



MODERN PROBLEMS IN EDUCATION AND THEIR SCIENTIFIC
SOLUTIONS
CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK AND ITS EFFECT ON GRAMMAR
ACQUISITION

Abdulkhakimova Mohlaroy Abduqosim qizi

Fergana State University, Bachelor's degree student

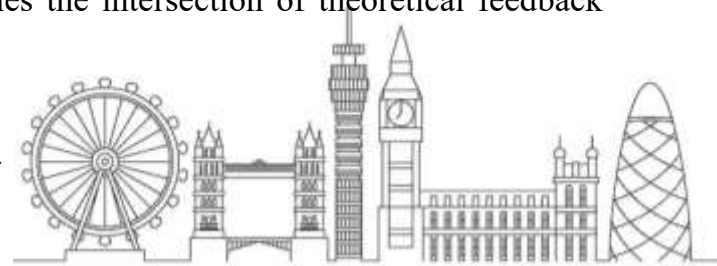
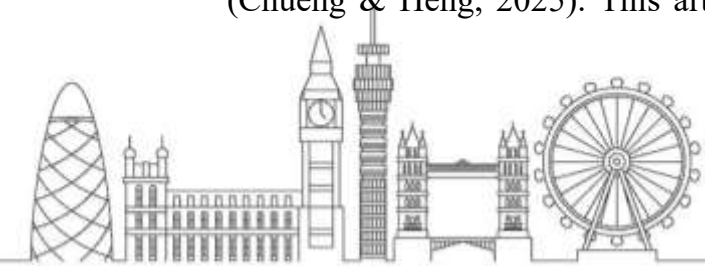
Abstract: *Corrective feedback serves as a fundamental mechanism in the acquisition of second language grammar, acting as a bridge between learner output and linguistic accuracy. This article explores the efficacy of various feedback strategies, specifically focusing on the timing of interventions, the role of scaffolding, and the impact of cognitive engagement. By synthesizing longitudinal data on immediate and delayed feedback alongside studies of middle school learners and broader pedagogical frameworks, it becomes evident that while the presence of feedback is universally beneficial, its effectiveness is modulated by several factors. These include the complexity of the grammatical structure, the specific timing of the correction, and the level of learner autonomy. The findings suggest that strategic feedback not only assists in the immediate correction of errors but also fosters long-term retention, metacognitive awareness, and the development of underlying linguistic competence.*

Keywords: *corrective feedback, second language acquisition, grammar acquisition, instructional scaffolding, immediate vs. delayed feedback, learner autonomy, ZPD, noticing hypothesis, EFL, pedagogy, cognitive engagement, recasts and prompts*

Introduction

In the contemporary landscape of global communication, the mastery of English grammar remains a primary objective for millions of learners (Alidemaj, 2024). As students navigate the complexities of a new language, the occurrence of errors is an inevitable and essential part of the developmental process. However, the manner in which educators address these errors—known as corrective feedback—is a subject of significant pedagogical debate. Corrective feedback is broadly defined as any reaction to a learner's utterance that contains an error, intended to signal that a linguistic problem has occurred. Within the framework of second language acquisition (SLA), this intervention is thought to promote "noticing," a cognitive process where learners recognize the gap between their current interlanguage and the target language (Schmidt, 2001).

The role of corrective feedback is particularly critical in formal classroom settings where exposure to the target language is often limited. Researchers have long sought to determine whether feedback should be provided the moment an error occurs or if a delayed approach allows for better cognitive processing (Li, Zhu, & Ellis, 2016). Furthermore, effective feedback is increasingly viewed as a form of instructional scaffolding, where support is tailored to the learner's current abilities and gradually withdrawn to promote independence (Chuang & Heng, 2025). This article examines the intersection of theoretical feedback





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models and their practical outcomes, emphasizing that the strategic application of correction is vital for successful grammar acquisition.

The Impact of Feedback Timing and Cognitive Processing

Experimental evidence suggests that the timing of corrective feedback plays a pivotal role in how effectively a new grammatical structure is internalized. Research involving learners performing communicative tasks indicates that providing feedback immediately following an error can be highly beneficial for the acquisition of complex structures, such as the English past passive (Li, Zhu, & Ellis, 2016). Immediate feedback allows learners to connect the correction directly to their communicative intent, reinforcing the correct grammatical form while the linguistic context is still fresh in their minds. Interestingly, while delayed feedback also shows positive results for long-term retention, immediate prompts and recasts often lead to more significant gains in the short term, suggesting that the "online" processing of errors provides a unique cognitive advantage (Li, Zhu, & Ellis, 2016). However, the effectiveness of feedback is also contingent upon the type of grammatical error being addressed. Some researchers argue that "recasts"—where the teacher implicitly corrects the student's error—are most effective for simple morphological traits, whereas "prompts"—which push the student to self-correct—are more beneficial for complex syntactic rules (Lyster & Ranta, 1997). This push toward self-correction is essential because it requires the learner to retrieve linguistic knowledge from their long-term memory, a process that strengthens the neural pathways associated with that grammatical rule.

Scaffolding, Autonomy, and Regional Contexts

The effectiveness of corrective feedback is also shaped by the specific demographic and geographic context of the learners. In regions like Gjilan, Kosova, studies of middle school students have highlighted that the consistent application of feedback is a dominant factor in improving grammatical accuracy (Alidemaj, 2024). For younger learners, feedback acts as a necessary guidepost that helps them navigate the transition from basic communication to formal linguistic precision. The social and educational environment, including the widespread availability of private language schools, creates a high-stakes atmosphere where corrective feedback is a necessary component of academic success.

Furthermore, when feedback is structured as a scaffold, it strengthens the learner's self-efficacy and promotes metacognitive awareness (Chueng & Heng, 2025). By using strategic questioning to lead students toward self-correction, educators encourage a higher level of cognitive engagement compared to simply providing the correct answer. This method aligns with the broader goals of language education, which seek to develop independent learners who can monitor their own speech and writing. This transition from external correction to internal self-regulation is the ultimate goal of the "gradual release of responsibility" model (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983). While the complexity of certain grammatical structures may occasionally require direct intervention, modern pedagogy





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favors a balanced approach that utilizes both immediate and delayed strategies to address varying student needs.

Conclusion

Corrective feedback is an indispensable element of the language learning process, serving as a catalyst for the accurate acquisition of English grammar. The evidence suggests that there is no universal solution; rather, the success of feedback depends on a careful balance of timing, scaffolding, and the nature of the linguistic target. Immediate feedback appears particularly effective for mastering complex structures during communicative tasks, while the general application of feedback in school environments provides the necessary foundation for long-term development. Furthermore, when feedback is integrated into a scaffolding framework, it not only corrects errors but also empowers learners to take greater responsibility for their own progress. By refining how and when feedback is delivered, educators can significantly enhance the efficiency of language instruction and support learners in achieving high levels of proficiency.

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