AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF ARMENIA

College of Humanities and Social Sciences

The Effect of Oral Feedback in an Armenian Public School

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Master of Arts in Teaching English as a Foreign Language

By

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**Abstract**

Public school teachers in Armenia use different types of classroom assessment. Most of them use summative assessment as a tool to learn about students' achievement in the course, forgetting about the importance of formative assessment and feedback, which is the essential part of classroom assessment and language learning. The lack of formative assessment tools and feedback in public school EFL classrooms result in decrease in student motivation and engagement as well as reduced language practice in the classroom. The purpose of this study is to investigate what oral feedback is provided to the students in an EFL classroom in public schools and what attitude the students have towards oral feedback. Forty public school students and their teacher participated in the study. In the framework of action research, a quasi-experimental study was conducted with two groups: treatment and comparison groups. The treatment group was exposed to various types of feedback, while the comparison group was not. The research included both quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data were collected through student surveys, and the qualitative data were obtained through classroom observations, teacher interview and a focus group interview with students. The analysis of the survey questions and classroom observations showed that there is not much difference between the treatment and comparison groups regarding their preferences and attitudes towards oral feedback. The students of both groups mentioned that they mainly received either direct or delayed corrective feedback. The survey and interview results revealed that the students' attitude towards different types of oral feedback is mainly positive.

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

Armenian public school teachers use different types of classroom assessment. Most of them use summative assessment as a tool to learn about students' achievements in the course, as a result, forgetting about the importance of formative assessment and feedback, which are the essential parts of classroom assessment and language learning. The purpose of formative assessment is to assess the students during learning and provide them with appropriate feedback (Brown, 2004; Stiggins, 2005; Rahman, 2018). Brown (2004) states that most of the classroom assessment is formative and students acquire the language based on the analysis of teacher feedback and comments. The role of feedback in formative assessment is crucial. Black & William (1998) and Nolen (2011) suggest that providing the students with effective feedback during the course enhances student success and increases their motivation and engagement. According to Ellis (2009), feedback has an important place in language acquisition and pedagogy. Feedback is viewed as a means of promoting student motivation and language learning as well as contributing to linguistic accuracy. The lack of formative assessment tools and absence of appropriate feedback in public school EFL classrooms result in decreased student motivation and engagement as well as deficit of language practice in the classroom.

The purpose of the following action research is to investigate what kind of oral feedback is provided to the students in EFL classrooms in public school as well as the students' attitude towards it. The data is collected through the analysis of teacher interviews, student surveys and classroom observations.

**1.1 Statement of the Problem**

Feedback is crucial in EFL classrooms. In most Armenian public schools there is no appropriate oral feedback provided to the students during the class. This limits the opportunities of the students to use the target language in classroom activities. Hence, it's essential to examine the effects of oral feedback and the students' attitude towards this and language learning.

**1.2 Research Questions**

The research questions of the present study are as follows:

- What kind of oral feedback is usually provided in EFL classrooms in public schools?
- What is the attitude of students towards oral feedback?

Investigating assessment practices and types of oral feedback will help teachers to reconstruct their assessment methods and help students in L2 acquisition. The findings of the study will also provide the teachers with considerable information about the oral feedback they give to the students and see what types of oral feedback contribute most to the students' L2 acquisition. Moreover, the study will provide some basis for further research in the field of classroom assessment and feedback in public schools in Armenia.

# Chapter 2

# Literature Review

## 2.1 Assessment

Assessment is essential in ESL/EFL teaching and learning. It is defined as a process of collecting information about the things we are interested in and assessing individuals according to that information (Ketabi, 2014). According to Coombe, Folse and Hubly, assessment includes a variety of activities which help the teachers to assess students' progress and achievement on a daily basis (Coombe, et al., 2007). In the past, by saying assessment, teachers mainly understood grading, which showed them in what way the students have achieved the planned target. Nowadays, assessment is seen as a principal tool supporting the learning process. Thus, assessment and instruction should be combined in all the stages of the learning process in order to place instruction and learning with assessment (Watering, et al., 2008).

. Rahman (2018) states that classroom assessment is an indispensable part of education. Saefurrohman & Balinas (2016) suggest that classroom assessment is a process in which the purpose of is assessment to know the progress of the learner and support their success in learning. According to Ketabi (2014), classroom assessment can be divided into three types: assessment for learning (formative assessment), assessment of learning (summative assessment) and assessment as learning (lifelong autonomous learning). The main two types of assessment that are used in the classroom to support language learning are summative and formative. Researchers suggest that a summative assessment is done at the end of the course or semester for checking the learner's overall achievement. On the contrary, the purpose of formative assessment is to assess the students during learning and provide them with appropriate feedback (Brown,

2004; Stiggins, 2005; Rahman, 2018). Brown (2004) states that most of the classroom assessment is formative and students acquire the language based on the analysis of teacher feedback and comments.

## 2.2 Formative assessment

The main focus of formative assessment in teaching is on the learner and the learning principles. The main concentration in this learner-centered approach is on such components which are controlled by the learner, also taking into account the environment and the context. One of the principles of formative assessment is to help learners to understand that feedback is more for learning and not for reward or punishment (Kaftan, et al., 2006). According to Bell and Cowie (2005), the aim of formative assessment is to help teachers and students to recognize and respond to learning. Although we accept the importance of student performance, student motivation is closely tied to formative assessment. The focus is more on learning to understand but not performing for a grade. Those teachers who respond to students using expressions like "good", "correct" mainly focus student attention on receiving approval. Those who ask them to explain in detail or say what they mean will be able to focus student attention on understanding the content deeply (Kaftan, et al., 2006).

