

The Importance of Feedback in the Teaching and Learning Process of English

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Abstract-Feedback has become one of the key factors in supporting the success of English teaching and learning processes. This study aims to analyze the impact of feedback on the effectiveness of English learning in Indonesia. Using a descriptive quantitative method, data were collected from students and teachers involved in the English teaching and learning process. The results indicate that feedback significantly improves students' understanding, learning motivation, and communication skills. Furthermore, the combination of direct and indirect feedback also plays an important role in enhancing students' language abilities. This study concludes that feedback not only helps students identify their weaknesses but also encourages them to achieve better results in English learning. Recommendations are proposed to teachers and educational institutions to improve the quality and frequency of feedback to support learning objectives.

Keywords: Feedback, Teaching and Learning Process, English, Learning Motivation, Communication Skills.

1. INTRODUCTION

Feedback in the teaching and learning process of English at the junior high school level, particularly in Grade VII at SMPN 1 Kisaran, plays a crucial role in shaping students' attitudes and motivation to learn. In addition to being an evaluation tool, feedback also serves to enhance students' understanding and language skills. Well-delivered feedback can bridge the gap in improving the quality of learning and students' academic performance. However, in practice, feedback delivery often encounters various obstacles that hinder its effectiveness, making it difficult to achieve learning objectives optimally.

One of the main issues in providing feedback is its tendency to be too general, making it difficult for students to understand. Teachers often give comments such as "not quite right" or "study more" without clearly explaining what is wrong and how to fix it. As a result, students do not know the specific mistakes they have made or the concrete steps needed to improve. This situation not only confuses students but also lowers their confidence in completing subsequent tasks. Without clear guidance, the learning process becomes less effective.

Moreover, an imbalance between positive and negative feedback poses another challenge in the learning process. Teachers tend to focus more on students' mistakes without acknowledging their efforts and achievements. For example, when a student successfully pronounces a sentence with the correct intonation or uses proper grammar, this achievement often goes unnoticed. Conversely, minor errors, such as slight mispronunciations, receive greater attention. This pattern can create a tense classroom atmosphere and decrease students' motivation to learn. In the long run, students may feel that their efforts are unappreciated, leading them to become reluctant to actively participate in learning.

Students' responses to feedback also vary depending on how it is delivered. Positive feedback, when given sincerely and specifically, can boost students' enthusiasm and confidence. For instance, if a teacher says, "Your pronunciation is good, but try to adjust the intonation to sound more natural," the student will feel appreciated and motivated to improve. On the other hand, negative feedback that is conveyed improperly or in an unsupportive tone often makes students feel uncomfortable. They may feel embarrassed or lose confidence, which ultimately hinders their participation in learning. This phenomenon indicates that a teacher's approach to providing feedback significantly impacts the classroom environment and overall learning outcomes.

To address these challenges, teachers must provide specific, constructive, and balanced feedback. Specific feedback explains students' mistakes in detail and provides clear guidance for improvement. For example, instead of saying, "This verb is wrong," a teacher can clarify, "You used the past tense here, but the sentence requires the present tense. Try changing 'went' to 'go'." With such detailed explanations, students can better understand their mistakes and learn how to correct them.

Balancing positive and negative feedback is equally important. Teachers should not only focus on students' errors but also appreciate their efforts and accomplishments. For example, when a student attempts to answer a question, even if the answer is incorrect, a teacher might say, "I appreciate your effort in trying. Your answer is close to correct, but let's work on the sentence structure." This approach helps students feel valued and motivated to keep learning.

Another strategy is enhancing teachers' communication skills in delivering feedback. Teachers should use a supportive and empathetic tone to ensure students feel encouraged in their learning process. Harsh or sarcastic

feedback should be avoided, as it can have negative psychological effects on students. Instead, a friendly and empathetic tone can foster a positive and comfortable classroom atmosphere. This, in turn, encourages students to accept feedback openly and motivates them to improve.

