Investigating Students' Perceptions of Teachers' Feedback in an Online English Class

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Abstract— This study examines the relationship between students' engagement and interest in the feedback they received in an online English class, as well as the quality of feedback given by the English teachers. It further studies students' satisfaction with the teachers' current feedback practices in their English online class. The study is designed in a quantitative manner using a correlational and descriptive research approach. It has adopted a survey questionnaire in Mulliner and Tucker (2015) to determine the types and quality of the feedback teachers provided. In addition, it investigated the level of students' engagement and interest in the quality of feedback they received. The modification made to the questionnaire underwent pilot testing using Cronbach's alpha, which was considered a measure of scale reliability. The participants were second-year college students enrolled during Academic Year 2021–2022 in a state college located in Pagadian City, Zamboanga del Sur. According to the study's findings, the quality of feedback students receive from their teachers in online English classes is highly correlated to students' engagement and interest, and vice versa, resulting in students' satisfaction with teachers' current feedback practices. In light of these findings, it is recommended that English teachers continue to provide online feedback even after the pandemic or even if the classes are supported by a face-to-face learning modality. Students will continue to use and value online feedback from English teachers.

Keywords— English Online Class; Student Perceptions; Teacher Feedback. Feedback Practices, Covid-19.

I. INTRODUCTION

Skinner and behaviorism are forerunners of positive and negative incentives and punishments which are currently considered feedback.[1] Feedback moved from the alteration of students' behavior to the transformation and enrichment of information and knowledge.[2] It is viewed as a process through which learners actively use comments and information from different sources to inform and improve their own learning.[3] In a dialogic approach, feedback is defined as "all dialogue" in formal and informal situations that aid learning. Such dialogue involves joint meaning construction between the learner and those who participate in their learning process.[4]

In the context of the current study, feedback is placed in an online environment where students and teachers meet in virtual classes. Online learning has overtaken face-to-face instruction in state colleges and universities because of the unanticipated effects of the pandemic on the educational system. The health crisis was the most dramatic educational system disruption in history, taking place in more than 190 different countries. It affected academic institution closures in almost 99 percent of the world's student population in low- and middle-income nations.[5] In particular, the Commission on Higher Education in the Philippines collaborated with the stakeholders to build a stronger culture of sharing knowledge, resources, and best practices shifting the teaching and learning paradigms into flexible online teaching and learning modalities.[6] Online learning offers significant advantages, such as greater flexibility and enhanced connectedness and interactions among teachers and students, irrespective of time or location. However, it presented many challenges for Filipino teachers and students who are considered novice in online modalities, specifically those who were not accustomed to certain forms of online feedback. [7]

As students were encouraged to learn independently during pandemic, digital learning needed greater feedback as it was proven to increase performance.[8] A preliminary understanding of what is required for students to successfully engage with feedback to improve their learning includes at least the following aspects: willingness to pay attention to it, noticing feedback, understanding feedback (or asking for clarification), perceiving feedback as relevant and useful, reflecting on feedback in relation to their own work, and having time and opportunity.[9] Furthermore, the quantity and quality of students' integration of teachers' feedback, which includes suggestions, questions, and imperatives, were more integrated by some students than others.[10] Thus, the current study significantly looked into the relationship between students' engagement and interest in the feedback they received and the quality of feedback given by the English teachers; along with, their perception of the quality of feedback given by the teachers and their satisfaction on the current feedback practices in their online English classes.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study aimed to examine students' perception and their significant relationship with respect to teachers' feedback in an English online class. Specifically, this study endeavored to answer the following aims:
a. To determine the type of feedback students received from their English teachers;
b. To ascertain the level of students' engagement and interest in the feedback they received;
c. To establish students' level of perception of the quality of feedback given by the teachers;
d. To find out if there is a significant relationship between students' interest and students' perception of the quality feedback;
e. To establish students' level of satisfaction with the current feedback practices in their online English class; and

f. To determine the significant relationship between students' perception and students' level of satisfaction with the feedback given.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

This study used a quantitative research design employing a correlational descriptive research approach. The descriptive approach intends to examine and summarize information about the level of students' perceptions of teachers' feedback quality in online English classes, and its significant relationship between variables.