The two main objectives of formative assessment are assessment for learning and assessment as learning. Assessment for learning monitors the progress of the learner starting from the current state until reaching the desired outcome. This can be done through teacher-student collaboration, constructive questioning and feedback. Assessment as learning is considered as a process where teachers and students share learning goals and success criteria and estimate their learning with the help of self and peer assessment (Clark, 2012).

## 2.3 Feedback

The role of feedback in formative assessment is crucial. Black & William (1998), Nolen (2011) and Ellis (2009) suggest that providing the students with effective feedback during the course enhances student success and increases their motivation and engagement as well as contributes to linguistic accuracy. Formative assessment and feedback show the students the distance between current stage and the desired outcome. There are components that play a major role in student motivation and their perceptions about feedback. These components are the context where feedback is provided, and the relationships between the teacher and the students. Feedback can be understood differently by different students. Teacher reputation along with the setting of giving feedback is also of a big importance (Nolen, 2011).

Winne and Butler (1994) describe feedback as information that is accepted, added to, reconstructed in their memory. Similarly, Nicole and MacFarlane Dick (2006) believe that formative feedback is self-regulated and all the assessments should be reestablished as formative assessments, accordingly the main goal of formative feedback is to empower students as self-regulated learners. Hattie and Temperly (2007) perceive feedback as a powerful instructional method in their study, which obtained different effect sizes for different kinds of feedback. They derive high effect sizes when the students are told how to perform a task more effectively, that is formative feedback. And lower effect sizes are achieved when the students are praised, or punished. By asking the student to "reformulate answers" or "work hard" we do not promote self-regulated learning as it is not done by guiding the student how and why to do so. The purpose of formative feedback is to adjust the teaching process in order to meet students' needs (Black & William 1998b; Sadler, 1989).

The role of interactional context and feedback in EFL classrooms is also of a big importance. Rhinda Oliver and Alison Mackey (2003) investigated the role of interactional context and feedback in child EFL classrooms. They mostly paid attention to the interactional context and the provision of feedback within that context. The results revealed that the interactional context had a great influence on teacher's provision of feedback as well as students' uptake and the modifications of their initial utterances after receiving the feedback. The study suggests that teachers should also pay attention to the interactional context when discussing feedback in EFL classrooms. Pynto and Santos (2008) suggest that every teacher has their own way of choosing the type of the feedback and the time of giving it. This diversity makes teachers' jobs even harder, as they need to understand which type and timing of giving feedback are suitable for different situations. Furthermore, Ikeda (2010) argued that even though feedback is a crucial part of the learning process, some teachers also need to take into account students' feelings. The idea of self-assessment for teachers should be put forward, which in its turn, will help them understand students' feelings and provide them with effective oral feedback (Lee, 2008).

According to literature, several researchers suggest their own classifications of types of feedback. Lyster & Ranta (1997) differentiate 6 types of feedback used by teachers:

- Explicit correction- directly providing the student with the correct form, indicating the erroneous utterance.
- Recasts- reformulating all or a part of student utterance without the error. Recasts are also referred to as "paraphrasing", "repetition with change" or "repetition with change and emphasis".

- Metalinguistic feedback- includes questions or comments for eliciting the answer from the student. It mainly states that error occurred. The main goal of this type of feedback is to indicate the error but elicit the information from the student.

- Clarification requests- showing the students that either their utterance is misunderstood, or it was not correctly formed and needs a reformulation or repetition.

- Repetition- repetition of the erroneous utterance by the teacher by adjusting their intonation to call attention to the error.

- Elicitation- directly elicit the correct form from the student. They use "fill in a blank" strategy by pausing and allowing the students to answer.

Along with the above mentioned six types of feedback, Lyster and Ranta (1997) also added the seventh type of feedback which is called multiple feedback and is a combination of several types of feedback. The aim of their study was to investigate the corrective feedback and learner uptake in four immersion classrooms. During the research four different teachers used six different types of feedback. The results showed that the teachers were mostly inclined to using recasts. The other four types of feedback (elicitation, metalinguistic feedback, clarification requests and repetition) resulted in learner uptake and self-generated repair.

Clark (2012) differentiates two types of feedback: synchronous and asynchronous. Synchronous or immediate feedback is another type of feedback which plays an important role in language assessment and learning. It is considered to be more effective in supporting higher psychological functioning that is why it is considered to promote learning. It is known that activities that give students the opportunity to receive immediate feedback and answer actively, are very engaging (Clark, 2012). Asynchronous or delayed feedback is more detailed and

comprehensible, which can serve as a permanent evidence of assessment. It includes the following three conditions:

- Time interval between gathering the evidence and sharing the evidence. As an example of this could be the information gathered from homework and used the next day.
- Time interval before gathering and sharing evidence. This is done at the end of the lesson for students to share their understandings, which are used to plan the next lesson.
- Evidence integrated from historical analysis. It is implemented by using the student misconceptions and insights from previous years.

Asynchronous feedback is considered useful as it permits to reflect on its use, and it is a recorded assessment evidence (Clark, 2012).

