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DIGITAL STORIES: STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF FEEDBACK CONTRIBUTION FOR SCRIPT DEVELOPMENT IN L2

HISTÓRIAS DIGITAIS: PERCEPÇÃO DE ALUNOS DA CONTRIBUIÇÃO DE FEEDBACK PARA DESENVOLVIMENTO DE SCRIPT EM L2

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ABSTRACT: Feedback is an important topic in education, and particularly for language development. This article intends to present some results of a research study aimed at investigating students' perception concerning the feedback received during the script development in an L2 for the production of a digital story as well as the use made of the received feedback. Participants were students from *Letras Inglês* course. During the course, participants were required to develop a digital story, and feedback was provided for the script development phase. After the production of their digital stories, they were asked to answer a questionnaire and also participate in an interview, both focusing on their perceptions concerning the feedback received. A comparison between the digital story (the video) and the script with teacher's feedback was also made to better understand the use participants made of the feedback. Results showed that participants acknowledged the relevance of feedback by emphasizing some aspects that were improved, such as the organization of ideas, punctuation problems, and also the development of an awareness for written productions. Concerning the use of the feedback received, results showed that the production of the digital story (the video) was an encouragement for the incorporation of the feedback received.
KEYWORDS: Feedback. Digital stories. Script development. Foreign language.

RESUMO: *Feedback* ("comentário") é um tema importante na área da educação e, em particular, para desenvolvimento de línguas. Este artigo apresenta alguns resultados de uma pesquisa que teve como objetivo investigar a percepção de alunos em relação ao *feedback* recebido durante o desenvolvimento do roteiro em uma L2 para a produção de uma história digital, como também investigar o uso feito do *feedback* recebido. Participantes foram estudantes de um curso de Letras Inglês. Durante o curso, os participantes foram solicitados a desenvolver uma história digital e *feedback* foi fornecido para a fase do desenvolvimento do roteiro. Após a produção das histórias digitais, os participantes responderam a um questionário e também participaram de uma entrevista, ambos focando em suas percepções sobre o *feedback* recebido. Uma comparação entre a história digital (o vídeo) e o roteiro com o *feedback* do professor foi também feita para melhor compreender o uso que os participantes fizeram do *feedback*. Resultados mostraram que participantes reconhecem a relevância do *feedback* ao enfatizar alguns aspectos que foram melhorados, como organização das ideias, pontuação, e também o

desenvolvimento de um conhecimento de produções escritas. Resultados também mostraram que a produção da história digital foi um elemento motivador para a incorporação do *feedback* recebido.
PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Feedback.* Histórias digitais. Desenvolvimento de *script.* Língua estrangeira.

1 Introduction

Learning is one of the cognitive processes that has attracted attention from scholars and researches. However complex, it seems to be directly related to feedback (FB), considering learners may need the assistance of someone with greater knowledge to guide them throughout the process. Hattie and Timperley (2007, p. 81) define feedback as information that can be provided by agents such as teachers, peers, books, parents, among others, usually concerning aspects within the learning process.

There are studies in the literature discussing the effectiveness of written feedback such as a study conducted with advanced students in which the revised drafts were compared with its final version. The results showed that the written feedback received on the draft version improved the final version of papers (FERRIS, 1997, p. 330). Another study aiming at examining what kind of feedback teachers provide to pupils shed a light into the use of written feedback as an assessment tool (BUDIMLIC, 2012, p. 1).There are also other studies showing the efficacy of written feedback by presenting results in which a group who received feedback outperformed a no-feedback group (BITCHENER; KNOCK, 2009, p. 206).

Feedback may be incorporated with the use of digital technology. One way is in the realm of digital stories (DSs). Tumolo (2015) defines DS as a digital resource that encompasses a variety of elements such as pictures, text, recorded oral narration, video clips and/or music to produce a digital video to tell a story from a personal perspective. Its production involves the development of its script for the audio narration of the story.

Literature seems to lack studies focusing specifically on feedback in activities involving digital technology, such as the digital story. This study may contribute to fill this gap. It had the objective of investigating students' perception concerning the feedback received during the script development in an L2 for the production of a digital story as well as the use made of the received feedback, that is, it aimed at investigating students': a) perception of feedback contribution to language development; b) perception of feedback contribution to their script development in English as their L2; and c) use made of the feedback received.

2 Review of literature

Throughout the years, teachers and researchers have been trying to find ways that can better support learners in terms of learning a foreign language. Providing feedback is one of them and it may be possible within the use of digital stories. This section aims at discussing possible definitions of written feedback as well as how to provide effective

ones. It also aims at briefly describing the steps to develop a DS focusing on the script development.

2.1 Feedback: what does it mean?

The term feedback has been frequently used within the educational context to define the process through which learners might become aware of their progress and limitations concerning the target learning area. Vidal (2010, p. 184) asserts that feedback might be understood as a languaging activity related to a full understanding of how the target language works by reflecting about it.

