

Examining Iraqi High School Students' Perceptions of Teacher Feedback

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This study explores the attitudes of Iraqi high school students toward teacher feedback, focusing on how it influences their learning experiences and motivation. **Method:** Using a quantitative research design, data were collected from 52 male high school students in Najaf City, Iraq, through a structured questionnaire. **Results:** The findings reveal that students generally hold positive attitudes toward teacher feedback, perceiving it as beneficial and necessary for their academic development. A majority of students reported that teacher feedback increased their learning motivation and trusted their teachers' comments. However, some students expressed anxiety when receiving feedback and hesitated to ask questions, indicating a need for a more supportive feedback environment. **Novelty:** The study underscores the importance of teacher feedback in enhancing student learning while highlighting the need for strategies to reduce student anxiety and foster a more comfortable learning atmosphere.

INTRODUCTION

Feedback is crucial in the learning process, providing students with information about their performance and specific learning goals. Its primary aim is to enhance students' learning outcomes by helping them refocus their efforts and activities toward achieving desired results. Feedback can address various aspects, such as the outcome of a task, the methods used to complete it, the student's autonomy in learning, or their self-regulation. It can be delivered verbally, in written form, or through digital platforms, and can come from teachers, peers, or other individuals in a teaching role [1].

Despite its recognized importance in improving the learning experience, feedback remains a complex and challenging aspect of education. While it is widely acknowledged as a key factor in fostering student growth, there is still much to understand about how different types of feedback influence learning outcomes and students' professional development [2]. Feedback helps students monitor and regulate their learning and plays a significant role in shaping their future practices [3].

When providing feedback, it is essential that students feel positive about it afterward [4]. Feedback should never be demoralizing; instead, it should encourage students to use the feedback constructively. While it is important to address areas where students may be struggling, teachers must be careful in how they deliver negative feedback to ensure it is received in a way that promotes growth and improvement [3].

Feedback can be categorized into two main types: peer feedback and teacher feedback. Peer feedback involves students providing feedback to one another, while

teacher feedback comes from educators. There is ongoing debate about the effectiveness of peer feedback in fostering self-regulation and improving learning outcomes [5]. Peer feedback can take many forms, such as formative or summative, mandatory or optional, and can focus on individual or group feedback. However, there is a growing emphasis on the importance of peer engagement rather than peer evaluation, as it encourages student participation, confidence, and autonomy [6].

Research has shown that students often prefer teacher feedback over peer feedback, as they perceive teachers to be more knowledgeable and authoritative [7]. However, peer feedback can also be valuable, as it allows students to engage in collaborative learning and develop metacognitive skills, such as error detection and audience awareness [8]. Despite these potential benefits, students may sometimes view peer feedback as less effective, particularly if they feel their peers lack the expertise to provide meaningful comments [7].

This study aims to explore the attitudes of Iraqi high school students toward teacher feedback, with a focus on how this feedback influences their learning experiences. By examining students' perspectives, this research seeks to provide insights that can help educators refine their feedback strategies to better support student learning and development.

Statement of the problem

Feedback is widely recognized as a crucial component in enhancing students' learning experiences, yet there is limited research on how students perceive feedback, particularly in the context of Iraqi high schools. While studies have explored the role of feedback in various educational settings, there is a gap in understanding how Iraqi high school students view teacher feedback. This study aims to address this gap by investigating the attitudes of Iraqi high school students toward teacher feedback, with a focus on how this form of feedback influence their learning experiences

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this study is to explore the attitudes of Iraqi high school students toward teacher feedback. By examining students' perceptions, the study aims to provide insights into how this form of feedback influences their learning and motivation. The findings could have significant implications for educators, helping them refine their feedback strategies to better support student learning and development

Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it addresses a gap in the existing literature by focusing on the perspectives of Iraqi high school students regarding teacher feedback. The findings could provide valuable insights for educators and policymakers, helping them develop more effective feedback strategies to enhance student learning and motivation. Additionally, the study contributes to the broader understanding of feedback in educational settings, particularly in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms.

