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Role of Feedback and Negotiation in Interlanguage Development

Shama-E-Shahid

Lecturer and Coordinator, Department of English, The International University of Scholars Bangladesh, Bangladesh

✉**Corresponding Author:** Shama-E-Shahid, **E-mail**: shamaeshahid@gmail.com

ARTICLE INFORMATION	ABSTRACT

A central theme in second language acquisition is Interlanguage, an idea grounded on the concept that the human brain activates an innate psychological structure in a second language learning process. It is a system that is constructed by second language learners. There is a distinct language system in second language learners' utterances which is quite different from the native speakers (Selinker 1972, p. 209-241). Interlanguage varies under diverse contexts, e.g., one domain of IL can be different from another one in terms of fluency, accuracy, and complexity. However, interlanguage can cease developing or fossilize, in any of its developmental stages due to the complexities a learner faces in acquiring a second language. According to Mitchell et al. (2013, p.60), under the platform of interaction, feedback, modified input, negotiation for meaning, and modified input come together to facilitate second language acquisition. It is evident from this point that Feedback and Negotiation are interrelated. This paper proposes to discuss these two subjects under the umbrella term interaction and argues the role of both of them on interlanguage development, concluding with an analysis of these techniques and the pedagogical implications.

1. Introduction

1.1 Feedback and Negotiation under the Interaction Hypothesis

Founded by Long (1996), the interaction hypothesis is an idea that offers that interaction facilitates second language acquisition because it avails the learners with necessary comprehensible linguistic input that occurs due to the linguistic and conversational modification in discourse. A cognitive input hypothesis of Krashen (1985) is slightly more advanced which emphasizes linguistic input's significance in the target language. Krashen observes that social contextual factors are more relevant to the conversational ploys that ensure more input, at the end relating to the notion of an effective filter determining the brain central language acquisition mechanism through the input (Allwright, 1995). According to Long's belief, it is the modified interaction or negotiation for meaning (NFM) that makes input more comprehensible. Krashen's input hypothesis propagates that the main causal variable is the comprehensible input by itself, whereas Long avers that the modified input is one of the essential factors of the language acquisition process which the learners encounter and how the interlocutors interact with each other under such situation (Lightbown and Spada,1993). The proposition of Long's interaction hypothesis (1983) is that negotiation for meaning which is activated by the native speakers (NS) adjustments of interaction, makes language input comprehensible and accelerates acquisition as it conjoins input, output, learner capacities, and selective attention productively (Gass 2002, p. 174). Long also believes that the comprehensibility of input is increased when meaning is negotiated and that makes the learners focus on a more productive linguistic output (Ariza and Hancock, 2003). The following is the summary of Long's interaction hypothesis by Carroll (2000):

- Feedback is the factor that draws the attention of the learners through the dissimilarities between the input and the learners' output (Carroll 2000, p. 291)

- Modified interaction is the outcome of negotiation for meaning, consisting of various modifications made by NS for the purpose of availing a comprehensible input to the learners. To elaborate, they often slow down their speech in a conversation with non-native speakers (NNS). Comprehension checks, recasts, self-repetition, topic switches, and

restatements of the non-native speakers are some of the modifications used as feedbacks (Wesche, 1994; Brown, 2000; Lightbown and Spada, 1993).

A study was designed to examine Corrective Feedback's effectiveness in interaction in terms of L2 accuracy and fluency. It contained three interaction groups (were taught to deliver prompts, recasts, and interaction without any feedback individually) and a control group. However, between the corrective feedback group and the interaction group, no remarkable dissimilarity was there in terms of fluency, although in terms of accuracy, the corrective feedback group did better. That study can provide two implications: error correction proves to be effective in interaction, and it is not an obstacle in communicating fluently. Error correction has been criticized in terms of fluency by some researchers (Krashen, 1981, Truscott, 1999), though these researchers did not manage to notice other types of feedbacks available there (e.g., recasts and prompts) which are less trespassing (Long, 1996, Chaudron, 1997). Prompts have been more effective between the prompts and recasts (Havraneck, 1999, Lyster, 2004). A pushing factor forcing the learners to reply is there in the prompts which distinguish them from recasts (Nobuyoshi and Ellis, N 1993).

When a learner remains unsuccessful in conveying a message, he or she is provided with error correction and feedback by the interlocutor that makes the learner responding with the amendment of speech with coherence, accuracy, and clarity (Izumi, 2003). This rectified output is referred to as modified output provided by feedback. With this cognitive process of amending the learner's speech, the change in the learner's interlanguage is initiated. This cognitive process leads the learner to notice a hiatus between their interlanguage and target language although not being able to produce correct output immediately.

