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UNIVERSITY EFL STUDENTS' PREFERENCES FOR FEEDBACK

Abstract

This case study involved Lithuanian university students and aimed to learn about their preferences for feedback in their EFL classes, as feedback is important for the improvement of their linguistic skills. The students filled in an anonymous online questionnaire containing open and closed-ended questions that focused on the form, focus, types, source, frequency, timing of feedback, the types of errors it should cover, and other relevant aspects of feedback, such as feelings related to feedback in the English classroom. The findings reveal that the students prefer teacher feedback focusing on language, content, organisation, and work in progress. Such feedback should be both positive and negative, provided either in English or Lithuanian or both. The form and type of feedback are not important, but individual feedback is preferred over collective feedback. All or the most frequent errors should be corrected either after the activity or straight away after they occur. KEY WORDS: EFL, feedback, preferred feedback, teacher feedback, university students.

Anotacija

Šiame atvejo tyrime dalyvavo vieno Lietuvos universiteto studentai, siekiant išsiaiškinti, kokiam grįžtamajam ryšiui jie teikia pirmenybę anglų kaip užsienio kalbos paskaitose. Studentai pildė anoniminį klausimyną internete; jį sudarė atvirieji ir uždarieji klausimai apie grįžtamojo ryšio formas, tipus, šaltinius, dažnį, laiką, klaidų tipus ir kitus svarbius aspektus, tokius kaip jausmai, susiję su gaunamu grįžtamuju ryšiu. Rezultatai atskleidė, kad studentai pageidauja dėstytojo teikiamo grįžtamojo ryšio, kai akcentuojama ne tik kalba, kurios mokomasi, bet ir su ja susijęs turinys, taip pat atliekamų užduočių procesas. Toks grįžtamasis ryšys gali būti tiek teigiamas, tiek neigiamas, pateikiamas arba angliškai, arba lietuviškai. Formos ir tipai nėra svarbūs, bet individualus grįžtamasis ryšys, teikiamas kiekvienam studentui atskirai, mėgstamas labiau nei kolektyvinis. Visos ar dažniausiai daromos klaidos turi būti taisomos arba po atliktos užduoties, arba iškart, kai klaidos padaromos.

PAGRINDINIAI ŽODŽIAI: anglų kaip užsienio kalba, grįžtamasis ryšys, dėstytojo teikiamas grįžtamasis ryšys, universiteto studentai.

Introduction

EFL students often rely on their teachers as feedback providers, and even expect the feedback on their skills to be frequent. Thus, despite their workload pressures, the teachers continue spending a lot of their precious time and energy giving such feedback. Naturally, they expect their comments and advice to be taken into account, and hope their students will take action to improve their linguistic skills and encourage or stimulate their revision skills and practices, especially when the process approach (e.g. to writing) is used (Saliu-Abdulahi et al. 2017). However, Gedye (2010) claims that students, especially in higher education, are often grade-oriented, and as a result do not use their received feedback effectively and efficiently, since having received a grade they are not very interested in their teacher's comments, or are negligent about the feedback received (Zaman, Azad 2012). In addition to the fact that some students are interested only in grades, one more reason why feedback may not be effective is that students may be used to their teachers being sole feedback providers. As a result, teacher-led feedback may make them dependent on their teachers and hinder the development of their self-correction skills (Gedye 2010). Therefore, students need to engage actively in their assessment process in order for the received feedback to be actually effective (Gedye 2010). This also means that 'good work', 'well done' and similar comments provided by teachers are not to be perceived as good-quality feedback, since they are not helpful for the improvement of students' work or skills, and are not considered as relevant (Gedye 2010), even though it is pleasant for students to receive such praise.

There are plenty of other factors for EFL teachers to consider before providing feedback. Some of these include the size of the classes taught, students' (un) motivation, and English proficiency level (Zaman, Azad 2012), to name just a few. This article focuses on some others, such as form, focus and scope, errors, source, timing, frequency, necessity, and feelings related to feedback in the English classroom. It reviews what other researchers and prior studies have revealed on the topic, and then presents a study carried out with Lithuanian EFL students that aimed to learn their preferences for feedback in relation to the same factors. The study added the factor of language, which is not covered in other studies. Due to the shift from monolingual to multilingual approaches in language teaching, the use of students' linguistic repertoires, including their mother tongue or home language(s) and other languages they can speak or understand, is seen as an asset (Lucas, Villegas 2013), and could be helpful in understanding feedback as well. The data were collected through an anonymous online questionnaire and processed using descriptive and thematic analysis.

Feedback: what to consider?

Feedback is usually provided with a certain purpose in mind. In the field of education, it is usually meant to be useful for students' learning and the improvement of particular skills. As Pedrosa-de-Jesus and Guerra (2018) note, feedback is seen as something with a strong effect on student achievements in the learning process. Since feedback is quite often provided in written form and on a written product (though not necessarily), it receives considerable attention from writing teachers who teach native, second or foreign language(s) (Saliu-Abdulahi et al. 2017). Such feedback originates in the process-oriented writing approach (also known as the process approach to writing) from the 1980s (Saliu-Abdulahi et al. 2017) and in formative assessment that aims to increase student knowledge, improve skills and performance, and encourage students to change their thinking or behaviour related to their learning (Shute 2008). In other words, feedback is an important part of any learning process (Hatziapostolou, Paraskakis 2010). The EFL context is not an exception.

