

Prospective Feedback to Improve Speaking and Affective Dimensions in Higher Education Students

Retroalimentación Prospectiva para Mejorar la Habilidad Oral y las Dimensiones Afectivas en Estudiantes de Educación Superior

Pablo Aedo Cancino¹

Universidad de Concepción, Chile

Abstract

The article presents a pedagogical experience with a course of undergraduate students from various programs. The main objectives were to improve their oral skills in English, increase their self-confidence, reduce language-specific anxiety, and provide individual prospective feedback. An action research design was employed, adhering to the conditions of effective feedback proposed by Sadler (2010). Through oral assessments and a semi-structured interview, positive effects were observed in the students' oral proficiency and psychological factors such as self-confidence, beliefs, and anxiety.

Keywords: anxiety, feedback, formative assessment, self-confidence, speaking skill

Resumen

El artículo presenta una experiencia pedagógica con un curso de estudiantes de pregrado de diversos programas. Los principales objetivos fueron mejorar sus habilidades orales en inglés, aumentar su confianza en sí mismos, reducir la ansiedad específica del idioma y proporcionar retroalimentación prospectiva individualizada, y analizar sus resultados y percepciones hacia la intervención. Se empleó un diseño de investigación-acción, siguiendo las condiciones de retroalimentación efectiva propuestas por Sadler (2010). A través de evaluaciones orales y una entrevista semiestructurada, se observaron efectos positivos no solo en la competencia oral de los estudiantes, sino también en factores psicológicos como la autoconfianza, las creencias y la ansiedad.

Palabras clave: ansiedad, autoconfianza, evaluación formativa, habilidad oral, retroalimentación

¹ He holds a B.A. in Education and English Teaching and an M.A. in Innovation of Teaching, Learning, and Assessment of English, both at Universidad de Concepción (Chile). He is currently working at Universidad de Concepción as a research assistant.

pabloaedo@udec.cl

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5509-8100>

Received: March 3rd, 2021. Accepted: November 18th, 2024

This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Non-Commercial-No-Derivatives 4.0 International License. License Deed can be consulted at <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0>.

Introduction

It is recognized that the English language is an excellent communication tool for people. This is consistent with the Chilean government's concern in promoting English Language teaching in schools with initiatives to develop teachers' skills and increase teaching hours (MINEDUC, 2017). However, these initiatives have not been efficient enough to improve students' general English language proficiency levels. Chile is placed in the 37th position in a ranking of English proficiency (EF Education First, 2020). In higher education, I have observed that speaking is the skill students need for different purposes (presentations, research, etc.). Speaking can be considered a key skill essential to be proficient in a foreign language (Luoma, 2004). However, I have observed that many difficulties arise when developing this skill.

What seems problematic for the learning process must be less with English linguistic aspects and more with the ways this is assessed and how these processes affect affective domains. Students are exposed to elevated levels of anxiety or foreign language anxiety (Horwitz et al., 1986) when they face oral assessments which are also detrimental to their self-confidence and beliefs about learning a language.

Consequently, assessment also emerges as an issue to be addressed. Assessment can serve different purposes such as certification for accountability and promoting learning (Mansell et al., 2009). In Chile, the first function predominates because of the neoliberal educational policies of management. Education institutions are subject to a national evaluation system, characterized by implementing standardized tests at various stages. This pervades the inside of classrooms when teachers collect information about the learning process. Thereby, a phenomenon known as 'teaching to the test' comes out (Black & William, 2006, 2009). This practice acts against the assessment oriented to help students' learning despite the learning assessment being universally recognized as an approach that improves pupils' learning and the results (Black et al., 2003). This perspective is also advocated by the Ministry of Education and suggested to be enacted within the Chilean educational system (MINEDUC, 2006).

30 Considering this assessment context for certification, standardized tests, and students with low confidence and limiting beliefs about oral English proficiency, I implemented an action research pedagogical experience focusing on formative assessment and prospective feedback. The implementation took place in an English II course at a university to improve students' performance and change their perceptions towards this fundamental activity of acquiring a foreign language.

Theoretical Framework

Evaluation within the Chilean Educational Context

A peculiar feature of the Chilean educational system is how centralized and standardized evaluation is adopted regardless of the education or administration level. Higher education follows this trend strongly. They must undergo a process called accountability. This process reports how the resources are managed and invested in different audiences (Corvalán, 2006). Thus, standardized tests become the main tool for showing results and building rankings. This method of certifying schools and students' learning has been gradually implemented in Chile since 1990 (Bravo, 2011). This trend towards accountability and certification seems to pervade the whole educational system.

Another perspective about assessment has strongly emerged, assessment for learning or formative assessment (Black & William 2006, 2009). Authorities in Chile have tried to introduce the foundations of this approach to enact this assessment focus properly in English lessons (MINEDUC, 2006). Thus, assessment and feedback become relevant principles to collect information about students' learning. This purpose of assessment has been powered by educational decrees that promote assessment for learning over evaluation for certification and accountability (MINEDUC, 2018). This implementation has shown improvements in student engagement and academic progress, although challenges such as lack of teacher training remain (López et al., 2020).

