TEACHERS OF ENGLISH EXPERIENCE OF PROVIDING FEEDBACK ON STUDENTS’ PERFORMANCE DURING WAR IN UKRAINE

Abstract. Living in a constantly changing information space is related to developing feedback literacy. The article aimed to explore experience of providing feedback by teachers who taught English in Ukraine during wartime. To achieve this aim we answered research questions about various kinds of feedback, their effectiveness, and importance of providing feedback. We administered teachers’ survey, collected data, analysed and presented results. The study used a mixed method research design, which implied obtaining quantitative and qualitative data through a Google Form survey. The survey consisted of twenty prompts regarding background information about the respondents, their experience in providing feedback to their students and their evaluation of feedback during wartime. Participation of teachers of English (N=68) was voluntary and anonymous. The results of the research were based on responses of Ukrainian teachers older than 25 years who had at least six years of teaching English at universities and secondary schools. Half of the participants had online synchronous lessons using Zoom, Google Meet and other videoconferencing planforms. Responding to the research questions, we discovered that majority of respondents provided feedback often, mostly verbally, combining group and individual feedback. Students’ reaction to the feedback was mostly positive which could be explained by the fact that teachers focused mostly on results, ways to improve and process in their feedback. We discovered three main sources of feedback for students: teachers (42%), computer-
based (27%) and peers (17%). The most important function of feedback for teachers was showing students the ways to improve, the best time to provide feedback after the activity, and the most important feature of feedback was its content. Majority of teachers had the same opinions on the connection between providing feedback and improving English, importance of feedback during wartime and learning more about feedback. Respondents also demonstrated desire to learn more about ways of providing effective feedback, which was especially important during wartime.

**Keywords:** feedback, teachers of English, performance, war.

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**ДОСВІД ЗАБЕЗПЕЧЕННЯ ФІДБЕКУ ВИКЛАДАЧАМИ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ ЩОДО УСПІШНОСТІ СТУДЕНТІВ ПІД ЧАС ВІЙНИ В УКРАЇНІ**

Анотація. Життя в інформаційному просторі, що постійно змінюється, пов’язане з розвитком грамотності надання зворотного зв’язку або фідбеку. Стаття мала на меті вивчити досвід надання фідбеку викладачами англійської мови в Україні під час війни. Для досягнення цієї мети ми відповіли на запитання дослідження про різні види зворотного зв’язку, їх ефективність та важливість. Ми провели опитування викладачів, зібрали дані, проаналізували та представили результати. У дослідженні використовувався смішаний метод, який передбачав отримання кількісних і якісних даних за допомогою Google Form. Опитування складається з двадцяти запитань щодо інформації про респондентів, їхній досвід надання зворотного зв’язку своїм учням або студентам та оцінку фідбеку під час війни. Участь викладачів англійської мови (кількість 68 осіб) була добровільною та анонімною. Результати дослідження грунтувалися на відповідях українських вчителів старше 25 років, як найменше шість років викладали англійську мову в університетах і середніх школах. Половина учасників проводила синхронні онлайн-заняття з використанням Zoom, Google Meet та інших платформ відеоконференцій. Відповідаючи на запитання дослідження, участь викладачів англійської мови (кількість 68 осіб) була добровільною та анонімною. Результати дослідження грунтувалися на відповідях українських вчителів старше 25 років, як найменше шість років викладали англійську мову в університетах і середніх школах. Половина учасників проводила синхронні онлайн-заняття з використанням Zoom, Google Meet та інших платформ відеоконференцій. Відповідаючи на запитання дослідження, ми виявили, що більшість
респондентів надавали фідбек часто, переважно усно, поєднуючи груповий та індивідуальний зворотний зв’язок. Реакція студентів на фідбек була здебільшого позитивною, що можна пояснити тим, що викладачі зосереджувалися здебільшого на результатах, способах покращення та процесу обробки інформації. Ми виявили три основні джерела фідбеку для учнів та студентів: вчителі (42%), комп’ютер (27%) і однолітки (17%). Найважливішою функцією фідбеку на думку викладачів було показати студентам шляхи вдосконалення, найкращий час для надання зворотного зв’язку – після виконаної вправи, а найважливішою особливістю зворотного зв’язку – його зміст. Більшість респондентів мали однакові думки щодо кореляції між фідбеком та покращенням опанування англійською мовою, важливості зворотного зв’язку під час війни та отримання додаткових знань про фідбек. Респонденти також продемонстрували бажання дізнатися більше про способи забезпечення ефективного зворотного зв’язку під час війни.