Battistela and Lima (2015, apud OLIVEIRA; SILVA, 2017, p. 341) defined feedback as ‘an answer to’ or ‘a reaction from’ the teacher to textual aspects, be them positive or negative. In the latter case, suggestions about how the work can improve are provided. However, to Oliveira and Silva (2017, p. 341), feedback should be understood as more than a reaction or an answer, but as a set of attitudes guided by the teacher concerning learners’ writing activities with the objective to provide better support of the writing skill.

For Keh (1990, p. 294), feedback can be defined as “input from a reader to a writer with the effect of providing information to the writer for revision”. The author acknowledges the relevance of writing developed as a process, which includes revision of the drafts written by learners that will be read by more experienced readers, who are able to provide comments and suggestions concerning lack of development of ideas, inappropriate word choice or tense, among others.

Still according to Keh (1990, p. 294), there are three important steps considering the writing process: (1) Generating ideas – brainstorming for first ideas; (2) Writing the first draft – putting the ideas on a paper; (3) Revision – probably by a more experienced writer, pointing to the gaps. This process may happen even more than once. Still in relation to the third step, studies have shown that students value the comments they received on their writings emphasizing that the process is diminished without someone to read it (SOMMERS, 2006, p. 251).

Many authors have defined feedback and it is important to understand that its main contribution is the result of a whole process as discussed by Keh (1990, p. 294), including the process of brainstorming ideas, of writing as many drafts as necessary, and of revision to write a good text. The drafting step seems to be relevant as reported by a study developed with 72 university ESL students who received written feedback to self-edit their texts. Results have shown that the group who received written feedback outperformed the no-feedback group, which shows the positive contribution of written feedback to writing skill development (FERRIS; ROBERTS, 2001, p. 176). Learners can better understand their development once they can see improvement in the multiple drafts and consequently in the final product, which means focusing on the process.

2.2 Effective written feedback

When dealing with written feedback provided in the language learning process, scholars usually mention Corrective Feedback (CF), defined as a type of negative

feedback, because it only takes form when a learner makes a linguistic error (ELLIS, 2009a, p. 3). This may trigger direct or indirect feedback.

According to Ellis (2009b, p. 99), direct feedback may be understood as the type of feedback in which the teacher indicates the error has been made and also indicates how the correction would be. Indirect feedback, on the other hand, happens once the error is just identified leaving the work to correct to the students, involving research for the correction.

Indirect feedback implies a certain level of autonomy considering learners would have to look for the answers on their own, based on more autonomous behavior. According to Holec (1981, p. 3), autonomy is understood as “the ability to take charge of one’s own learning”. With this autonomous behavior of playing an active role in their learning process, it seems that learners may profit from indirect feedback.

Feedback, once effective, may contribute to learners’ language development. Brookhart (2008, p. 6) advocates some elements for written effective feedback: clarity, specificity, and tone. Clarity refers to learners’ understanding of what they are expected to do to improve their writing skills. When providing written feedback, the teacher should thus consider the level of learners and consequently choose a vocabulary they will be able to comprehend.

Specificity is another relevant element. Feedback should be "not too narrow, nor too broad” (BROOKHART, 2008, p. 33). She illustrates with an example in which the teacher provided all the correct answers to students’ language problems and, once they were asked to rewrite the activity, they just made editing changes to the work the teacher had done. The idea, therefore, is to be specific so that learners can understand what they are being required to do, but not too specific, to the point of doing all the job for them. The author claims that comments such as ‘Write more!’ or ‘Try harder’ should be avoided because they are too broad, considering the student would not know what to do to improve, and the role of feedback is exactly to point to the direction in which this student must move.

The last element mentioned by Brookhart (2008, p. 33) is tone. For oral activities, teachers have the chance to talk to learners and make sure they understand the message. However, when this message is written, teachers need to be more careful with the vocabulary chosen because it might either inspire or discourage learners into the learning process. The author also claims that providing only positive comments when there is the need of some revision is not helpful at all once the learner might end up believing there is no need of improvement.

In sum, for corrective feedback, a combination and/or a balance of direct and indirect, involving the elements for effectiveness, must always be considered, and teachers may resort to them according to the educational context.

2.3 Digital story: the script

Although digital stories did not emerge from the educational context, they can be a powerful resource to support students in their learning process in general, and for L2 learning process in particular. Smeda, Dakich, Sharda (2013, p. 491) point out that the the production of a digital story has the capability to engage students with the power of the

digital midia involved in the process. To develop a digital story, there are some steps proposed to better contribute to the flow of the video production. The steps, described in detail in Tumolo (2015; 2018), are presented here very briefly. The first step is to choose the topic of the story. The second step is to write a script carefully with the story to be narrated. The third step is to create the storyboard to organize the written text with the digital media (images, etc) previously selected. The last step is to use computer software to produce the video (JAKE, 2009).

