

THE ROLE OF FEEDBACK IN TECHNOLOGY-ENHANCED ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING: TYPES, TIMING, AND IMPACT

The integration of technology in English Language Teaching (ELT) has significantly transformed the pedagogical landscape, altering not just how lessons are delivered but also how feedback is provided and received. This technological evolution has prompted educators and researchers alike to explore the nuances of feedback within digital learning environments. Specifically, the distinction between automated and human feedback, as well as the timing of these responses, plays a critical role in shaping language acquisition and learner motivation. This paper delves into these aspects, evaluating the effectiveness of various feedback mechanisms employed in technology-enhanced ELT [4; p. 1042].

Feedback in educational contexts is pivotal for learning, providing learners with insights into their performance and offering guidance on how to improve. In traditional classrooms, this feedback usually comes directly from the teacher, tailored to the individual's needs and often verbal. However, as digital platforms become more prevalent, the feedback landscape in ELT has expanded to include automated systems capable of delivering immediate responses [1; p. 67].

Automated feedback is primarily characterized by its immediacy and consistency, attributes that are highly valued in fast-paced, technology-driven learning environments. Language learning applications, for instance, utilize algorithms to assess a student's written or spoken input, providing quick corrections. This type of feedback is particularly effective for exercises involving clear right or wrong answers, such as vocabulary drills or grammar quizzes. The immediate correction helps reinforce learning points and correct mistakes in real time, potentially accelerating the learning process [3; p. 4].

However, the limitations of automated feedback become apparent when the learning objectives are more complex. While these systems excel in identifying overt errors, they lack the capacity to provide in-depth analysis or context-based feedback. For example, in tasks that require creative language use or higher-order thinking, such as essay writing or open conversation, automated feedback may not offer the nuanced insights that come from a human instructor [2; p. 327].

Human feedback, in contrast, involves more personalized interaction and is typically more flexible and context sensitive. Instructors can offer comprehensive insights that go beyond mere correctness, addressing issues like style, tone, and the appropriateness of language use. Furthermore, human feedback often includes motivational elements and emotional support, which are crucial for maintaining student engagement and perseverance [5; p. 5].

The primary drawback of human feedback in digital settings, however, is its lack of immediacy. Especially in asynchronous learning environments, feedback can be delayed, sometimes significantly, depending on the instructor's availability or the platform's scheduling. This delay can hinder the learning process, as students may struggle to connect the feedback with the specific content they submitted earlier [3; 10].

The timing of feedback is another critical factor in its effectiveness. Real-time feedback, whether automated or human, allows learners to immediately apply corrections

and integrate learning points into their practice. This is particularly useful in language learning, where the goal is often to build and refine practical skills like speaking and writing [2; p. 328].

Delayed feedback, on the other hand, while less effective in reinforcing immediate corrections, provides an opportunity for more thoughtful reflection and in-depth analysis. It can be particularly beneficial for complex assignments where the learner benefits from spending more time reflecting on the feedback and integrating it into their knowledge base [5; p. 12].

The type and timing of feedback significantly influence not only language acquisition but also learner motivation. Immediate, automated feedback can boost confidence by providing quick wins and clear progress markers. It is particularly motivating for beginners who need frequent reassurance to stay engaged with the learning process. Conversely, the personalized nature of human feedback, even if delayed, can be more satisfying for advanced learners, who appreciate detailed insights into their use of language [1; 71].

In technology-enhanced ELT, both automated and human feedback play vital roles, each suited to different learning contexts and objectives. The choice between these types of feedback and their timing should be strategically made based on the specific learning outcomes desired and the nature of the task at hand. As technology continues to evolve, so too will the capabilities for delivering effective feedback. Future research and development will need to focus on optimizing these feedback mechanisms to better serve the diverse needs of learners, ultimately enhancing both their experience and outcomes in learning English.

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