Speaking

Speaking skills are essential to produce language. They are so important that language teachers need to know about them deeply. They involve real-time, productive, and aural/oral dimensions (Nunan, 2003). They are immediate, interactive, outward, and dialectical. Therefore, speaking is an intrinsically complex set of skills. Speaking encompasses both micro and macro skills. Micro skills involve producing distinct sounds, using appropriate intonation, and constructing phrases and sentences, while macro skills refer to organizing discourse, managing conversations, and adapting language to different social contexts (Brown, 2004). Additionally, speaking is influenced by cognitive, linguistic, and affective factors, such as vocabulary knowledge, fluency, and confidence (Bygate, 2001).

Assessing speaking is a challenge for teachers as it is considered the most difficult language skill to assess reliably (Louma, 2004). The teacher must make immediate judgments about a range of aspects. Thus, the assessment depends not only upon speech features such as pronunciation, fluency, grammatical accuracy, and coherence but also on other factors such as language level, and cognitive and affective skills. The tasks and the context will

have an impact on student performance. It is challenging. Brown (2004) describes two major challenges: (1) the interaction of listening and speaking, that is, it is difficult to isolate speaking and (2) the speaker strategy to convey meaning may make it difficult for teachers to design a solid elicitation technique. For my intervention, I will use the extensive type of assessment (Brown, 2004) which involves speaking presentations.

Foreign Language Anxiety

This construct has emerged in the learning context of speaking a foreign language. This is Foreign Language Anxiety (Horwitz, 2001; Horwitz et al., 1986; Jones, 2004). It occurs when people are engaged in the acquisition of a foreign language in a classroom context. It conveys complex self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning. Students are supposed to learn and demonstrate learning constantly. This situation generates anxiety that rises in specific moments such as participation, dialogues, or speaking presentations. This anxiety negatively affects their opportunities for participating as students prefer to avoid instances that, paradoxically, are designed for them to take risks and make mistakes in pursuit of learning. This anxiety often manifests when students must participate in oral presentations or impromptu speaking tasks. For example, students may fear being judged by their peers or making mistakes, leading to behaviors such as staying silent during group discussions or avoiding language practice altogether (Zhang, 2019).

These behaviors impact students' willingness to communicate with other people (Oz et al., 2015), their perception of being negatively judged by classmates and teachers (Aydin, 2008), and their fear of failing in test situations (Büyükahıska, 2016). As a result, these situations affect students' self-confidence and beliefs resulting in avoidance attitudes and low motivation to participate in learning activities (Dweck, 2006; Marsh & Martin, 2011).

Speaking in a foreign language has been considered particularly challenging due to the complex process of constructing meaning (Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2000). Speaking requires the speaker to decide why, how, and when to communicate depending on the cultural and social context in which the speaking act occurs. Due to its complexity, speaking has been recognized as the most anxiety-provoking skill (Luo, H. 2014) producing a negative effect on achieving the L2. Finally, some factors influence students' anxiety concerning language tests such as test validity, format, techniques, length, time limit, and clarity of test instructions (Young, 1990). These factors are connected to speaking assessment as unclear instructions, complex formats, or time constraints can increase anxiety by making it harder for students to perform. Techniques like spontaneous tasks or tests with unfamiliar topics further elevate stress requiring immediate language production without preparation (Tsiplakides & Keramida, 2009).

Assessment for Learning

Conceived as an active process that is inextricably linked to teaching and learning, learning assessment is any assessment for which its design and practice priority is to serve the purpose of collecting evidence to promote students' learning and provide information for all the parties involved to improve practices (Black et al., 2004). Authors cited in this research use formative and learning assessment as synonyms. Formative assessment is an essential classroom work component, and its development can raise achievement standards. Another key element of formative assessment is the collected evidence use, which is intended to help students close the gap between the actual level of performance and the learning goal (Sadler, 1989). The evidence serves as material to raise judgments on the quality of students' pieces of work to shape and improve their competence by short-circuiting the randomness and inefficiency of trial-and-error learning. Teachers should know students and their learning needs. Likewise, the teacher-student relationship and the teaching-learning link must be interactive (Black, 2007). This alignment implies teachers know about students' advantages and disadvantages, needs, individual skills, and classroom divergences. In speaking performance, assessment should focus on fluency, pronunciation, and coherence, using continuous feedback to help students improve through targeted practice (Harmer, 2007).

Feedback

There is usually a key feature of formative assessment, feedback through interaction. Feedback is one of the most powerful influences on learning and achievement. However, the type of feedback and the way it is given can be differentially effective (Black & William, 2004; Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Sadler, 1989). Feedback plays a key role in formative assessment. It is defined in terms of information about how successfully something has been or is being done (Sadler, 1989). This activity plays a crucial role in teaching-learning processes by helping students understand the course goals and acquire the tools to reach them. The teacher plays a key role in modeling, describing, and demonstrating a high-quality performance and must be capable of guiding the students through improvement by transmitting this feedback and providing strategies for it.