Research Question

What Are Iraqi high school students' perspectives toward teacher feedback?

Hypotheses

Ho Iraqi high school students generally have negative attitudes toward teacher feedback

Limitations of the Study

1. The study is limited to high school students in Najaf City, Iraq, and the findings may not be generalizable to other regions or educational contexts.
2. The sample size, while adequate, is relatively small, and the study focuses solely on teacher feedback.

Feedback in the EFL Context of the Classroom

Feedback plays a critical role in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms, particularly in addressing learner errors and enhancing language acquisition. Over the past two decades, research on feedback in second language acquisition (SLA) has grown significantly, with scholars approaching the topic from various disciplinary perspectives [9]. The interactional structure of the classroom is particularly important in helping learners overcome language-related challenges. [10] emphasizes that classroom interaction serves not only as a platform for practice but also as a mechanism through which learning occurs. The amount and type of feedback provided by instructors significantly influence how learners process and internalize language input.

[11] highlights the challenge educators face in determining the appropriate amount of feedback to provide. She suggests applying the "Goldilocks principle," which involves finding a balance between too much and too little feedback. According to this principle, teachers should focus on two or three key areas of improvement that align with learning objectives. Similarly, [12] argue that providing limited, targeted feedback is more effective than overwhelming students with excessive corrections. However, some learners may prefer comprehensive feedback that addresses all errors, which requires teachers to consider individual student preferences and learning goals [13].

Related Studies on Teacher Feedback

Several studies have explored the role and effectiveness of teacher feedback in EFL classrooms. [8] investigated how students perceive and utilize teacher feedback compared to peer feedback. Their study, conducted with Chinese secondary school students, found that students preferred teacher feedback over peer feedback, as they believed teachers provided more accurate and authoritative comments. Teacher feedback also led to more substantial revisions in students' written work. The study highlighted that teacher feedback helped students develop a better understanding of their audience and improved their metacognitive skills, such as error detection and self-correction.

[7] examined the perspectives of ESL students on teacher feedback, focusing on how cultural differences influenced their perceptions. They found that students often viewed teacher feedback as more reliable and effective than peer feedback, as they trusted teachers' expertise. However, students also expressed concerns about the generic nature of teacher comments, which sometimes lacked specificity. This study emphasized the importance of balancing global and local feedback to ensure that students benefit from both overall guidance and detailed corrections.

[9]explored how students respond to corrective feedback in immersion programs. The study identified six types of corrective feedback, including explicit correction, recasts, and clarification requests. Lyster found that while teachers frequently provided corrective feedback, certain types, such as recasts, were less effective in prompting students to self-correct. This suggests that the form and timing of teacher feedback are crucial in facilitating language learning.

In a more recent study, [14] investigated the impact of teacher feedback on student motivation and engagement in EFL classrooms. They found that constructive and timely feedback significantly enhanced students' motivation to improve their language skills. However, the study also noted that students sometimes felt stressed or anxious when receiving feedback, particularly if it was overly critical or focused solely on errors. This highlights the need for teachers to deliver feedback in a supportive and encouraging manner.

Finally, [15] emphasized the importance of teacher feedback in fostering self-regulated learning. He argued that effective feedback should not only address errors but also provide students with strategies for improvement and encourage self-reflection. Nicol's work underscores the role of teacher feedback in helping students develop autonomy and take ownership of their learning process.

A study by [16] explored Iraqi high school students' attitudes toward both peer feedback and teacher feedback. Data were gathered using two separate questionnaires: one assessing peer feedback and the other evaluating teacher feedback. The findings indicated that most students felt hesitant about giving critical feedback to their peers. Additionally, the majority of participants held positive views toward teacher feedback. The analysis showed no significant relationship between students' perceptions of peer feedback and their opinions on teacher feedback. These findings offer valuable insights that could benefit both teachers and students in educational settings.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This study used a quantitative research design to investigate the attitudes of Iraqi high school students toward teacher feedback. The research focused on understanding students' perceptions of teacher feedback and its impact on their learning experience. The study utilizes a structured questionnaire to collect data, which is then analyzed using descriptive statistics to draw meaningful conclusions.