Elaborated written texts must involve a process of revision by an external experienced reader aiming at the final versions. In the process, changes are suggested for improvements and they are returned as suggestions to the authors as feedback. The script, as any written text, must have the same revision process. Its production was one of the main sources for data collection of this study considering that a detailed analysis of the material produced by the students in their target language along with the teacher's feedback was made. As aforementioned, there are different types of feedback and a combination/balance of them may better support students in terms of language development. Then, specifically concerning script development, this study aimed at investigating the students' perceptions concerning the feedback provided and their use of the feedback received.

3 Method

This section intends to present the method for this qualitative study. As this study aims at understanding students' perceptions concerning written feedback, a qualitative approach seemed to be a suitable one.

The data for this research was collected within the course on written skills development, level 3, which is part of *Letras Inglês* undergraduate program from Federal University of Santa Catarina.

The course was developed through 10 topics, and one of them was on stories. Students were asked to develop the script, the storyboard, and produce the digital video, that is, the digital story. The script and the written feedback provided by the teacher were the data for this research. The final version of the script (the digital story) was also data for this research considering that analyzing if students incorporated (or not) the feedback previously received in their final version was one of the objectives of this research.

This research was submitted to CEP/CONEP and approved under the number 2.657.803.

3.1 Participants

The participants were students regularly attending the course on written skills development, level 3, which is part of *Letras Inglês* course from Federal University of Santa Catarina. The course was taught during their third semester when it is expected that students have reached the intermediate level of language. Participants were the ones who voluntarily accepted the invitation to take part in this research. The study was conducted

with eight participants – 2 males and 6 females, ages ranging from 18 to 53 years old. Throughout the analysis, the participants were identified by the letter P followed by a number attributed randomly.

3.2 Data collection

The present qualitative study had as data collection the following instruments: (1) a questionnaire with 12 open questions concerning mostly the participants' perception about the contribution of feedback to their learning process; (2) a semi-structured interview with questions concerning mostly the contribution of feedback to the development of a script used for the production of a digital story. In addition to the instruments designed for the data collection, data was also collected considering the scripts developed, the feedback provided by the teacher, and the final version (turned into the audio-narration of the digital story) for a comparison to determine the use students made of the feedback. With participants' consent, all this material was also used.

The procedures for data collection involved the following steps. The invitation to take part of this study was sent by e-mail to all students regularly enrolled in the course previously mentioned. The participants who accepted to take part of this study were provided with information regarding the study throughout the Consent Form (*Termo de Consentimento Livre e Esclarecido*). Then, they were invited to answer a questionnaire administered in person on a date previously scheduled with the participant. The next step for data collection was the interview, which was done individually and in person on a date previously booked with the participants as well. All the data from the interview was recorded in audio format and transcribed for further analysis. The questionnaire and the interview were both in Portuguese.

It is relevant to mention that participants were asked about the feedback received in all the assignments developed within the course so that they could argue about any possible differences between the feedback received for the assignments and the feedback received for the script development. In case they could not remember details of the feedbacks, they were advised to access them available on the virtual environment (Moodle).

3.3 Procedures for data analysis

The participants answered a questionnaire with the objective of providing data on how they perceived the contribution of feedback to their language development. They also participated in an interview with the objective of providing data on their perception concerning the contribution of feedback during script development to the production of a digital story. The data collected from the questionnaire and the interview were carefully analyzed to answer the research questions proposed in this study.

A comparative analysis between the script with the feedback provided and the final product (the digital story) was made to investigate if participants used (or not) the feedback received. A comparison between what was being said in the digital story and the script with the teacher's feedback was made so that it was possible to investigate the use participants have made of feedback received.

4 Results and Discussion

This section aims at presenting and discussing the results of this study concerning students' perception of feedback contribution to their script development and also concerning their use of received feedback for their digital stories production. It is divided in three: section 4.1 aims at discussing students' perception of feedback contribution to their language development; section 4.2 discusses students' perception of feedback contribution to the script development; and section 4.3 aims at discussing students' use of feedback received.

4.1 Students' perception of feedback contribution to their language development

This section aims at discussing the students' perception of feedback contribution to their language development. During the course, students developed written assignments for the development of their language skills. For that, they received written feedback from the teacher. The analysis showed that, in general, the participants acknowledged the relevance of feedback contribution to their language development by stating that feedback is what allows them to notice their errors and improve based on the suggestions and comments received.

P4 argued during the interview:

> I am sure feedback is extremely important... I think that actually ... it is like a guide so that we know what we are doing right and what we are doing wrong... and to reassess what we have been doing so far.