Additionally, students use feedback to monitor their strengths and weaknesses and take a more active role. Feedback should therefore empower students to become self-regulated learners. Students should be able to self-monitor and use strategies to alter gaps between the expected quality and their actual level of performance. Feedback also impacts positively on affective factors such as motivation, beliefs, self-concept, and self-confidence (Gnepp et al., 2020; Hamidun et al., 2013; Kim & Lee, 2019; Lundstorm & Baker, 2009). Besides, for feedback to be effective, it must fulfill three conditions: (a) that the learner possesses

a concept of the standard being aimed for, (b) compares the actual (or current) level of performance with the standard, and (c) engages in appropriate action which leads to some closure of the gap (Sadler, 1983, 1989, 2010). In this sense, feedback is a tool for future work. It equips students to face future learning activities and assessments. Thus, feedback works as feedforward or prospective feedback (Sadler, 2010).

Providing Feedback

Understanding feedback is not easy for students. This is difficult because it requires them to think and later self-regulate their learning processes. Therefore, how feedback is delivered and how learners internalize it to take further actions are relevant points in this process. The teacher already possesses this knowledge (quality); it must somehow be shared with the student. Teachers' conceptions of quality are typically held in unarticulated form, inside their heads as tacit knowledge.

A tool was built to reduce this abstraction, externalize this quality element, and consider this theorization key in this research. Besides, students must understand the meaning of feedback before they can apply it to their work. Students need to identify with near certainty the aspects of their work that need attention. In this case, the teacher's role is to provide the students with comments on their work. In doing so, students need to receive concrete references to know where to start toward the goal (quality).

Other recommendations from Sadler include telling students about the strengths of their works; telling them (gently) about deficiencies, where they occurred, and their nature; telling students what would have improved their works; and pointing them to what could be done next time they complete a related type of response. In doing all this, feedback should be in a face-to-face modality that allows proper assessment and strategies for every student to improve their work. Specific strategies must be delivered to every student to work on their own to task improvement (Sadler, 2010).

In the context of speaking performance, feedback must address specific areas such as fluency, pronunciation, and coherence. Teachers can provide targeted feedback that helps students understand their strengths and areas for improvement, guiding them through modeling and practical strategies. Individualized, face-to-face feedback is especially effective in helping students develop self-monitoring skills and close the gap between their current abilities and the expected speaking performance (Sadler, 2010).

In the context of this research, all the strategies are followed to reach students' best understanding of their current performance state within the framework of a dialogic process and based on criteria that contribute to prospective feedback (i.e., to move towards learning that favors future decision-making).

Feedback in Higher Education

Assessment practices are confined to summative assessment in which the main goal is to judge students' work to get numerical scores that may allow them to pass or not the course. Traditional forms of assessment have been largely taken for granted and developments in formative assessment are mostly ignored. As a result, much teaching at whatever level still assumes a model of education as knowledge transmission and acquisition, with formative assessment conceptualized as an instrumental adjunct or a quick fix to educational problems (Pryor & Crossouard, 2010). Formative assessment has been misunderstood or misused. This practice and the prevalence of summative assessment methodologies also model students' assessment perception.

Method

Type of Research

This qualitative study seeks an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon (Mason, 2002). As an action research design (Berg & Lune, 2012), the participants can experience the intervention process and collect valuable lessons for teaching improvement and making changes (Creswell, 2005; Sandín, 2003). Therefore, its design involves the following overlapping stages: planning, action, observation, and reflection (Burns, 2009). In this study, planning involved designing the intervention, action focused on implementing it in the classroom, observation of collected data during the process, and reflection on analyzing the results to improve teaching practices (Burns, 2009).

Research Problem

This action research is contextualized in a Basic English II course for undergraduate students from different programs. The speaking tasks were challenging to them due to their limited experience with spoken English. There are few opportunities for them to receive feedback, and when it is done, it conveys the form of comments or grades for work done. The speaking skills are assessed twice each semester. However, it is not a widespread practice that students receive feedback on their performance when they may receive suggestions to improve. This issue may be due to the assessment approach that pervades teaching, how students appreciate it, or how they conceive feedback provision. Students highly value feedback focused on grades with summative purposes and not centered on improvement actions. Also, they have expressed concerns when facing speaking tasks. Their self-confidence and beliefs about speaking are fixed so they rarely implement strategies to improve due to the elevated level of anxiety they feel at the thought of having to speak English in front of the class.

Research Objectives

The objectives are:

1. To evaluate the effectiveness of formative feedback on students' oral production.
2. To explore the participants' views on formative feedback for improving speaking-presentation dimensions in English and reducing negative psychological aspects such as anxiety, negative beliefs, and self-confidence.