In order to be useful, as Shute points out, feedback should be 'nonevaluative, supportive, timely, and specific' (2008, 153). Hatziapostolou and Paraskakis (2010) focus on similar criteria: feedback should be *timely*, motivational, individual/personal, detailed enough, and directly related to assessment criteria/learning outcomes. Gedye (2010) describes some of these criteria for feedback, as well as paying attention to time and relevance, but emphasises that feedback should also be understandable (the language in which it is provided could be important), so that students could actually improve their work rather than know its strengths and weaknesses. Only then would feedback be seen as good, but it needs to be 'delivered correctly' (Shute 2008, 154) first. That is, the way feedback is provided is also important. (Formative) Feedback can have a variety of forms, from marking correct/incorrect answers using codes, to extensive explanations, and it can be provided immediately or after some time (Shute 2008), even though timely feedback has a great advantage over delayed feedback. Shute writes about directive and facilitative feedback types: the former is more specific, as it allows students to know what they need to revise, while the latter type of feedback provides commentary, suggesting revision on their own (Shute 2008). As Pedrosa-de-Jesus and Guerra (2018) point out, teachers choose their feedback strategies based on the aim they wish to achieve, the meaning they intend to transfer, and other factors.

In terms of feedback *sources*, three types of feedback providers are usually distinguished: teacher feedback, peer feedback, and computerised feedback. The first is the most popular, and is provided on an assignment or product by a

teacher in a variety of forms, whereas in peer feedback students provide each other with feedback by commenting on their submitted work or work in progress (Tasdemir, Yalçın Arslan 2018). Computerised feedback is given in an electronic form using ICT or other tools (Tehrani 2018), such as AI-based ones that are becoming more popular every day. As technologies in education have become the norm rather than the exception, the types of feedback sometimes blur or get mixed, in the sense that feedback can, for instance, be provided by peers but by using ICT tools. At other times, peer feedback as such may not be as useful, as it may be perceived as a waste of precious class time, but in fact it can be a great source for learning in some activities, and also save time for teachers. However, the debate on who should provide feedback, teachers or students, seems to be never-ending (Zaman, Azad 2012). Indeed, all are useful in different ways, and may complement one another successfully.

Srichanyachon (2012) and Thi and Nikolov (2021) highlight the issue of high numbers of students in EFL classes, and how difficult it is for teachers to mark errors in every written paper and provide feedback this way, especially in the limited time they have. Yet teachers hope it will encourage their students' interest and engagement, and motivate them to be in control of their own learning (Srichanyachon 2012) and develop their skills, e.g. writing (Wulandari 2022). Alvira describes feedback as information that students receive about the improvement of their skills and how they can possibly achieve it (Alvira 2016). Therefore, teachers should provide feedback not only on a done product that the product approach focuses on, but also on the process through which a certain task is being done, because then students are able to gain a certain knowledge through it and learn (Wulandari 2022). To be more specific, in order to be effective, feedback should be about showing what can be done better based on what has already been done (Wulandari 2022). Only then can feedback help to improve the performance of both the teacher and the students (Klimova 2015), which means that feedback is about both teachers and students and their activities. Based on their feedback, teachers can know whether their teaching methodology is appropriate (Klimova 2015) and take the right decisions if it is not; but at the same time, they can see where their students have improved and the areas yet to be improved (Allman 2019). In addition, Zaman and Azad view feedback as a supportive platform for 'socioacademic interaction' (2012, 139), in which students can see if they are making any progress (Tasdemir, Yalçın Arslan 2018). Wahyuni (2017) adds that to provide students with feedback is as important as actually revising the work on which the feedback is given. If students are not given a chance to submit an improved piece of work, the provided feedback may be not motivating enough to take it into account. This is the reason why some

studies advocate for the process-oriented approach in the teaching of writing and feedback provision.

The provided feedback may also be *individual/personal* or *collective*. Tehrani (2018) points out that individual feedback has a great advantage over collective feedback, because the latter cannot address or serve the personal needs of the students who receive it, which makes it more likely that they would ignore such feedback. On the other hand, collective feedback may be useful for high-proficiency students who should be able to improve their (e.g. written) production or skills individually after receiving collective feedback. Furthermore, different strategies may be employed to provide feedback, so feedback may also be *direct* or *indirect*, both of which have advantages and disadvantages (Cheng et al. 2021; Cheng, Zhang 2022). Feedback is direct when a teacher provides correct answers (e.g. linguistic forms) when errors are spotted, and crosses out forms/structures that are unnecessary or includes them if they are missing; but feedback is indirect when a teacher only indicates errors in some way (e.g. by underlining, circling, using particular codes, etc.) without providing correct answers or solutions to any marked problems, in order to promote self-editing skills (Cheng et al. 2021; Srichanyachon 2012; Wahyuni 2017; Zaman, Azad 2012). The latter type of feedback may also provide other indicators, such as the number of errors in a particular line of a written piece, or types of errors (Wahyuni 2017). Which is better, direct or indirect feedback, is a good question. According to Srichanyachon (2012), some researchers argue that indirect feedback is more effective and brings more benefits to students in the long term, for instance in writing. Even though Cheng and Zhang claim that many studies on direct and indirect feedback have provided inconclusive findings, their study suggests that low-proficiency EFL learners should be given direct feedback to help them understand the correct forms, while advanced EFL students should be provided with indirect feedback in order to promote independent error correction (Cheng, Zhang 2022). Yet Wulandari (2022) points out that corrective feedback is the most common among teachers. For (formative) feedback to have a corrective function, feedback should provide information on whether the students' answer is correct or incorrect, and in the latter case provide the right answer in some chosen form (Shute 2008).