Internal and external feedback are other types of formative assessment. Internal feedback plays a fundamental role in student engagement, learning and achievement. Formative assessment is a powerful tool used by teachers in classrooms to reveal the internal psychological factors that affect the learning process (Black and William, 1998). External feedback includes student beliefs concerning a particular subject or learning area. Butler and Winne (1995) state that external feedback may add, confirm or question the learners understanding of the task and the learning process. According to Sadler (1989), both internal and external feedback assist learners to meet standards and make progress in their learning procedure. Along with the above-mentioned types, feedback can also be positive and negative. Positive feedback shows that the student utterance was correct. From the point of view of pedagogical theory, positive

feedback is beneficial in second language acquisition as it supports the learner and motivates them to continue the learning process. Teachers also need to focus students' attention on the correctness of their utterance. In this respect, teachers need to give negative feedback, which is corrective in its nature as it indicates that the learner's utterances are linguistically incorrect (Ellis, 2009).

Gattullo (2000) and Harmer (2001) differentiate 3 kinds of feedback: evaluative, strategic and corrective feedback. Evaluative feedback is given with the help of such words and phrases ("good", "great", "poor") which will state whether a student's performance is good or not. This kind of feedback helps the students to improve their performance. Strategic feedback assists the students in becoming independent and overcoming the mistake themselves. When teachers notice the mistake, they can use different techniques to make the student understand it and fix it on their own. Strategic feedback is considered to enhance student learning and make them more confident. In addition to this, corrective feedback is another important type of feedback that needs to be paid attention to. The effect of corrective feedback has been a major discussion topic for researchers. Ellis (2006) defines corrective feedback as a "response to learner utterance containing an error". The goal of providing students with feedback is to help them realize the error in their speech and motivate them to use the correct form. Therefore, corrective feedback plays a crucial role in L2 acquisition which could be done through teacher support and encouragement (Lyster and Ranta 1997; Sheen, 2004). Corrective feedback can be given in two ways: implicitly and explicitly. Implicit corrective feedback usually has the form of recasts. The teacher repeats the erroneous utterance of the student, trying to highlight it but not clearly indicate the error itself. While in explicit corrective feedback, we have an apparent indication of the error (Ellis, 2008).

A considerable number of empirical studies have shown that students' external and internal factors play an important role in the effectiveness of corrective feedback. Moreover, according to Lyster and Saito (2010), learner age also has a remarkable effect on corrective feedback. They believe that young learners receive more benefits from corrective feedback than the old ones.

## 2.4 Student attitude towards teacher's oral feedback

Students' attitude towards teacher's oral feedback mainly depends on the way they notice, understand and interpret the feedback in their perceptions. Gamlem & Smith (2013) suggested that examining student attitudes towards teacher feedback can be beneficial for teaching practices by helping teachers to understand student needs about feedback and fulfill them. Many studies have been conducted to reveal student attitudes towards oral feedback and help teachers to find the most suitable and effective ways of giving feedback (Irawan and Salija, 2017). Irawan and Salija (2017) conducted a descriptive study in an Indonesian senior high school in order to understand teachers' oral feedback in EFL classroom interaction and students' perceptions about it. The findings suggest that students' attitude towards oral feedback is mainly positive. Some students were sensitive towards oral feedback, nevertheless they find it useful and state that it has a positive effect on their learning. Cowie (2005) believes that oral feedback can affect students' feelings both positively and negatively. A study was conducted in New Zealand, with pupils aged seven to 10. The aim of the study was to understand student perceptions about assessment for learning and feedback. The results of the interviews showed that students mostly prefer teacher feedback in the form of suggestions as it allows them to play a more active role in understanding different concepts. Moreover, they preferred feedback on the way of task

completion. Overall, students' perceptions about feedback were mainly positive. In addition, student learning and their perceptions towards feedback also depends on the type of feedback and the way they receive it. Hattie and Timperley (2007) state that in order to enhance student achievement, teachers need to provide them with quality feedback. Moreover, they need to decide accurately the way and timing of providing feedback. One of the rules of effective teaching is to evaluate the learners' understanding of the given feedback and adapt it based on their needs.

There are several questions that need to be considered when providing the students with feedback. What kind of feedback should be provided to the students? Should all the errors be corrected or not? Should it be done privately or in front of the class? Should it be given immediately or after the lesson? All these questions affect students' perceptions and their attitude towards feedback and language learning (Ananda, et al., 2017).

Carnell (2000) examined the perceptions of 14 secondary school students (grades seven to eleven) about teacher to student feedback. After conducting individual interviews, it was found that the teacher was viewed as an expert who provides information to the students about their work, corrects their mistakes and gives advice on how to improve their work. Still, many students also felt that peer feedback was useful as it gave them a chance to work with others and discuss their works. This also helped when the students were stuck. King, Schrodt, and Weisel's (2009) study reports that for college students, feedback retention and the degree to which feedback is confidential are crucial factors in how they use feedback. The usefulness of feedback may vary student to student. Many students are likely to mention the usefulness of corrective feedback and give an impression on their sensitivity towards teacher's corrective feedback. The

researchers also think that many teachers need to find ways of providing students with useful feedback so that they experience feedback as useful. Lee (2008) conducted a study in Hong Kong secondary classrooms in order to investigate the reactions of students to teacher feedback. Student data from questionnaires, checklists along with teacher data from interviews and observations showed that students, regardless of their proficiency level preferred more written comments from teachers. Although both groups preferred more specific error feedback from the instructor, students with lower proficiency were less interested in error feedback than those with higher proficiency. The results also suggest that many students did not understand all the teacher feedback, therefore it made students passive and dependent on teachers.

The following studies helped to understand the importance of oral feedback in language learning and to investigate the challenges of providing EFL/ESL students with appropriate and effective oral feedback in the classroom.

# Chapter 3

## Methodology

The following action research aims at exploring the types of oral feedback used in two ESL classrooms in a public school in Yerevan. Moreover, it aims to reveal students' attitude towards oral feedback. The following chapter discusses the methodology applied in the study including the participants, the instruments used for data collection and data analysis.