Besides negative evidence from feedback and modified output resulting from it, interaction also promotes positive evidence. It is evidence that is possible in the language. During communication between a learner and the interlocutor, when a learner is unable to understand the message of the interlocutor, it occurs. This initiates the process of negotiation for meaning (NFM) between the two where several techniques are applied to make the communication more comprehensible. Confirmation checks, comprehension checks, clarification requests, and co-constructions are some of the techniques. Through negotiation for meaning, learners receive positive evidence termed as input.

1.2 Feedback
Feedback is a linguistic mechanism that ensures that a set of basic requirements can be met in communication such as possibilities for continued contact, mutual understanding, and mutual perception. It informs the learner about their progress or lacings in progress in relation to their utterances and allows them to focus on their comprehension development. Feedback, being either explicit or implicit, proves that what the target language lacks (Ellis, Erlam & Loewen, 2006). In implicit feedback, the error is not considered crucial, whereas in explicit feedback, the exact area of error is being highlighted (Ellis, Erlam & Loewen, 2006, p. 334). Recasts are there in implicit feedback providing the learners with clarification requests, correct form, prompts, and learners' errors of repetitions. Explicit feedback is comprised of recasts stressing the words stress and metalinguistic explanations (Mitchell et al. 2013, p. 161-170). There are another two sections of feedback- classroom feedback where the students are corrected by the teacher and interactional feedback which is the communication between two or more people.

The role of feedback has been a heavily disputed one in second language learning. Feedback has been criticized by some researchers for its ineffectiveness. Researchers like Schwartz (1992) and Krashen (1982) criticize feedback by arguing that it is explicit knowledge only that can be acquired by correction for the acquisition of knowledge is not explicit rather, it is implicit. Again, correcting the students will make them feel embarrassed as well as anxious which will be an obstacle for their language acquisition. Hence, Freeman (2000, p. 108) suggests that learners should not be corrected or forced to speak.

There is evidence on the positive side of feedback as well. Some researchers observed (Magilow,1999) the effect of feedback practically. In the duration of a semester, he observed a class and evaluation of the students by the end of a semester. It was a second language class a Beginner's German was the language. Magilow used recasts and explicit metalinguistic feedback by the demand of the students. The findings suggested implications that corrective feedback did not play any negative role on students, rather, some students demanded more feedback and this explicit error correction actually increased their confidence (Magilow, 1999, p. 128). This case study refutes the proposition of Krashen (1982) and others as error correction does not necessarily have a negative effect on students. A more concrete proof in favor of this study was done by Younghee Sheen containing a metalinguistic feedback group, a controlled group, and a group of recasts (Mackay, 2007, p. 316). He was investigating a more positive attitude towards error correction. What more was found from the case study of Younghee Sheen is the relationship between learning outcomes and learners' attitudes. Apart from the immediate group of post-testing, there was no relationship found between these two. There was no significant result in the delayed post-test group as well. In both immediate and delayed post-test, the recast group also didn't show anything significant. What affected the learners' outcome more, was the application of various types of feedback and the learning capability of the learners (Mackay, 2007, p. 317-320). A solid correlation was found by Sheen between

long-term and short-term tests and learners' ability which indicates that the attitude of learners towards error correction has some role but it is not as strong as Krashen's (1982) one.

As mentioned earlier, researchers (Krashen, 1982, Truscott, 1999, Paradis, 1994) and others have criticized the effectiveness of feedback arguing that explicit knowledge does not provide acquisition as language acquisition requires to be implicit. However, some suggest that (Ellis, 1994) explicit knowledge might facilitate developing implicit knowledge. He advances by stating that implicit knowledge is greatly facilitated by explicit knowledge over a long period of time (Ellis 2006, the effects of form-focused instruction on second language acquisition). Some mixed results were found by White's (1991) study on positive and negative evidence taken by Schwartz (1992) implying that it is explicit knowledge that gets developed by negative evidence. White's study contained 11-year-old French-speaking children of an ESL program in Quebec learning adverb placement rules in English. The program was five months long intensive learning on communication and traditional teaching of another five months. Containing five classes of around twenty-five to thirty students in a group, it formed three groups, an adverb group (grade 5 and 6), a question formation group (grade 5-6), and a control group of native speakers. The question formation group received only positive evidence, whereas the adverb group received negative evidence in terms of adverb placement. Three post-tests were there, one was immediately after five weeks, and the final one after one year. This study of white observed significant improvement of learners after providing negative evidence. The negative evidence adverb group did quite well in comparison with the positive evidence group of question formation in terms of the immediate post-tests and five weeks later post-tests. What did not show any statistical significance was the positive evidence groups' pre-results-tests results (White 1991, p. 151). The test that was taken after a year, here the negative eviworsece group did bad than the previous tests (White 1991, p. 153). Not much difference was there between the one year later post-test and original pre-test taken before the negative evidence instruction. The interpretation of Schwartz (1992) suggests that negative evidence causes no changes in interlanguage but causes some changes in the knowledge of the learners regarding adverb placement. But White (1991) rejects this by explaining that the children got three weeks of feedback instruction on adverb placement, hence, the feedback they received did not get sustain(White 1991, p. 15). Lightbown's (1991) study boosts up White's explanation stating that if maintained regularly, feedback remains more effective.