Participants

The sample is purposive and classified as discretionary sampling (Diaz, 2006; Palys, 2008). Participants were selected for meeting the following criteria, appropriate for the study:

- *Heterogeneity*: 24 mixed-undergraduate students from different study fields such as nursing, psychology, kinesiology, veterinary medicine, business engineering, social work, and law. The nature of the disciplines may influence the ways they learn English.
- *Age*: Ranging from 18 to 25 years old. There is little gap in academic work between now and high school.
- *Educational background*: All of them come from public schools; so, it can be assumed that they had English lessons from 10th to 12th grade at least 3-4 hours a week, as stated by the governmental programs with a little focus on speaking.
- *Level of English*: The Basic English II course is aligned with The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) at the A1 proficiency level (Council of Europe, 2001).

Research Procedures

The action plan was carried out for five weeks, from the first week of May to the first week of June. The action plan had six sessions presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. *Stages of the Action Plan*

Session	Description	Focus
1	– Pretest: Speaking presentation about daily routine	– Assessing students' performance using the rubric – Gathering information for pre-test

Session	Description	Focus
2	– To determine the compressibility of the instruments.	– Validation of instruments with students, other teachers, and experts.
3	– To analyze a high-quality oral presentation given by the teacher. – To describe a situation in the past	– Modeling – Studying the analytic rubric and the criteria – Preparation of presentation script – Monitoring and praising
4	– To analyze the criteria of the analytic rubric. – To implement specific strategies to improve oral performance	– Exemplification of a superior performance – Correction of scripts – Oral individual feedback was given – Provision of strategies to close the gap: – keeping a draft, recording samples of their presentation, knowing the criteria, distinguishing between exceptionally good and poor performance for each one of the criteria, using visual aids, self-assessing their presentations
5	– Posttest: speaking presentation about a story in the past	– Assessing students' performance using the rubric – Gathering information for posttest
6	– Interview: to analyze participants' perception of the intervention using a semi-structured interview	– Conducting interview – Gathering qualitative information from students' perceptions

Source: Own work.

Data Collection Instruments

Pre and Posttests

Both tests consisted of speaking presentations to help students understand the task quality criteria (Sadler, 1989, 2010). An analytic rubric was designed and used to monitor both oral speaking assessments. This rubric's criteria included grammar, vocabulary, content, pronunciation, and fluency. The maximum score was 20 points. It was designed in Spanish to facilitate understanding and comprehension.

The first one (pretest) was carried out before the action plan in session 1. Students had to present about their daily routines. The second one (posttest) was carried out after individual feedback was provided to students in session 4. Students had to present a story in the past tense.

Semi-structured Interview

A semi-structured interview was conducted in Spanish considering the students' English language competence, the need to collect rich information about the process, and an understanding of a social phenomenon from the participants' perspective. Collected data attempted to describe the findings as experienced by the subjects (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009) (see Appendix A).

Data Analysis Techniques

For the data collected with the pre and post-tests, descriptive statistics helped summarize findings by describing general tendencies in the data and the overall spread of the scores (Dörnyei, 2007). Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data collected from the interviews. The analytical stages considered: familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing, defining, and naming the themes (Braun & Clark, 2006).

Findings

Specific Objective 1

Pre and Post-test General Results

The result of the mean obtained in both tests is illustrated in Figure 1.

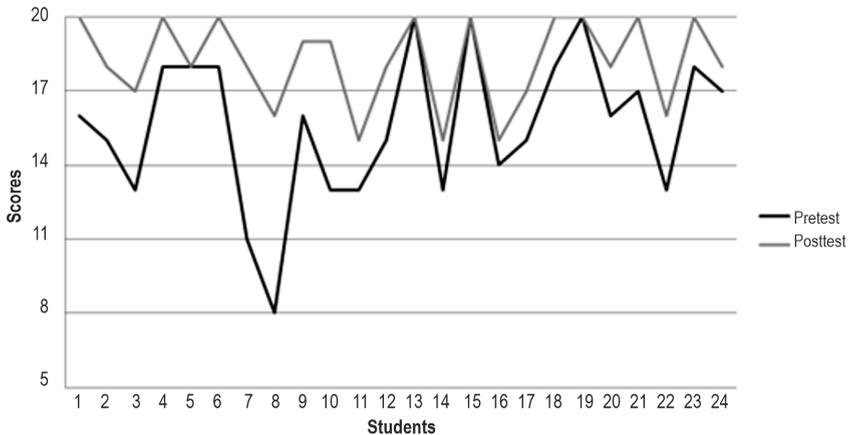


Figure 1. Pre and Posttests General Results

The scores' mean for the pre-intervention test was 15,63 out of twenty, while for the post-intervention test was 18,21 out of 20. Thus, the data collected showed an increase of 2,58 points after the intervention. It is worth noticing that low achievers in the pre-test increased in the post-test.

