Feedback Preferences and Psychological Perspectives on Student Engagement: Affective, Cognitive, and Behavioral Dimensions

Nan Zhang[1]

[1] College of Foreign Languages, Ocean University of China, Shandong, China
Correspondence: Nan Zhang, College of Foreign Languages, Ocean University of China, Shandong, China.

Abstract

Verbal instruction serves as the primary method by which teachers disseminate knowledge, while teacher feedback plays a significant role in ensuring the smooth progression of pedagogical activities. This study investigates teacher feedback language in high school English classrooms, aiming to explore feedback patterns and the preferences of both teachers and students. It also examines whether second language proficiency affects students' engagement with feedback across affective, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions. Observations of four teachers and online questionnaires administered to students revealed nine distinct feedback patterns. Teachers frequently employed elicitation to guide students in recognizing their own errors and tended to use positive feedback. Questionnaire results showed that students preferred positive feedback over negative feedback and expected feedback to be specific and targeted. The interview indicated that high- and low-level students exhibited differences in their affective, cognitive, and behavioral engagement with teacher feedback. This study contributes empirical evidence to teacher feedback language research and offers valuable insights for English language teaching.

Keywords: teacher feedback, feedback preference, high school English teaching

1. Introduction

Research on classroom teaching in the field of foreign language education began in the 1950s. Harris (1952) published an article titled "Discourse Analysis", marking the beginning of classroom discourse analysis. Following the mid-1970s, the Birmingham School, led by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975), made significant contributions by developing the Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF) model, which has had lasting influence. In the 1980s, advancements in second language acquisition theory provided increasingly reliable theoretical support for more in-depth studies of teacher feedback in classrooms. To date, discourse analysis has made substantial progress. Most of the articles published in China focus on corrective feedback, particularly on strategies for addressing students' spelling, pronunciation, and grammar mistakes during question responses (Wei, 2015; Zhang et al., 2019). In recent years, feedback patterns have become

increasingly diverse, and research has shifted toward examining the degree of student engagement in teacher feedback (Fan, 2019; Xie & Gao, 2022), as well as the "peer feedback" (Yu, 2013; Fan, 2019; Gu *et al.*, 2022). Feedback serves as a critical link between teaching and student learning. Educational reforms have primarily focused on modifying teaching methods and content, while the significance of classroom discourse, led by teachers as the facilitators of instruction, has often been overlooked. Additionally, since research on teacher feedback discourse in China began relatively recently and has primarily focused on colleges and middle schools, this study shifts attention to high school English classrooms to examine teacher feedback, aiming to contribute to the theoretical understanding of teacher feedback discourse.

2. Literature Review

The study of teacher feedback language must begin with a clear definition of the term and specific classification criteria, which also facilitate the coding process for classroom observation. This is followed by a review of the related research.

Regarding the definition, Long (1996), based on the interaction hypothesis, suggested that feedback is not only part of students' target language input but also plays a critical role in output, making it an indispensable element of teacher-student classroom interaction. Ur (2000), in terms of the evaluative function, defines teacher feedback as information given by the teacher to the students about their performance, which is intended to help the students to achieve their learning goals. Wiseman and Hunt (2013) further argued that teacher feedback, whether verbal or written, primarily serves to provide students with specific comments on their learning performance. They also suggested that feedback from behaviors, such as gestures, also belong to a kind of feedback language (non-verbal feedback). Zhao (1998), an early researcher of teacher discourse in China, argued that teacher feedback language can be classified into two categories, those directly related to the content of the classroom teaching, and those organized to guide the teaching and learning. Based on the aforementioned definitions and the objectives of this study, teacher feedback language is categorized as the verbal responses of teachers to students' learning performance.

Concerning the classification, Nunan (1991)

categorized teacher feedback into two types: positive and negative. Positive feedback refers to affirmative responses from teachers to students' answers and classroom performance, such as "Good job" or "Great" in response to students' contributions. This can be further categorized into three forms: simple positive feedback, elicited positive feedback, and positive feedback with add-ons. Simple positive feedback refers to the teacher's straightforward acknowledgement of the student's response. Elicited positive feedback involves the teacher's simple acknowledgement of the student's response, followed by a follow-up question about the response. Positive feedback with add-ons comprises the teacher's simple positive feedback of the student's response, accompanied by further information related to the question. Negative feedback refers to the teacher's rejection of the student's answer and the subsequent reaction and evaluation of the student's response to identify the error, i.e., error-correcting feedback (Lin & Zhou, 2011). Lyster and Ranta (1997) summarized six kinds of corrective feedback in a study on feedback: 1) explicit correction: provide students with the correct form directly; 2) recasts: reformulate students' responses with a rising tone to hope students could aware their errors by themselves; 3) clarification requests: ask students to repeat or adjust their response; 4) meta-linguistic feedback: find some problems in students' answers and then gives some comments or questions without giving the correct form explicitly; 5) elicitation: elicit the correct form directly by asking questions or further explaining the questions; 6) repetition: repeat students' inaccurate answers so that they can notice their mistakes.

