

A Review on Corrective Feedback Research of the Recent 20 Years

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Abstract: Corrective Feedback is a hot topic in the field of second language acquisition in recent years. Its research is helpful for second language learners to acquire target language successfully. Based on the research results at home and abroad in the past two decades, this paper firstly analyzes the definition of Corrective Feedback, including the definition and classification of Corrective Feedback. Secondly, it introduces the research content of Corrective Feedback at home and abroad, mainly including the overall effect of Corrective Feedback on second language acquisition, the effectiveness of different classification of feedback and the four main factors affecting the effect of Corrective Feedback. Finally, the current development trend of Corrective Feedback research is summarized and concluded.

Keywords: Corrective Feedback, Second language acquisition, Classification, Effectiveness.

1. Introduction

In the process of second language acquisition, learners will inevitably make various mistakes, and how to deal with these mistakes is a practical problem. In order to develop students' language skills so that students can become proficient in the target language, appropriate feedback should be provided in the interaction regarding the student's use of the language. Teachers need to provide positive feedback if the learner is able to use the language correctly, and negative feedback if the learner makes mistakes in using the language (Vanpatten & Benati, 2015), or Corrective Feedback.

Teachers' Corrective Feedback is a reactive teaching strategy that occurs when they discover errors (Campillo, 2003). The importance of providing feedback is to provide learners with the opportunity to correct their language during interaction, which effectively facilitates the acquisition of second language skills (Mashrah, 2017). Feedback is not possible without learning, and it is a way for teachers to evaluate student learning. At the same time, after basic learning is gained, it tends to have a powerful effect on student performance (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Corrective Feedback is inseparable from foreign language classroom teaching, so the research and exploration of Corrective Feedback is an important part of second language acquisition and English teaching.

In the past two decades, domestic and foreign scholars have achieved fruitful results in the study of Corrective Feedback. Although many studies are inconclusive, it fully proves that feedback is a complex phenomenon with multiple functions (Chaudron, 1988), and more confirmatory and pioneering studies are needed. This paper mainly reviews the research on Corrective Feedback at home and abroad in the past 20 years from the aspects of definition, classification, related research and development trend, so as to provide reference for relevant research.

2. Corrective Feedback Definition and Classification

2.1. Definition

Ur (1996) pointed out that in English teaching, feedback

usually refers to the information returned to students about their completion of a learning task in order to improve and enhance their learning. Chaudron (1998) pointed out that "Corrective Feedback" only refers to the behavior of teachers trying to tell learners about wrong facts, which may not cause obvious responses from students, or it may take great efforts to make students correct, but real correction can successfully change the rules of students' interlanguage and reduce mistakes in future learning. Lightbown and Spada (1999) define Corrective Feedback as any indication to students that they are using the target language incorrectly. Gass (1997) argued that without direct or frequent feedback on corrective in the teacher's speech input, learners would not be able to detect the difference between their interlanguage and the target language, which might lead to fossilization.

2.2. Classification

The classification of feedback has always been the focus of research on Corrective Feedback. According to Ellis et al. (2006), explicit corrective feedback refers to an explicit error made by the learner, while implicit corrective feedback refers to a failure to explicitly state the error. This dichotomy of feedback is problematic (Yang & Lyster, 2010). Recasting can also be explicit, depending on the context and the characteristics of recasting, such as the target language, language length, and number of variations (Pu & Wang, 2010). However, researchers generally believe that recasting tends to be implicit, while explicit corrective and metalinguistic feedback tend to be explicit. Corrective Feedback, which mainly includes recasting, clarification and elicitation, is classified as implicit. In order to standardize the research, Ellis (2009) proposed two main classification criteria: (1) Explicit feedback vs Implicit feedback; (2) Input-providing vs Output-prompting: Input providing refers to providing the correct language form to the learner when input, and output-prompting is trying to induce the learner to self-correction. Zhang and Wang (2015) summarized and supplemented the division proposed by predecessors, and the classification, definitions and examples of Corrective Feedback are shown in Table 1 and Table 2:

Table 1. Classification of Corrective Feedback

	Implicit	Explicit
Input-providing	Recast	Explicit correction
Output-prompting	Clarification request	Metalinguistic explanation
		Elicitation Paralinguistic signal
		Interrupt

