



THE ROLE OF FEEDBACK IN TEACHING ESL CLASSES

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ABSTRACT

This article gives information about the significance of giving feedback to ESL students and discusses advantages and disadvantages of teacher and student feedback during the learning process. There are some suggested methods for how to provide learners with an effective feedback which may help them to improve their language acquisition.

KEYWORDS: *effective feedback, directive and facilitative feedback, methodology, language production, evaluators, professional feedback, teaching approach, language behavior*

For a long period of time feedback has been playing one of the principal role in methodology. A number of ESL teachers consider it as a powerful tool to guide the students in learning process. In other words learners may improve their language production with the help of the feedback given by their teachers.

As many students face some difficulties while learning English as a second language, it is mostly preferred to provide them with written feedback. According to [1], "providing feedback to students is often seen as one of the teacher's most important tasks, offering the kind of individual attention that is otherwise rarely possible under classroom conditions." Therefore, more feedback means more guidance which may enhance the ESL students writing skill quickly. They can receive both positive and negative comments during the classes. Dudley-Evans as well as St John [2] state that in the beginning of written feedback it is necessary for pedagogues to mention about particular achievements in learning process and then they may provide a detailed reference of negative features in student's language acquisition. Obviously, it may help them to

create a positive atmosphere for learning second language.

In ESL classroom learners differ from each other with their personality. In this case teachers ought to be responsible to select an appropriate feedback response that will not discourage a student's learning. In other words, it is vital to approach each student individually. There might be some sensitive learners who can consider feedback as a criticism towards their language performance. Consequently, they may become passive participants during the class since they lose confidence in the ability to learn. In methodology it is widely suggested to take student's feelings into consideration for the purpose of encouraging them to show positive results in their study.

The way a feedback is presented has a major impact on a learner's further improvement and development on that subject. Teachers should be extremely careful before correcting their learners in order not to cause any misunderstandings between them and their students. According to Marzano [3], a feedback which concentrates on only what is right or wrong may carry a negative impact within it that may lead to a 3 percent reduction of learning achievement.



Regarding the another feedback giving approach that focuses on explaining the reasons of incorrect or correct answers has a positive influence on learners which increases the learning achievement by 8.5 percent. Additionally, this number may be taken to 20 percent when there is a discussion involved on a given feedback and its reasons to be right or wrong. According to the approaches above it can be noticed that the improved teachers standards lead to an improved students learning achievement.

It should be noted that in some cases feedbacks are not received positively by students or learners, hence teachers may face a bit of fear and hesitation while presenting their feedback. Since people's response to criticism varies there is a likelihood of confusion to appear concerning the given feedback. On occasions, learners tend not to feel responsible enough to learn from their mistakes and discuss face to face about the feedback (negative) they are given. Nevertheless, a variety of defensive reactions can occur, and it is important to learn some strategies for dealing with them. It is not only the receiver of feedback who can become defensive: the person giving the feedback can also manifest similar reactions. [4]

By this statement it can be understood that teachers' trying to resist on proving their feedback on most occasions only intensifies the situation. Instead, teachers can use other ways and methods to overcome any negative conversations on a presented feedback and the effective usage of these methods may even lead to more preferable correlation between the teacher and learner.

In most European countries it is advocated by evaluators that an occasional feedback from learners may have an influential role in their significant correlation between them. Teachers may receive feedback from students in various ways: it might be either in oral or written form. OECD's (2013) report "What Makes Schools Successful" states that student's feedback about teacher's practice may have an important contribution to formative processes of school evaluation. The research found that schools where students are eligible to provide a written feedback about school systems, teachers or resources tend to be more equitable. However, in that study it is claimed that student's feedback can aid to find out certain problems but it should not be considered as a relevant professional feedback. From the statements above it is obvious that feedback from students may have noticeable influence on the efficiency of educational standards at some institutions.

On the other hand, however, teachers can be also less determined by some of students' opinions since students might be too critical of their teaching approaches and techniques. Moreover, students can feel uncomfortable to open up their thoughts or be

reluctant to do such observation. In some educational institutions students write a self-reflective essay. Learners are suggested to write down all their estimations related to their teacher's methods as well as experience. It is not part of their course evaluation. It means that students are just asked to reflect on what they have learned and experienced in the course in order to help improve the course, including the teacher's performance in the course. However, it is advisable to provide students with a few guiding questions in order to make it explicable for them to write a clear reflective essay.

Hesketh and Laidlaw [5] point out that there are a number of barriers of providing an effective feedback that hold back teachers to feel free while stating their opinion or pointing at student's weaknesses. The most common hesitations teachers may have about giving feedback is having a fear of hurting students' feelings. In some cases, the act of giving feedback has a tendency of causing misconceptions and confusion between the feedback giver and feedback receiver.

According to Black and William [6], we can divide the roles of the feedback into two: directive feedback and facilitative feedback. The former one concentrates on helping the students to get on the right track by giving them feedback, whereas the latter one focuses on giving direction as well as boosting their learning experience. It is crucial to approach to one of these types of feedbacks thoughtfully, since it has a major impact on a student's confidence when it comes to receiving the feedback the next time. Nor carefully chosen words while stating the feedback may lead the student to hesitate in his progress or even make them want to give up. In order not to make it happen teachers should be highly considerate before giving the feedback.

There are many types of feedbacks we have covered in this paper which can be applied by teachers and educators. But, one thing which should not be overlooked is exploring the most effective and practical one. While we are searching for a better way of presenting our feedback we should consider its benefits both for our students and learners as well as for us, because we improve our teaching methods by improving our learners language learning ability and comprehending. By providing a learner with a feedback targeted at improving his language skills we may trigger in them a desire to be better and develop their abilities in studying more effectively. Thus, several methods should be practiced by a teacher to identify the exact one method that is the most adequate. Concerning on how to choose the appropriate one, we should take into account the cases with grammar errors, mistakes in vocabulary or word choice, fluency and pronouncing the words



correctly. Teachers should present their feedbacks considering the subject of the mistake (if there is one) and approach to that confusion as carefully as possible so that a learner does not get that feedback negatively but could find out the point he has got wrong.

In methodology, it is considered that there is a noticeable difference between error correction and feedback since both of them are targeted in two different ways. In other words, some teachers may use feedback in order to give a general reaction to learners' performance while correction is preferable to mark faulty language behaviour. However, most researchers prefer to merge both error correction and feedback and apply the phrase "corrective feedback" in evaluation. It means that teachers can use the method of error correction which is aimed to guide students to the right way by providing with clear response to students performance and correcting their mistakes during the learning process. In short, it depends on teachers preference whether to unite both error correction and feedback or not, but the main point is to assess learners language behaviour in effective way to enrich their learning productivity.

To sum up, one of the highly important trait of any teacher, educator or instructor is being capable of presenting constructive feedback whether it is formal or informal, oral form or written form. The core element of giving feedbacks to learners is to develop their comprehension and boost the language learning skills. Alongside with this, giving an effective feedback impacts the relationship between a teacher and a learner which can strengthen the bond they have or vice versa loosen it. Especially, the method applied in giving feedback has a major role to play in student's further motivation to learn. The most significant thing to keep in mind is that it is not the case to give feedback with the only purpose of pointing to weaknesses but also praising the strengths of a learner. Since the aim of giving feedback is to help the learners to see their signs of improvement in their studies and make them believe or see that their effort was not pointless.

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