Regarding the current state of research on teacher feedback language, in recent years, there has been a growing consensus on the importance of teacher feedback in L2 learning context, prompting extensive research into the topic. This research has evolved from initially categorizing feedback into content and form to more recently investigating its impact on the efficiency of teaching and learning. Well (1993) and Chaudron (1988) were among the early contributors who highlighted the pivotal role of feedback in fostering student engagement and language production. Building on this foundation, Brown (2002) and Martin and Sippel (2021) have further underscored the significance

of feedback in directing student learning and in the correction of mistakes. Gass and Mackey (2007) also advocated for the use of explicit corrections to improve language accuracy. In China, Zhao (1998) was a pioneer in studying teacher feedback, noting a tendency among teachers to favor positive feedback. This preference was supported by Chen and Wang (2021), who found that highly effective educators often use targeted positive feedback to enhance educational outcomes. Aligning with this sentiment, Zhou Xing and Zhou Yun (2002) proposed that such positive feedback is instrumental in elevating student motivation. The body of work culminates with Gu (2018) research, which, along with other studies, demonstrates the profound influence of teacher feedback on advancing students' linguistic capabilities and on enriching classroom interaction, thereby underscoring the need for a diverse and well-calibrated approach to feedback that can invigorate the learning environment.

Based on the previous research, we can see that more and more attention has been paid to the research on classroom feedback. At present, most of the research is carried out with scientific and empirical methods, which is different from the previous pure theoretical analysis and exposition. However, the research on feedback is still in the stage of development and not mature and still has deficiencies. For example, there is a lack of newer theories to guide them. Most of the theoretical basis is the results of foreign research in the last century. In addition, the research object is insufficient and has certain limitations. Moreover, previous studies have been inconsistent with the current trend of education reform. In this instance, it would be more valuable to go deep into the classroom and record the real teacher feedback for the purposes of such a study.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Questions

This study employed a mixed-methods approach, integrating both qualitative and quantitative analyses of classroom transcripts and semi-structured interviews. The objective was to categorize teachers' feedback and to compare students' engagement with feedback at different levels of language proficiency. Quantitative analysis was used to assess teachers' feedback preferences, while questionnaire data were employed to explore students' preferences for teacher feedback. This research aimed to answer the following three questions:

1) What are English teachers' preferences for feedback?

2) What are students' preferences for teacher feedback?

3) How does second language proficiency affect students' engagement with feedback across affective, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions?

3.2 Participants

The participants in this study were all from an ordinary high school in the central region of China.

Four classes were randomly selected for the experiment, and four English teachers from these four classes were used as teacher-participants. For confidentiality reasons, the four teachers are referred to as T1, T2, T3, and T4 (see Table 1). T1 and T2 were novice teachers with less than 10 years of teaching experience, while T3 and T4 were experienced teachers with more than 15 years of teaching experience. Table 1 provides an overview of the four teachers and the classes they teach, including their respective teaching experience.

The 136 students from these four classes were the student subjects for this experiment. What's more, to address the third research question, 20 high-level English learners and 20 low-level English learners were selected based on their midterm exam scores. The top 5 and bottom 5 students in each class in English were considered as high-level (HL) and low-level (LL) participants, respectively. HL participants scored above 130, while LL participants scored between 75 and 90, showing a significant difference between the two groups (t = 36.127, p < 0.001). None of them had any experience of going abroad.

Table 1. The Information of the Four Teachers in the Research

Teacher	Gender	Age	Teaching Years	Class/Grade
T1	Male	28	2	14/Senior 1
T2	Female	31	5	5/Senior 1
T3	Female	39	15	13/Senior 3

| T4 | Female | 42 | 20 | 8/Senior 2 |

common types of teacher feedback and developed a classroom feedback observation form (Table 2), dividing the feedback patterns into two categories: positive and negative, to analyze both teachers' and students' preferences.

3.3 Instruments

3.3.1 Classroom Observation Form

To facilitate observation, this study coded

Table 2. Coding of Teacher Feedback

Number	Pattern		Definition
1		Simple Positive Feedback	Teachers give simple acknowledgement of students' responses, such as "Good", "Well done", *etc*.
2	Positive Feedback	Elicited Positive Feedback	Teachers give a brief acknowledgement of the student's answer and then continues to ask questions in response to his or her answer.
3		Positive Feedback with Add-ons	Teachers give brief positive feedback on the student's response and then provide the student with more information related to the question.
4		Explicit Correction	Teachers directly negate student responses and explicitly give the correct answer, e.g., "You'd better say...", "It should be..." *etc.*
5		Recast	Instead of negating an incorrect response, teachers say the correct expression and use a higher pitch where the student has made a mistake in the hope that the student will realize the error and fix it himself or herself.
6		Clarification Request	When students give an incorrect answer, teachers ask the student to say the correct answer by saying "Pardon", or "What do you mean by...?" *etc.*, as a way of asking the student to say the correct answer.
7	Negative Feedback	Repetition	The teacher repeats the student's incorrect expression with a question in the hope that the student will realize the error.
8		Meta-Linguistic Feedback	When students make errors in their responses, teachers explain the errors directly in meta-language. For example, when students answer, "There are influence person who ...", the teacher prompts "Influential is an adjective".
9		Elicitation	When students answer incorrectly, teachers use the way of asking questions to elicit the correct expression, such as the students say "after an hour", the teacher asks "What article do we use before 'hour'?"