Pre and Post-Test Results by Criteria

By contrasting pre and post-tests, it is possible to ascertain that the intervention improved all the participants' speaking skill dimensions including fluency, pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and content. These dimensions were consistent with the criteria used in the analytic rubric to monitor the students' learning before and after the formative feedback methodology was emphasized during lessons. This is shown in Figure 2.

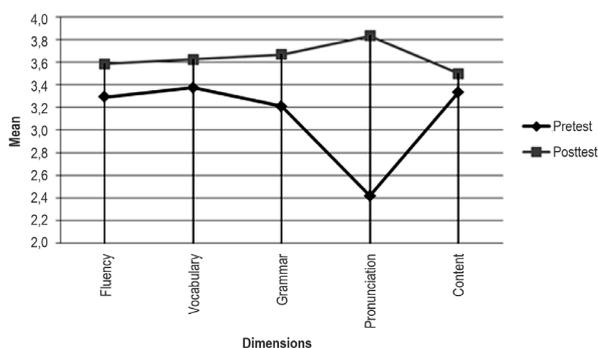


Figure 2. *Pre and Post-test Results by Criteria*

There has been an improvement within many of the assessed dimensions. The maximum score for each dimension was 4 points. Indeed, all the dimensions reached punctuation over 3.5 in the post-test. There is a remarkable case for the pronunciation dimension. The scores increased from 2.4 (pre-test) to 3.8 (post-test). In addition, the participants exhibited the lowest scores for this dimension in the pre-test but the highest for the same ability in the post-intervention test. Thus, the data strongly suggest that enhancement in the learning process for this skill exists.

Specific Objective 2²

The data from the interview with six of the participants suggest four clear dimensions: (1) formative assessment, (2) dimension improvement, (3) strategies for improvement, and

² Interviews were translated from Spanish into English for publication purposes.

(4) impact on affective factors. Each of these dimensions contains, at the same time, specific themes.

Formative Assessment

The participants valued the innovative methodology of actively incorporating formative feedback, highlighting each moment of it. They especially appreciated modeling, continuous feedback, individual feedback, and knowing the evaluation instrument beforehand.

Students valued the teacher's modeling strategy regarding using examples for the speaking task. It was helpful for them as a reference in terms of time, depth, development, delivery, and presentation language. They also refer to modeling as a guide or criteria to prepare and visualize their presentation:

“...it was very useful to have an idea of what we had to accomplish...because sometimes you do much more and it is unnecessary, or you do much less, and you need much more. In short, it was useful having a parameter of what we had to accomplish.” (Participant 2)

Continuous feedback interrelated with the learning process was considered a valuable opportunity to practice and rehearse with the teacher before the real presentation. They highlight that this instance was helpful, on one hand, to find out what their strengths and weaknesses were before the task; on the other, to uncover by themselves what was their English proficiency level at that moment as a reference to practice and improve it during the time they had before the actual presentation. The following comments exemplify this issue:

“Constantly getting feedback was helpful because it's good to know what to do and how to do it at every moment ... I was learning about the strengths and weaknesses of the presentation, and I felt like I was not alone as it happens in other presentations. It's good to feel guided.” (Participant 5)

“...because I was able to make sure that my presentation... that is, what I was going to say... was correct or what corrections I had to make to make it look good. Also, since I had the opportunity to present... saying what I was going to present... I realized what I needed to work on to improve... with the comments and seeing how the previous evaluation with the guideline.” (Participant 1)

Knowing the instrument beforehand refers to the value participants give to the knowledge of the assessment instrument, in this case, the analytic rubric. Knowing the instrument and its criteria benefited their progress since they knew how they were assessed in the real instance. It served as a guide when they were studying for the task. Also, some of them mentioned that it was helpful to focus their study as for some other assessments they lost time not knowing what to concentrate on because they did not have a reference. Finally, some of them also mentioned that the proficiency levels were helpful when rehearsing because they had a concrete reference, the “very well” level, to orient their study and improvement. For example:

“...having that guideline...the rubric...and also knowing that with that we will be assessed and knowing exactly what we have to do to get a good grade is very helpful to guide us and not waste time or concentration on things that won't be assessed.” (Participant 5)

“...because then I could prepare myself with certainty knowing that I had to improve since in that instance...of feedback...I knew my strengths and weaknesses besides knowing the guidelines with which I would be assessed.” (Participant 6)

“It was good to learn what a rubric means. Not all teachers send the guidelines with the work instructions and the ones that don't explain what it means. They assume you know what they know.” (Participant 2)

Dimension Improvement

This dimension refers to an important result of this intervention. All dimensions, pronunciation, fluency, grammar, and content improved. As previously analyzed, pronunciation was the dimension with the greatest improvement.