B. Research Setting

The study was conducted in higher educational institutions (HEI) located in the Province of Zamboanga del Sur. The institution is a state college with Level 3 accreditation in the HEI that offers tertiary education. One of the programs offered where targeted respondents enrolled in the Bachelor of Science in Secondary Education major in English. The program is being offered in two main campuses located in Mati, San Miguel, and Dumingag, both located in the said province. Moreover, both campuses employed online teaching and learning in English during the pandemic thus serving as the targeted setting of the current study.

C. Participants

The participants were second-year college students enrolled during Academic Year 2021–2022. The students actively participated in their English subject amidst the education crisis. In addition, the said participants provided relevant perceptions on the feedback they received from their English teachers and responded to the survey completely with utmost honesty

D. Research Instrument and Validation

The study used an adapted survey questionnaire in Mulliner and Tucker (2015). It was used to determine students' perceptions of the types and quality of the feedback teachers provided in an online English class. In addition, it investigated the level of students' engagement and interest in the quality of feedback they received. The modification made in the questionnaire underwent pilot testing using Cronbach's alpha, which was considered a measure of scale reliability.

A Likert scale was used in the questionnaire, guided by a rating and its corresponding responses ranging from 1 as "strongly disagree" to 5 as "strongly agree". The responses for the level of students' engagement and interest in the feedback were interpreted, 1 as "very low" to 5 as "very high" while the level of student's perception of the quality and satisfaction of teachers' feedback were interpreted, 1 as "not satisfied" to 5 as "highly satisfied".

E. Data Gathering

Prior to the conduct of the study, ethical standards were observed such as the securement of a request letter from the Dean of School of Teacher Education, and endorsement form from advisers of respective year-level participants from the same program. Due to face-to-face restrictions, the survey questionnaire was uploaded in the Google form, which was distributed through a link sent to participants' email addresses. During data gathering, the participants affirmed their participation by clicking 'Yes' on the consent form incorporated in the Google form. After which, they proceeded to the section of the form where they were required to answer each statement that corresponded to their perceptions. The gathered data online were converted to Excel for tallying, statistical treatment, and analysis.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

A. Types of Feedback that Students Received from Their English Teachers

Figure 1 below illustrates the types of feedback that students received from their English teachers. About 16.3% agreed that rubrics utilization in describing different levels of performance is more important to them. The result corroborates other findings [12] that when rubrics are used, students produce a better product and therefore earn better grades. Moreover, 14.3% of the respondents affirm the type of feedback where teachers give comments to the whole class, and 12.9% apply facilitative feedback, which includes giving comments and suggestions to help guide students as they revise and reconceptualize their outputs. Teachers' feedback, according to the findings, bridges the gap between a student's comprehension and actual performance, as well as the teachers' expectations for how the student should perform or progress. [13].
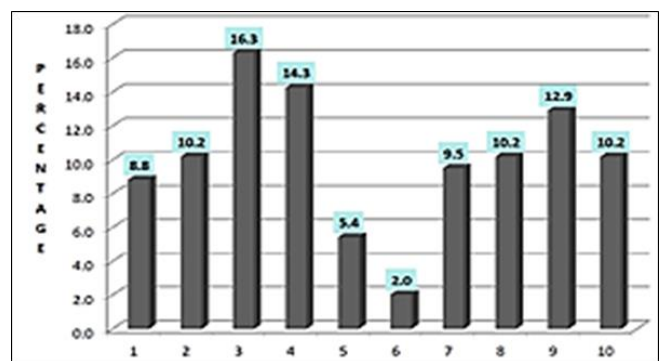

Fig. 1. Types of Feedback

Legend: 1-Simple corrections of right or wrong (without further comment); 2- Presentation of grades in the form of numerical equivalent; 3- Rubrics utilization (assessment caters describing different levels of performance); 4- Comments to the whole class; 5-Generic exemplars (carefully chosen samples of student work); 6- Stamps/Digital Badges (electronic symbols used to document performance); 7- Written comments; 8- Verification Feedback (i.e. grades, scores, and judgmental comments); 9- Facilitative Feedback (comments &suggestions to help guide students in their own revision and conceptualization); and 10- Peer evaluation feedback.