3.3.2 Questionnaire

A questionnaire comprising 15 questions was devised. The initial six questions were designed to investigate students' perceptions and attitudes towards teacher feedback, while the remaining nine questions focused on students' preferences for teacher feedback (positive and negative).

The 15 questions were presented in the form of semantic differential scales, with answer options consisting of a pair of antonymic adjectives and five interval ratings between them. Participants were required to mark the appropriate interval on the scale with an "√" according to their perceptions. Only one interval grade could be chosen for each question.

3.3.3 Semi-Structured Interview

This interview outline drew on the questions in the three-dimensional scale of Xie & Gao (2022), the interview outlines of Tan (2021) and Cheng and Liu (2022), with slight modifications. Questions 1 and 2 aimed to find out whether students at high and low levels of proficiency differed in their affective engagement with the feedback; questions 3 and 4 focused on cognitive engagement; and questions 5 and 6 focused on students' behavioral engagement.

The interviews were conducted face-to-face, in Chinese and recorded throughout. The actual interviews included, but were not limited to, these six questions. After the interviews were completed, the recording was transcribed into text.

3.4 Procedure

The initial stage of the research process was the creation of three key instruments: a classroom observation form, a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview outline. The observation form was developed by combining Nunan's (1991) and Lyster and Ranta's (1997) categorization. The questionnaire for this study was presented in the form of a semantic differential scale containing 15 questions, designed to understand students' preferences for teacher feedback. The semi-structured interview outline included six questions but was not limited to these.

The second step was observation. Two coders observed 12 English classes taught by four different teachers over a two-week period, with the aim of recording and completing the Classroom Feedback Observation Form. The Kappa consistency test demonstrated good coding reliability (Kappa = 0.985, $p < 0.001$).

The third step was to conduct a questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to investigate students' preferences for teachers' feedback phrases and consisted of 15 questions on a 5-point semantic differential scale, where options closer to 1 indicate greater consistency with the left-hand side of the word and options closer to 5 indicate greater consistency with the right-hand side of the word.

The fourth step was to conduct semi-structured interviews with the students. In order to obtain information that could not be directly observed from classroom observation. The aim was to ascertain the level of affective, cognitive and behavioral engagement with the teacher feedback between high-level students and low-level students.

4. Data Collection and Analyses

4.1 Classroom Observation

This study observed and recorded a total of 12 (45 minutes per class) classes, and the whole process lasted for two weeks. After the classroom observation form was well organized, this study used Excel 2010 statistical software to analyse the data to obtain a pie chart of the distribution of teacher feedback types, which not only shows the types of feedback used by these teachers, but also shows the preference of the teacher's feedback phrases.

4.2 Questionnaire

This study used "Wenjuanxing" (an online questionnaire-making platform: https://www.wjx.cn/) to generate a questionnaire and sent it to the online groups of the four classes. Students had three days to complete the questionnaire. A total of 136 questionnaires were collected. Microsoft Excel 2010 was then used to visualize the frequency distribution of feedback types.

A reliability analysis was conducted to test internal consistency (Cronbach's α = 0.877), indicating that the scale was internally consistent and highly reliable. This study subsequently compared the correlations and Cronbach's α before and after the deletion of a question item, which was used to determine whether the scale questions needed to be modified. The results showed that the correlations were all greater than 0.3 and the α after deleting the items were all less than the original ones, so there was no need to correct the questions.

Validity analyses were then conducted using exploratory factor analysis. Orthogonal rotation, employing principal component analysis and maximum variance rotation, was performed to determine the alignment between factors and study items. The results revealed a KMO value of 0.844 (> 0.7) and a significant Bartlett's sphericity test ($p < 0.001$), indicating that the sample data were suitable for factor analysis (Table 3).

Table 3. KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	0.844

Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1164.033
	df	105
	sig.	< 0.001

As illustrated in Table 4, the 15 items can be classified into three dimensions, collectively accounting for a cumulative variance contribution rate of 65.791% (> 60%). This suggests that a more optimal dimensionality can be achieved through such a division. The initial six items were designed to ascertain students' perceptions and attitudes towards teachers' feedback, while the subsequent nine were intended to elicit their preferences regarding this feedback. Each item corresponded to a specific type. The feedback type was also investigated, with items 7, 9 and 15 examining positive feedback and items 8, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14 analyzing negative feedback.