All the participants mentioned that the prospective feedback instance helped them improve all the dimensions. Students highlight that the intervention helped them internalize the rubric criteria and understand what each one is about. In addition, they mention that having strategies to study autonomously helped them a lot because they could use their time more effectively. Additionally, they value their improvement in the pronunciation dimension as shown in the following comments:

“I was able to improve on all the criteria in the assessment guideline since this time I knew what they meant, and I was also able to learn strategies for studying alone at home.” (Participant 1)

“In the presentation work sessions when you individually gave us feedback, I realized that I had a lot of work to do to improve my pronunciation so that what I wanted to say would be understood and I started to use the strategies I had learned.” (Participant 6)

Strategies for Improvement Dimension

An important objective of the intervention is that students could manage strategies to improve. In this regard, three strategies stand out among those mentioned by the participants: visual aid, keeping a draft, and using a voice record.

Using visual aids to prepare the presentation and practice for its final presentation helped them organize ideas, follow the story through the images, and implement retrieval practice strategies (Bjork, 1988). This is reported below:

“For my presentation, I practiced with images, just images. I could reach the skill of seeing the image and remembering what I had to say. In this sense, that helped me learn the presentation better.” (Participant 3)

Keeping a draft corrected by the teacher with comments and suggestions made the participants feel confident about practicing with this corrected draft as they were sure of learning something one hundred percent precise. This is presented below:

“I have taken up much of my sheet of paper with the notes from the comments you made to me. This helped me organize my presentation and keep track of the improvements I needed to make.” (Participant 5)

Participants also used their cell phones to record the teacher’s comments and pay better attention when giving feedback. This is important as sometimes the comments are extended and there is much to say. Using this type of strategy reduces the exogenous load on the working memory and allows focus on the work (Sweller, 2010) as expressed below:

“Something I used a lot to prepare the presentation better was to record the comments. That helped me not worry about everything at the same time during the feedback. With the recording, I could listen to the comments as many times as I wanted.” (Participant 4)

Impact on Affective Factors

An interesting aspect of the experience is how the methodology impacted the students’ affective factors. In general, much attention is paid to cognitive aspects such as memory, attention, and problem-solving, which are crucial in language learning. These aspects may be intuitive but not necessarily accurate. Students report that the intervention helped them improve their self-confidence, decrease their anxiety towards speaking tasks, and modify their beliefs about how to learn English. For example:

“The whole process helped me be confident in my abilities to present in English. I think that is very important in learning anything. Feeling confident that you can do something with help from the teacher lessens those feelings of inadequacy.” (Participant 2)

“Receiving feedback and knowing what strategies to use to improve much helped me not go through that nervousness that usually happens to me before speaking in English. Sometimes just thinking about having to speak in English, I started to feel nervous and anxious; that made me forget what I had to say.” (Participant 6)

“I have never felt so good preparing an oral presentation in English. The process was so good that I now think learning English is not difficult if you have the proper guidance to do it. In fact, now I am more interested in continuing to learn.” (Participant 4)

Conclusions

As previously described, my intervention dealt with prospective feedback and its principles to improve my participants’ speaking skill dimensions and help them with affective factors that usually hinder their performance. Formative assessment and feedback highly

and positively affected students' performance. All the students increased their overall scores in the post-test. No matter the program they were studying, they incorporated strategies for improving the presentation. Besides, all the speaking skill dimensions improved. The intervention affected low achievers who needed support and guidance during learning.

Regarding feedback, students improved when they clearly understood what they had to do in a task. Therefore, modeling or exemplifying the objective of a task, in this case, an oral presentation, was beneficial for them. This is supported by Sadler (2010) who states that students should have —an appreciation of what constitutes high-quality work of the type they are called to produce. Students preferred individual feedback over other ways of receiving comments. Among the reasons, I found out that they were more relaxed and open to comments when this instance was individual rather than in groups, mostly when they felt less confident and shy.

They also benefited when they knew their current performance level. In the intervention, the students analyzed the rubric and its criteria and understood the assessment on their presentations before the final one. The rubric was a starting point to visualize progress and a specific goal. They knew the quality of their present work concerning the quality target. This idea also supports the implementation of a high-quality example. Students also had to understand what the teacher meant with the feedback, so it had to become a dialogic experience.

Students selected specific strategies to make progress for the final presentation. During the intervention, many options were provided. As teachers, we cannot expect they already know how to close the gap. Students should develop a repertoire of tactics that help them close the gap between the high-quality target and their current level and these strategies should also be taught. This idea supports the use of prospective feedback. The strategies are for future use to become independent learners. Using visual aids, keeping a corrected draft, and recording teachers' comments stood out among the students' commonly used strategies.

The intervention impacted affective factors such as self-confidence, beliefs, and anxiety. The participants of this study reported an increase in their self-confidence and a decrease in their anxiety when facing speaking tasks. Finally, the intervention had a positive impact on students' beliefs. This is relevant because beliefs can predispose individuals to generate strategies to cope with or avoid certain activities (Dweck, 2006). English language learners in general have limiting beliefs about learning a foreign language, especially about speaking in a foreign language. It is relevant to work on these beliefs that students bring to classrooms as they can limit motivation, attention, curiosity, memory, and learning strategies (Fredrickson, 2004; Gopnik, 2012; Gruber et al., 2014).

