

The Impact of Teacher Feedback on Student Interaction Based on A Case Study in China

Yuhui Pan *

Department of Huazhong University of Science and Technology, Wuhan, China

* Corresponding Author Email: u202116558@hust.edu.cn

Abstract. Teacher feedback plays a significant role in English teaching. Effective teacher feedback can not only enhance students' enthusiasm and motivation for learning but also improve their language skills and ability to think critically. This study analyzes data from classroom observations of the four teachers and their four English classes, attempting to explore the impact of teacher feedback on student interaction. A few instances of the usage of teacher feedback in Chinese college English classrooms are compiled in this study. The author suggests that teachers employ feedback language in the following three ways, based on the findings of the research: First and foremost, educators need to be aware of how much language is used in feedback. Second, educators should work to raise their own standards and employ a variety of feedback language in a flexible manner. Thirdly, input from teachers ought to be varied and not overly straightforward. In the future, incorporating these strategies into pedagogical practice may completely transform English instruction in Chinese universities, creating a more engaging and dynamic learning environment that not only gets students ready for success in the classroom but also gives them the critical thinking abilities they need to thrive in the increasingly interconnected world.

Keywords: Teacher feedback; Chinese college English classrooms; Student interaction.

1. Introduction

In the realm of English language teaching, effective communication between educators and students is paramount. The way teachers provide feedback significantly shapes the learning environment, influencing student engagement and language acquisition. This study addresses the critical need to understand how teacher feedback impacts student interaction within Chinese college English classrooms. This investigation is significant because it has the ability to improve student motivation, instructional tactics, and language learning outcomes. By carefully dissecting four English lessons given by four different teachers, this study seeks to pinpoint areas that need improvement and shed light on the function of feedback in creating a vibrant learning environment.

2. Literature Review

As an important part of second language classroom interaction, teacher feedback plays an important role in creating a good learning atmosphere for students and has a decisive impact on the continuation of teacher-student dialogue turns. Many linguists and psychologists have conducted in-depth research on the role of teacher feedback.

Long believes that teacher feedback plays an important role in cultivating students' interlanguage ability [1]. Chaudron believes that feedback is an effective method to evaluate students' performance in the classroom, and proved that positive feedback is better than negative feedback in improving students' language learning effects [2]. Richards and Lockhart pointed out that there are three functions of positive feedback in the teacher's classroom: (1) it helps students correct answers; (2) praise motivates students to respond; (3) creating a lively classroom atmosphere to improve students' enthusiasm for learning [3]. Tsui summarized the four functions of teacher feedback: (1) expressing affirmation; (2) indicating that information has been received or expressing one's own ideas; (3) reducing the impact of "negation" and maintaining others' self-esteem to avoid losing face; (4) seeking opinions, making the exchange positive by asking for others' ideas [4]. According to Tsui's explanation of the purposes of feedback, teacher comments can boost student engagement, inspire

students, and foster teacher-student communication. Carvalho employed empirical study to discover that students view teacher feedback as an extremely helpful instructional guide. [5].

Except for the inconsistent opinions about the influence of teacher feedback in western, Chinese researchers also have conducted studies into it and put forward their opinions. Xu summarized the two major functions of teacher verbal feedback: one is cognitive function, and the other is affective function [6]. Yan expanded the two major functions of teacher feedback proposed by Xu, summarizing the three major support functions of teacher feedback [7]. Lin and Zhou pointed out that in classroom teaching, teacher feedback plays a "demonstrative" role of the target language [8]. He found in his research that teacher feedback can provide students with an important source of input, help students reduce task difficulty, and provide positive emotional support, thereby improving the interactive effect in the teaching process and enhancing students' English level [9].

Through the above literature review, it can be found that although scholars mostly study the function of teacher feedback from different goals, some common points are undeniable, that is, teacher feedback has a great effect on improving students' learning motivation, increasing students' self-confidence, promoting language knowledge acquisition, and promoting classroom interaction. However, it still lacks further research in the current use of teacher feedback in college English classrooms. Therefore, two basic questions will be answered in this study: (1) What is the current state of teachers' feedback language use in college English classrooms? (2) What positive roles do different types of teachers' feedback language play in classroom interaction, and in which aspects are these roles reflected?