Table 4. Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	6.056	40.373	40.373	6.056	40.373	40.373	3.944	26.295	26.295
2	2.498	16.651	57.023	2.498	16.651	57.023	3.416	22.773	49.068
3	1.315	8.767	65.791	1.315	8.767	65.791	2.508	16.723	65.791
4	0.912	6.083	71.874						
5	0.712	4.748	76.621						
6	0.615	4.099	80.721						
7	0.564	3.757	84.478						
8	0.456	3.041	87.520						
9	0.392	2.611	90.130						
10	0.353	2.356	92.486						
11	0.324	2.157	94.644						
12	0.271	1.805	96.449						
13	0.250	1.664	98.113						
14	0.159	1.063	99.175						
15	0.124	0.825	100.000						

As indicated in Table 5, the factor loadings of all the items ranged from 0.407 to 0.922 and were aggregated into three factors. The three factors were named based on the content of the items contained in each factor. These were as follows: Students' Perception of and Attitudes toward Teachers' Feedback, Students' Preference for Teachers' Negative Feedback Types, and Students' Preference for Teachers' Positive Feedback Types. A total of 15 items were found to load above 0.4 on a single dimension, further indicating high validity.

Table 5. Rotated Component Matrix

Item	Component 1	Component 2	Component 3
Q3	0.922		
Q1	0.853		
Q2	0.772		

Item	Component 1	Component 2	Component 3
Q4	0.756		
Q5	0.665		
Q6	0.537		
Q11		0.822	
Q13		0.821	
Q10		0.817	
Q12		0.733	
Q8		0.685	
Q14		0.407	
Q15			0.840
Q7			0.828
Q9			0.500

4.3 Semi-Structured Interviews

The interview participants in this study were the top 5 and bottom 5 students (representing high-level and low-level English learners respectively) in the English midterm examination of the current semester in each class, and the students in the classes of the four teachers, T1, T2, T3 and T4, were coded as A, B, C, D respectively, e.g., the high level students in class A were coded as A1-A5, and the low level students were coded as A6-A10, and similarly for other classes, the interviews were arranged at the end of the week when students were free.

Considering the different English proficiency between high- and low-level students, all interviews were conducted in Chinese. After the interviews, the recordings were transcribed into text.

5. Results and Discussion

5.1 The Preference of Teachers Towards Teacher Feedback

Each type of teacher feedback is clearly recorded. The detailed information of each type is as following Table 6.

Table 6. The Detailed Information of Teacher Feedback Frequency

Type of feedback	Teacher/Lesson Frequency	T1 1	T1 2	T1 3	T2 1	T2 2	T2 3	T3 1	T3 2	T3 3	T4 1	T4 2	T4 3	Sum
Positive Feedback	Simple Positive Feedback	17	14	16	20	7	13	23	18	18	14	13	10	183
	Elicited Positive Feedback	2	3	0	5	2	3	3	1	2	2	4	2	29
	Positive Feedback with Add-ons	7	3	3	3	1	3	2	3	5	7	0	3	40
Sum of positive feedback patterns		**26**	**20**	**19**	**28**	**10**	**19**	**28**	**22**	**25**	**23**	**17**	**15**	**252**
Negative Feedback	Explicit Correction	4	0	1	1	1	0	0	3	2	1	2	0	15
	Recast	1	1	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	6	3	2	17
	Clarification Request	2	0	0	2	0	3	1	1	0	1	1	1	12
	Repetition	4	0	4	2	1	0	1	0	2	2	2	1	19
	Meta-Linguistic Feedback	13	7	14	12	6	11	10	14	10	10	9	11	127
	Elicitation	6	2	3	10	2	1	3	3	3	8	8	5	54
Sum of negative feedback patterns		**30**	**10**	**24**	**28**	**11**	**15**	**15**	**21**	**17**	**28**	**25**	**20**	**244**

Sum of all feedback patterns	56 30 43 56 21 34 43 43 42 51 42 35 496

The table above shows that the number of feedback per teacher ranged from 21 to 56 per lesson, which suggests that the English teachers interacted with their students frequently. Students were engaged in classroom interactions and were able to receive feedback from their teachers about their performance. To explore the characteristics of feedback distribution, the frequencies and their proportions were presented in a table (Table 7).