### 3.1 Research Questions

Based on the purpose of the study and the literature review, the study is guided by the following research questions.

*RQ1: What kind of oral feedback is usually provided in EFL classrooms in public schools?*

*RQ2: What is the attitude of students towards oral feedback?*

The data for the first research question is collected through observations, teacher interviews as well as student surveys. The answer to the second research question is revealed through student pre- and post- study surveys, after class surveys and a focus group interview.

**3.2 Research Design**

A quasi-experimental research has been conducted in two EFL classrooms: treatment and comparison groups. Non-probability purposive sampling was used in the study. The research employed a concurrent mixed method approach, including both quantitative and qualitative strands. The data were collected and analyzed separately, for further analysis. In order to have reliable data and results, triangulation was implemented for collecting information on the same question from different viewpoints and sources.

**3.3 Context, Participants and Materials**

The study was conducted in two EFL classrooms, in one of the public schools in Yerevan, Armenia. The participants were 40 students from seven and eight grades (22 and 18 students for the treatment and comparison groups) and one English teacher. The students were native Armenians, aged 12 to 15. The level of the students varied from elementary to low intermediate. The English classes for both groups took place twice a week, for 45 minutes. The textbook for seven and eight graders was mainly used during the lessons. Besides, 8 graders also used "Destination" as a supplementary material.

**3.4 Ethical Considerations**

Ethical considerations have been followed throughout the whole research. The completion of an IRB (Institutional Review Board) certificate permitted the researcher to follow the principles of ethics and protect participants' rights.

Before beginning the research, written consent was received from the headmaster of the school. Afterwards, the English language teacher was informed about the study and gave approval for participation. Finally, the students gave oral consent to participate in the study.

The teacher interviews were conducted face- to- face. The teacher refused to be recorded so notes were taken accordingly throughout the whole process.

The pre-, post-study and after class surveys were anonymous, protecting the privacy of the participants. They were conducted after the lessons in the classroom.

The names of the school and the participant are kept confidential and the data are used for educational purposes.

## 3.5 Instruments

Both qualitative and quantitative data are used for the research. The qualitative data were collected through observations and interviews, and the quantitative data were collected through surveys.

- Pre- post- study teacher interview
- Pre- post- study students survey
- Classroom observations
- After class surveys

- Focus group interview

- Treatment procedure

Pre- study and post-study teacher interviews (see Appendix A, G) were conducted during the research. Before the beginning of the research, a pre-study interview was administered with the teacher, which aimed at collecting information about the teaching experience, preferred teaching methods, as well as perceptions about formative assessment tools and feedback.  The main goal of the post-study interview was to reveal the possible changes in teacher's perceptions and attitudes toward providing students with effective feedback.

At the beginning and at the end of the study all participants completed a multiple-choice question survey (see Appendix C). The purpose of the pre-study survey was to understand the students' perceptions about their English language classes, the types of feedback they received and their attitudes towards it. The post- study survey (see Appendix H) was directed to reveal the changes in their attitudes and perceptions as well as to see the overall effect of the study.

To understand the overall lesson structure, teaching methods and formative assessment tools, overall, eight classroom observations (see Appendix B) were conducted before the treatment. Detailed field notes were taken during the observations.

During the treatment procedure after class surveys (see Appendix D, E) were given to students. The surveys aimed to understand their perceptions about the lesson overall, attitude towards different kinds of feedback and teaching methods used during the class. All the terms and new concepts included in the surveys were introduced to the students beforehand. The answers to survey questions would help to collect the needed data for answering the research questions.

The treatment procedure started right after the observations. Teacher training was the first step taken in this process. The teacher was familiarized with some major ideas and concepts and she was asked to be present during the lessons of the treatment procedure and pay attention to the methods used. Two lessons were conducted in the treatment group. Textbook analysis helped to plan the lesson effectively and use different types of feedback during the lesson. The main topics which were being covered during that period were word forms, adjectives and adverbs and mixed tenses.

During the first lesson of the treatment procedure, the main focus was on the usage of peer feedback and elicitation. The lesson started with a homework check. Before starting the procedure, a detailed introduction and explanation of feedback types was given to the students. The students were divided into 3 groups and asked to compare their homework. They were given time to complete the task and when everyone was finished, the check-up procedure started. The students were asked to listen to each other's answers and give corrective feedback whenever needed. This process continued during the whole lesson. The students were actively participating and giving corrective feedback to each other. The teacher here was the listener and only interfered when the student-student interaction was interrupted by some knowledge gap. Even in this case, there was no explicit feedback provided by the teacher, and elicitation was used to overcome the situation.

The second lesson was a combination of several types of feedback such as repetition, recasts, elicitation, direct and delayed corrective feedback. The provision of feedback was mainly done by the teacher. The lesson started with a warmup activity, asking about students' well-being and what they did during the weekend. This was done to make students practice their speaking skills as well as change the atmosphere of the classroom, as it was the last class, and

everyone was tired. During this activity delayed corrective feedback along with elicitation was used. Homework check was again done as a group work. The students were asked to compare their works, choose one person from the group and share the answers on the blackboard. After that, both groups compared their answers and if there were any mismatches or mistakes a group discussion was organized and peer feedback was implemented. All the students were encouraged to take part in all the activities and the main goal of incorporating several types of feedback was to see which of them worked well and enhanced student learning.

A face-to-face focus group interview (see Appendix F) was conducted at the end of the study with two students from the treatment group. The students were chosen according to their proficiency level and engagement. The main goal of the interview was to understand students' perceptions about oral feedback.