3. Method

Based on the transcription of four lessons (each 45 minutes in duration), this study conducted a quantitative analysis of the volume of teacher feedback and the total volume of teacher discourse. In order to evaluate the current status of feedback language usage, the analysis mainly concentrated on three factors: the amount of feedback language used in teachers' discourse, the kinds of feedback language that teachers use, and the problems that teachers run into when using feedback language. Teacher discourse included all of the language that the instructor used to set up the classroom, explain the material, create the activities, and give feedback and assessments.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. The Frequency of Teacher Feedback in Teacher Discourse

The frequency of teacher feedback was recorded and statistically analyzed. The following will present the frequency of teacher feedback, the volume of teacher feedback, the volume of teacher discourse, and their respective proportions in tabular form.

Table 1. The Volume of Teacher Feedback and Its Frequency in Teacher Discourse

Teacher	Class Type	Frequency of Feedback	Volume of Teacher Feedback/ Teacher Discourse Volume (%)
Teacher A	Comprehensive English Course	102	2055/4213 (49%)
Teacher B	Comprehensive English Course	151	2019/4056 (50%)
Teacher C	Comprehensive English Course	173	1473/4352 (34%)
Teacher D	Comprehensive English Course	227	2492/5881 (42%)

According to Table1, there are variations among the teachers in terms of the frequency of feedback, the volume of feedback language, and the total volume of teacher discourse. Nonetheless, it's clear that instructor feedback plays a big role in college English courses. In terms of feedback language volume, it is evident that the four teachers use it 163 times on average every class, which accounts for 44% of their whole discourse on average and surpasses Huang's research findings of 35% [10]. This indicates that feedback language is becoming more and more appreciated and is a significant part of college English training.

However, the table also reveals noticeable differences in the volume of feedback language among the teachers. Teachers A and B have a relatively higher volume of feedback language compared to Teachers C and D, which may be attributed to the fact that Teachers A and B are more experienced, while Teachers C and D are novice teachers. Compared to the other two experienced teachers, the novice teachers may have weaker classroom management skills. Observations made during class sessions revealed that Teachers C and D gave extremely thorough explanations of the material, putting more emphasis on how to understand the text than giving students comments. Frequently, they would merely reply to a student's response, failing to take advantage of the chance to encourage more in-depth analysis. Furthermore, the inexperienced professors appeared less concerned with the volume of student conversation, frequently capping student evaluations with straightforward affirmations like "yes!" or "very good!" In contrast, Teachers A and B are more inclined to use feedback as a starting point for dialogue, guiding students to think carefully about issues and achieve a deeper understanding of the material, thereby encouraging continuous expression. Thus, the classroom data illustrates that teacher feedback is indeed widely applied in current college school English classrooms.

4.2. Types and Frequencies of Teacher Feedback in the Classroom

This study categorized and sorted the transcribed college teacher feedback corpus based on the classification method proposed by Lin and Zhou [8]. The results of the observation are presented in Table2.

Table 2. The Usage of Classroom Feedback Expressions by Four English Teachers

Teacher	Frequency (%) of Unidirectional Feedback	Frequency (%) of Multidirectional Feedback	Total
Teacher A	72 (71%)	30 (29%)	102
Teacher B	97 (64%)	54 (36%)	151
Teacher C	132 (76%)	41 (24%)	173
Teacher D	164 (72%)	63 (28%)	227
Total	465 (71%)	188 (29%)	653 (100%)

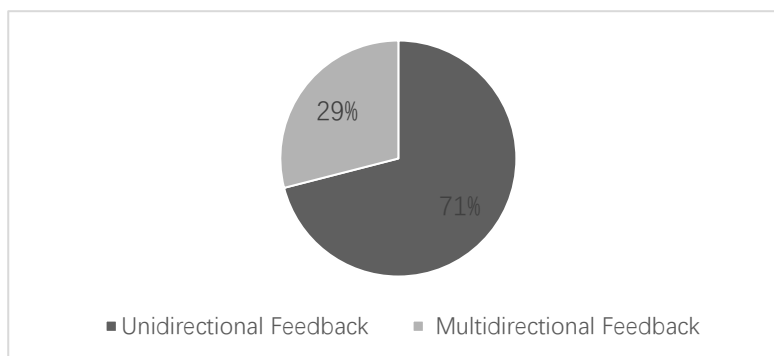


Figure 1. The Proportion of Use between Unidirectional Feedback and Multidirectional Feedback

From Table2, it can be seen that although each teacher has different ratios in the use of unidirectional and multidirectional feedback language, overall, the number of times teachers use unidirectional feedback language far exceeds that of multidirectional feedback language. The data in Figure1 shows that the proportion of unidirectional feedback language used in the classroom exceeds two-thirds, accounting for 71%, far exceeding the usage rate of multidirectional feedback language, which is something teachers need to pay attention to.