Table 2. Definitions and examples of different classification of Corrective Feedback

Feedback classification	Definition	Example
1. Recast	A partial or complete paraphrase of one or more incorrect expressions by the learner.	L: I went shopping two times. T: You've been. You've been shopping twice by yourself?
2. Repetition	By emphasizing the repetition of learner discourse, errors are highlighted.	L: I will talked to you. T: I will TALKED to you. L: I ll talk to you.
3. Clarification request	Ask learners to interpret their words by asking questions.	L: What do you spend with your wife? T: What?
4. Explicit correction	Identify errors and provide corrections.	L: On June. T: Not on June, In June. We say, "It will start in June."
5. Elicitation	The speaker asks questions to induce the learner to paraphrase.	L: I'll go outside if it will not rain. T: I'll go outside if it.....?
6. Paralinguistic signal	Use gestures or facial expressions to point out the learner's mistakes.	L: Yesterday I go for dinner. T: (gestures with right forefinger over left shoulder to indicate past)
7. Metalinguistic interpretation	Provide metalinguistic comments or information on the learner's discourse.	L: Yesterday I go shopping. T: Use past tense.
8. Interrupt	Errors are corrected when learners have the opportunity to complete the discourse.	T: What are you going to do in your leisure time next weekend? S: My lei...leish... T: leisure time or free time.

Among them, Lyster and Ranta (1997) consider elicitation, metalinguistic interpretation, clarification request and repetition methods as formal negotiation methods, which return the right to speak to students and provide students with opportunities for self-correction. In contrast, there are some methods of rephrasing and explicit correction.

3. Research on Corrective Feedback

In order to verify whether Corrective Feedback has a positive effect on second language acquisition, domestic and foreign scholars have conducted a large number of observational and experimental research reports and meta-analysis reviews on Corrective Feedback. These reports and reviews attempt to answer questions about the overall effect of Corrective Feedback on second language acquisition, the effectiveness of different types of feedback, and the main factors affecting the effectiveness of Corrective Feedback.

3.1. The overall effect of Corrective Feedback on second language acquisition

In the past two decades, the research on Corrective Feedback has changed from describing the relationship between Corrective Feedback and learners' absorption to measuring the effect of Corrective Feedback by experimental method. At present, most experimental and quasi-experimental reports have adopted the research design of relative ratio between experimental group and control group to investigate the effect of Corrective Feedback.

In terms of oral feedback, Mei (2016) investigated the relationship between teachers' Corrective Feedback and college students' oral English accuracy, and found that the oral accuracy of the class with Corrective Feedback was significantly higher than that of the class without feedback. The interview results showed that Corrective Feedback could enable students to actively correct their oral grammar mistakes in the preparation stage. And consciously correct when speaking. Liu (2014) added a group of experimental groups to confirm the impact of Corrective Feedback on

students' present progressive acquisition, in order to compare the differences among recast, metalinguistic feedback and non-rectifying feedback. The data showed that metalinguistic feedback could attract students' attention and be widely accepted, thus promoting progressive learning most effectively, followed by recast. Finally, non-rectifying feedback.

In the study of written feedback, Aisha Tanvee (2018) investigated the effectiveness of written Corrective Feedback on low and intermediate foreign language learners, and the data showed that students who adopted the Corrective Feedback strategy had a higher accuracy rate in language use than those who did not adopt any feedback strategy. Zhang's (2016) experiment confirmed that except for verbal input feedback, subjects in the written feedback group showed significant improvement in grammar accuracy, and Corrective Feedback could maintain this learning effect in subsequent writing, indicating that written feedback has the potential to internalize and consolidate declarative knowledge.

In addition, meta-analysis on the effectiveness of Corrective Feedback has emerged in an endless number of studies. These meta-analysis studies have demonstrated that Corrective Feedback has short-term or even long-term promoting effects on second language acquisition by measuring and comparing the effect value results of Corrective Feedback studies and experimental data reports over the years. Five meta-analysis reviews, for example, Norris and Ortega (2000), Russell and Spada (2006), Mackey and Goo (2007), Li (2010), and Lyster and Saito (2010), measured and compared the size of effect sizes in the included Corrective Feedback experimental reports. According to Cohen's (1988) criteria, the effect size of the immediate post-test of Corrective Feedback in these five literatures reached a level above the medium level, and also maintained a high effect size in the delayed post-test after 2 to 6 weeks. These data show that Corrective Feedback has not only short-term but also long-term effects on second language learning.