Ключові слова: фідбек, викладачі англійської мови, успішність, війна.

Actuality of research. New approaches to teaching students who will meet requirements of a highly competitive labour market suggest using innovative pedagogical and communicative technologies. The ability to live in a constantly changing information space and learn throughout life is closely related to exposure of various types of assessment, providing and receiving personally oriented feedback thus developing feedback literacy in general. Importance of feedback lies in providing an opportunity for students to improve and learn from errors. Therefore, the issue of providing feedback on students’ performance during wartime in Ukraine needs further exploration.

Introduction. Feedback may be defined as information which fills in a gap between what a learner really understands and what should be understood, to put it differently, a gap between “current and desired learning” (7, p. 3). Therefore, to identify the gap, there should be a set of standards to use before providing feedback. Another important condition of providing effective feedback is an ability of students to obtain, process and exploit it (13). In fact, feedback may be informative but if a student ignores, cannot comprehend or cannot use it, such feedback is even harmful. Feedback is powerful, but because of its variability, it requires taking into account characteristics of a particular classroom environment (7, p. 6).

Feedback is also defined as information given to learners on their progress by a teacher or somebody else (3). Therefore, they distinguish several types of feedback depending on its source or agent: student to teacher, teacher to student (7, p. 7), peer to peer (12), internet, experience, parents and other outside school partners (7, p. 168), self-marking (7, p. 162). Regarding the time when feedback is provided, it may be immediate and delayed (3), also called as in-lesson and post-lesson (7, p. 6).

It is important to remember that feedback belongs to formative assessment the focus of which is improvement of students’ current performance. Three questions
may be used to characterize feedback: where a student is now, where they need to go, and how to do that (7, p. 8, 10). Feedback may be described by so-called ten Cs, according to teachers’ explanations what feedback was for them: comments, clarification, criticism, confirmation, content development, constructive reflection, correction, cons and pros, commentary and criterion (7, p. 1). Feedback should not be confused with marking and grading, as the main task of feedback is to guide students to achieve better results (7, p. 2).

Feedback is closely connected with improvement of students’ performance through learning from mistakes. The previous study revealed that teacher’s corrective feedback is one factor that influences the progress of students in learning English (1). According to the results of the research on university students’ perception of emergency remote learning (ERL), one third of respondents confessed that they were dissatisfied by “unclear instructions and absence of prompt or sufficient feedback.” More than eighty percent of students in the same study named missed opportunities for mutual feedback as one of ERL drawbacks (5, p. 94). To conclude, it is possible to state that students’ satisfaction depends on regular provision of feedback (5, p. 97).

The article aims to explore experience of providing feedback by teachers of English in Ukraine during wartime. To achieve this aim we have to answer research questions:

- What kind of feedback do teachers of English usually provide?
- What makes feedback effective?
- How important feedback is for teachers of English?

To answer research questions we administered teachers’ survey, collected data, analysed and presented results.

Materials and methods. This study used a mixed method research design, which implied obtaining quantitative and qualitative data through a Google Form survey. The survey consisted of twenty prompts regarding background information about the respondents, their experience in providing feedback to their students and their evaluation of feedback during wartime. Prompts 8, 11, 17, 18 and 19 were based on a Likert scale, consisted of a prompt and a set of five responses, we calculated the median and Inter-Quartile Range (IQR) of each prompt; Prompts 4 and 5 were general questions and required either “Yes” or “No” answers; Prompt 20 was an open question for written comments which were not obligatory; the rest of the prompts with one or several possible choices. Participation of teachers of English (N=68) was voluntary and anonymous.

Results and Discussion. Considering the age (Prompt 1), more than a half of the respondents were 45 years old and older, the third of teachers were within 35-44 age range (35%), the rest were 25-34 years old (10%) (Picture 1).
Women (94%) outnumbered men (6%) in this research, which could be explained by womanizing of teaching profession in Ukraine (Prompt 2). According to the results of all Ukrainian survey, 84% of teachers are women, which is higher than the average international level (68.1%), got by TALIS 2013. Considering various regions of Ukraine, Kyiv boasts the highest share of teachers who are women 87.7% (6).