In feedback on EFL writing, teachers usually intend to *focus* on 'language, content, and organization' (Cheng et al. 2021, 3), but the scope of these three components can differ greatly, depending on the teacher. The teacher may choose to mark a great variety or all errors, which would mean that such feedback is unfocused/comprehensive (corrective), or correct only a few particular errors, which would mean that the feedback is focused/selective, since some

errors are left uncorrected and are disregarded (Cheng et al. 2021; Wahyuni 2017). According to Cheng et al. (2012), focused feedback, rather than comprehensive feedback, helps to avoid cognitive overload, especially among second or foreign-language learners, as feedback usually provides much information (Tehrani 2018). In addition, some research shows that, in the EFL context, teachers prefer focused feedback, since it seems to be more effective (Cheng et al. 2021) and time-saving. However, the study by Cheng and Zhang (2022) in the Chinese setting that involved teachers who were non-native and native speakers of English revealed that the former favoured comprehensive feedback, while the latter were in favour of focused feedback. In the same investigation, focused feedback received criticism too, because errors which are not corrected may be made again in students' future production (Cheng, Zhang 2022). Tasdemir and Yařın Arslan rightly (2018) note that the way feedback is administered depends on the amount that the teacher intends to provide. This may be related to the wishes and needs of either the teacher or the students, or both.

ESL and EFL teachers most frequently focus on grammar *errors* in their feedback on writing (Srichanyachon 2012). Thus, consciously or unconsciously, they pay attention to the form (Allman 2019; Zaman, Azad 2012) rather than the content in writing assignments. In other words, local rather than global feedback receives attention, but both EFL teachers who are native speakers and those who are non-native speakers agree that it should be just the opposite (Cheng, Zhang 2022). The reason why they believe this is that the focus on the form covers only some specific areas of writing, while the focus on the content helps to improve students' overall proficiency, which is more beneficial (Cheng, Zhang 2022). Nevertheless, previous studies suggest that teachers feel more comfortable giving feedback not on the content but on the form (Saidon et al. 2018). Such feedback 'includes grammar and mechanics, i.e. spelling, punctuation, vocabulary' (Zaman, Azad 2012, 140). As some studies indicate, it seems that most students prefer feedback on grammatical errors (Srichanyachon 2012; Wulandari 2022) as well, since 'error correction helps learners to achieve accuracy in the short term as well as in the long term' (Zaman, Azad 2012, 141), even though an emphasis on errors could demotivate students too (Klimova 2015). Other studies do not support this view, as they claim that students would like their teachers to focus on the content, organisation and ideas in their production (Srichanyachon 2012). Of course, a focus on both is a good idea, even though it is more challenging for teachers. This is why there has been a lot of debate about the two components in feedback in an EFL context (Saliu-Abdulahi et al. 2017). Cheng and Zhang (2022) think that in most cases teachers do not focus on one aspect, so their feedback includes at least several, e.g. language and organisation at the

same time. Nevertheless, according to Allman (2019), attention to meaning is more important for English learners, because the purpose of any language is to express meaning as well as possible, that is, in an understandable way, which in turn would demonstrate their communicative competence. Competence should be more important than grades or performance in a particular task, so 'low-threat objective feedback' is advisable (Allman 2019, 3). Furthermore, consistency is an important factor while providing effective feedback, because consistent feedback is 'stable, accurate, and trustworthy' (Allman 2019, 2), and students know what to expect. It is also specific, transparent, user-friendly, understandable, and leads to action (Allman 2019).

Feedback can also be positive or negative. The following definition explains how they differ in the context of writing tasks: 'The former refers to comments affirming that students' writing has met a standard such as "good grammar," "clear organization," and "the task is well achieved". In contrast, negative feedback is defined as teachers' comments, indicating that there are some errors, problems or weaknesses in students' writing' (Cheng, Zhang 2022, 2). Positive feedback gives students confidence and leads to positive reinforcement, since such feedback points out the strengths in a particular skill or competence, while negative feedback helps them understand the weaknesses (Cheng, Zhang 2022; Srichanyachon 2012). It is believed that a combination of both these types of feedback should be used in order to motivate students and embrace a growth mindset that helps their learning and improvement (Allman 2019; Wulandari 2022). Liu et al. state that feedback (positive or negative) can also be given in various forms which are less tangible, 'such as gestures, eye contact, facial expressions, etc. (2021, 110). This means that teachers' body language can also be a source of positive or negative feedback.