Table 7. The Frequency and Distribution of Teacher Feedback

Feedback Pattern		Frequency	Distribution
Positive Feedback	Simple Positive Feedback	183	36.90%
	Elicited Positive Feedback	29	5.85%
	Positive Feedback with Add-ons	40	8.06%
Sum of positive feedback		**252**	**50.80%**
Negative Feedback	Explicit Correction	15	3.02%
	Recast	17	3.43%
	Clarification Request	12	2.42%
	Repetition	19	3.83%
	Meta-Linguistic Feedback	127	25.60%
	Elicitation	54	10.89%
Sum of negative feedback		**244**	**49.19%**

As shown in Table 7, teachers used "simple positive feedback" most frequently with 36.90%, followed by "meta-linguistic feedback" with 25.60 % and "elicitation" with 10.89%. Meta-linguistic feedback came in third with 10.89%. The least used type was "clarification request" at 2.42%, followed by "explicit correction" at 3.02%. The total frequency of positive feedback was 252 times, accounting for 50.80 % of the total, which is almost equal to the total frequency of negative feedback, which was 244 times, accounting for 49.19% of the total. In order to show the distribution of teachers' feedback types and teachers' preferences more intuitively, the data in Table 7 was transformed into Figure 1.
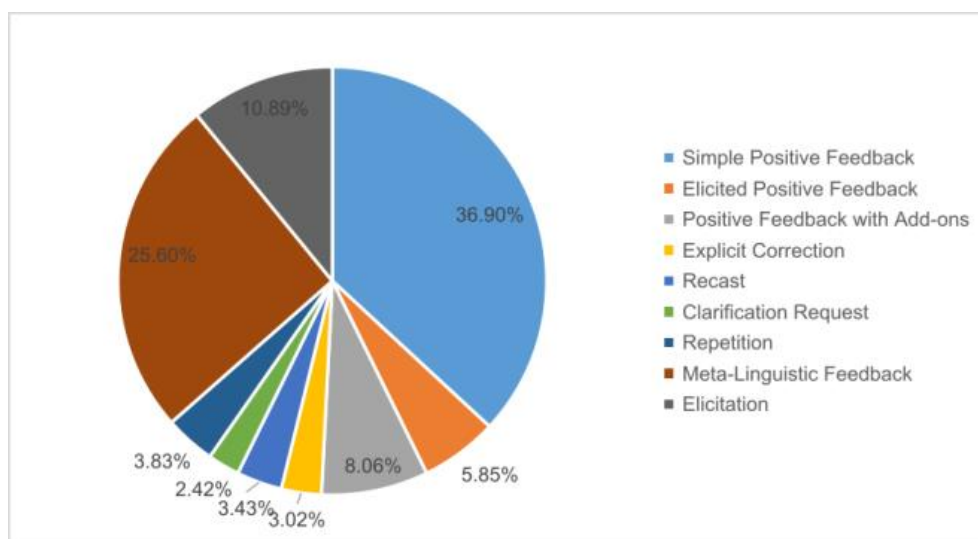

Figure 1. The Distribution of Each Type of Teacher Feedback

Teachers tend to use more direct forms of feedback, such as "simple positive feedback" and "meta-linguistic feedback". This preference may stem from the need for efficiency in the classroom. Additionally, teachers frequently used "elicitation" feedback to help students identify their mistakes. This approach likely reflects the fact that most students' answers were close to being correct, and with minimal guidance, they were able to self-correct. The ratio of positive to negative feedback used by each teacher is shown in Table 8.

Table 8. The Frequency and Distribution of Feedback by Each Teacher

	T1		T2		T3		T4		
	F	D	F	D	F	D	F	D	Total
Positive Feedback	65	50.39%	57	51.35%	75	58.59%	55	95.31%	50.81%
Negative Feedback	64	49.61%	54	48.65%	53	41.41%	73	4.69%	49.19%

The table above showed that the frequency of positive and negative feedback used by each teacher was almost equal, but overall positive feedback was used slightly more than negative feedback. This indicates that the classroom feedback of the four teachers was more balanced in terms of both positive and negative feedback, without praising students, or correcting their mistakes to the extent of undermining the students' self-confidence. This contrasts with Zhang's (2017) findings, which observed that positive feedback was used more frequently than negative feedback. This suggested that the teachers were continuously engaged in refining their pedagogical discourse.

5.2 The Preference of Students Towards Teacher Feedback

The questionnaire comprised 15 questions. The initial six pertained to students' perceptions and attitudes towards feedback, while the subsequent nine focused on students' preference for specific feedback type. Table 9 illustrates the results.

Table 9. Results of the Questionnaire

Item	Point 1	Point 2	Point 3	Point 4	Point 5
1	3.68%[a]	0.00%	11.03%	16.91%	68.38%
2	2.94%	13.24%	13.24%	25.74%	44.85%
3	1.47%	2.94%	5.88%	14.71%	75.00%
4	1.62%	1.44%	13.21%	19.85%	63.88%
5	0.74%	2.21%	4.41%	22.06%	70.59%
6	0.74%	1.47%	17.65%	27.21%	52.94%
7	2.94%	11.76%	22.79%	29.41%	33.09%
8	1.47%	0.74%	7.35%	22.79%	67.65%
9	7.41%	37.65%	27.12%	10.38%	17.44%
10	65.24%	26.71%	5.47%	2.06%	0.52%
11	1.47%	4.41%	19.12%	25.74%	49.26%
12	2.21%	9.56%	20.59%	19.85%	47.79%
13	0.74%	0.74%	8.09%	27.21%	63.24%
14	10.94%	35.50%	36.91%	10.21%	7.44%
15	0.74%	0.74%	2.94%	25.00%	70.59%