Three types of feedback received account for the 10.2% of the total respondents, namely numerical feedback, verification feedback, and peer evaluation. In the Philippine educational system, performance is rated according to numerical values to signify the level of achievement in a given task [14] thus, teachers do not fail to refer to the grading point system. The results affirm without a grade, there was no sense of accomplishment. The presence of a grade made it easier to interpret the teachers' assessment of the work (e.g., high or low); or, when presented with a grade; they focused on this and

not the accompanying comments.[15] This is in consonance with other results of the study, where verification feedback and peer evaluation were perceived by 10.2% of the respondents. Verification feedback includes grades, scores, and judgmental comments of the teachers [16], while peer evaluation refers to a type of feedback with the help of other students. The latter denotes a positive impression of peer observation in online activities, which made the students' value modifications to their work.[17] However, other studies perceived peer evaluation as ineffective and unpredictable. [18] [19]

B. Students' Engagement and Interest in the Feedback They Received

Table 1 shows the level of students' engagement and interest in the feedback they received. All predetermined statements on feedback received a high level of engagement and interest among students. Specifically, students are engaged and interested in making the best use of the feedback and receiving qualitative feedback which is equally significant as grades.

TABLE 1. Level of Students' Engagement and Interest in the Feedback They Received

Statements	M	SD	QD
1. I understand how to make best use of feedback.	4.20	0.407	Very High
2. I refer back to feedback from a previous assignment when starting a new related assignment.	4.17	0.531	High
3. A grade without feedback is insufficient even if returned quickly.	4.17	0.791	High
4. I'm equally interested in the qualitative feedback as the grade.	4.20	0.664	Very High
5. I'm more interested in the grade than qualitative feedback.	3.60	0.675	High
6. I always act on feedback.	3.80	0.761	High
7. I always read the qualitative feedback.	4.07	0.640	High
8. I always access marked assignments.	4.07	0.583	High
General Mean	**4.03**	**0.665**	**High**

Note: 1.00 – 1.79 = Very Low (Strongly Disagree), 1.80 – 2.59 = Low (Disagree), 2.60 – 3.39 = Moderate (Moderately Agree), 3.40 – 4.19 = High (Agree), 4.20 – 5.00 = Very High (Strongly Agree)

The overall mean of 4.03 with a description of "high" is congruent with other studies [20] [21] that students enjoy feedback on all aspects of their progress. The result also indicates that the majority of students expect their teachers to correct them. Nonetheless, the degree to which the student actively engages in the feedback process varies.[22] According to the outcomes of the study, students successfully engage with feedback to improve their learning in at least the following aspects: willingness to pay attention to it, noticing feedback, understanding feedback (or asking for clarification), perceiving feedback as relevant and useful, reflecting on feedback in relation to their own work, and having time and opportunity. [10]

B. C. Students' Perception of the Quality of Feedback Given by the Teachers

Table 2 reveals students' high level of satisfaction with the quality of feedback they received from their teachers in an English online class. The pandemic prompted innovative approaches to online teaching, and despite the challenges, teachers successfully provided detailed direction for future improvement in a constructive and encouraging manner. It stimulated opportunities for students to discuss feedback with

the instructor in a virtual modality. The result implies that the respondents hold quite consistent views concerning what quality feedback should entail.

TABLE 2. Level of Students' Perception of the Quality of Feedback given by the Teachers

Statements	Mean	SD	QD
1. Provides detailed direction for future improvement.	4.30	0.702	Highly Satisfied
2. Delivers in a constructive and encouraging manner.	4.23	0.568	Highly Satisfied
3. Links directly to marking scheme.	3.73	0.640	Satisfied
4. Stimulates opportunity for students to discuss Feedback with the instructor either in face-to-face or in virtual conference.	4.20	0.664	Highly Satisfied
5. Includes appropriate amount of praise even if the output is not very satisfactory.	3.80	0.805	Satisfied
6. Specifies about the weakness or shortcomings of the output.	3.93	0.640	Satisfied
7. Remains in a positive tone even the output fails to meet the expectations.	3.87	0.819	Satisfied
General Mean	**4.01**	**0.719**	**Satisfied**

Note: 1.00 – 1.79 =Not Satisfied, 1.80 – 2.59 =Less Satisfied, 2.60 – 3.39 = Neutral, 3.40 – 4.19=Satisfied, 4.20 – 5.00 = Highly Satisfied

Feedback should not be discouraging to students at any cost as research suggests that overly negative feedback can affect student engagement and motivation.[23] Since feedback is a "post-response information that educates learners on their current states of learning and/or performance in order to help them in assessing if their states suit the learning purposes in a particular environment." [24]

D. Students' Satisfaction with the Current Feedback Practices in their Online English Class

Table 3 reveals students who are highly satisfied with the current feedback practices in their online English class mainly on informing them in the manner they can improve their output, giving a fair evaluation on submitted outputs, and providing feedback when they accomplished the task.

TABLE 3. Level of Students' Satisfaction on the Current Feedback Practices in their Online English Class

Statements	M	SD	QD
1. Provides feedback at the time when I do something wrong.	4.00	0.695	Satisfied
2. Provides feedback when I fully completed the task.	4.33	0.711	Highly Satisfied
3. Gives feedback in a virtual class in the presence of my other classmates.	3.90	0.712	Satisfied
4. Expresses feedback which simply tells what is wrong.	4.03	0.718	Satisfied
5. Informs me on how can I improve my output.	4.57	0.568	Highly Satisfied
6. Gives fair evaluation on submitted outputs.	4.43	0.626	Highly Satisfied
7. Informs me/co students about a mistake without further explanation.	3.40	1.003	Satisfied
General Mean	**4.10**	**0.807**	**Satisfied**

Note: 1.00 – 1.79 =Not Satisfied, 1.80 – 2.59 =Less Satisfied, 2.60 – 3.39 = Neutral, 3.40 – 4.19=Satisfied, 4.20 – 5.00 = Highly Satisfied

The overall mean of 4.10 reveals satisfaction among the students with the current feedback practices of the teachers in their online English class. Teachers uphold the concept of feedback transmitting to the students regarding their work towards a more 'sustainable' student-centered model that supports learning both in the current higher education context and in the future learning beyond it.[25]

E. Relationship between the Students' Engagement and Interest in the Feedback They Received and Their Perception of the Quality of Feedback given by the Teachers

TABLE 4. Testing of Relationship between the Students' Engagement and Interest in the Feedback They Received and Their Perception on the Quality of Feedback given by the Teachers

Variables	r value	Remark	p-value	Interpretation
Students' interest and Students' perception on the quality feedback	0.607**	Strong Linear Relationship	0.000	**With Highly Significant Relationship

Note: r = Pearson Correlation Coefficient; r is interpreted using Cohen's Scale: -0.3 to +0.3 = weak, -0.5 to -0.3 or +0.3 to +0.5 = moderate relationship, -0.9 to -0.5 or +0.5 to +0.9 = strong relationship, -1.0 to -0.9 or +0.9 to +1.0 = very Strong relationship.

H_{O1}: There is no relationship between the student's engagement and interest in the feedback they received and their perception of the quality of feedback given by the teachers.

As presented in Table 4, the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation test yielded an R-value of 0.607 with a p-value of 0.000, which implies rejecting the null hypothesis and establishing a significant relationship at 0.05 level. Furthermore, the positive R-values of 0.607 that signified a strong linear relationship also implied that as the quality of feedback they received from their teachers increase, the students' engagement and interest in feedback also increase. Moreover, as the quality of feedback decreases, the students' engagement and interest in feedback also decrease. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between students' interest and students' agreement on the quality of feedback they received. The findings imply that excellent feedback is that which is given at the right time. Giving feedback immediately can improve performance.[9]