More supporting studies are there proving that negative evidence is effective (Loewen and Nabei, 2007). For this case study, eleven groups were formed randomly from sixty-six participants from two Japanese universities of English classes. Studying English for an average of seven years, the participants were Japanese speakers in terms of L1. Question formation in English was the target structure because their first language was Japanese which displayed a common difficulty among them. Among the ten groups, around four learners formed each one. Two of them received metalinguistic feedback, two received clarification requests, three received recasts and no feedback was received by three. The remaining thirty-one participants formed a controlled group. The findings implied that in terms of their implicit knowledge, a significant effect is offered by corrective feedback on implicit knowledge. Han (2000) and Ellis (2004) comment, this study of implicit knowledge measurement was a short-timed grammar test; relying on learners' spontaneous reply providing short time, a meaning-focused one which is the best implicit knowledge measurement test. This very fact distinguishes Loewen and Nabei's (2007) study from White's (1991) study that lacked time restriction in testing.

1.3 Negotiation for meaning
Negotiation for meaning (NFM) is a term in second language acquisition where two or more peers identify a communication breakdown and try to resolve it (Ellis 2003, p. 346). The concept was originated from Krashen's theory (1981, 1982, 1985), stating that through comprehensible input, a second language can be acquired. This input is termed by Krashen as the " i+1" level. Long (1985,1996) averred that it is the interactional adjustments that make the input comprehensible. With negotiations through these interactions, speaking difficulties get clarified, repeated, checked, or modified to some extent. The significance of NFM lies specifically in the group works that provide the "i+1" input in order to measure learners' interlanguage level individually. Negative evidence is provided to the learners with their own output them that compels learners to repair the mistakes for the purpose of making the more comprehensible and target-like conversation (Swain, 1985).

A number of cognitive and quantitative researches have been generated in the mid of 1980s for the purpose of determining the most productive classroom activities regarding negotiated interaction (Varonis and Gass, 1985; Gass and Varonis, 1985; Doughty and Pica, 1986; Rulon and McCreary, 1986; Pica et al. 1989; Pica, 1994). Findings from these researches implied that the information gap tasks for NFM provided the most opportunities. Several tasks of information gap are there but what is common in them is each of them contains the principle of hiding some information from the participants so that they can understand the gap clearly. This means that in NFM, what is essential is the negotiation of meanings is required, comprehensible input and a bit out of the present competence level of the learners than their second language acquisition level. Learners' modifications of utterances facilitate their second language learning process where the interlocutors provide clarification requests, prompts, morphosyntax, and lexis. Thus, information gap activities aid the learners with opportunities in noticing and filling the gaps with their current IL knowledge (Schmidt and Frota, 1986).

Further researches have been carried out in the '90s indicating more valuable negotiating opportunities appearing from communication failures. Pica (1992, p. 200) argues that NFM occurs when there is a problem of adjustments between the listener and the speaker in terms of the message signals of the speaker where the listener tries to repair the error. NFM occurs in an interrupted communication that is difficult to comprehend (Pica 1994, p. 494). It is a conversation instance where the interlocutors need to take a break in the conversation in order to understand each other's message clearly (Gass & Selinker 1994, p. 209). According to Long (1996, p. 425), NFM is communicative trouble that makes the learners identify the linguistic problem, change their focus from message to form, and include the required thing in input. Likewise, Macky et al. (2000, p. 476) point at the communication problem as communication breakdown triggered by something that they cannot comprehend and recognize the problem in their own constructed rule. Ellis (1999, p. 3) and Ellis et al (2001) comments that a communicative impasse leads to NFM after a linguistic problem arises that demands an explicit solution. Long (1996) argues in his interaction hypothesis the importance of interaction in SLA, claiming that interlanguage development is facilitated with these interactions where the peers try to adjust the complexities that they are facing to understand each other. Therefore, NFM is regarded as a beneficiary to SLA.

A valuable aspect of communication breakdown is that they work as the "pressure points" to the learners to change their language (Skehen 1996, p. 1). In recent years, the study of interaction's importance in second language acquisition has transferred from information gap tasks of the interlocutors to recasts (Oliver, 1995; Lyster, 1998; Long et al., 1998; Braidi, 2002) and tasks involving the whole class (Doughty and Varela, 1998; Ellis et al., 2001). These tasks are generally regulated by a teacher or a native speaker who is more competent with no communication failure. They understand the words of non-native speakers well at the same time they are appointed for some useful language-oriented tasks. Such shift in the tasks changes a classroom group work where learners interact with each other towards a situational one where learners' focus is changed productively from meaning to form. These tasks include recasts, feedback, and other language-related tasks (Swain, 2001).

