



A Study on the Application of Teacher Feedback Language in Middle School English Class

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Abstract: Teacher feedback language has a very significant impact on students' learning. Appropriate feedback language will promote students' learning motivation, arouse students' interest in learning, and have a positive role in promoting students' language ability development. However, in middle school English classrooms, many teachers do not pay attention to the role of feedback language, ignore the positive feedback to students or lack the application skills of feedback and students do not participate in classroom communication, and lose interest in English. This article proposes corresponding improvement measures in response to the current problems in the application of teacher feedback in middle school English classrooms.

Keywords: English classroom, teacher feedback, application

1. Introduction

Feedback discourse research occupies an important position in foreign language classroom interaction research (Chaudron, 1988). Teachers' feedback in the classroom plays an important role in adjusting the classroom atmosphere, promoting teacher-student interaction, and guiding students to think. At the same time, Long's interaction theory believes that teacher feedback is also part of the student's language input and plays an important role in the student's language output. Basing on the literature review, this article studies the problems in the classroom feedback from middle school teachers and gives corresponding suggestions for improvement. The questions to be discussed are as follows: 1) What are the problems with English teacher feedback? 2) How to improve teachers' feedback skills and promote the development of students' language ability and interest?

2. Literature review

Feedback, that is, the teacher's response to the students' speech performance, is an extremely important content of the teacher's speech, and it is especially important in language teaching classes. If teachers ignore the feedback link, students will become at a loss (McCarthy 2002). Regarding the research of feedback language, foreign scholars have the following research: Researchers (Vigil & Oller, 1976) put forward cognitive feedback and emotional feedback. The former is for the actual understanding of information, and the latter conveys teachers and students support each other in terms of motivation and emotion during the dialogue. There are also researchers who classify from different angles, dividing feedback into a dichotomy of positive feedback and negative feedback (Nunan 1991; Zhao Xiaohong 1998). Long (1996) also divides negative feedback into explicit negative feedback and implicit negative feedback. Cullen (2002) divides teacher feedback into two types: evaluative and discourse. Evaluative feedback refers to the linguistic evaluation made by teachers on students' answers; discourse feedback is the evaluation given by teachers on the content of students' answers. The research of teacher feedback language mainly focuses on error-correcting feedback. Lyster and Ranta (1997) proposed six types of error-correcting feedback. Krashen (1982) pointed out that correcting mistakes puts learners in a state of self-defense, which in turn makes them avoid using complex structures and focus on form rather than meaning, which is not conducive to language acquisition. Teachers should try to avoid correcting learners' mistakes. Yster and Ranta (1997) proposed six types of corrective feedback: 1) Explicit Correction, which directly points out the errors in the student's answer and provides the correct form; 2) Restate, restates the student's answer but keep the meaning unchanged; 3) Request for clarification (Clarification request), the teacher indicates to the students that the answer is difficult to understand or has errors, and asks the students to repeat or correct it; 4) Metalinguistic feedback (Metalinguistic feedback), the teacher provides comments for students to find own language errors; 5) Elicitation, the teacher induces students to correct their own language errors by asking questions, pauses, etc.; 6) Repeating, we can summarize them into the following table:

Table 1. The classification of “Repeating”

First classification	Secondary classification	Explanation
Positive feedback	Simple approval Approval with repetition	Use "good, very good", etc. to express approval and accept students' answers. Further accept the student's answer
Negative feedback	Explicit correction Prompt Elicitation Clarification request Metalinguistic request Recast	Point out the error and correct it directly Supplement the information necessary to complete the task Teachers use another questioning method to let students find the correct answer by themselves The teacher asks the students to clarify the previous answers by using rhetorical questioning or selecting questions Teachers use relevant grammatical knowledge to point out students' mistakes and guide students to correct them by themselves Teachers reformulate all or part of inappropriate expressions, so that students can form correct language forms
Discoursal feedback	Comments Expansion	The teacher puts forward his thoughts or expresses his emotions on a certain problem Explain and supplement the content of students' words

Most of the domestic research on teacher feedback is concentrated in university classrooms, mainly the description, analysis and evaluation of the use of university teachers' feedback, such as Zhou Xing, Zhou Yun (2002), Zhao Xiaohong (1998), Xie Xiaoyan (2011), etc. There are few researches on the application of feedback language by middle school teachers in English classrooms. Therefore, this article mainly studies the deficiencies in the feedback language of middle school English teachers, and proposes targeted improvement measures.