The next part of the paper will focus on the discussed aspects, with a specific focus on Lithuanian EFL students and their preferences for feedback.

Methodology

Prior studies on feedback in the EFL context can be divided into these groups: those that researched students' opinions towards teacher feedback, those that investigated teachers' perceptions of their own feedback, those that focused on both teacher and student views on feedback given and received, studies that researched innovative methods/tools to provide feedback, and studies that focused on peer-feedback, as perceived by students and/or their teachers. As students are those to whom feedback is addressed, it is meaningful to investigate their preferences and needs. This study will attempt to contribute to the field, and shed

some light by focusing on Lithuanian university students of English as a foreign language and their preferences of feedback.

The study took place in 2023. Its data were collected from one *instrument*: an online questionnaire on Google Forms that was designed and distributed to the respondents, Lithuanian EFL students studying upper-intermediate English as an obligatory study subject at Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas in Lithuania, run in a blended form. The questionnaire was partly based on a previous literature review and was divided into two parts. The first part gathered background information about the respondents, such as gender and age. The second section included 19 items distributed into nine main thematic strands, such as focus, language, form, errors, source, timing, frequency, necessity and feelings, which can be seen as paramount in feedback provision. The questionnaire was in English, and was completed on a voluntary basis by 51 (=N; 39 female and 12 male) students who were the *study participants*. A total of 56.9% of the respondents, that is, the majority, were 19 years old, 21.6% were 18, 7.8% were 20, while the rest of the sample (13.7%) were 22 or older. Most of them (98%) were in their first year, while others were in year two of their studies. Thus, the study findings will mostly reflect the preferences and needs (in terms of feedback) of first-year students from various study programmes studying English. The results were processed by using Ms Excel (for quantitative) and descriptive and thematic analysis (for qualitative data), as these *methods* were deemed appropriate for the context of this study.

Results and discussion

First of all, the students were asked to reflect on their preferences concerning the *focus* of feedback provided by their EFL teachers. A choice of nine options (Fig. 1) was provided, and the answers displayed a variety of preferences, but the greater part (37.3%) included all aspects, namely language, content, organisation, and work in progress. A focus on only work in progress was preferred by 13.7%. The same number chose only language and content. The desire for language-related feedback was expressed by only one student. Thus, even though the questionnaire was created with reference to EFL feedback, the findings indicate clearly that the English language should not be the sole focus of English classes.

Then the students were asked about their preferences for the *type* of feedback (Fig. 2). It is evident that the majority (84.3%) prefer both positive and negative feedback, reflecting their strengths and weaknesses, which means that their EFL teacher(s) should provide both.

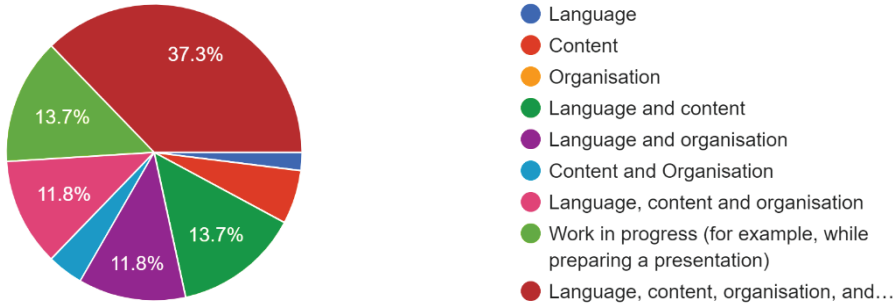


Figure 1. The preferred focus for feedback from EFL teachers

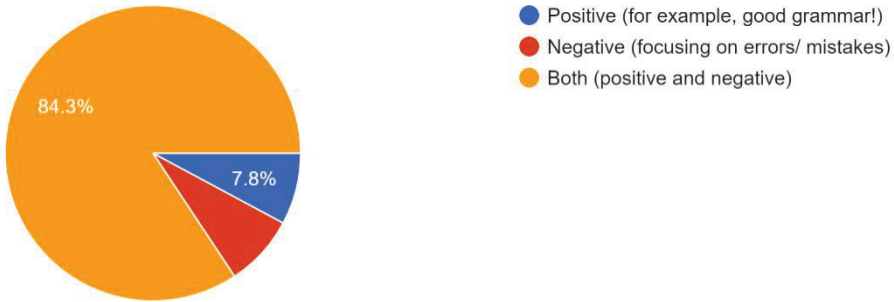


Figure 2. The focus on positive or negative feedback

However, 7.8% of the students would like to receive only positive feedback (focusing on praise and approval), and the same amount only negative feedback (focusing on errors). These may not illustrate where the students are in terms of their English skills, or help to improve them.

Even though the context of the study is related to the English classroom, the turn towards translanguaging rather than outdated monolingual practices in current teaching methodologies inspired the question on preferred language(s) for feedback provision (Fig. 3). The study reveals that for 41.2% of the respondents it is not important in which language feedback is provided, for 35.3% both English and Lithuanian are acceptable, 23.5% prefer only English, while 5.9% would like only Lithuanian to be used for feedback in EFL classes. The use of the native language may help to understand the feedback better and use it more effectively in order to improve in the future.