**3.6 Data collection**

The data collection started with a teacher interview. As the teacher refused to be recorded, a note-taking strategy was used. The interview took place at school, after classes as arranged with the teacher.

After the teacher interview, several observations were conducted in both groups. The students were given the pre-study survey, which took about seven minutes. The language of the survey was in their L1, in order to make sure that all the students understood the questions. The main purpose of the observations was to have an overall picture of the lesson, teacher-student and student-student interaction, as well as the types of feedback provided during the lesson. The observations also helped to understand the main ways of providing feedback to the students and their attitudes towards it.

After several observations, the treatment procedure was implemented. It included two classes with after class surveys.

At the end of the study a teacher post-interview, student post-survey as well as a focus group interview was administered with both groups.

## 3.7 Data analysis

The qualitative data from the interviews were analyzed descriptively, while the quantitative data collected from the surveys were analyzed through Excel, separately.

Teacher interviews were analyzed and represented descriptively.

**Chapter 4**

**Results**

The current study aims at finding out the types of oral feedback usually provided in an Armenian public school EFL classroom.  The other important aspect is to understand students' attitudes towards the provided oral feedback. Therefore, the following chapter represents the answers to the guiding research questions based on the findings of the instruments.

**4.1 Research Question 1**

*What kind of oral feedback is usually provided in EFL classrooms in public schools?*

To answer the first research question pre-study teacher interview, pre-study student survey and classroom observations were conducted.

From the interpretation of the pre-study teacher interview it became clear that the main types of feedback the teacher used in the classroom were direct and corrective feedback in the form of repetition.  During the interview the teacher mentioned that she had 21 years of teaching experience. One of her beliefs about oral feedback was that without explicit corrections and explanations no results will be reached in language learning. The teacher also mentioned that it was more effective to provide the students with direct feedback, as it helped them pay attention to the mistake at that moment and fix it in their memory. To the question of what effect the oral feedback had on the students the teacher mentioned that it was mainly positive, thus it depended on the student. If the student was eager to learn more and be engaged, then the effect was surely positive. Different types of oral feedback were usually accepted naturally.

The detailed field notes of classroom observations showed that the teacher used several types of feedback during the lesson. The main types were corrective feedback in the form of recasts, positive/negative feedback, gestures, direct and delayed feedback. Although it was an English language lesson, the teacher often used the students' L1 in grammar explanations and the new vocabulary introduction. The material was introduced explicitly, without any attempt to elicit the answers from the students. They were not given enough time to think and answer the given questions.

Moreover, to find the answer to the first research question, pre- and post- study surveys were also conducted.

Figure 1 illustrates the summary of students' pre-study survey responses in percentages. As the data shows, both comparison and treatment groups (overall 34 students) state that they usually received the oral feedback directly after their answer. Only the treatment group mentioned that they also received oral feedback as they were answering. The purpose of the question was to understand the type and timing of the feedback provided.

Figure 1

Student pre-study survey responses about the timing of providing feedback in the classroom

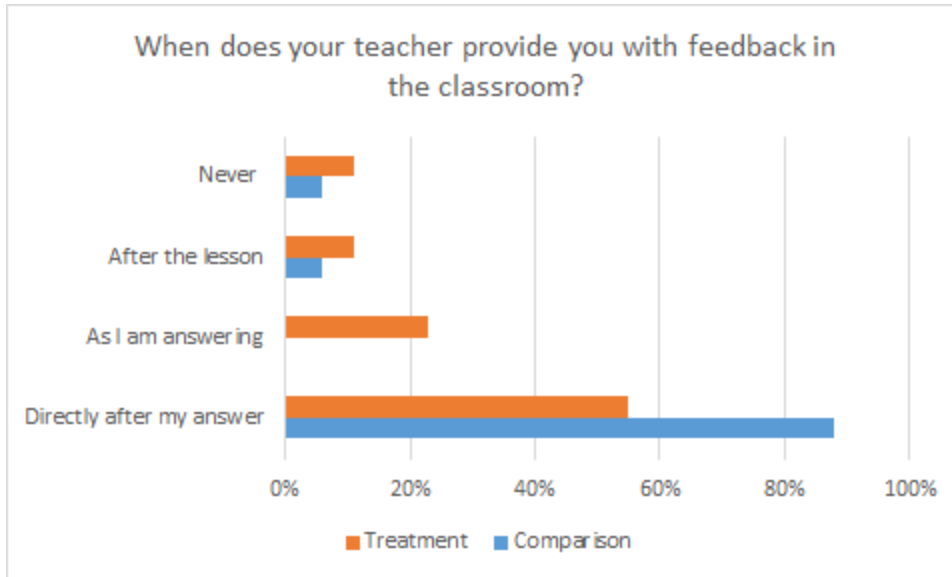When does your teacher provide you with feedback in the classroom?