Participants

The participants of this study consisted of 52 male high school students from Alshaid Kahthm High School in Iraq. The students were aged between 16 and 17 years old and were all native speakers of Arabic. The participants were selected randomly through convenience sampling.

Instruments

A. Teacher Feedback Questionnaire

The primary instrument used in this study was the Teacher Feedback Questionnaire, which was adapted from previous research [17]. The questionnaire consisted of **10 items** designed to measure students' perceptions of teacher feedback. The items were structured using a **5-point Likert scale**, ranging from **1 (Strongly Disagree)** to **5 (Strongly Agree)**. The questionnaire was translated into Arabic to ensure clarity and comprehension for the participants.

To ensure the reliability of the questionnaire, a pilot study was conducted with **10** students from the same population. Two PhD instructors from Kufa University were consulted for evaluation and validation.

The internal consistency of the questionnaire was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, and the results indicated a high level of reliability, as shown in the table below:

Table 1. Cronbach's alpha of teacher feedback questionnaire.

Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
0.89	10

The high Cronbach's Alpha value (0.89) confirms that the questionnaire is a reliable tool for measuring students' perceptions of teacher feedback.

Procedure

The researcher began by obtaining approval from the school administration to conduct the study, ensuring ethical and organized research practices. A pilot study was then conducted with 10 students to test the clarity and reliability of the questionnaire, and the results were used to refine the instrument and ensure its validity. For data collection, the researchers created a Telegram group, added the selected students, and explained the study's purpose in Arabic to ensure comprehension and emphasize the importance of participation. The Arabic version of the questionnaire was distributed via a Google Form link in the Telegram group, and students were given one week to complete it at their convenience. After the data collection period, the responses were compiled and analyzed using descriptive statistics in SPSS, allowing the researcher to interpret the results and draw conclusions about students' attitudes toward teacher feedback.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Table 2. Learners' perspectives towards teacher feedback.

No	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean
1	I like to have my writing reviewed by my teacher.	2% (1)	5% (3)	10% (5)	50% (26)	33% (17)	4.07
2	I benefit from my teacher's feedback.	0% (0)	4% (2)	6% (3)	55% (29)	35% (18)	4.21

3	Teacher feedback increases my learning motivation.	2% (1)	6% (3)	15% (8)	50% (26)	27% (14)	3.94
4	My teacher's feedback is appropriate.	0% (0)	8% (4)	10% (5)	52% (27)	30% (16)	4.04
5	I need teacher feedback.	0% (0)	2% (1)	4% (2)	48% (25)	46% (24)	4.38
6	I can trust my teacher's comments.	2% (1)	6% (3)	12% (6)	50% (26)	30% (16)	4.00
7	Teachers give me clear explanations about grammatical items.	0% (0)	4% (2)	10% (5)	58% (30)	28% (15)	4.10
8	The process of teacher feedback takes less time than the peer review process.	4% (2)	10% (5)	15% (8)	48% (25)	23% (12)	3.76
9	Occasionally, I feel slightly worried when receiving feedback from the teacher.	6% (3)	12% (6)	20% (10)	40% (21)	22% (12)	3.60
10	I do not dare to ask the teacher because I don't want to make myself look foolish.	8% (4)	15% (8)	25% (13)	35% (18)	17% (9)	3.38