This study compared the usage proportions of unidirectional feedback language (71%) and multidirectional feedback language (29%) obtained in this study with the data results (91.02%, 8.98%) researched by Lin and Zhou [8]. It is discovered that although the usage of unidirectional feedback language has reduced, the usage of multidirectional feedback language has increased in the classrooms under observation. Given that multidirectional feedback language is more likely to support students' learning, this may be connected to how effective it is as a teacher. Nonetheless, the data results are consistent with Huang's research (70.92%, 29.08%), which examined the teacher feedback in Chinese high school English courses. It suggests that teaching methods are improving over time.

Finally, the four teachers differ in the types of teacher feedback they use. Teachers A, C and D use multidirectional feedback language at rates of 29%, 24% and 28%, respectively, while Teacher B uses more multidirectional feedback language than Teachers A, C and D, at 36%. With more classroom and student experience under her belt, Teacher B is more knowledgeable of the importance of multidirectional feedback language in student learning. As inexperienced educators with only three to four years of classroom experience, Teachers A, C, and D, in comparison, are less adaptable when it comes to providing criticism than Teacher B. Their classes are not as engaging as Teacher B's since they frequently only offer brief praise in response to students' input, lack integrative discourse, and are still learning how to use the classroom.

4.2.1 Unidirectional Feedback Language

This study found that there are eleven types of unidirectional feedback language in college English classrooms. This study creates a new category for the requirements and questions from teachers in comparison to the previous data gathered by Huang [10]. The following table displays the detailed results of this study, which counted the circumstances in which each of the four teachers used unidirectional feedback language.

Table 3. The Specific Use of Unidirectional Feedback Expressions

Type Teacher	Teacher A	Teacher B	Teacher C	Teacher D	Total	Percentage
Raising Requirements and Queries	44	58	61	72	235	50.54%
Seeking Opinions	8	8	29	37	82	17.63%
Praise	11	2	14	15	42	9.03%
Guiding	2	5	14	18	39	8.39%
Evaluation	5	7	8	6	26	5.59%
Probing	1	15	1	6	23	4.95%
Repetition	0	1	3	6	10	2.15%
Expansion	1	1	0	2	4	0.86%
Paraphrasing	0	0	1	1	2	0.43%
Metalinguistic Feedback	0	0	0	1	1	0.22%
Direct Answering by the Teacher	0	0	1	0	1	0.22%

From Table3, it can be observed that the four English teachers most frequently use Raising Requirements and Queries, accounting for 50.54%. The next most commonly used are Seeking Opinions, at 17.63%. Praise and Guiding are used with similar frequency, at 9.03% and 8.39% respectively. Probing is used approximately twice the frequency compared to repetition, at 4.95% and 2.15% respectively. Expansion, Paraphrasing, Metalinguistic Feedback and Direct Answering by the Teacher are used least frequently in the four lessons, accounting for 0.86%, 0.43%, 0.22% and 0.22% of the total, respectively.

The study found during classroom observation that all four teachers tend to raise requirements, queries to students, guide them to answer the questions or pose further question to them, encouraging them to keep up with the class.Guiding and probing are more effective in fostering student discourse output than raising requirements and questions. Giving pupils the answers right away, though, can prevent them from having the chance to think for themselves. This could account for the teacher's seldom use of direct answering. In order to determine whether or not pupils fully comprehend or agree with the teachers, opinions are sought for. After students respond to questions, teachers should provide them feedback and encouragement because this can increase their curiosity and initiative for learning while also giving them instructions. Positive feedback also takes the shape of repetition and paraphrasing, which show teachers are paying attention and support children in speaking up with confidence. Paraphrasing is also used to correct certain mistakes made by the students.

The reason for the low frequency of use of Expansion may be because teachers usually have a tight schedule in class and do not have much time for expansion or further understanding of students' learning situations, so teachers prefer to use the extra class time for knowledge explanation and learning.While giving pupils the answers right away can save time, it does not help them become more enthusiastic learners or develop critical thinking skills. As a result, teachers don't often use direct responses and criticism in metalanguage.