Teachers with at least six years of experience took part in this research (Prompt 3); 41 percent of the respondents had experience from 11 to 20 years of teaching English. More than half of the participants had 21 years and more of working experience teaching English (Picture 2). Such results correlate with the age of the participants, the youngest being 25 years old.

It is important to know how the beginning of the war affected teachers’ lives. Indeed, the third of the respondents had to relocate (Prompt 4), but none changed their place of work (Prompt 5). It could be explained by the fact that almost all educational institutions used blended or fully online classes because of the Covid-19 restrictions. Moreover, the Ministry of Science and Education of Ukraine encouraged teachers to continue working even from abroad. These findings are consistent with the previous research which indicated that ten percent of teachers of English, who completed the survey, moved to safe places in Ukraine and twenty percent went abroad (14, p. 17).
The participants of the research were mostly college or university teachers of English (Prompt 6), but secondary schools were also represented (18%) (Picture 3).

**Pic.3. The participants’ current place of work**

Considering the mode of teaching (Prompt 7), half of the participants conducted online lessons of English synchronously using videoconferencing platforms like Zoom, Google Meet and others, quarter of the lessons were online asynchronous, when students completed the tasks at time convenient for them. A bit less than quarter were blended lessons, partly online, partly offline. As we can see, it was practically impossible to conduct offline lessons of English (2%) (Picture 4).

**Pic. 4. The mode of teaching English during wartime**

These results accord with earlier research indicating similar proportion of the modes of teaching: online synchronous classes 87%, online asynchronous 42%, blended classes 15%, and offline classes 2% (14, p. 19).

Responding to the question about frequency of feedback (Prompt 8), most respondents indicated agreement with “often” (Mdn=2, IQR=1), a bit less chose “always” to show how often they provided feedback (Table 1).
### Table 1

**Teacher’s feedback on students’ performance at the lessons of English**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey prompts</th>
<th>always</th>
<th>often</th>
<th>sometimes</th>
<th>rarely</th>
<th>never</th>
<th>Mdn</th>
<th>IQR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prompt 8. How often do you provide feedback for your students?</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prompt 11. What is your students’ reaction to your feedback?</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prompt 17. Providing feedback helps me to improve teaching English.</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prompt 18. Feedback of teachers is especially important during the wartime.</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prompt 19. I would like to learn more about providing effective feedback.</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At the same time fifteen percent of teachers confessed that provided feedback “sometimes” (Picture 5).

![Pic. 5. Frequency of providing feedback during wartime](image)
Describing the kind of feedback they provide (Prompt 9), teachers indicated verbal as mostly used (64%) (Picture 6).

These findings are in keeping with the previous research stating that verbal feedback is more powerful than written (2).

According to the results of the research, teachers of English used a combination of group and individual feedback (Prompt 10), but individual feedback was also used by some respondents (18%) (Picture 7).

According to the results of the research (Prompt 11), students usually reacted positively to the feedback provided by their teachers of English (77%). Teachers agreed on their students’ positive reaction (Mdn=2, IQR=0) (Table 1), while some respondents were indecisive about that (Picture 8).
Providing feedback, teachers of English mostly focused on results and ways to improve (Prompt 12), as well as on the process (Picture 9). Students’ personality and behaviour deserve much less attention while providing feedback. Such findings accord with another research on corrective feedback which implied that teachers should support their students and use all the means for students not to be ashamed of their errors. Such policy creates a safe atmosphere at the lesson which encourages students to experiment with a language (1, p. 1).

There may be various sources of feedback (Prompt 13). The research demonstrated that students got feedback mostly from teachers (42%), their feedback was also computer-based (27%) or provided by peers (17%) (Picture 10).
As we can see, as far as feedback was provided by teachers first of all, teacher-centered classrooms prevail, and alternative kinds of assessment like self-generated or peer, were still not ubiquitous. These results are consistent with the previous studies which showed that peer assessment was used extensively only by 15.6% of teachers, and 22.1% of teachers did not use it at all (12, p. 161). According to another research, teachers overestimated students’ unwillingness to provide feedback for their peers (11, p. 102). Using self-assessment was also not widely used in spite of the fact that students are excellent sources of feedback through self-assessment, which includes reflection on the quality of their performance, using criteria, and revising their work, which leads to developing learner autonomy (9).