P4 seemed to understand the relevance of feedback for her language development process due to the fact that it might be really hard to develop language without having the assistance of someone with greater knowledge showing what needs improvement. The participant argued that feedback is like a guide, which shows the acknowledgment of feedback being relevant to language learning. Then, feedback plays a role in which learners can identify aspects not identified without some assistance. Concerning that, P7 shared the same idea as P4 and also emphasized the relevance of having a different point of view concerning written texts. P7 said in her questionnaire:

> Feedbacks provide another point of view, showing us where and why we made mistakes and how we can improve. This way we can improve our knowledge and our proficiency.

This assistance, according to P7, is quite relevant considering that having a different person reading a text can elucidate aspects unnoticed by the learners. This is what Keh (1990) proposed for this relation between teacher (reader) and students (writers) considering this knowledge exchange seems to be profitable for both sides.

Generally speaking, students recognized the relevance of feedback contribution to their language development considering that, from their perception, feedback is like a guide from which they can better understand the aspects adequate to their writings but also the aspects that are in need of improvements.

Next, more detailed analysis on the contribution of feedback perceived by the participants is provided.

Students' perception of how feedback should be provided to better contribute to their language development

Effective written feedback should be provided in a way that learners can fully understand what is being suggested by the teacher so that they can actually do something with it and also have the chance to improve their writings based on feedback, return the text to the teacher, and actually learn something out of the written comments received (BROOKHART, 2008, p. 2).

There are different ways to provide feedback and learners may develop better with specific ones. Then, when asked about how they believed feedback should be provided to better contribute to their language learning process, participants seem to demonstrate that feedback should directly point to their language use problems, as P2 stated in her questionnaire:

> Pointing where the student did right and where he did wrong, providing further explanation about why it is wrong.

P2's perception concerning the effectiveness of feedback to language development goes beyond the idea of identifying aspects that need improvement; she also understands that feedback should bring explanation concerning the errors identified. Maybe this further explanation considered so relevant by P2 may be understood as the links and/or suggestions made by teachers when providing feedback or even the indication of a book or any other source in which learners can solve their own doubts.

Considering the answers in the questionnaire, it can be said that the participant seems to have mostly a heteronomous behavior towards learning, that is, she emphasized the relevance of receiving a direct feedback and also a direct correction concerning their text. However, an important aspect for language development is autonomous behavior, i.e., learners taking charge of their own learning process (HOLEC, 1981, p. 3). Autonomous students should be able to find out the reasons for their errors in their texts on their own, by searching and researching for answers.

P3 seemed to have a more autonomous behavior as his questionnaire shows:

> Feedback should contain errors and the indication of possible solutions, and even clues to help or collaborate to students learning and development.

P3 mentioned that feedback should contain "possible solutions and even clues", which gives the idea that the teachers may contribute by providing reliable sources for references so that learners could find the answers on their own. Despite the importance of developing autonomy, it is important to emphasize the contribution by the teacher. As P4 pointed out in her questionnaire:

> [...] feedback needs to be clear concerning the notes and needed corrections. The student needs to be sure about his "failures" and the access to the teacher to solve possible doubts should be continuous.

As mentioned by P4, clarity is quite relevant for the feedback to fulfill its role considering that if the learner is unable to comprehend what is being suggested/asked by the teacher's notes, it would be impossible to improve. However, if by any chance the feedback is not clear enough, learners should have direct access to teachers as an alternative to fully comprehend what they are expected to do. The sense of autonomy should also come with a certain maturity level to understand that sometimes it would be

essential to solve the doubts with the teacher.

Students' perception concerning the contribution of direct and indirect feedback to their language development

There are different ways a teacher can provide written feedback to students. As discussed previously, direct feedback happens once the teacher corrects a text and provides the answers for the language problems while indirect feedback takes place once the teacher just identifies the errors and/or provides means for students to find the answers on their own (ELLIS, 2009b, p. 99).

Both types of feedback seem to contribute to language development. The direct one provides students the opportunity to visualize directly how/what they should have written. It leads us to consider that students can find the information and apply it in the next writing activities, especially if it was just a mistake out of lack of attention. The indirect one, in turn, demands a higher level of autonomy from students, based on the fact they would have to spend some time trying to understand the reason for the errors and, based on the teacher's support, revise and improve the text.

The participants of this study received both types of feedback and it seemed relevant to investigate what type of feedback students believe might better contribute to their language development. In general, it is possible to say that most of the participants stated that direct feedback seemed to better contribute to their language development. P1, for example, stated in his questionnaire that:

> When the problem is pointed, and corrected by the teacher because I believe I learn better when I see the corrected activity.

P1 understands that feedback may better contribute to his language development once the teacher identifies and also corrects the errors. When he uses the word "see", it may give the idea that his learning process is more visual, which means he learns better once he can see what is wrong instead of having to go to another source on his own to improve the writing. As P1, other participants seemed to prefer errors to be identified and corrected by the teacher. P7 explained why direct feedback seemed to contribute better to her language development process by arguing in the questionnaire that:

> I think it is important to have both types of feedback. However, I prefer when the teacher shows what I did wrong and how the correct way would be and also explain why. If the teacher just marks what I did wrong, it may not cause an effect since I may not be able to see what is wrong or may not know how to correct the text (even if I have the theory to be based on).