Table 2. presents the descriptive statistics results for learners' attitudes toward teacher feedback. The study's findings indicate that students generally have positive attitudes toward teacher feedback, with most perceiving it as beneficial and necessary for their writing development. A majority (83%) expressed a preference for having their writing reviewed by their teacher, and 90% agreed that they benefit from teacher feedback, highlighting its perceived effectiveness. Additionally, teacher feedback was found to be a strong motivational factor, as 77% of students reported that it increased their learning motivation. Trust in teacher feedback was also evident, with 82% considering it appropriate and 80% expressing confidence in their teacher's comments. Notably, the highest agreement (94%) was observed in students' acknowledgment of their need for teacher feedback, emphasizing its essential role in their learning. Furthermore, 86% of students found their teachers' grammatical explanations clear, while 71% perceived teacher feedback as more time-efficient than peer review. However, some students reported feeling anxious about receiving feedback (62%) and hesitated to ask questions for fear of looking foolish (52%), suggesting that while feedback is valued, a more supportive and reassuring approach may be needed to ease student concerns. Overall, the study highlights the significance of teacher feedback in enhancing student learning and motivation, while also pointing to the importance of fostering a comfortable feedback environment to reduce anxiety.

Discussion

The findings of this study align with several previous studies in the literature review, while also highlighting some areas of divergence. The results indicate that Iraqi

high school students generally have positive attitudes toward teacher feedback, which is consistent with the findings of [7], [8]. Both studies found that students tend to prefer teacher feedback over peer feedback, as they perceive teachers to be more knowledgeable and authoritative. Similarly, the current study found that 90% of students agreed that they benefit from teacher feedback, and 83% expressed a preference for having their writing reviewed by their teacher. This suggests that students value the expertise and guidance provided by teachers, which aligns with the notion that teacher feedback is seen as more reliable and effective.

The study also supports the findings of [14], who emphasized the motivational impact of teacher feedback. In this study, 77% of students reported that teacher feedback increased their learning motivation, which is consistent with Neumann and Hood's argument that constructive and timely feedback can significantly enhance students' motivation to improve their skills. Additionally, the high level of trust in teacher feedback (80% of students agreed they could trust their teacher's comments) echoes [15] emphasis on the role of teacher feedback in fostering self-regulated learning and student autonomy.

However, the study also reveals some areas where the findings diverge from previous research. For instance, while [9] found that certain types of corrective feedback, such as recasts, were less effective in prompting students to self-correct, this study did not specifically explore the types of feedback but rather focused on students' overall perceptions. The positive attitudes toward teacher feedback in this study suggest that students may not differentiate between feedback types as much as they value the overall guidance provided by teachers.

Another point of divergence is related to students' anxiety and hesitation when receiving feedback. While [14] noted that students sometimes feel stressed or anxious when receiving feedback, this study found that 62% of students occasionally feel slightly worried when receiving feedback from their teacher, and 52% hesitate to ask questions for fear of looking foolish. This suggests that while students value teacher feedback, there is a need for teachers to create a more supportive and less intimidating feedback environment. This finding contrasts with [7] observation that students often view teacher feedback as more reliable but does not explicitly address the emotional impact of feedback on students.

Furthermore, the study's finding that 71% of students perceive teacher feedback as more time-efficient than peer review aligns with [11] suggestion that teachers should focus on providing targeted and efficient feedback. However, this study did not explore the specific content or quality of the feedback, which is an area that could be further investigated in future research.

CONCLUSION

Fundamental Finding : This study aimed to explore the attitudes of Iraqi high school students toward teacher feedback and its impact on their learning experiences. The findings indicate that students generally have positive perceptions of teacher feedback, viewing it as a valuable tool for improving their academic performance and

motivation. The majority of students expressed a preference for teacher feedback over peer feedback, citing its clarity, reliability, and effectiveness in guiding their learning. **Implication :** To maximize the benefits of feedback, educators should focus on creating a supportive and encouraging environment that reduces students' fears and promotes open communication. Overall, this study contributes to the growing body of literature on feedback in educational settings, offering valuable insights for educators and policymakers in Iraq and beyond. **Limitation :** However, the study also identified areas for improvement, particularly in addressing students' anxiety and hesitation when receiving feedback. **Future Research :** Future research could expand on these findings by exploring the perspectives of a more diverse student population and examining the role of cultural factors in shaping students' attitudes toward feedback.

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