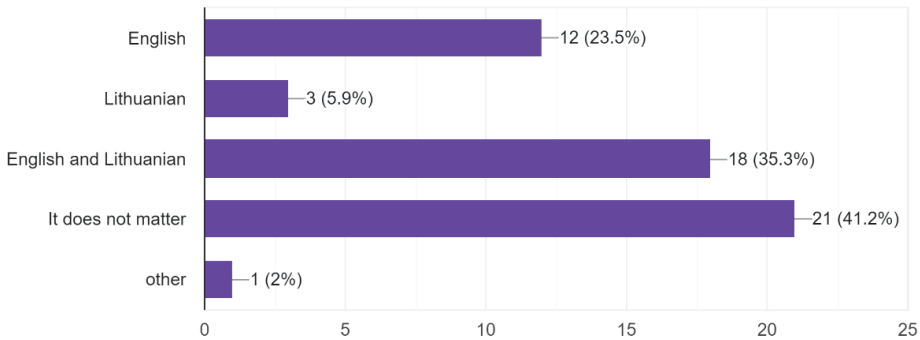


Figure 3. The language(s) of feedback

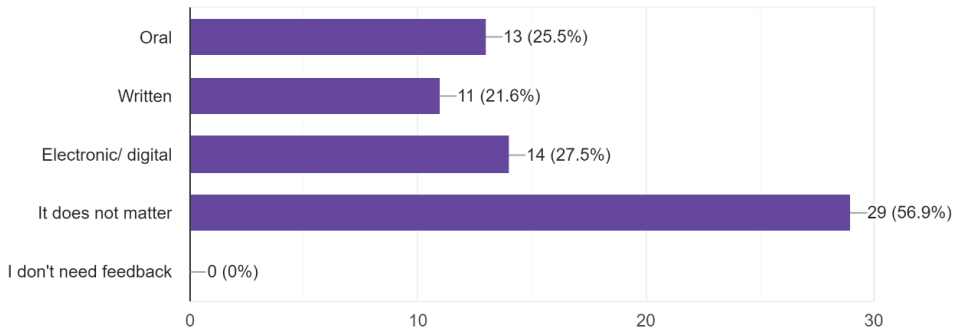


Figure 4. Form(s) of feedback

The *form* of the feedback was also taken into account in the questionnaire (Fig. 4). Like the previous question about preferred language(s), for 56.9% of respondents the form of the feedback is not important. However, 25.5% would prefer oral feedback, 21.6% written, while 27.5% would like to receive feedback in electronic/digital form. As the students were able to select as many forms as they needed, it seems that sometimes the preferred form of feedback may include several forms at the same time, for instance written and digital. On the other hand, it is surprising to see that even though the respondents can be referred to as digital natives, they prefer oral over digital feedback.

The following examples from open-ended answers reflect the reasons for preferring certain kinds of feedback (the students' language here and elsewhere was not corrected):

Oral, because we can discuss the problems properly and be on the same page (Student 7, subsequently S7).

Because all of them are necessary for learning, I would like to receive them all, depending on task that we did. If it was a writing activity, I would like to get written feedback, if it was a digital one, I would like to get digital feedback, and the same way with oral. If it was a speaking activity, I would like to hear my feedback after I did the task, or even on the spot (S10).

Thus, as pointed out by the students, their preferences might also differ depending on the task in question. Nevertheless, no matter what the task is, the majority (88.2%) prefer direct feedback (e.g. errors are spotted and corrected), while only 11.8% prefer indirect feedback (errors are circled/underlined, correct answers are not provided) (Fig. 5). This is not in line with the results obtained by Cheng and Zhang (2020), who revealed that direct feedback strategies are preferred by students of lower proficiency, while indirect feedback strategies are preferred by students of higher proficiency, such as upper-intermediate or advanced level.