3.2. Effectiveness of different feedback classification

After recognizing the role of Corrective Feedback in second language acquisition, researchers began to think about what form of Corrective Feedback can help learners improve their learning efficiency in second language acquisition to the maximum extent. At present, most studies focus on students' correction after receiving feedback and use this as a standard to measure the effectiveness of feedback.

Some studies have focused on the effect of specific classification of feedback on second language acquisition. Lyster (2004) compared the effects of recast and elicitation on French grammar gender acquisition, and the results showed that elicitation had a better effect than recast especially in written language ability. Yang and Lyster (2010) compared the effects of three different Corrective Feedback treatments on Chinese learners' use of regular and irregular English past tense, and found that elicitation is more effective than recast and no feedback in the use of regular past tense rules. Fatemeh (2014) found that among the classification of Corrective Feedback, metalinguistic feedback leads to the highest comprehension ratio of learners, while repetition leads to the lowest comprehension ratio of learners. Shi (2005) compared the immediate effects of different Corrective Feedback and found that students had more understanding of phonological errors after teacher recast and formal negotiation, and more

understanding of grammar and vocabulary errors after formal negotiation. Zhang (2019) found in her research that the three kinds of Corrective Feedback most commonly used by teachers are recast, elicitation and explicit correction in order, but the three kinds of Corrective Feedback with a high response rate of students are explicit correction, recast and elicitation in order.

Some studies have explored the effectiveness of explicit and implicit feedback. Ellis et al. (2006) found through experiments that explicit feedback is more effective than implicit feedback, because explicit feedback is easy to be noticed and accepted. Sheen (2007) investigated the different effects of recast as a representative of implicit feedback and metalinguistic feedback as a representative of explicit feedback on English article acquisition, and the results showed that students who received metalinguistic feedback had significantly higher scores in immediate post-test and delayed post-test than students who received recast feedback and students in the control group. After comparing the effect of explicit recasting and implicit recasting on middle school students' grammar, Guo (2013) concluded that explicit recasting is the best choice for teachers compared with implicit recasting. Zhang (2016) found that compared with implicit feedback and input feedback, explicit feedback and output feedback help learners to pay more attention to the target language, make them better notice the gap between the current language structure and the target language structure, and ultimately affect the effectiveness of feedback.

Overall, research shows that teachers prefer implicit feedback, especially Recast. However, there is no consensus on which Corrective Feedback strategy is more effective. The above research seems to prove that in the classroom environment, output-based prompt feedback is more effective than input-based recast, and explicit feedback strategy is more effective than implicit feedback strategy. However, more empirical studies are needed to prove this conclusion.

3.3. The main factors affecting Corrective Feedback effect

3.3.1. The relationship between feedback effect and individual learner differences

Learner is not only the receiver but also the subject of classroom corrective, and is an important variable in teacher feedback research. Zu and Deng(2019) believe that individual differences in learning ability, motivation, working memory, anxiety and other aspects of learners will affect the effect of Corrective Feedback.

Hong (2013) analyzed the relationship between learner level and feedback classification, and found that the frequency of receiving metalinguistic interpretation and repetitive feedback is lower for beginner learners than for high-level learners. Yang(2013) investigated the relationship between learner level and feedback effect and found that learners with high level benefit more from recast feedback, while learners with low level benefit more from elicitation feedback. Zhang (2019) found that elicitation is easy to cause anxiety among introverted students, and the corrective effect is not ideal, while explicit correction is easy to attract the attention of extroverted students, and the corrective effect is ideal. A meta-analysis review by Li (2010) and Lyster&Saito (2010) found that the effect of Corrective Feedback is inversely proportional to the age of the learner, which means that the younger the learner, the more benefit from Corrective Feedback. Zhang (2020) found that learners' native language

background, personality, language level and other factors would affect their understanding and response to Corrective Feedback and their choice of Corrective Feedback mode. Zhang (2016) found that high-level learners can benefit from two different forms of feedback, while indirect feedback has a more obvious effect on low-level learners, which may be because indirect feedback reduces the difficulty of tasks by delineating error areas, indicating error categories and providing feedback functions such as rule interpretation.