References

- Aydin, S. (2008). An investigation on the language anxiety and fear of negative evaluation among Turkish EFL Learners. *Asian EFL Journal*, 30, 421-444. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED512266>
- Berg, B. L., & Lune, H. (2012). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences* (8th ed.). Pearson. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1317652>
- Bjork, R. A. (1988). Retrieval practice and the maintenance of knowledge. In Gruneberg, M.M., Morris, P.E., Sykes, R.N., (Eds.), *Practical aspects of memory II* (pp. 396–401). Wiley. <https://bjorklab.psych.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/13/2016/07/Bjork1988ReRetrieval.pdf>
- Black, P. (2007). Formative Assessment: Promises or problems? *The Journal for Drama in Education*. 23(2) 37-42.
- Black, P., & Wiliam, D. (2006). Developing a theory of formative assessment. In J. Gardner (Ed.), *Assessment and learning*. Sage. https://kclpure.kcl.ac.uk/portal/files/9119063/Black2009_Developing_the_theory_of_formative_assessment.pdf
- Black, P., & Wiliam, D. (2009). Developing the theory of formative assessment. *Educational Assessment, Evaluation and Accountability*, 21(1), 5-31. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11092-008-9068-5>
- Black, P., Harrison, C., Lee, C., Marshall, B., & Dylan, W. (2004). *Assessment for learning: Putting it into practice*. Open University.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Bravo, J. (2011). *SIMCE: Pasado, Presente y Futuro del Sistema Nacional de Evaluación*. <https://biblat.unam.mx/hevila/EstudiospublicosSantiago0/2011/no123/4.pdf>
- Brown, H. D. (2004). *Language Assessment*. Addison Wesley Longman, Inc. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3588320>
- Burns, A. (2009). *Doing action research in English language teaching: A guide for practitioners*. Routledge.
- Büyükhıskı, D. (2016). The Correlation among EFL learners' test anxiety, foreign language anxiety and language achievement. *English Language Teaching*, 9, 190. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/full-text/EJ1106656.pdf>
- Bygate, M. (2001). Speaking. In R. Carter & D. Nunan (Eds.), *The Cambridge guide to teaching English to speakers of other languages* (pp. 14-20). Cambridge.
- Celce-Murcia, M., & Olshtain, E. (2000). *Discourse and context in language teaching: A guide for language teachers*. Cambridge University Press. <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/4kx77286>
- Corvalán, J. (2006). *Accountability educacional: rendición de cuentas más responsabilización por los procesos y resultados de la educación* (1a ed.). Editorial San Marino.
- Council of Europe. (2001). *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: learning, teaching, assessment*. Cambridge University Press
- Creswell, J. W. (2005). *Educational research Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. Pearson.

- Díaz, N. (2006). Técnicas de muestreo. Sesgos más frecuentes. *Revistas Sedén*, 9, 21- 132. <http://www.revistaseden.org/files/9-cap%209.pdf>
- Dörnyei, Z. (2007). *Research Methods in Applied Linguistics*. Oxford University Press.
- Dweck, C. S. (2006). *Mindset: the new psychology of success*. Random House.
- EF Education First. (2020) *EF English Proficiency Index*. EF Education First.
- Fredrickson, B. L. (2004). The broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London. Series B, Biological sciences*, 359(1449), 1367–1378. <https://doi.org/10.1098/rstb.2004.1512>
- Gnepp, J., Klayman, J., Williamson, I. O., & Barlas, S. (2020). The future of feedback: Motivating performance improvement through future-focused feedback. *PLoS one*, 15(6), e0234444. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0234444>
- Gopnik, A. (2012). Scientific thinking in young children: Theoretical advances, empirical research, and policy implications. *Science* 337, 1623–1627. <https://science.sciencemag.org/content/337/6102/1623/tab-pdf>
- Gruber, B. D., & Gelman, C. (2014). States of curiosity modulate hippocampus-dependent learning via the dopaminergic circuit. *Neuron*, 84(2014), 486-496. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0896627314008046>
- Hamidun, N., & Hizwari, S., & Othman, N. (2013). Enhancing students' motivation by providing feedback on writing: The case of international students from Thailand. *International Journal of Social Science and Humanity*, 179(2), 591-594. <http://ijssh.org/papers/179-A10062.pdf>
- Harmer, J. (2007). *The practice of English language teaching* (4th ed.). Pearson Longman.
- Hattie, J., & Timperley, H. (2007). The power of feedback. *Review of Educational Research*, 77(1), 81–112. <https://doi.org/10.3102/003465430298487>
- Horwitz, E. (2001). Language anxiety and achievement. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 21, 112 - 126.
- Horwitz, E., Horwitz, M., & Cope, A. (1986). Foreign language classroom anxiety. *Modern Language Journal*, 70, 125- 132. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2008.06.002>
- Jones, J. F. (2004). A cultural context for language anxiety. *EA (English Australia) Journal*, 21(2), 30-39.
- Kim, E. J., & Lee, K. R. (2019). Effects of an examiner's positive and negative feedback on self-assessment of skill performance, emotional response, and self-efficacy in Korea: A quasi-experimental study. *BMC Med Educ*, 19, 142. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12909-019-1595-x>
- Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, S. (2009). *InterViews: Learning the craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing*. SAGE.
- López, R., Pizarro, M., & Castro, F. (2020). Challenges in implementing formative assessment: A Chilean perspective. *Educational Studies*, 52(1), 78-95. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03055698.2020.1719384>