4.2.2 Multidirectional Feedback Language

Multidirectional Feedback Language refers to the combination of two or more types of unidirectional feedback language. A total of seventeen different types of multidirectional feedback language were detected in the four college English sessions observed for this study—more than had been found in previous investigations. The precise findings of this study's analysis and statistical summary of the four English teachers' use of multidirectional feedback language in the transcribed texts are shown in the table below.

Table 4. Specific Usage of Multidimensional Feedback Expressions

Type Teacher	Teacher A	Teacher B	Teacher C	Teacher D	Total	Percentage
Praise, Repetition	2	11	11	24	48	25.53%
Praise, Paraphrasing	12	12	8	9	41	21.81%
Raising Requirements and Queries, Guiding	6	8	7	12	33	17.55%
Raising Requirements and Queries, Direct Answering by the Teacher	0	10	4	4	18	9.57%
Raising Requirements and Queries, Praise	2	0	1	4	7	3.72%
Praise, Guiding	1	1	3	2	7	3.72%
Raising Requirements and Queries, Evaluation	1	3	0	0	4	2.13%
Praise, Expansion	1	0	2	1	4	2.13%
Praise, Evaluation	1	1	0	1	3	1.60%
Praise, Probing	0	1	2	0	3	1.60%
Repetition, Probing	0	0	1	2	3	1.60%
Guiding, Evaluation	0	2	0	0	2	1.06%
Praise, Repetition, Probing	0	0	2	2	4	2.13%
Praise, Repetition, Evaluation	2	3	0	0	5	0.27%
Raising Requirements and Queries, Praise, Guiding	1	0	0	1	2	1.06%
Raising Requirements and Queries, Guiding, Direct Answering by the Teacher	0	2	0	1	3	1.60%
Raising Requirements and Queries, Praise, Guiding, Evaluation	1	0	0	0	1	0.05%

Table 4 shows that the combination of Praise and Repetition is the most commonly used multidirectional feedback language across the four teachers, accounting for 25.53% of the total usage. Combining praise with paraphrasing is the second most used multidirectional feedback language, accounting for 21.81% of all feedback. Following closely is Raising Requirements and Queries with Guiding, accounting for 17.55%, which is twice as much as Raising Requirements and Queries with Direct Answering by the Teacher, accounting for 9.57%. The least used forms of multidirectional feedback language are Raising Requirements and Queries with Praise, Praise with Guiding, Raising Requirements and Queries with Evaluation, Praise with Expansion, Praise with Evaluation, Praise with Probing, Repetition with Probing, Guiding with Evaluation, Praise with Repetition with Probing, Praise with Repetition with Evaluation, Raising Requirements and Queries with Praise with Guiding, Raising Requirements and Queries with Guiding with Direct Answering by the Teacher, Raising Requirements and Queries with Praise with Guiding with Evaluation, which respectively make up 3.72%, 3.72%, 2.13%, 2.13%, 1.60%, 1.60%, 1.60%, 1.06%, 2.13%, 0.27%, 1.06%, 1.60% and 0.05% of the total.

Repetition and paraphrase, which are the two most frequently used multidirectional feedback language elements, are not more commonly employed in unidirectional feedback language, where they rank seventh and ninth, respectively. It demonstrates that corrections and reinforcements are more commonly employed in conjunction with praise than they are alone. Acknowledgment has the

power to boost students' self-assurance in their ability to learn and their engagement in class; paraphrase and repetition support pupils and encourage language use.

5. Conclusion

This study underscores the significant role that teacher feedback plays in the college English classroom setting in China. The data gleaned from the observation of four teachers' feedback practices reveals that feedback language constitutes a substantial portion of the total teacher discourse, highlighting its integral position in the instructional process. The findings show that although feedback language is frequently used, instructors' use of it varies substantially in terms of both frequency and kind. Remarkably, feedback language that is unidirectional is more common than feedback that is multidirectional. The use of multidirectional feedback has been increasing, which is a good trend that fits with the changing pedagogical approaches because it promotes greater student participation and dialogue. This study also emphasizes how crucial it is for teachers to have experience and to be flexible when using language in feedback. Skilled educators, who possess greater proficiency in managing classroom dynamics, typically utilize a wider variety of feedback techniques, which fosters a more participatory and captivating learning atmosphere. In light of these findings, this study recommends that teachers be mindful of the quantity and quality of feedback language they use. Furthermore, this study advocates for a shift towards more multidirectional feedback language to stimulate deeper student engagement and critical thinking.

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