Despite believing that both types of feedback have their contribution, P7 seems to believe direct feedback can better support her in terms of language development and she also stresses that just having the errors identified by teachers may not be a useful solution once she may not be able to know what she is expected to do. If a teacher is teaching simple present, for example, and notices students are making errors concerning this tense, maybe just identifying their mistakes in the text could be the option. However, if the content students are making errors about is beyond what this teacher has worked in the classroom, maybe direct feedback with pertinent explanations may have more effective results.

Ferris (2006, p. 95) suggests that one of the possible reasons learners tend to use direct feedback more effectively than indirect one is because it involves the idea of just copying teacher's sugestions or making simple editing changes in the next draft. The

author also points out that these editing changes may not contribute effectively to a long term writing improvement. Concerning that, she believes indirect feedback seems to help them develop more over time.

Students' perception concerning direct feedback for language development

Considering the data collected for this study, it is possible to assert that participants seemed to believe that direct feedback is the one able to contribute effectively to their language development process. P7, for example, argued that the reason why direct feedback might be more useful is due to the fact that understanding indirect feedback can be difficult sometimes.

As pointed out throughout the review of literature, Brookhart (2008) claims that feedback can only play its role once learners can fully understand their errors and also what they are expected to do to improve. Another relevant aspect to be considered regarding indirect feedback, if teacher's notes are not clear enough to that specific learner, feedback may become a quite demotivating factor to learners.

Carrol and Swain (1993, p. 362) assert that direct feedback is more helpful to learn grammatical generalizations and they also point out that a more informative feedback in which teachers explain clearly and directly students' errors can contribute positively to their language process. Direct feedback seems to be the one learners believe that can better contribute to their language development, yet indirect feedback can also play a relevant role considering it can prompt the development of students' autonomous behavior towards their learning. And considering this "difficulty" mentioned by P7 in understanding indirect feedback, it is relevant to stress that despite the fact feedback is important to learning development, learners can always have access to teachers to solve doubts, as P8 emphasized in her questionnaire:

> I particularly prefer when the problem is directly pointed by the teacher. He does not need to give the correct answer, but it is important that he provides texts and other theoretical references in which I can find the problem and the solution. It is the student's job to notice that if he does not fully understand the feedback received, he should ask the teacher about that. But I believe that there are some kinds of errors that require a more direct feedback pointing to the correct answer or at least a direction should be pointed so that the problem can be understood.

Maybe "balance" is a good word when discussing what type of feedback should be provided. As P8 pointed out, there are some types of errors that require a more direct feedback, it is possible to infer that the type of errors learners believe feedback can better contribute are mostly grammar errors. Despite the fact P8 seems to develop better with direct feedback as mentioned in the excerpt above, she also emphasizes the idea of the teacher providing sources so that she could solve the problem by herself, which shows the autonomy learners are expected to have.

Indirect feedback should not be discarded due to its contribution not just to language development, but also to learners' autonomy. In this sense, the nature of the error seemed to have a huge influence on participants' development concerning the type of feedback received. If the error concerned grammar, specifically a subject they have already studied, they seemed to believe the indirect feedback would better apply because it may have been due to lack of attention, which means if the teacher just identifies the problem, students would be able to correct it by themselves. P6 approached this topic during the interview stating that:

> It depends ... if it is a normal error... grammatical... I prefer that he just identifies and I work to discover the answer... if it is something more complex, I don't know ... something...as it happened ...it wasn't just an error ... I made errors like verbal agreement, or used a pronoun or an article incorrectly ... it is always simple things that if he just made a circle, maybe just to see the circle I notice what I did wrong, right? But maybe if it is something more complex ... as it happened ... somethings he just put... he even replaced by red ... he corrected. Then I think that both feedbacks are important, it just depends a little on what is the correction, got it?

P6 seems to believe that simple errors should be pointed indirectly because those errors are "normal" errors, probably studied before and, in this case, a simple indication should be enough. P6 added that once the error became complicated, a more direct approach seemed to be the best option due to the fact learners would not be able to correct them by themselves. Having that in mind, it is possible to stress that feedback concerning text structure might work better by being strictly direct because learners would be directly pointed to the aspects that need improvement, not leaving room for lack of understanding of received feedback.

In sum, concerning students' perception about feedback contribution to their language development, it seems that they identify better with direct feedback and believe direct feedback can better support them in terms of language development, although they recognize the contribution of indirect feedback specifically related to the type of error made. Next section aims at discussing students' perception of feedback contribution specifically during a script development to be later used in a digital story production.