In the questionnaire, the closer the option is to 1, the more it corresponds to the word on the left, and the closer the option is to 5, the more it corresponds to the word on the right. The above

table illustrates that 3.68% of the 136 students selected the response of "1" and 68.38% selected the response of "5" for question 1. This indicates that over half of the students believe that it is highly important for teachers to provide feedback on students' classroom performance, which suggests a favourable attitude towards such feedback. In response to question 2, 14.71% of the students selected option 4 and 75.00% selected option 5. This indicates that nearly 90% of the students believe that their English teachers frequently provide feedback to students. This question explored students' perceptions and teachers' awareness of feedback. Question 3 indicates that the majority of students (25.74% chose "4" and 44.85% chose "5") perceive that positive feedback from teachers has a beneficial impact on their confidence in English learning. In contrast to Question 3, Questions 4 and 6 seek to ascertain students' attitudes towards teachers' negative feedback. As evidenced in the preceding table, a majority of students (80.15%) believe that excessive negative feedback from teachers will have a detrimental impact on students. This suggests that students may lack a comprehensive understanding of the nuances of negative feedback and perceive it totally negated. In question 5, 22.06% of respondents selected option "4", while 70.59% selected option "5". This suggests that the teacher-student interaction in the classroom is effective. In conclusion, the results of the first six questions indicate that students showed a more favorable attitude toward positive feedback from teachers but demonstrated limited understanding of negative feedback.

The final nine questions, each corresponding to a specific feedback type, focus on students' preferences. To avoid order effects, positive feedback and negative feedback preference questions were out of order, with questions 7, 9, and 15 investigating positive feedback and questions 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14 investigating negative feedback. In terms of positive feedback, question 9 revealed that 7.41% of the 136 students selected option 1, 37.65% chose option 2, 10.38% opted for option 4, and 17.44% selected option 5. This indicates that approximately half of the students believe that teachers should provide feedback on students' correct answers in simple terms, while nearly 30% of the students believe that the feedback should be detailed. This suggests that students'

preference for concise or detailed feedback is subject to individual variation. The preference for concise feedback may be attributed to the efficiency of the classroom setting or to the fact that students may not perceive the need to dedicate significant time to exploring simple questions. Conversely, the preference for detailed feedback may be associated with a desire to gain deeper insights into complex questions. In regard to question 15, 70.59% of respondents selected option 5, while 25.00% chose option 4. This indicates that 95.59% of the students believe that it is essential for the teacher to pose further questions to students who have provided correct responses, in addition to verifying the accuracy of their answers. In comparison to question 9, a greater proportion of students (over 90%) expressed a preference for follow-up questions on the answers, while only approximately 40% indicated a preference for simple feedback. This suggests that students generally preferred "elicited positive feedback" to "simple positive feedback". As illustrated in Question 7, 2.94% of respondents selected option 1, 11.76 % selected option 2, 29.41% selected option 4. A total of 33.09% of respondents selected option 5, indicating that the majority of students believe that providing additional information can enhance students' motivation to learn English. However, only 60% of the students expressed a preference for supplementing or expanding the feedback, compared to more than 90% of the students who indicated a preference for follow-up questions (Question 15). The survey data for these three questions collectively indicate that the majority of students have a positive attitude towards positive feedback. Among the three types of positive feedback, students indicated a preference for "elicited positive feedback".

In terms of negative feedback, question 10 demonstrated that 65.24 % of the 136 students surveyed selected the first option, 26.71 % chose the second option, and only 0.52 % opted for the fifth option. This indicated that 91.95% of the students were opposed to the notion that "when a student provides an incorrect response, teacher should directly reject the student's answer and rectify the error." This demonstrates that students are averse to being "explicitly corrected" when they provide an incorrect response, whether due to concerns about self-esteem or the desire to facilitate further