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Figure 2 illustrates the answers of students of pre-study and post-study surveys about the oral feedback type they usually received in the classroom. In the pre-study survey the majority of students from both groups mentioned that they usually received delayed and corrective oral feedback in the classroom. Others also mentioned peer and direct feedback. The answers to this question in the post-study survey revealed that there was no major variation in the feedback type the students received. Again, delayed and corrective types of oral feedback were chosen by most of the students from both groups.
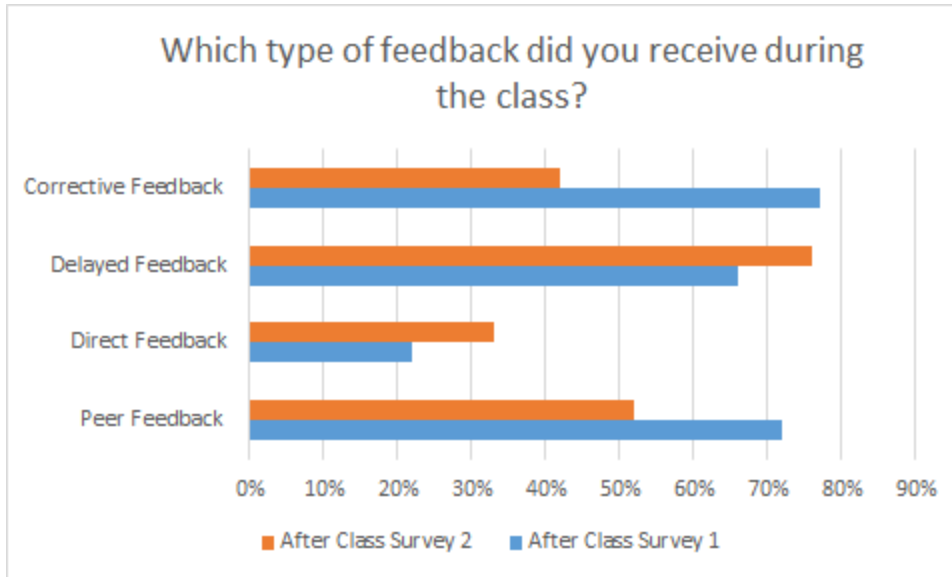
Figure 2

Student pre- and post- study survey answers about the type of oral feedback they usually receive

**What type of feedback do you usually receive?**
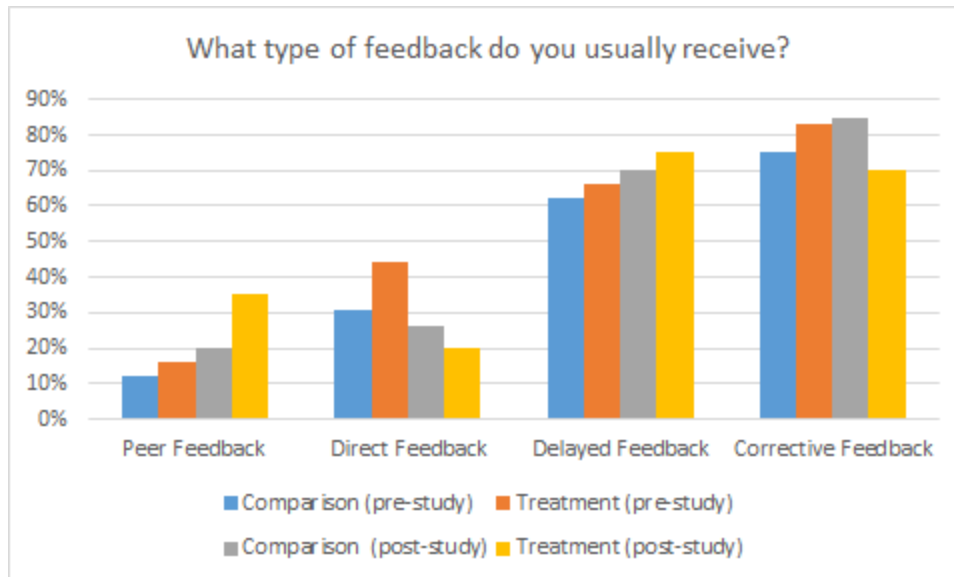
In addition, two after class surveys were conducted during the treatment procedure. Figure 3 illustrates students' answers to the question about the feedback type they received during the two classes. Students' answers revealed that during the first class of the treatment procedure they mainly received three types of oral feedback: peer (13 students out of 18), delayed ( 12 out of 18) and corrective (14 out of 18). Moreover, only four students out of 18 mentioned that they received direct feedback during the class. As for the second lesson, the variation of the types of feedback received is not major. Again, the above mentioned three types of oral feedback were mainly received by the students. Based on the students' responses (seven students out of 21) , the amount of direct feedback was again less then the amount of other three types of oral feedback.

Figure 3

Student after class survey responses about the type of oral feedback received during the class

Which type of feedback did you receive during the class?

To the question of what their preferred feedback type was, 16 out of 21 students answered that they prefer delayed feedback. The remaining five gave their preference to direct feedback.

Figure 4

Student after class survey responses about their preferred type of feedback



Which type of oral feedback do you prefer more?
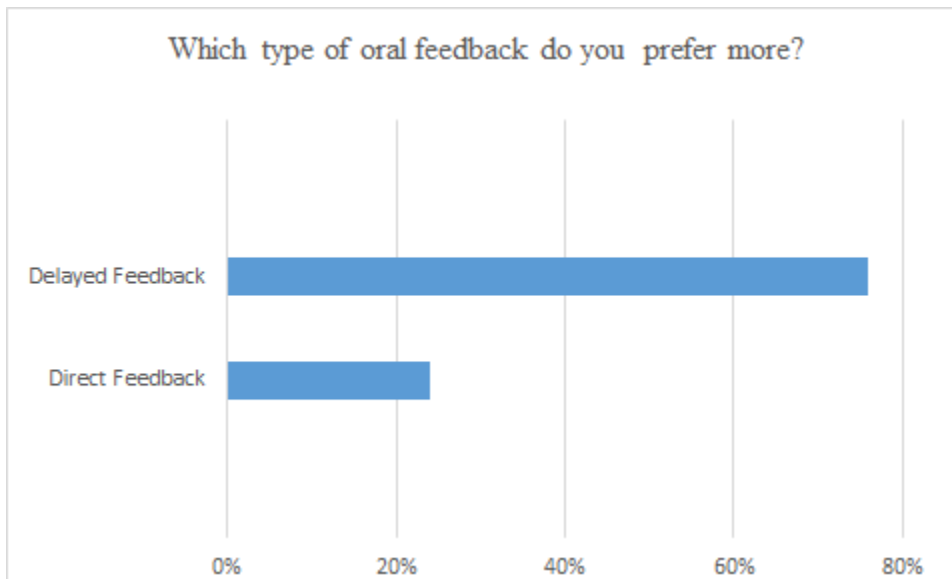
After the treatment procedure, at the end of the study, a teacher interview was administered. The answers revealed some changes in the teacher's understanding of the concept of oral feedback and its possible effects on students. She changed her understanding about peer feedback. She noticed that oral peer feedback enhanced student-student interaction and it gave students opportunities to share their knowledge.  The teacher also mentioned that it was more effective to provide the students with delayed feedback, as the interruption of the speech might affect students' motivation and attitude towards learning  and the feedback itself, as well as hinder them from using the target language. She stated that repetition was more effective as a type of corrective feedback. To the question about what kind of oral feedback she used in order to encourage and motivate the students she mentioned that the most common ways were praises and high grades.

### 4.2 Research Question 2

*What is the attitude of students towards oral feedback?*

As the survey answers did not give a full understanding of students' attitude towards feedback, a face to face focus group interview was conducted with two students from the treatment group. The students were chosen according to their proficiency level (elementary to low-intermediate), which was noted during the classroom observations and stated by the teacher. The first two questions of the interview aimed at finding out whether the students enjoy their English class in general, and their attitude towards the teaching style and methods of the teacher. Both students answered positively to the questions, stating that they like their English class and

mainly the teacher. They found her teaching methods effective and didn't want any changes in their classes. The students also mentioned that the teacher was always ready to help them in case of any questions and difficulties. The teacher provided them with quick and effective oral feedback in the classroom which helped them in language learning. The next question was about the feedback type which motivated them or hindered them from learning the language. One of the students mentioned that whenever the teacher interrupted her speech and corrected the mistakes or tried to help her, she got confused and it became difficult for her to continue her speech. They preferred to receive the feedback after their speech, so they could pay more attention to what was said.

Post-study survey also assisted in finding out the answer to the second research question. Based on the findings of Figure 5, it can be implied that most of the students, both in comparison and treatment groups mostly preferred corrective and delayed oral feedback. Direct and peer feedback were mainly preferred by the minority of students.

Figure 5

Student post-study survey responses about the preferred feedback type
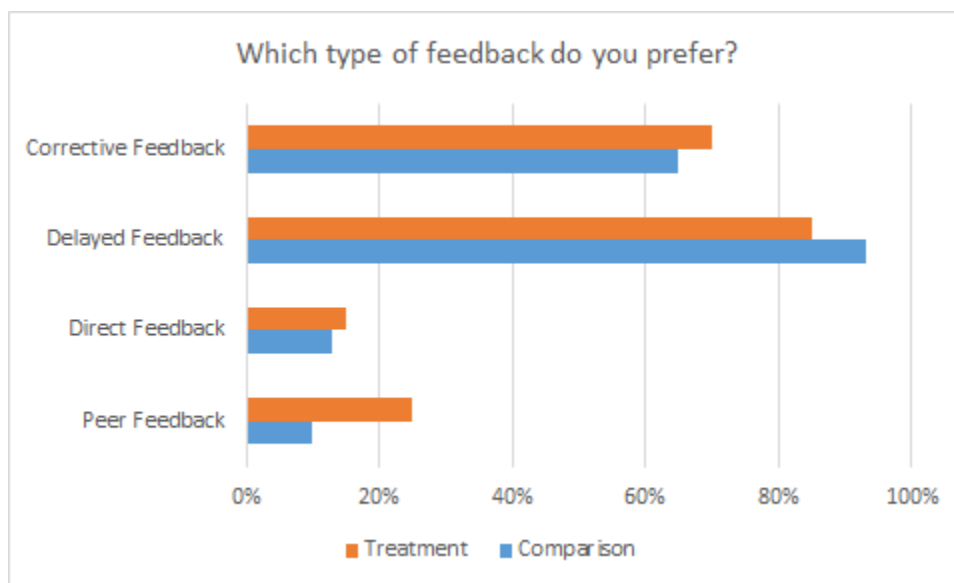
Student responses to post-study survey questions also helped to understand the influence of teacher feedback on their performance. According to Figure 6, the majority of students from both groups (nine students out of 18 form the treatment group and 11 students out of 16 from the comparison group) stated that teacher feedback helped them perform better. And only ten percent of the students from the treatment group mentioned that the feedback did not help them at all.