According to the results of the research, the participants considered “showing students the ways to improve” to be the most important function of feedback (Prompt 14). “Encouraging students”, “identifying students’ weaknesses and strengths”, were also important. Such functions of feedback as “informing students of their performance” and “justifying grades” were mentioned less frequently. The only function which was not mentioned was “punishing students” (Picture 11).
Majority of respondents had the same point of view considering the best time to provide feedback (Prompt 15), eighty-two percent of them thought that it would be better to do right after the activity (Picture 12).

**Pic. 12. The best time to provide feedback**

However, some teachers thought that it was possible to give feedback during the activity or later, at the next lesson, and some remarked that it depended on a type of activity and may vary. These findings are in keeping with the previous studies focused on corrective feedback (CF) which stated that seventy percent of teachers preferred to provide CF after the activity and in their comments added that timing depended on the activity and its aim (4, p. 6). Nevertheless, some researchers indicated benefits of immediate feedback during an activity when it was possible to learn more about an error and use a corrected option (10). According to the results of another research, immediate feedback did not break “the flow of the communication” and friendly atmosphere of the lesson (1).

Content of comments was considered the most important for effectiveness of feedback by teachers (Prompt 16), but a source of feedback information, feedback design and students’ feedback literacy were also mentioned (Picture 13).

**Pic. 13. What makes feedback effective**
Responds to Prompt 17 (Table 1) demonstrated that for majority of teachers providing feedback was directly related to improving teaching English (Picture 14).

**Pic. 14. Correlation between providing feedback and improving teaching English**

It is worth noting that constructive feedback is effective only when students reflect on their experience and take it into account (2).

Respondents also mostly agreed with Prompt 18 (Table 1) that feedback was especially important during wartime (Picture 15).

**Pic. 15. Importance of feedback during wartime**

As far as there were mostly online lessons of English during wartime, according to the responses to Prompt 7, interaction between teachers and students was of utmost importance (5, p. 97).

Moreover, teachers of English acknowledged necessity of learning more about providing effective feedback responding to Prompt 19 (Picture 16).
Remarkably, teachers indicated agreement with Prompts 17, 18 and 19, and their opinions on the connection between providing feedback and improving English, importance of feedback during wartime and learning more about feedback were not divided (Mdn=2, IQR=1) (Table 1).

Responding to Prompt 20 was not obligatory. Nevertheless, some respondents shared their additional comments on feedback, as well as on the survey itself. Teachers of English wrote about their intention to learn more about “providing effective feedback” and try “what works” for their students, necessity to “pay more attention to feedback”, get “additional information or training on the topic”. Some teachers did not see any connection “between feedback and war in the country”, while others emphasized importance of knowing “more about feedback during wartime”, researching “different aspects of teaching during wartime because it is something we face for the first time” and, therefore, it is necessary to understand “what we deal with and how to be most effective.” They were curious about “new ways of providing feedback and learning of other teachers’ experience”, teaching and learning “the culture of feedback”. These findings endorse the view that feedback should be detailed enough for students to understand and use it (8). Teachers also wrote about challenges like “assessing big groups of students and giving them feedback”, “limited time”, etc. In general, teachers were grateful for an opportunity to complete the survey and speculated that the research was “something intriguingly amazing” and wished good luck, added that the survey was “interesting”, the issue “urgent” and “deserves more attention.”

Conclusions. The results of the research are based on responses of Ukrainian teachers older than 25 years and at least six years of teaching English at universities and secondary schools. Half of the participants had online synchronous lessons using Zoom, Google Meet and other videoconferencing planforms, a quarter had online asynchronous lessons, the rest had blended and just a few offline. Responding to the research questions, we discovered that majority of respondents provided feedback often, mostly verbally, combining group and individual feedback. Students’ reaction to the feedback was mostly positive which could be explained by the fact that
teachers focused mostly on results, ways to improve and process in their feedback, while students’ personality and behaviour were of a low priority. We discovered three main sources of feedback for students: teachers (42%), computer-based (27%) and peers (17%), which proves that English language classrooms are still teacher-centered in Ukraine. The most important function of feedback for teachers is showing students the ways to improve, the best time to provide feedback is after the activity, and the most important feature of feedback is its content. Majority of teachers had the same opinions on the connection between providing feedback and improving English, importance of feedback during wartime and learning more about feedback. Respondents also demonstrated desire to learn more about ways of providing effective feedback, which is especially important during wartime.

References:

Література: