

Instant messaging and the timing of written corrective feedback

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Although under-researched in the SLA literature, the timing of feedback is worth exploring given the pedagogical implications that can be drawn from its study. The effectiveness of providing feedback during task performance (i.e., immediate corrective feedback, ICF) has not always proved to be more effective than providing feedback after task completion (i.e., delayed corrective feedback, DCF) (for a review see Quinn and Nakata, 2017). Furthermore, several teacher training manuals (i.e., Anderson, 2017;) discourage teachers from providing ICF for fear of disrupting oral communication. However, students seem to prefer ICF (Quinn, 2014) and some SLA theories (i.e., Interactional Hypothesis; Skill Acquisition Theory) are inclined to favour the ICF modality. The provision of written feedback in computer-mediated environments may be less disruptive than in face-to-face communication. Long (2017) also argues that it can be quite salient and a more permanent record. Two recent studies have investigated immediate feedback provision in computer-mediated communication (Andujar, 2020; Arroyo and Yilmaz, 2018) but did not explore students' perceptions, the goal of our study. The present study took place over five weeks during an online EFL course. Adult students (n=10) periodically received language learning activities via WhatsApp to complete by sending written messages outside class time. After an introductory task for familiarization purposes, students were sent DCF in weeks two and three and ICF in weeks four and five. Questionnaire and interview data show students did not find ICF to be disruptive and most had a strong preference for this more interactive type of feedback both for practical and cognitive-related reasons. There is also evidence of students spontaneously paying attention to their classmates' errors and repairs. These results confirm findings by Kim (2012) in the context of synchronous corrective teacher-initiated feedback in writing tasks and point to the potential of immediate feedback provision through instant messaging.