4.2 Students' perception of feedback contribution to script development

This section aims at discussing the students' perception of feedback contribution to script development. During the course, students developed a script for their digital stories. For that, they received written feedback from the teacher. The analysis showed that, in general, participants acknowledge the relevance of feedback. P3 said:

> [...] I believe that feedback to script development was essential so that I could better organize my ideas to the digital story improving the text structure that would be spoken throughout the video and better centralizing the focus of the first ideas.

P3 mentioned, like other participants, two aspects when discussing the development of the digital story: organizing the ideas and improving the text structure. Feedback is not supposed to support learners just in terms of language problems, but it should also support learners in terms of organizing how the ideas are presented. Understanding that a digital story would become a video that later could be seen by other people, participants seemed to have a concern with the quality of the message, observing the feedback received seemed to be one of the ways to ensure that the message would be conveyed as expected. Castañedas (2013, p. 51) developed a digital story study with high school students in which she states that when providing feedback there should be a concern with the author's intention. It means there should be an understanding between the feedback provided and the message the author wants to deliver.

Another feedback contribution was the development of an awareness regarding the type of language required to write this type of text. Despite the fact the script was a writing activity, there were certain aspects which differed from what they had been doing in other courses. It was a written text that would become an oral text – the audio narration – with pictures and music, and those aspects had to be taken into account. As mentioned by P3

in her questionnaire:

> The script feedback contributed to clarify the difference between academic writing and script writing.

P3 pointed out that some attention had to be paid to linguistic choices concerning the script production. This may mean that this participant noticed that the kind of language required was different from the language required in the other written productions in the course. Also referring to the feedback, P5 pointed out in her questionnaire:

> The script feedback was really relevant because I could identify some important aspects. I realized, for example, that the sentences were too elaborated and I simplified them in the storyboard construction.

P5 seems to have focused on the audience who would watch the video of the digital story and also on the type of text she was producing which, unlike academic texts, do not require elaborated sentences. Academic writing requires a certain level of elaboration in the sentences, but the script to be turned into a digital story does not. Then, it is possible to conclude that one relevant contribution of the feedback was to develop students' awareness concerning the genre of the text they were writing.

Another aspect mentioned by the participants was the contribution of the feedback for language problems. Having another reader to revise a text seemed to be a positive feedback contribution so that minor language problems that had not been noticed by the author could be improved. P6 pointed out that relevance of having an external reader, the teacher, in his questionnaire, by stating that:

> I have done some corrections related to grammar errors and a few changes in the text because I noticed the way it was received by the reader, in this case, the teacher.

P6 stressed that having an external reader revising the text can support learners in terms of how the message intended is received by this reader. Concerning the same subject, in the interview, P3 argued that:

> [...] when someone gives an opinion, someone from outside, you end up seeing the errors you could not see before ... adding or eliminating the excess. [...]

These excerpts by P6 and P3 show the importance of revising and providing feedback. If the idea was to support learners in terms of writing skill development, having someone else read the text and provide feedback can certainly allow the writer to see some language aspects that were not seen before. This effective contribution of the revising process and feedback to the whole language learning process, also reported by Ferris (1997), could be seen in this research when the versions of the script were compared, actually showing improvements, also further discussed in the following section.

In the interview, P6 also provided an example concerning how important it is to have someone else reading the text to identify whether the text is actually as clear to the reader as it is to the writer.

> [...] Sometimes I feel that the teacher understood in a different way... then I see if it is the case to change to make it clearer... for example I changed in my script because I wrote that I met Ulysses, then he wrote an observation saying - not the guy, the book, right? - Then I modified the writing to make it clearer [...]

P6 emphasized the idea that having an external reader to revise a text may be useful so that there would not be any ambiguity in the writing, problems that were not noticed by the writer. Clarity of ideas is certainly a good characteristic of a well written text and participants of this research seemed to have acknowledged feedback contribution

concerning the organization of ideas to make them as clear as possible in the written text.

Participants also seemed to have the perception that language aspects such as grammar problems, text structure and even the level of language to be used on a script are among the feedback contributions during the development of the digital story. Considering the nature of this study, it was expected that learners had identified grammar errors as at least one of the most relevant feedback contributions during script development to their language learning process. However, it is relevant to mention that other aspects, such as ambiguity, the organization of the ideas to be presented, the message intended to be conveyed, among others, seemed to have called their attention even more than any grammar problems they might have had.

Next, more detailed analysis of the feedback received is provided.

Students' attention concerning the feedback received

It has been discussed throughout this analysis how important it is that students fully understand what they are required to do when receiving feedback (BROOKHART, 2008, p. 2). Considering that, it seemed relevant to investigate students' attention when receiving feedback.

Based on the definitions of feedback presented in the review of literature, it is possible to assume that feedback can be understood as a result of teacher's effort to call students' attention to language aspects that need improvement. It involves a series of choices that need to be made so that learners can receive the most effective feedback and actually learn from that.