Teachers' feedback practices are tied to their beliefs and behaviors regarding students' learning, and it can be challenging to modify those attitudes and habits.[26] Thus, teachers must (constantly) interact with their students [27] through feedback; in the end, students' interpretations of it decide its worth.[28]

F. Relationship between the Students' Perception of the Quality of Feedback given by the Teachers and Their Satisfaction with the Current Feedback Practices in their Online English Classes

TABLE 5. Testing of the relationship between the student's perception of the quality of feedback given by the teachers and their satisfaction with the current feedback practices in their online English class

Variables	r value	Remark	p-value	Interpretation
Students' perception and students' satisfaction on the feedback	0.586**	Strong Linear Relationship	0.001	**With Highly Significant Relationship

Note: r = Pearson Correlation Coefficient; r is interpreted using Cohen's Scale: -0.3 to +0.3 = weak, -0.5 to -0.3 or +0.3 to +0.5 = moderate relationship, -0.9 to -0.5 or +0.5 to +0.9 = strong relationship, -1.0 to -0.9 or +0.9 to +1.0 = very Strong relationship.

H_{O2}: There is no relationship between the student's engagement and interest in the feedback they received and their perception on the quality of feedback given by the teachers.

As reflected in Table 5, the test yielded an R-value of 0.586 with a p-value of 0.001, which implied the rejection of the null hypothesis and established a significant relationship at 0.05 level. Moreover, the positive R-value of 0.586, which signified a strong linear relationship, also implied that the student's perception of the quality of feedback given by the teachers increases their satisfaction with the current feedback practices

in their online English class also increases. In addition, as the student's perception of the quality of feedback given by the teachers decreases their satisfaction with the current feedback practices in their online English class. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between students' perception of the quality of feedback given by the teachers and their satisfaction with the current feedback practices in their online English class.

Students' perceived satisfaction with the feedback practices of teachers in their online classes signifies the quality of feedback they received from them. The shift of feedback online, breaking the boundaries of time and space, affords a broader capacity for interaction and social learning between the teacher and students, as well as the opportunity for increased provision of and response to feedback. Although students have more freedom and autonomy to act upon feedback, they need to take greater responsibility to manage the feedback or seek extra feedback to enhance their learning.

V. OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of the study, it is recommended that the students continue using and valuing the online feedback they receive from their teachers for the improvement of their performances and outputs. That English teachers would continue utilizing feedback online even if classes are back in face-to-face settings. Other future researchers will consider doing a similar empirical study on a larger scale or using qualitative methods to validate the results of the current study through face-to-face interviews and observations.

VI. CONCLUSION

Skinner, along with other behaviorism theorists, who advanced positive and negative incentives and punishments, served as antecedents of what can currently be appraised as feedback.[1] The proponents of feedback theory moved away from the pure alteration of students' behavior towards the formation and absorption of knowledge and information. [10] In the context of online feedback from an English class, the findings of the study enrich and affirm that feedback is certainly a process through which learners actively use comments and information from different sources to inform and improve their own learning.[29] This is evident from the perceptions of the students who are taking a Bachelor of Science in Secondary Education major in English, where the utilization of rubrics to describe their level of performance, the giving of comments in virtual classes, and applying facilitative feedback are common types of feedback they received from their teachers in their online classes; as well as, numerical feedback, verification feedback, and peer evaluation.

Though the degree to which the student actively engages in the feedback process varies [24], it is worth noting students are relatively satisfied with the feedback they receive, regardless of the challenges of online classes. Teachers who are also coping with the new modality in learning successfully provide their students with quality, constructive feedback for future improvement and stimulate opportunities for students to discuss feedback with the instructor in virtual conferences. Moreover, students perceived satisfaction with feedback practices in their online English class as essentially informing the student to

improve their outputs, fairly evaluating submitted outputs, and affording the opportunity to give feedback on completed tasks. Finally, it can be inferred that the quality of feedback students received from their teachers in their online English classes is significantly correlated to students' engagement and interest in teachers' feedback, and vice versa; leading to students' satisfaction with the current practices of English teachers in giving their feedback.

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