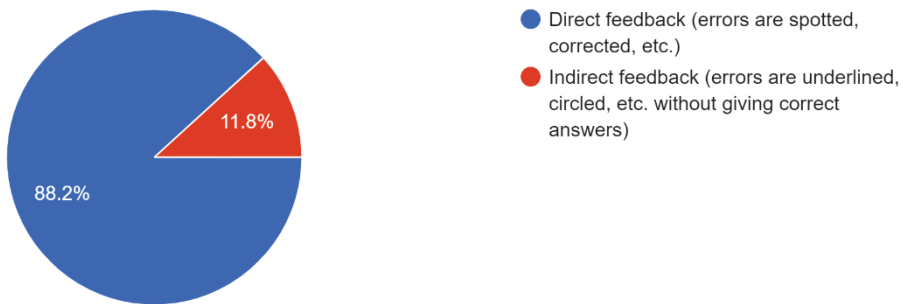


Figure 5. Direct or indirect feedback

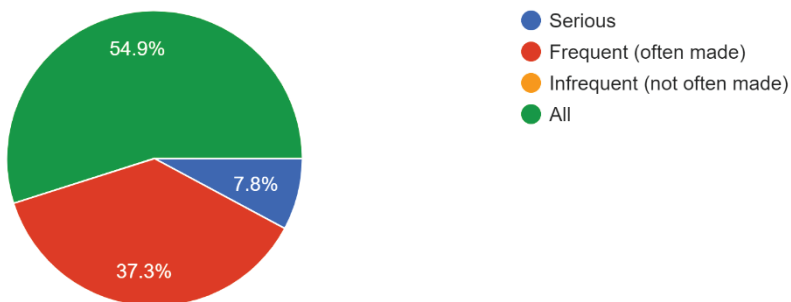


Figure 6. Types of error as the focus of feedback

In terms of *types of feedback*, general and detailed comments were equally preferred, as each option was chosen by 62.7% of the respondents. As they could choose more than one option, it seems that one of the two or both were chosen most frequently, while coded feedback was opted for only by 23.5%. However, individual feedback was preferred over collective feedback, as 62.7% chose the former, and 37.3% the latter. Moreover, more than half of all the study participants (54.9%) would like to receive feedback on all *errors* in their production and skills (which means that the scope of the errors should be wide), 37.3% preferred feedback on frequent errors, and 7.8% on serious errors (Fig. 6). In other words, unfocused/comprehensive feedback is preferred over focused/selective feedback. This may suggest that students wish to actually learn from their mistakes and not to make the same ones in the future, or the inability to correct mistakes individually.

It is interesting to point out that when asked about the *source(s)* of feedback, all the study participants (100%) indicated that the feedback provider should be their EFL teacher. Even though the questionnaire included other options, such as their peers and the student who filled in the questionnaire himself or herself, they were not chosen. This may mean that Lithuanian EFL students do not trust their peers as competent feedback providers, or they may believe that they lack the skills or proficiency in English, as some previous studies have suggested (e.g. Daukšaitė-Kolpakovienė, Mačianskienė 2023). When the study results were presented in an arranged face-to-face discussion with the study participants, this indeed turned out to be the case. In other words, EFL teachers are seen as the most competent and suitable sources of feedback.

As far as the *timing* of the feedback is concerned, the most popular choices were after the activity (49%) and straight after an error is made (45.1%). Other

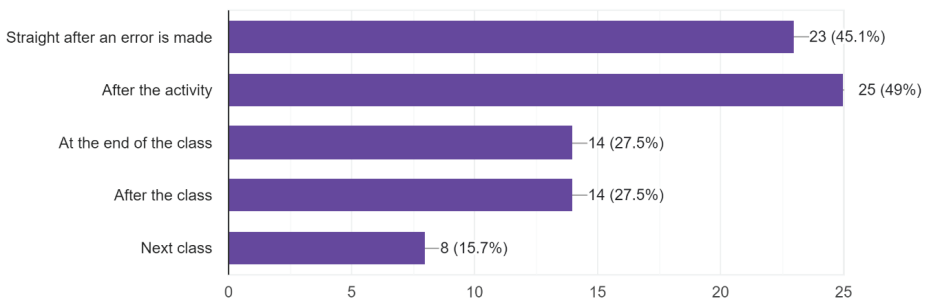


Figure 7. The time of the feedback

options, such as at the end of the class, after the class or the next class, were much less popular (Fig. 7).

Here are some explanations from the comments made by the students when they were asked to explain their preferences for the timing of feedback:

So that I could not forget what needs to be fixed, better to know immediately what's wrong in my speech or writing than later (S5).

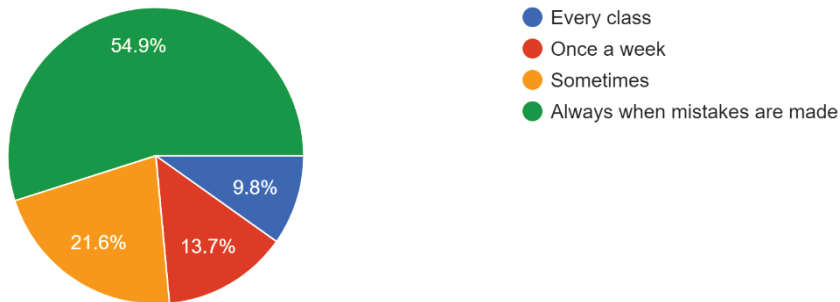
I will remember it better because I won't have time to make the mistake again (S6).

It's more relevant right after the error is made (S8).

The sooner I know about my mistake I just made, the better I can remember it (S9).

If I'm corrected immediately, I can learn from it faster and don't repeat my mistakes (S10).

As the thematic analysis shows, the students believe that if they receive feedback as soon as they make mistakes, they will remember better, which in turn will help them to avoid such mistakes. If feedback is provided later, it may appear not to be relevant anymore. The *frequency* of feedback was also considered, as it was very much related to timing. More than half of all the students who participated in the study indicated their preference to receive it always when mistakes are made, 21.6% would like to receive feedback sometimes, 13.7% once a week, and 9.8% every class (Fig. 8).



and 9.8% every class (Fig. 8).

