

FEEDBACK IS LEARNERS RIGHT: A STUDY ON ASSAMESE MEDIUM STUDENTS

Dr. Ataur Rahman
Associate Professor
Department of English
Dhemaji Commerce College
District: Dhemaji, Assam
Email: ataurdhemaji99@gmail.com

Abstract:

Feedback is an integral part of the teaching-learning process. It provides a foundation for positive student teacher relationship and teacher can determine the learning preference of individual students. This paper aims to study how the English teachers of Assamese Medium secondary schools of Assam provides feedback to the learners. Self-prepared Observation Schedule, and separate Questionnaires for teachers and Students have been used for data collection in thirty schools from 720 students. It was found that teachers did not adopt any innovative method of providing feedback either due to ignorance or due to paucity of time. Self-correction/Peer correction were not practiced. Giving homework, too, was not a regular practice.

Introduction:

Feedback is information that is given to the learner about his or her performance of a learning task, usually with the objective of improving the learner's performance.

Feedback has two main distinguishable components: assessment and correction. In assessment, the learner is simply informed how well or poorly he/she has performed. This generally includes marks, percentage, a learner has acquired, or No/Fair type comment at the end of a written assignment. While in correction, some specific information is provided on aspects of the learner's performance: through explanation, or provision of better or other alternatives or through elicitation of these from the learner.

Objectives:

Feedback and evaluation are an integral part of the whole teaching-learning process. So, under this dimension enquiry was made (i) role of the teacher in providing feedback to students (ii) techniques adopted by the teachers in giving feedback to students (iii) whether teachers get ample time for providing feedback.

Methodology:

Method:

Descriptive survey method has been used in the study

Area of study:

The study has been conducted in class IX in selected Assamese medium secondary schools of Dhemaji district in Assam.

Population: The population of the study comprised of-

- (a) all the Assamese medium secondary Sched schools in Dhemaji having class IX and X
- (b) all the students of class IX of the Assamese4 Medium secondary schools in Dhemaji district
- (c) all the teachers teaching English in class IX and X in the Assamese Medium secondary schools in Dhemaji district

Sample:

- (a) Thirty school, selected from five Development Blocks and Two Town Committees of Dhemaji district of Assam
- (b) Seven hundred and twenty students, both male and female, studying in class IX
- (c) all the teachers teaching English in class IX and X from the selected schools.

Tools: Three tools have been used in the study-

- (i) Self-prepared Classroom observation Schedule
- (ii) (ii) Self- prepared Questionnaire for teachers
- (iii) (iii) Self- prepared Questionnaire for students

Analysis and Discussion:

Data provided below in Table 1 is from Teachers Questionnaire

Table 1

Get time enough for students correction in classroom (%)	<i>Always</i> 60%	<i>Sometimes</i> 2%	<i>Rarely</i> 32%	<i>Never</i> 6%
Provide scope for self-correction (%)	<i>Always</i> 14%	<i>Sometimes</i> 40%	<i>Rarely</i> 40%	<i>Never</i> 6%
Provide scope for Peer correction / Feedback (%)	<i>Always</i> 60%	<i>Sometimes</i> 20%	<i>Rarely</i> 10%	<i>Never</i> 10%
Techniques of providing feedback (%)	<i>By marking</i> 40%	<i>Through a generalized talk to the class</i> 16%	<i>Individual counselling and comments</i> 38%	<i>Informally and indirectly in talks etc.</i> 6%

The Table above shows 60% teachers could always spare time for correcting students written tasks, 32% teachers could rarely spare time, 2% teachers said they sometimes got time while 6% teachers said they could never spare time for correcting students tasks in classroom.

Regarding self-correction by students, 40% teachers said that they sometimes provided scope to students for self-correction of written tasks, equal number of teachers (40%) responded that they rarely could provide scope for self-correction. 14% teachers stated that they always gave scope to students for self-correction. As the table shows, 6% teachers could never spare time for correction of students' tasks in classroom.

As regard to peer correction/feedback, 60% teachers claimed that they always adopted, 20% adopted sometimes, 10% teachers said that they provided opportunity for peer correction / feedback rarely. Another 10% teachers admitted that they never adopted this technique of correction.

On the query of the techniques teachers adopted for providing feedback, 40% teachers responded that they provided feedback by marking, almost equal number (38%) told about giving feedback through individual counselling and comments. 16% said they provided feedback through a generalised talk to the class and another 6% teachers talked about providing feedback informally and indirectly through talks.

Data provided in Table 2 is from Students Questionnaire. This aspect of the Students Questionnaire was intended to know the feedback mechanism adopted by the teachers.

Table 2

Teachers ask student to correct the written tasks themselves		
Always %	Sometimes %	Never %
3.01	31.63	65.36

Table 2 shows 65.36% students responded that their teachers never asked for self-correction of the written tasks. 31.63% students responded to sometimes and a poor fraction of students; 3.01% students said teachers always asked students for self-correction of written tasks.

Data provided in Table 3 is obtained from the Observation Schedule

Table 3

Sl. No.	Issues	Yes (%)	No (%)	Partial (%)
1	Teacher finds time for correction of written tasks	33.33	66.66	-
2	Teacher corrects the written tasks in class	30	70	-
3	Teacher involves students in self-correction	-	100	-
4	Teacher involves students in peer-correction	-	100	-
5	Teacher monitors and give instant feedback in case of group and pair activity		100	
6	Any innovative strategy for providing feedback	Comments		
		No		

Analysis of Table No. 3 shows 66.66% teachers did not find time for correction of written tasks in class and another 70% teachers never corrected students' written work. 3.33% teachers could spare time for correction of written tasks and 30% teachers corrected the written tasks of students in class. None of the teachers (100%) asked students for self-correction and peer-correction. As there was no group and pair work there was no question of the teacher giving instant feedback. No innovative technique or strategy of the teacher for providing feedback to learners was found in the study.