Additionally, involving students in the feedback process is a crucial step. Teachers can encourage students to reflect on their own work before receiving feedback. For example, a teacher might ask, "Which part of your writing do you think is well done, and which part needs improvement?" This approach makes students feel valued and included in the learning process while also helping them develop self-evaluation skills, which are essential for learning.

Through effective feedback, teachers not only help students enhance their academic abilities but also contribute to their emotional development. Well-delivered feedback can build students' confidence, motivation, and engagement in learning. Ultimately, efforts to create an optimal learning process can be achieved holistically and sustainably. Thus, teachers play a strategic role in fostering a supportive and inclusive learning environment, ensuring that educational goals are maximally attained.

2. METHODS

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach to explore and understand the importance of feedback in the English teaching and learning process for seventh-grade students at SMPN 1 Kisaran. This approach was chosen because it allows the researcher to explore the experiences and perceptions of both students and teachers regarding the feedback provided during the learning process.

3. RESULTS

3.1 Students' Response to Positive Feedback

1. Experimental Class (VII A):

The majority of students showed a significant positive response to positive feedback. About 85% of students felt motivated to actively participate in class activities after receiving praise and recognition from the teacher. Some students also reported feeling more confident when attempting to answer questions, even if they were not always correct.

2. Control Class (VII B):

Students' responses to positive feedback were more varied. About 60% of students felt motivated, but the rest believed that praise was not always relevant or was only given to certain students. This indicates that the way feedback is provided affects students' perceptions.

3.2 Students' Response to Negative Feedback

1. Experimental Class (VII A):

The response to negative feedback was more constructive. About 70% of students felt that the criticism helped them understand their mistakes and correct them. Teachers in this class tended to provide personal feedback with clear guidance, so students did not feel pressured.

2. Control Class (VII B):

Students' responses were more defensive or passive. About 50% of students reported feeling uncomfortable with how the criticism was delivered, especially when given in front of the class without clear guidance. This decreased student participation in subsequent discussions.

3.3 Student Engagement

1. Experimental Class (VII A):

Observations showed that on average, 75% of students actively participated in each learning session, such as answering questions, discussing, and asking for clarification.

2. Control Class (VII B):

Student engagement was lower, with an average of only 55% of students participating actively. Some students appeared passive after receiving criticism or not being rewarded for their efforts.

3.4 Learning Outcomes

1. Experimental Class (VII A)

Evaluation results showed an average increase of 15% in students' scores after two weeks of learning with structured positive feedback intervention.

2. Control Class (VII B):

Evaluation results showed an increase of 8%, lower compared to the experimental class.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study conducted in the seventh-grade class at SMPN 1 Kisaran, it can be concluded that providing feedback has a significant impact on students' motivation, engagement, and learning outcomes in English language learning. The study findings show that: Positive feedback has a very beneficial impact on students, especially in increasing their self-confidence and motivation to learn. Students in the experimental class who received structured positive feedback were more active in participating, whether in answering questions, engaging in discussions, or seeking clarification on material they had not fully understood. Specific and relevant praise made students feel appreciated and motivated to try harder. Negative feedback, although often perceived as less pleasant by students, still plays an important role in helping them recognize mistakes and correct them. However, the study results show that the manner in which criticism is delivered greatly affects students' acceptance. Criticism delivered constructively and personally is more accepted by students compared to general criticism or that given in front of other students. The experimental class, which received structured feedback intervention, showed more significant improvements in motivation, engagement, and learning outcomes compared to the control class. The average student score in the experimental class increased by 15%, while in the control class, it only increased by 8%. This highlights the importance of a well-designed feedback approach to support the learning process. Effective feedback not only impacts students' academic aspects but also creates a supportive and enjoyable learning environment. When students feel supported by the teacher, they are more confident in participating and expressing their opinions. Overall, this study demonstrates that providing balanced feedback, both positive and negative, with an emphasis on constructiveness and relevance, is key to enhancing the quality of English language learning.

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