- Lundstorm, K., & Baker, W. (2009). To give is better than to receive: The Benefits of peer review to the reviewer's own writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 18*(1), 30-43. http://epi.sc.edu/ar/AS_4_files/Lundstrom%20and%20Baker,%202009.pdf
- Luo, H. (2014). Foreign language speaking anxiety: A study of Chinese language learners. *Journal of the National Council of Less Commonly Taught Languages, 15*, 99-117. <http://www.newsite.ncoctl.org/images/foreign-Language-speaking.pdf>
- Luoma S. (2004). *Assessing speaking*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511733017>
- Mansell, W., James, M., & Gardner, J. (2009). *Assessment in schools—fit for purpose?* ESRC/TLRP. <http://www.tlrp.org/pub/documents/assessment.pdf>
- Marsh, H., & Martin, A. (2011). Academic self-concept and academic achievement: Relations and causal ordering. *The British journal of educational psychology, 81*, 59-77. <https://bpspsychub.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1348/000709910X503501>
- Mason, J. (2002). *Qualitative Researching* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications.
- MINEDUC. (2006). *Evaluación para el Aprendizaje*. Santiago. <https://www.rmm.cl/sites/default/files/usuarios/yvivanco/File/EVALUACION%20PARA%20EL%20APRENDIZAJE.pdf>
- MINEDUC. (2017). *Antecedentes sobre el Programa Inglés Abre Puertas (PIAP)*. Santiago. <https://ingles.mineduc.cl/programa-inglesabre-puertas/>
- MINEDUC. (2018). *Decreto Supremo 67 de Evaluación, Calificación y Promoción Escolar*. Santiago de Chile.
- Nunan, D. (2003). *Practical English language teaching*. McGraw Hill.
- Oz, H., Demirezen, M., & Pourfeiz, J. (2015). Willingness to communicate of EFL learners in Turkish context. *Learning and Individual Differences, 37*, 269–275. <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/81183646.pdf>
- Palys, T. (2008). Purposive sampling. In L. M. Given (Ed.), *The Sage Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods* (Vol.2) (pp. 697-698). Sage.
- Pryor, J., & Crossouard, B. (2010). Challenging formative assessment - disciplinary spaces and identities. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education, 35*(3), 265–276. https://www.library.uwa.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/1885968/Pryor.pdf
- Sadler, R. D. (1983). Evaluation and the improvement of academic learning. *Journal of Higher Education, 54* (1), 60-79.
- Sadler, R. D. (1989). Formative assessment and the design of instructional systems. *Instructional Science, 18*, 119-144.
- Sadler, R. D. (2010). Beyond feedback: Developing student capability in complex appraisal. *Assessment and evaluation in Higher education, 35*(5), 535-550.
- Sandín, E. (2003). *Investigación cualitativa en Educación. Fundamentos y Tradiciones*. McGrawHill.

- Sweller, J. (2010). Cognitive load theory: Recent theoretical advances. In J. L. Plass, R. Moreno, & R. Brünken (Eds.), *Cognitive load theory* (pp. 29–47). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511844744.004>
- Tsiplakides, I., & Keramida, A. (2009). Helping students overcome foreign language speaking anxiety in the English classroom: Theoretical issues and practical recommendations. *International Education Studies*, 2(4), 39-44. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ies.v2n4p39>
- Young, P. (1990). *The psychology of language testing*. Cambridge University Press.
- Zhang, X. (2019). Foreign language anxiety and its effects on students' oral performance in language classrooms. *Language Teaching Research*, 23(6), 727-745. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168818765871>

Appendix A.

Semi-structured interview

Dimension 1: Appreciation of feedback

1. Do you remember a time when you received feedback on your oral performance?
2. To what extent did it help you to know the standard of a high-quality presentation for your work?
3. Do you think that knowing the evaluation criteria and their key concepts was helpful to you?

Dimension 2: Contribution of Feedback

4. Do you think that the teacher's feedback was useful to improve your oral performance? Do you think that the teacher's feedback was useful to improve your oral performance in what aspects?
5. Do you think that how the feedback was given was beneficial for your improvement?
6. What elements of the feedback do you think were most helpful?
7. Why do you think the suggestions were helpful? Which suggestions were most helpful?
8. Did the feedback instance have an impact on the way you prepare for an oral assessment, and why?