In order for this learning moment to happen, learners must spend some time to read the feedback received trying to better understand the aspects that need improvement and decide what to do with that information, including the expected search and research to find the answers for the indirect feedback provided by the teacher. All the participants who took part in this study stated that they usually read all teacher's notes from received feedbacks. P2, for example, stated in the questionnaire:

> [...] I like to see whether I understood the subject or not.

P2 seems to understand feedback as a guide and her attention to received feedback seems to be directly connected to the fact that she wants to be sure whether she understood the topics being approached or not and feedback seems to provide her this information.

Considering that students had instructions concerning language aspects – grammar and vocabulary – and text organization during classes, it would be possible to say that once they are required to write texts, they are actually using what was learned, then feedback may be understood as a thermometer which tells learners the aspects in need of improvement and also the direction to follow. Still concerning this, P3 asserted in the questionnaire that:

> Most times I read attentively so that I can understand what the error is. If it was caused by lack of knowledge or attention

Identifying the cause of the error seemed to be relevant, as mentioned by P3, either as lack of knowledge or of attention.

Criteria to consider or not the feedback received

As aforementioned, students usually read carefully the feedback received as an attempt to improve their knowledge in the target language. However, reading is not the same as considering everything that was suggested, so it seemed relevant to investigate whether learners considered or not the feedback received and based on which criteria they chose to consider or not. Most participants emphasized the idea that teachers know better so they usually consider everything that was suggested in the feedback. This is pointed out by P8:

> Yes, I usually take into account the feedback provided by the teacher because I understand that many teachers have professional experience with technical and theoretical knowledge that I also want to acquire and/or improve.

P8 seems to recognize the professional background teachers have and it seems to be reason enough to usually consider the feedback received in the written activities. Certainly, this is a solid justification to consider feedback. Miller's (2014) points out that the participants of her study also emphasized the idea of relying on the teachers' feedback due to their professional background. They also stated that they expect teachers to mark most errors in their texts, which shows their trust in teacher's professional backgrounds to improve their drafts.Participants also pointed out that teacher's feedback is the first thing they consider when writing a revised draft. Concerning the same subject, when asked if the feedback provided by the teacher was often considered, P4 asserted that:

> Always because teacher's intention when delivering feedback is to provide reflection about the errors or aspects that need improvement.

P4 adds another justification for considering the feedback: promoting reflection concerning errors. This seems to be one of feedback's roles for effective learning to happen from received feedback. In spite of the general acceptance of the teachers' suggestions and comments, not all participants shared the same idea. P3, for example, argued in the questionnaire that:

> I frequently consider it. Sometimes I disagree and ignore because it is something that will take too much time for me to actually learn and I try to control and divide my time with other academic activities.

The amount of activities from other courses which generate in lack of time seems to be one of the criteria used by P3 to consider or not the feedback received. However, the contribution feedback may provide in language courses may spread to other courses as well.

Improvement seems to be the main goal of teachers for feedback. On this, P4 and P5 shared the same idea that feedback was usually taken into account with the intention to improve in the following activities. In their questionnaires, they argued that:

> Understanding the reason why the correction was made and what can be improved not just in the following activities, but also in the revised activity. (P4)

> I read more carefully the teacher's feedback with the objective to identify the aspects that need improvement and try to develop them with the practice of the language. (P5)

Both participants, P4 and P5, seem to use the criteria of improvement in the target language to consider or not teachers' comments and suggestions in their texts. P4 even used the word "understanding" which might mean that feedback is more than looking at the corrections: it is all about understanding the reasons why the correction was suggested

and consequently understand why the error was made.

Comprehending the reason for the error seemed relevant in this process, as also mentioned by P7, who stated in the questionnaire that:

> [...] It is important to take into account the suggestions provided because they can help not to make the same errors and even learn why the error was made.

P7 stresses the importance of feedback in terms of preventing the same errors in the following activities of the same nature and considering the suggestions and comments were made to improve the text, accepting them seemed to be an effective way to improve the writing.

In addition to the aspects mentioned that may lead learners' attention towards received feedback, another one was grading. Participants stated that once there was grading involved, they tended to read teacher's notes upon the received feedback more carefully. This was stated by P3 in the questionnaire who emphasized the idea of considering feedback to improve the grade.

> Understanding better the abilities I should improve in the following activities. And out of my effort to improve my performance, I develop language and also the grade.

Grading seems to be one of the criteria used by P3 to consider and consequently improve the text but it is also relevant to emphasize that despite the fact P3 mentioned grading, she also mentioned "develop language" which might mean that improving the grading is just a consequence.

P8 argued in the questionnaire that even if the grade was good, feedback was still relevant:

> [...] Even when the grade is good, I believe that feedback is important because there is always an aspect that can be improved. Feedback is an essential tool so that it is possible to develop learning concerning a specific subject in a flowing way and also understand better my weak and strong aspects so that I could improve them.