3. Problems in teacher feedback in middle school English classroom

When Barak studied classroom language, he found that nearly one-third of classroom behaviors of teachers are evaluating students. Therefore, it is particularly important for teachers to give appropriate feedback on the performance of students in the classroom. However, through surveys, it is found that many middle school teachers often ignore the performance of students in the classroom and fail to give them timely feedback. This will lead to students not feeling the teacher's response. Their attention and affirmative response eventually caused students to lose their enthusiasm for learning. Next, I will show the following examples to analyze the problems in teacher feedback:

3.1 The teacher's feedback is understatement and mere formality

Fragment 1: T: What did you do last night?
S: I help my mother do the housework.
T: No, you are wrong. Try it again.
S:
T: Ok, sit down please.
T: So, next one.

It can be seen from the fragment that the teacher used direct error correction, directly pointing out that the student's answer was wrong, but did not give further hints, or inspire the cause of the student's error and stimulate the student's thinking. Instead, it is directly rotated to the next student to answer. Such feedback is only for the teacher's teaching progress. The arranged questioning session is only a formality, and does not really promote the development of students' learning ability.

3.2 Teacher feedback is monotonous and boring, failing to stimulate students' self-confidence

Fragment 2: T: What did you do last night?
S1: I helped my mother do the housework.
T: Good!
T: Any volunteers?
S2: I watched TV with my sisters.
T: Good!
S3: I saw a film with my family.
T: Good!
.....

From the fragments, the teacher aimed at the knowledge of the general past tense grammar, combined with the reality of life, and asked the students to use this tense to express. All three students answered correctly and spoke actively. However, the teacher's feedback is singular and boring, so that students do not feel the teacher's unique affirmation and praise, especially for students with different English learning levels, the teacher's feedback should be more differentiated, so as to stimulate students' confidence in learning English.

3.3 The teacher's feedback language is lagging, and the students are not given feedback in time

Excerpt 3: T: What did you do last night?

S: I did my homework and listened to some music.

T: Ok, so let's do some role play.

...

From Fragment 3, it can be seen that the teacher is eager to arrange the next interactive session, while ignoring the performance of the student in the previous session. It is easy for the students to undermine their self-confidence and make the students feel that their performance has not been received by the teacher, which is not conducive to the cultivation of students' interest in English learning.

4. Measures to improve the feedback language of middle school English teachers

4.1 Focus on reflecting on the effectiveness of the feedback language and inspire the development of students' thinking

The teacher's feedback should not be the feedback for completing the teaching task, but should let the feedback language play its unique role. Therefore, teachers should pay attention to the impact of their feedback on students in class, and they should also reflect on the existing problems after class. Before each class, setting up interactive sessions in advance to encourage and praise students for their performance; if students have problems when answering questions, prompt feedback should be used to inspire students instead of pursuing the progress of teaching, or skipping this important link directly. Teachers should also use some clever methods to record them when they reflect after class. For example, Cullen once said: listening or transcribing through recording is the best way to help teachers understand their classroom discourse. Therefore, teachers can use this method to continuously reflect on the problems in their own classrooms and take effective measures to correct them.

4.2 Establish a rich "corpus" of teacher feedback to stimulate students' self-confidence

Excellent teachers should have their own corpus. The source of the corpus can be derived from their teaching experience, or they can be recorded by listening to excellent teachers in class. You can accumulate a wealth of words and sentences to express praise, such as: perfect, excellent, brilliant, good job...There are also a variety of rich praise or encouragement sentences, which require teachers to continue to accumulate and create their own corpus.

4.3 Timely feedback to create meaningful dialogue situations

The best feedback time is when students answer the questions raised by the teacher, and the teacher will give the evaluation in time; if the teacher misses the best time and the feedback is delayed, then the students will have a psychological impact, which will cause the students' self-confidence to be frustrated. Therefore, teachers should seize the best time to encourage less advanced students or praise their progress. Of course, the feedback language should be close to the actual situation and cannot be exaggerated, otherwise it will be counterproductive. Finally, teachers should also create meaningful dialogue situations, so that students have the desire to express, so that teachers can seize the opportunity to give them evaluation.

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