Figure 8. The frequency of feedback

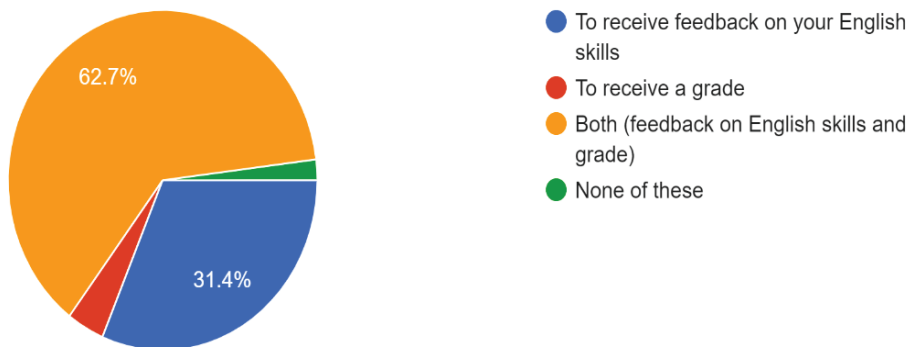
Here are some student explanations relating to their preferences for feedback frequency:

Always when mistakes are made, because I want to know what to avoid and learn from my mistakes (S15).

I always want to receive feedback when mistakes are made, because I want to mark them and try not to make them again (S20).

As the quantitative and qualitative data suggest, the feedback is always preferred when mistakes are made, in order to avoid such mistakes in the future. In other words, such frequent feedback is seen as efficient for student learning. This is in line with the results received through the next question, asking whether students ever use feedback for learning purposes. In fact, 94.1% admitted to using it, which proves how important feedback is in the EFL student learning process. As thematic grouping revealed, students' comments mostly mentioned the use of received feedback in the future, as students take notes about their mistakes and later revisit the notes, so that they can remember which constructions, grammar, etc. not to use (e.g. in their tests, mid-term tests, examinations, etc.).

When asked what is more important/*needed* for them, a substantial part of the study participants (62.7%) indicated both feedback on their English skills and grades, while 31.4% are interested only in feedback on their English skills. The rest of the sample is interested only in grades (3.9%), or none of these aspects



(2%). Thus, it seems that feedback is as much needed as a grade in the EFL classroom (Fig. 9).

Figure 9. The importance of feedback on English skills or grades

Here are some explanations provided by students as to why both feedback and grades are important to them:

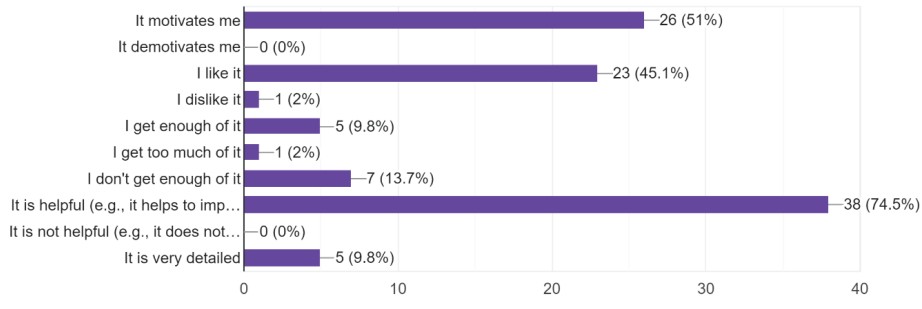
It is important to learn from your mistakes, but the grade matters too (S5).

As much as I want to learn, for me the grade is also important, as it might push my entire GPD (or whatever it's called) down (S8).

Grade is important for formal reasons, while the feedback is for improvement (S21).

As the answers suggest, feedback and grades are important to students for different reasons. They need feedback in order to improve and learn, while grades are needed for formal reasons at university.

At the end of the questionnaire (Fig. 10), the study participants were asked how they felt about the feedback they had received from their EFL teachers so far. Most of the student choices in this multiple choice-type question reflect



positive experience/*feelings* related to EFL teacher feedback: 74.5% said it was helpful, 51% said it was motivating, and 45.1% of students said they liked it. Only 2% did not like it, and 13.7% did not get enough of it. It is important to note that this experience is related to their studies of English prior to their studies at university level.

Figure 10. Feedback received from EFL teachers so far

Some comments made by students on the usefulness of EFL teacher feedback can be found below:

Because then I know that the teacher really cares about students and doesn't just mark your work without any feedback. And helps to learn better (S6).

I still remember mistakes I made, so it motivates me to do better (S11).

Feedback motivates me to learn from my mistakes, and it's also very helpful even if it's negative or positive (15).

Therefore, it is possible to state that EFL teachers' feedback is not only useful to students because it helps them to improve their different skills, but it also motivates them and shows that their teachers actually care for their students. This means it may help to build a rapport as well.