P8 states that, even when the grade is good, there is always some aspect that can be improved, which means that, despite the grade, feedback seems to be always useful.

In sum, considering the discussion of this section, it is possible to assume that participants actually read attentively the feedback received, at least most of the times. The reason for the mistake was an important aspect. Once learners were able to identify an error caused by lack of attention, it would be possible for them to revise the text without the need of any other support and avoid making the same error. However, once lack of knowledge was identified to be the main reason for the error, learners may do their own search and research as an attempt to solve the problem and, in case the doubt, asking teachers for support seems to be a plausible alternative. They can only identify the causes of the errors made by paying attention to received feedback.

Next section will discuss the use participants made of the feedback received during script development.

4.3 Students' use of feedback received

This section aims at discussing whether the students incorporated feedback received into their final versions of the script or not. During the course, students developed

a script for their digital stories. For that, they received written feedback from the teacher. The analysis of the versions, with comparison of the first version with the final version, showed that, in general, students incorporated the feedback provided by the teacher. Also, it was possible to notice that sometimes participants had the tendency to change the whole sentence instead of just changing the aspects the teacher called attention to. Comparing the scripts with the feedback provided, it was noted that participants made considerable changes in their texts by adding totally new sentences or even deleting some part of their first version.

Considering carefully and incorporating the feedback provided was affected by the production of the video for the digital story. In the interviews, participants acknowledged that the possibility of their stories to be viewed by others encouraged them to revise their script which would become the audio narration of their stories. P3, for example, said:

> I think that when you do something people will see, you tend to 'police' yourself, right? You think to yourself: 'I will be judged by a lot of people.... a lot of people will see my mistakes'...so I believe that when it is so, you tend to be smarter.

P5 said:

> [...] so I think that people pay closer attention to the script on this issue because we are going to develop a story that others might see, so it is important to have a well-written text…so I think that the attention is much bigger.

P6 said:

> [...] if the teacher noticed mistakes, everyone else might also, right? It is a way of knowing that in advance, right?

In addition to having the stories, with possible mistakes, judged by others, the fact there was a follow-up activity going beyond teacher's readings and revisions seemed to have a positive contribution for the incorporation of feedback received. P4 said:

> Yes, for sure, much more likely, right? The feedback was important because, unlike the assignments requiring revision and resend, in this case we had a follow-up. We needed to use the text for a second phase…then the attention was doubled so that the final work would be cool [...].

Also, P6 added:

> [...] as there is the follow-up assignment, the most important in the course...of course, I paid closer attention to the script and the feedback give on it [...]

In sum, focusing on the use students made of the feedback received, it was possible to say that participants of this study seemed to pay close attention to written feedback received. Feedback was, in general, incorporated into their final versions and sometimes, as mentioned before, participants chose to change the whole sentence which may indicate that they wanted to use a structure they felt more confident with. Also, having the production of the video had a positive influence in the incorporation of the feedback provided into a revised script for the audio narration of the digital stories for two main reasons: a) the possibility of the digital story to be viewed and its mistakes to be judged by others; and b) the fact there was a follow-up activity going beyond teacher's readings and revisions.

5 Final remarks

This research intended to investigate feedback contribution to language development from the perspective of learners as an attempt to better understand whether it has been supporting them in the way it is expected. Results have shown that, generally speaking, students seemed to acknowledge the relevance of feedback to their language development, specifically to the development of their writing skill, which was the main focus of this study.

There were many aspects involved when discussing the effectiveness of feedback and the attention learners provided to received written feedback was one of them. Based on the results, it was possible to assume that feedback could only play its role once students decided to reflect upon teacher's comments and suggestions which were made with the specific objective of supporting learners in terms of learning development. This study has shown that most students actually read attentively teacher's feedback notes usually as an attempt to improve their learning process.

This research also focused on discussing the contribution of direct and indirect feedback. Students seemed to understand that direct feedback was a better contribution to their language development than indirect one, considering they found relevant that the teacher provided the correct answer because, once they see the error and its correction, they tend to avoid it in the following activity. Despite the fact students considered direct feedback to be a better contribution, they also emphasized that the nature of the error should be taken into account for the most effective type of feedback. Once the errors were strictly grammatical concerning topics already studied, they considered lack of attention as the cause and direct feedback as the most effective procedure. However, once the error was related to more complex issues such as text organization or even a more advanced grammar structure, they considered lack of knowledge as the cause and indirect feedback as the most effective procedure, since it requires search and research for the necessary knowledge to writing improvement.

Feedback received was incorporated into their final versions of the script for the audio narration of the digital stories by most participants, sometimes with considerable changes. The reflection upon the feedback and the opportunity to reread their own texts with the feedback showed them the need to change their texts for improvement. Also, feedback was incorporated mostly because there was a follow-up activity going beyond teacher's readings and revisions and the digital story based on the revised script could be viewed and mistakes could be judged by others.

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