Most of the teachers provided feedback by marking on students exercise books while others gave individual counselling and comments. This is in line with **Rajkhowa's (2012)** findings that teachers provided feedback to students by marking followed by a generalised talk, individual counselling and comments.

Nearly seventy percent of teachers did not find time for correction of students written tasks in class. In such a situation the teacher could go for Self-correction/Peer-correction technique. But teachers never asked students to self-correct the written tasks as alleged by students. Though a large number of teachers responded to adapting peer correction/feedback always, contradictory response was obtained from nearly ninety percent students that teachers never engaged students to correct class tasks. The researcher's too, did not find teachers adopting self and peer correction mechanism. Probably teachers of the surveyed schools lacked knowledge of feedback mechanism or did not consider the students eligible for correcting their own work or their classmates.

Giving homework was a regular practice found among most of the teachers but correction of the home assignments was infrequent, as challenged by nearly seventy percent students. This finding of the researcher agrees **Walia (1981)** findings; "some 98.24 per cent of teachers claimed that they gave regular home assignments and corrected each one of them but contrary to this, 82.46 per cent of students contested

this claim". **Azhar (2004)** found it was impossible on the part of the teachers to check homework. However, **Arshad (2009)** in his study observed teachers have shown competency in giving and evaluating home assignments while **Bhattacharya (1984)** observed that teachers did not give assignments, evaluate students' progress. **Rajkhwa (2012)** reported that majority of the teachers never gave homework's. Teachers who did not correct homework deprived students from getting feedback. One of the reasons for not evaluating home assignments could be heavy workload. At the same time, wilful negligence on the part of the teacher can't be ignored.

The investigator in his observation found 66.66% of teachers did not find time for correction of students written tasks in class. When teachers do not find time to correct the written tasks, it is wise to ask students to correct themselves or employ Peer correction technique. The study found, teachers never asked them to correct the written tasks themselves as alleged by 65.36% of students, on the other hand, 31.63% students replied sometimes teachers asked them to correct the written tasks themselves. Regarding peer feedback, 60% of the teachers responded to adapting peer correction/feedback always. Contradictory response was obtained from 86.90% students that teachers never engaged advanced students to correct class tasks, only 1.05% students said their teachers always took help of advanced students in correcting class activity. The authenticity of the teacher's response is doubtful because the researcher, too, in his observation found none of the teacher adopted Self / Peer correction mechanism.

The teacher is considered the appropriate authority to provide feedback to a student's performance because he/she is the *insider* in the classroom; he/she has far greater experience and understanding of the situation than anyone else. He/she has deep insight into the working of the different aspects in the classroom. Secondly, as the teacher is right there on-site all the time and so he is the most qualified one for providing feedback. This belief of the teacher very often makes them feel that students are not ready, they are not 'experts' or they don't know enough, they may be able to judge certain aspects but not others, they will not be objective, etc. Some of these apprehensions may be true. It is pertinent to note here is that, have we given our students a chance to have a say in matters that relate to them!

Even though good number of teachers traditionally follows the system of giving homework, there are few who corrects students home assignments.

The study showed 69.22% students responded to teachers correcting their Homeworks only sometimes. On the other hand, 30.78% students said their teachers always corrected the Home works. This findings of the researcher supports **Walia, A, (1981)** findings "some 98.24 per cent of teachers claimed that they gave regular home assignments and corrected each one of them but contrary to this, 82.46 per cent of students contested this claim."

Some of the teachers who did not correct homework deprived students from getting feedback. Seen this issue from teachers perspectives; most of the teachers were burdened with heavy workload and so could not spare time for checking homework. At the same time, wilful negligence on the part of the teacher could not be ignored. A number of studies provide support for a correlation between homework and achievement. Hence, assigning homework should be part of any class. Homework allows the students to revisit the lesson in their own time that can work to build their understanding and retention. Furthermore, it also encourages students to take responsibility for their own learning thereby promoting self-learning.

A good aspect in providing feedback was also observed; 59.18% students said teachers always corrected students pronunciation instantly. It is to be noted here that, as discussed earlier, teachers own pronunciation was found to be full of errors. In such a situation, the learners of Assamese medium secondary schools will learn English but not correctly.

Some of the earlier researches support the idea of assigning homework and self-correction. “The main goal is to have the students revisit the class to reinforce the material. Students need to be exposed to new words multiple times before the meaning is remembered. In fact, some studies have found that learners need to have up to sixteen meaningful encounters with a new word just to establish it in the student’s vocabulary bank (Paul Nation 2001 cited in Lightbown & Spada 2006:98).

Conclusion:

Involving the learners in the evaluation process or more specifically in giving feedback itself is a way of enabling the learners to do well. By actively participating in the teaching-learning-evaluation process, learners will gradually internalize the nuances of the evaluation system and will be able to interpret the results/feedback in a way that is meaningful to them which would enable them to become better learners. As a result of this, they will be able to participate in the feedback mechanism better, instead of having it imposed on them by experts/outsideers.

REFERENCES:

1. Koul, Lokesh 2009. *Methodology of Educational Research*. New Delhi: Vikash Publishing House Pvt. Ltd.
2. Cohen, Louis, Lawrence Manion and Keith Marrison 2007. *Research Methods in Education*. New York: Routledge.
3. Kothari, C.R. 2007. *Research Methodology Methods and Techniques*. New Delhi: New Age International Publishers (P) Ltd.