Conclusions

The results of this study indicate that Lithuanian university EFL students prefer and benefit from teacher feedback *focusing* on language, content, organisation, and work in progress. It should be both positive and negative, provided

in either English or Lithuanian or both *languages*, but the *form* (oral, written or digital) does not matter much. The feedback may be general or detailed (*types of feedback*), but individual feedback is preferred over collective feedback. All or the most frequently made mistakes (*types of errors*) should be spotted and corrected, which means the feedback should also be corrective. Mistakes should be corrected either after the activity or straight after they occur (*time*). This is in line with the students' preference for feedback always to be provided when a mistake is made. Thus, the *frequency* of feedback may depend on how often mistakes occur in an EFL classroom. Moreover, their EFL teacher should be the only *source* of feedback.

The study reveals that feedback is important to students as well as or as much as the grades they receive in their EFL classes, but for different reasons. Furthermore, the feedback received by the students until the time of the study had been motivating, which is in line with the studies by Srichanyachon (2012) and Tehrani (2018). It was helpful, and made them *feel* that their teachers cared. They liked the feedback and used it for learning purposes, meaning that their teachers' time spent on the provision of feedback was greatly appreciated and had a positive effect.

Even though it was limited in its participants and in the aspects of feedback, this study has contributed to the existing literature about feedback in EFL classes. It can be useful for teachers of English as a foreign or second language and other practitioners teaching languages, as it helps to see that it is a good idea to ask students about their expectations or needs. The knowledge of students' needs and preferences in terms of feedback in language classes may help their teachers to provide feedback that is more beneficial, and in turn make learning more guided and effective, leading to an overall improvement in the learning process. This knowledge may also lead to changes in the way EFL teachers plan their classes and methods, and the approaches they implement.

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UNIVERSITETO STUDENTŲ PAGEIDAUJAMAS GRĮŽTAMASIS RYŠYS ANGLŲ KAIP UŽSIENIO KALBOS PASKAITOSE

Santrauka

Ankstesni tyrimai anglų kaip užsienio kalbos mokymo kontekste gali būti skirstomi į šias grupes: aptariantys tik studentų nuomonę ar reakciją į gautą grįžtamąjį ryšį; aptariantys tik dėstytojų refleksijas apie jų pačių teikiamą grįžtamąjį ryšį; tyrimai, apimantys ir lyginantys dėstytojų ir studentų teikiamą ir gaunamą grįžtamąjį ryšį; inovatyvių metodų taikymą grįžtamajam ryšiui teikti, bendramokslių teikiamą grįžtamąjį ryšį ir kitus. Kadangi aukštajame moksle grįžtamasis ryšys yra skirtas studentams, prasminga ištirti jų pageidavimus ir poreikius, kurie minėtuose tyrimuose pamirštami.

Šiame atvejo tyrime dalyvavo vieno Lietuvos universiteto studentai, norint išsiaiškinti, kokiam grįžtamajam ryšiui jie teikia pirmenybę anglų kaip užsienio kalbos paskaitose. Trisdešimt aštuoni studentai pildė anoniminį klausimyną internete, o jį sudarė atvirieji ir uždarieji klausimai apie grįžtamojo ryšio formas, tipus, šaltinius, dažnį, laiką, klaidų tipus ir kitus svarbius aspektus, tokius kaip jausmai, susiję su gaunamu grįžtamoju ryšiu. Rezultatai atskleidė, kad studentai pageidauja dėstytojo teikiamo grįžtamojo ryšio, kai akcentuojama ne tik anglų kalba, kurios mokomasi, bet ir su ja susijęs turinys, taip pat atliekamų užduočių procesas. Toks grįžtamasis ryšys gali būti tiek teigiamas, tiek neigiamas, pateikiamas arba angliškai, arba lietuviškai. Formos ir tipai nėra svarbūs, bet individualus grįžtamasis ryšys, teikiamas kiekvienam studentui atskirai, mėgstamas labiau nei kolektyvinis. Visos ar dažniausiai daromos klaidos turi būti taisomos arba po atliktos užduoties, arba iškart, kai klaidos padaromos.

Tyrimas parodė, kad anglų kaip užsienio kalbos paskaitose gaunamas grįžtamasis ryšys studentams yra toks pat svarbus kaip ir pažymiai, bet dėl skirtingų priežasčių. Įdomu pažymėti, kad grįžtamasis ryšys apskritai laikomas naudingu, o dėl paties fakto, kad jį dėstytojas teikia, studentai jaučia, jog dėstytojas jais

rūpinasi. Taigi taip studentai gali mokytis iš savo klaidų, taip pat kuriamas ryšys tarp dėstytojų ir studentų.

Nors dalyvių imtis nedidelė, šis tyrimas gali būti naudingas ne tik anglų kaip užsienio kalbos mokytojams ir dėstytojams, bet ir kitų dalykų mokytojams ir dėstytojams, nes rodo, kaip svarbu klausti mokinių ir studentų apie jų poreikius ir ko jie tikisi iš vieno ar kito mokomojo dalyko. Šios žinios padėtų efektyviau teikti tokį grįžtamąjį ryšį, kuris būtų ne tik naudingas, bet ir padėtų gerinti mokymosi procesą. Mokytojai ir dėstytojai galėtų keisti ir pritaikyti savo mokymo metodus bei vertinimo formas, kad jie atitiktų lūkesčius.