Confirmation and clarification checks are the two techniques employed in NFM to repair communication breakdowns. Besides these, the speaker can slow down the speed of speech and can repeat it regularly to repair communication breakdown (Macky, 2007, p. 12). NFM also facilitates the learners with input in receiving positive evidence. Confirmation checks and repetition of speech are widely used during NFM interaction (Long 1985, p. 378) which makes a more comprehensible L2 input that aids second language acquisition. This process of repetition and confirmation checks that makes a more comprehensible input is termed as the modified input.

2. Pedagogical implications

This essay is an endeavor to discuss the importance of feedback and negotiation for meaning in interlanguage development and has tried to refute some of the criticisms against these factors. In order to maximize the utilization of feedback and NFM in interlanguage development, a pedagogical application of these two factors needs to be considered. For this purpose, feedback, which is considered to be the most integral part of the interaction, (Macky et Al., p. 2000) has been analyzed. The following extracts of examples have been analyzed where the first one is extracted from Ellis and Sheen (2006) and the others are from Yang (2008).

Extract 1
1. Teacher: When you were in school?
2. Learner: Yes. I stand in the first row.
3. Teacher: You stood in the first row?
4. Learner: Yes, stood in the first row, and sit, ah, sat the first row.

The first extract is a very good example of recasts. An error occurs in line 2 as the learner, continuing a conversation with the teacher in the past tense, says "I stand in the first row" in the present tense. The teacher repairs the error with the past form "You stood in the first row?" and pushes the learner to repair the error immediately by saying "stood". Again, the learner falls victim to the same mistake when in line 4 he says "sit" but identifies the error and immediately repairs it by uttering "sat". A study by Loewen (2004) and Philip (2003) showed that the response rate of adult learners is 13 times more with the aid of recasts where their incorrect utterances are stressed frequently by the teacher in order to correct the mistake successfully.

Extract 2
1. Learner: Why does he fly to Korea last year?
2. Teacher: He???
3. Learner: Why did he fly to Korea last year?
In the second extract, the teacher prompts the learner with the question mark so that he gets noticed and repair the utterance immediately. The learner knows explicitly what is the correct form of the "wh" question but did not manage to acquire the correct form implicitly. This extract implies that learners do mistakes when spontaneously producing a sentence but if time is being

provided, the learners can produce the sentence structure correctly (Han, 2000, Ellis, 2004). This is a good example of a prompt as it pushes the learner to modify his output.

Extract 3
1. Learner: I went to the train station and pick up my aunt.
2. Teacher: Use past tense consistently.
3. Learner: I went to the train station and picked up my aunt.

This extract consists example of metalinguistic feedback where the teacher comments on the learner to correct his utterances without providing the correct form explicitly. As the learner in the previous lesson is drilled a structure with prompts, the teacher pushes the learner to produce correct utterances because the learner in line one is partially correct as he errs with producing "pick up" instead of "picked up". Later he is instructed by the teacher and repairs the error.

3. Conclusion and implications
This study endeavors to discuss Feedback and Negotiation under the umbrella term interaction and argues the role of both of them on interlanguage development, concluding with an analysis of these techniques and the pedagogical implications. To maximize the utilization of feedback and NFM in interlanguage development, a pedagogical application of these two factors was conducted. For this purpose, feedback, which is considered to be the most integral part of the interaction, (Macky et Al., 2000) has been analyzed. Due to time constraints, three extracts of examples have been analyzed where the first one is extracted from Ellis and Sheen (2006) and the others are from Yang (2008). The first extract is a very good example of recasts. The second extract is an example of a prompt as it pushes the learner to modify his output. The third extract consists example of metalinguistic feedback where the teacher comments on the learner to correct his utterances without providing the correct form explicitly. Although this study is characterized by several shortcomings, its findings can make a significant contribution to Interlanguage development. The findings of this study suggest that consistency is an important aspect of feedback. A teacher might not be able to correct every mistake of the learners but he must provide some feedback irrespective of circumstances so that the learners do not have to encounter any negative conditions. Moreover, recasts need to be practiced primarily upon the advanced learners as they are more capable to notice them (Ammar and Spada, 2006). Initially, recasts should be provided as feedback for a comparatively new language structure after the errors produced by the learners. Another implication suggests that prompts need to be employed frequently upon learners who are not from the advanced level and often remain the victim of fossilization. A modified output is facilitated by the prompts stimulating the cognitive process which leads to the acquisition of language (Swain, 1995). The role of metalinguistic feedback lies in the fact that when the learners are unable to respond to the prompts, it can be applied under such situations.

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