These studies suggest that teachers should adopt different methods in providing feedback according to different students. However, the question of what kind of feedback is appropriate for what kind of learners remains to be explored in future research.

3.3.2. Relationship between feedback effect and teaching environment

It is self-evident that the teaching environment plays an important role in learners' language acquisition. Linguist Spolsky (2000) proposed that the natural language environment can provide learners with a variety of clues, so that learners can understand the target language and master the rules of verbal communication using the target language.

Some scholars have compared the influence of the second language classroom and foreign language classroom environment on the feedback effect. Sheen's (2004) research shows that recast results in more absorption and self-correction in classrooms with more language focus or more emphasis on language forms, and the adjustment of learners' language output is most likely to occur in teaching environments with obvious Corrective Feedback intentions. Lyster and Mori (2006) compared the relationship between Corrective Feedback and absorption in a Canadian French immersion classroom and a Japanese English immersion classroom, and obtained similar results as Sheen's (2004). Canadian students had less self-correction after recasting than after prompting, while Japanese English classes had roughly equal rates of self-correction after recasting and induction. The meta-analysis data of Mackey and Goo (2007) and Li (2010) show that the feedback effect of foreign language teaching environment is better than that of second language classroom. Li believes that this is because learners in the foreign language teaching environment have a more positive attitude towards corrective than learners in the second language environment, and learners in the second language environment are more eager to improve their language communication ability.

The social relations and conversation atmosphere of the teaching environment also affect the effectiveness of Corrective Feedback. Morris and Tarone (2003) found that students' negative evaluation expectations can distort understanding of the nature of Corrective Feedback, which is likely to be misinterpreted as a mockery of errors. Nishita (2004) found that Corrective Feedback was more effective in group communication than in teacher-led communication. In group communication, students can more directly participate in the communication, easily notice the feedback, and provide correct language form correction is more likely to trigger self-correction.

3.3.3. The relationship between feedback effect and teaching method

As an interactive way between teachers and students, the effectiveness of Corrective Feedback is closely related to the way teachers arrange and deal with teaching methods.

Some scholars have discussed the influence of teaching

treatment methods on the feedback effect of corrective. The meta-analysis study by Russell and Spada (2006) examined the focused reinforcement feedback style and the broad feedback style as variables. Due to the small sample size, the study data did not show a clear difference between the two. However, data from Mackey and Goo (2007) show that the effect size of a single reinforcement feedback is larger than that of a broad feedback mode in a delayed post-test. Han (2002) pointed out that the feedback mode of reinforcement is related to frequency, and high frequency will produce prominence, while frequency and prominence are considered to be of great significance to the effect of recasting.

The length of teaching process also affects the effect of Corrective Feedback. Norris and Ortega (2000) came to the conclusion that the shorter the feedback time, the better the feedback effect when talking about the effect of Corrective Feedback. Zhang's (2019) study also confirmed that the longer the time interval between the occurrence of errors and the giving of feedback, the smaller the effect that feedback can achieve. The meta-analysis data of Li (2010), Lyster and Saito (2010) all show that the effect of short Corrective Feedback of less than 1 hour is the most obvious, but for the feedback effect of teaching processing time of more than 1 hour, the data of Li (2010) and Lyster and Saito (2010) are inconsistent. According to Lyster and Saito's calculations, long Corrective Feedback is better than medium feedback. However, Li's data show that there is no significant difference between the feedback effect size of less than two hours and the feedback effect size of more than two hours, because the short feedback of less than 50 minutes mostly occurs in the laboratory environment, while the feedback time of the classroom is longer.