learning. In regard to question 8, 67.65% of respondents selected option 5, 22.79% selected option 4, and only 1.47% selected option 1. This indicates that 90.44% of students have a positive attitude towards teachers explicitly correcting students' mistakes in meta-language. The discrepancy in student attitudes towards "meta-linguistic feedback" and "explicit correction" can be attributed to the fact that the former does not directly provide the correct answer, but rather offers an explanation of the error. Similarly, question 11 demonstrated that over 70% of students preferred the teacher to repeat the incorrect portion of their responses to prompt them to correct it. Students preferred the feedback of repeating to explicitly correcting. In response to question 12, where the teacher provided the correct answer directly, over 70% of students indicated support for that the teacher rephrased the correct form in a rising tone. This is in contrast to what is referred to as an "explicit correction," which is a direct negation. The feedback language of "recast" serves to inform students of the correct answer while simultaneously protecting their self-esteem. With regard to question 13, the attitudes of the students were more discernible, with 63.24% selecting the option 5 and 27.21% selecting the option 4. This indicates that 90% of the students believed that teacher does not interrupt immediately but guides the students to say the correct answer through various ways, which is beneficial for English learning. Consequently, the students prefer the method of "elicitation", which encourages independent thinking and avoids instilling a so-called "standard answer" in the students. The data pertaining to question 14 indicates that students' attitudes towards the feedback of "clarification request" are more nuanced, with nearly 40% of the students offering opinions on the use of phrases such as "Sorry" or "Pardon" by teachers.

In conclusion, the three positive feedback questions demonstrated that the majority of students expressed a favourable opinion. Among the three types of positive feedback, students indicated a preference for "elicited positive feedback". The nine questions investigating negative feedback indicated that the majority of students expressed a preference for "meta-linguistic feedback" over "explicit correction", which they found unhelpful. Additionally, they demonstrated a preference for

"repetition" and "recast", which they perceived as relatively euphemistic, over other forms of negative feedback. Additionally, "elicitation" was preferred by over 90% of the students for it can stimulate students' thinking. However, their attitude towards "clarification request" was more ambiguous.

5.3 Students' Engagement with Teacher Feedback Across the Affective, Cognitive and Behavioral Dimensions

5.3.1 Affective Engagement

This interview revealed that both HL and LL students anticipated receiving feedback (both positive and negative) from their teachers during classroom interactions. Both groups emphasized the value and importance of feedback. This positive sentiment was reflected in their responses to questions 1 and 2 of the interview outline, which included statements such as "it is very helpful," "I trust my teacher," and "feedback is important for learning." As student B2 (HL) stated in the interview:

"Feedback indicates that my efforts are acknowledged and respected by the teacher."

Similarly, C7 students (LP) said:

"Teacher's feedback is more reliable than other sources."

Both groups of students exhibited a affirmative attitude towards teachers' feedback, which they perceived as a means of identifying their shortcomings and offering guidance for improvement. However, the affective responses of high- and low-level students differed when listening to the feedback. The affective responses of high-level students to teacher feedback were predominantly positive. This was evidenced by the use of positive terms such as "inspired" and "gained much" in their interview quotes. The positive affective responses were attributed to the general belief that the feedback would facilitate future improvements in their English language skills. For instance, Student B3 (HL) indicated that her teacher had identified an expression error after she responded to a question, and that she had subsequently avoided similar mistakes.

In contrast, only two of the 20 low-level students exhibited similar positive affective responses to those observed in the high-level students. The majority of LL students displayed negative affective reactions, including feelings of anxiety, fear, and guilt. For instance, when receiving

feedback, student C10 (LL) stated:

"When presenting what I considered to be the optimal response, I received lots of corrections, which led to feelings of frustration and guilt."

In conclusion, both high-level and low-level students placed a high value on feedback statements. However, their affective responses to feedback differed. High-level students generally exhibited positive feelings when listening to teachers' feedback. In contrast, low-level students' affective responses to feedback were more negative.

5.3.2 Cognitive Engagement

Both high- and low-level students indicated that if they were sufficiently courageous to respond to questions and engage actively with their teachers, they would be able to be provided targeted feedback. However, there were notable differences between these two groups of students in their comprehension of feedback, which manifested in their responses to question 3 of the interview. Higher-level students exhibited greater ease in understanding the majority of the questions pertaining to feedback language. Student A4 (HL) exemplified this by stating:

"Teacher's feedback prompts an immediate response when an answer is incorrect, allowing for a swift correction."

Student D3 (HL) said as follows:

"Teacher does not typically provide the correct answer immediately; rather, she employs a variety of methods, such as posing follow-up questions or changing her tone, which helps me to comprehend her."

In contrast to the high-level students, the low-level students found it challenging to comprehend when the teacher did not provide the correct answer directly but instead employed an indirect approach to make students recognize the correct answer independently. As Student A8 (LL) observed:

"On occasion, my teacher alters their vocal tone to indicate that an error has been made, but I still can't figure out."

Student C7 (LL) expressed a similar view:

"I couldn't think of the right answer without the teacher saying it, and I felt embarrassed and wasted the class's time."

This illustrates that students at different proficiency levels have distinct perceptions of

feedback. Those at the higher level of learning are able to comprehend the teacher's feedback with relative ease, implement the necessary corrections, and perceive it as beneficial for the teacher to refrain from directly providing the correct answer. In contrast, low-level students found the feedback challenging to comprehend and expressed a preference for more detailed guidance or even the direct provision of the correct answer. This suggests that high-level students preferred the feedback types of "elicitation" and "repetition", while low-level students preferred "meta-linguistic feedback" and "explicit correction". This is consistent with Brown's (2009) questionnaire finding: higher-level learners prefer implicit error-correcting feedback strategies, whereas lower-level learners prefer direct and explicit error-correcting strategies.