3.3.4. Relationship between feedback effect and language form

The effect of Corrective Feedback also has a certain relationship with the form of language. Ellis (2007) compared the different effects of recast and metalinguistic feedback on the acquisition of English past tense and comparative form, and found that the comparative form is more complex than the past tense form in terms of input frequency, learnability, scope of language points involved, and difficulty of rules. Deng (2019) compared the effects of teachers' Corrective Feedback on three types of mistakes that students are prone to make, namely vocabulary, grammar and text structure, through experiments, and found that teachers' Corrective Feedback strategies have obvious effects on correcting grammar and vocabulary errors in high school students' English writing. Zhao (2005) studied the relationship between teachers' verbal Corrective Feedback and students' correction output, and found that teachers' verbal Corrective Feedback had no influence on students' vocabulary and pronunciation errors, while the verbal Corrective Feedback for grammar errors varied according to students' language level. Wu (2020) found that teachers mostly use output elicitation when dealing with grammar errors, and input provision when dealing with pronunciation and vocabulary errors, because output elicitation is more effective for grammar errors, while input provision is more effective for pronunciation and vocabulary errors. Mackey (2006) found that learners pay the most attention to interrogative feedback and have the best acquisition effect, while learners pay less attention to past tense regular verb feedback and have poor acquisition effect. The reason is that the questioning is the most prominent, the most frequently used in the classroom, and the most

communicative value.

So far, the research on the relationship between the feedback effect of corrective and language form is relatively rare. However, some studies have noticed that the prominence of language form has an impact on the feedback effect of corrective, and the relationship between the Corrective Feedback and the complexity of language form needs further exploration.

4. The Development Trend of Corrective Feedback Research

In recent years, with the updating and exploration of theory and practice in the field of second language acquisition, the research on Corrective Feedback has developed rapidly. After two decades of research, the development of Corrective Feedback research can be summarized as follows:

First, the theoretical basis of the study varies from those related to cognition and psychology to those related to sociocultural theory. Ellis (2007) argues that in a sociocultural framework, Corrective Feedback is seen as a collaborative process between researchers or teachers, learners and others. Corrective Feedback should change with the social environment and the individual learner, and no classification of feedback is better than others. As long as the participants of the interactive activity can help the learners realize the construction of the nearest development zone, the Corrective Feedback provided is successful. Second language teaching should be viewed as a dynamic system of interactions in which the teacher must provide appropriate input to the difficulty of the students in their most recent development area. Interaction is no longer the “catalyst” and “provider” of learning, but more should be the source of learning.

Secondly, the research methods are expanded from the traditional classroom observation and experimental proof to the comprehensive meta-analysis of previous studies. The term “meta-analysis”, coined by American educator Charles Glass, refers to the reanalysis of multiple independent quantitative studies on the same problem. Because of its advantages over traditional methods, meta-analysis has been widely used in medical and educational research. The meta-analysis study described in this paper plays a quantitative and accurate role in the study of Corrective Feedback, and points out the direction for the study of the interaction between Corrective Feedback and other regulating variables. Cai(2012) believes that meta-analysis, as a new means of systematic integrated quantitative research, has incomparable advantages over traditional literature review.

Finally, the research content is subdivided into different categories from a single Corrective Feedback. Because of the different classification standards, the research focus is also different. The content of feedback research is mainly divided into four aspects: the comparison of learning promotion effect of different feedback sources, the comparison of learning promotion effect of different feedback content, the comparison of learning promotion effect of different feedback types, and the cognition of teachers and students to feedback comments. Although the research starting point is different, the research of Corrective Feedback is still a center, that is, the validity of feedback. Focusing on this center, the researchers conducted a comparative study from the dimensions of feedback source, feedback carrier, feedback mode and feedback cognition. Ferris (1999) put forward the idea of “treatable errors”, that feedback may be more effective

if error types are controlled within manageable limits. Inspired by this view, many researchers began to directly correct one or more kinds of language errors, such as errors in articles, prepositions, and the past simple tense.

5. Conclusion

From the above discussion, it can be seen that in the past two decades, the research on Corrective Feedback at home and abroad has been quite in-depth. Regardless of whether the previous research is based on experimental research or teaching environment, although the research results are not always the same, the motivation and significance of the research are the same. The reason why foreign language teachers provide Corrective Feedback in the teaching environment is not only to enable learners to pay attention to the input target language form, but also to consolidate and strengthen the natural second language knowledge through practice. The relevant research on Corrective Feedback will help foreign language teachers realize the importance of Corrective Feedback and actively explore effective Corrective Feedback strategies. Foreign language teachers need to adopt different feedback strategies for different language forms, pay attention to the individual differences of learners and adopt more targeted feedback strategies in the process of implementing Corrective Feedback. In addition, it is also necessary to encourage learners’ self-correction, promote the quality of their language output, and make Corrective Feedback more conducive to the development of language ability.

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