With a view to cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies, the two groups of students exhibited notable divergences, as evidenced by their responses to question 4 of the interview. The high-level students employed a range of cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies in their response to the feedback. These included the categorization of the feedback and an observation of the types of mistakes that were most commonly made to avoid in subsequent learning. In contrast, low-level students seldom employ cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies, for example, merely restating the correct answer without a following review.

The above findings elucidate the distinction between high- and low-level students' cognitive engagement with teacher feedback. High-level students exhibited greater cognitive engagement with teacher feedback, utilizing a diverse array of cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies to address teacher feedback. In contrast, low-level students demonstrated lesser engagement, employing a limited number of cognition and meta-cognition, and did not demonstrate effective attention to teacher feedback.

5.3.3 Behavioral Engagement

The results of the interview for questions 5 and 6 indicated a discrepancy between high- and low-level students in terms of their behavioral engagement with teacher feedback. As high-level learners who were highly cognitively engaged, they were also behaviorally active. They responded instantly after hearing the feedback in class and had a higher accuracy rate

in correcting their errors. Furthermore, they were able to use a variety of after-class channels to find the answers to the feedback that they did not thoroughly understand in class. The responses of student B2 (HL) represented the majority of the high-level students' thoughts.

"*As long as I can understand the feedback, I can correct my answers and seldom make the same mistakes in the future. Sometimes the knowledge is too complicated, I will ask my classmates or teachers again after class, and I can also go home check on the Internet.*"

In contrast, students at the lower levels showed a more perfunctory behavioral engagement with teacher feedback. Only one student indicated that he or she would seek assistance from classmates or reference books, while others expressed that they were preoccupied with other learning tasks and lacked interest in furthering their English proficiency. Some students admitted to repeating the same mistakes despite receiving feedback.

To sum up, students at the higher levels of academic achievement demonstrate a greater behavioral engagement with the feedback than their those at the lower levels. HL students utilized external resources to enhance their acquisition, whereas students at the lower levels do not employ specific strategies.

In conclusion, this interview indicated that high- and low-level students exhibited differences in their affective, cognitive, and behavioral engagement with teacher feedback language. Firstly, there were notable differences in the affective responses of the two groups to listening to feedback. High-level students exhibited a predominantly positive affective state, whereas low-level students displayed a more negative affective disposition. Secondly, high-level students demonstrated greater cognitive engagement with the teacher's feedback, while low-level students exhibited lower levels of cognitive engagement. Finally, high-level students showed a greater behavioral engagement than their low-level peers.

6. Conclusion

This study revealed that, in terms of positive feedback, students exhibited a preference for "elicited positive feedback", while teachers employed "simple positive feedback" with the greatest frequency. This finding aligns with the argument put forth by Brophy (1981), which suggests that general, or overly simplistic

positive feedback may not yield optimal outcomes. This indicates that high school English teachers should prioritize the use of "elicited positive feedback" and pose follow-up questions to improve students' learning effectiveness.

With regard to negative feedback, the majority of students preferred "meta-linguistic feedback" that didn't provide answers directly, as well as "repetition" and "recast", both of which are more euphemistic than "explicit error correction". Many students (over 90%) expressed a preference for feedback that encourages critical thinking and avoids the imposition of so-called "standard answers". This study found that teachers did employ "meta-linguistic feedback" and "elicitation" with greater frequency, yet the utilization of "repetition" and "recast" remained relatively limited. Teachers may appropriately increase their use of the euphemistic ones and decrease the use of explicit ones when using corrective feedback to safeguard students' self-esteem. Prior research has demonstrated that positive feedback can stimulate students' interest in learning. Consequently, positive feedback is more conducive to promoting students' progress than negative feedback (Nunan, 1991).

With respect to the students' engagement with the feedback, significant differences were observed in the affective, cognitive and behavioral engagement between the high- and low-level students. In terms of the affective dimension, the responses of high-level students were predominantly positive, whereas those of low-level students were largely negative. This indicates that high school teachers should prioritize the affective needs. Regarding the cognitive dimension, high-level students showed a greater capacity to engage with the teacher's feedback through the utilization of diverse cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies. In contrast, low-level students exhibited a comparatively limited engagement, with a notable absence of cognition and meta-cognition. It can be posited that high school teachers should guide low-level students in learning strategies, with the aim of fostering positive learning habits and high engagement. About the behavioral dimension, high-level students make use of external resources with a view to enhancing their knowledge. In contrast, low-level students do not employ specific strategies to review teacher feedback. High

school teachers may wish to consider pairing high-level with low-level students to achieve a mutual help and enhance the behavioral engagement of low-level students.

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