Figure 6 Students' perceptions about teacher oral feedback
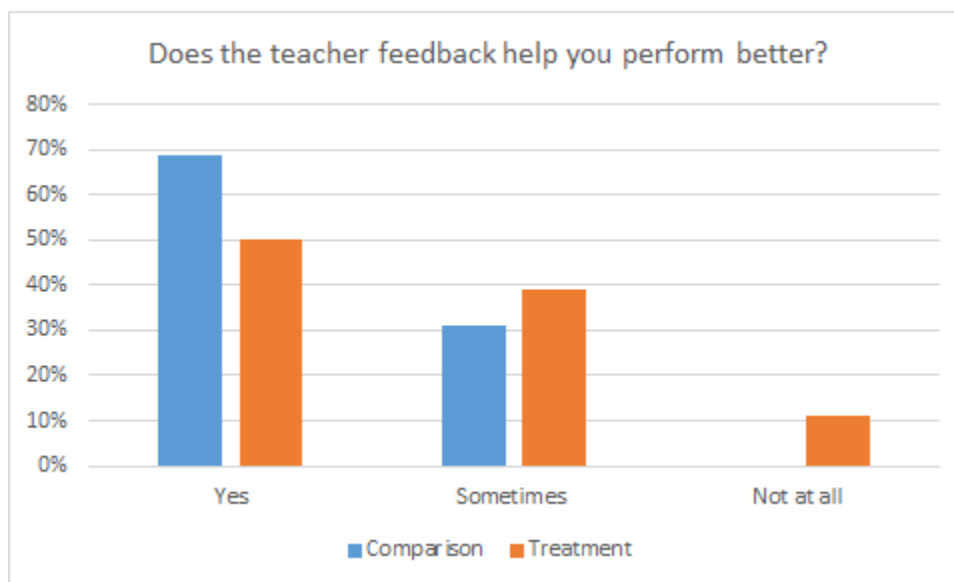


Regarding the influence of feedback on students' feelings, the post-study survey responses revealed that the majority of students in both groups (five students out of 15 in the comparison group and 12 students out of 20 in the treatment group) stated that it helped them perform better. Some students from both groups pointed out that it hindered them from using the language in the classroom or made them uncomfortable. Only two students from the comparison group and 3 students from the treatment group mentioned that it had no influence on their feelings.

Figure 7 Students' perceptions about oral feedback
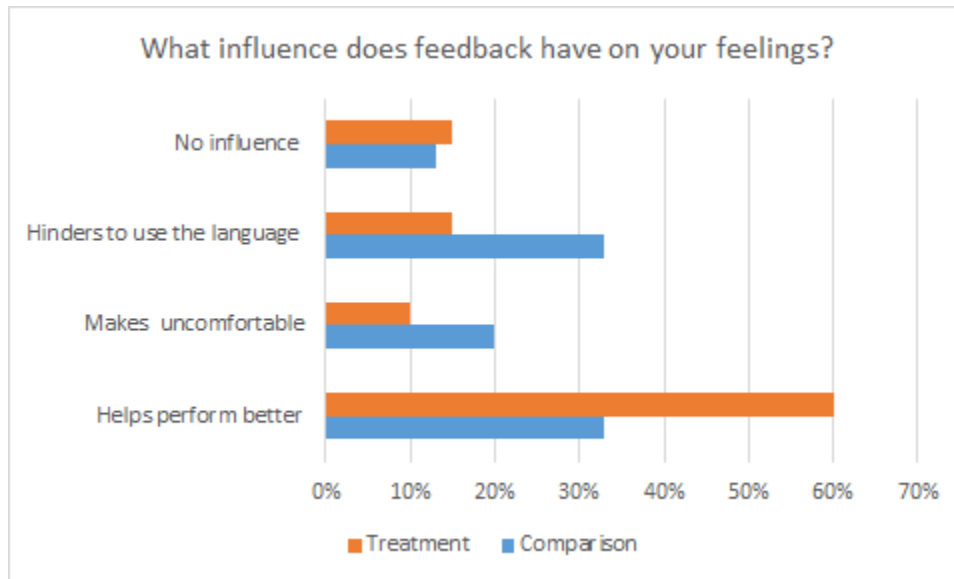


Thus, the findings of this section indicate that students' perceptions about oral feedback are mainly positive. The results were obtained from pre- and post- study surveys, as well as teacher and students focus group interviews.

# Chapter 5

## Discussion and Conclusions

### 5.1 Discussion

The current study aimed at investigating types of oral feedback provided in an EFL classroom in an Armenian public school, as well as understanding student perceptions about oral feedback. This chapter will explain and interpret the findings in relation to previous research and research objectives.

In response to the first research question about the types of oral feedback that are usually provided in an EFL classroom in Armenian public school, the results of the pre-study teacher interview indicated that the teacher usually uses direct corrective feedback. The teacher believes that explicit direct corrective feedback plays an important role in language learning. Clark (2012) also states that activities which give students opportunities to receive immediate feedback and answer actively, are very engaging. The post-study survey revealed some changes in the teacher's understanding of the concept of oral feedback and its possible effects on students. Firstly, she mentioned the effectiveness of peer feedback in enhancing student interaction and sharing knowledge with one another. She also understood that delayed feedback is much help for students, as it does not interrupt their flow of ideas and does not hinder them from using the target language. Still, the teacher uses praises and high grades for motivating and encouraging the students.

Moreover, the detailed note of classroom observations also revealed that the teacher mainly uses direct and delayed corrective feedback in the form of recasts and repetitions. The provisions positive and negative oral feedback were also implemented during the classes. It can be concluded that the teacher uses multiple feedback as Lyster and Ranta (1997) suggested in their study.

In addition, student survey responses also assisted in collecting the answer to the first research question. To the question about the timing of the provision of feedback the majority of both groups mentioned in the pre-study survey that they are usually being interrupted and provided with feedback. The pre- and post- study surveys included the same question about the type of oral feedback that the students usually receive. In the pre-study survey the majority of both groups mentioned that they usually receive delayed corrective feedback. While in the post-study survey the students from the treatment group mentioned that they also receive peer feedback which is the result of the treatment procedure.

Furthermore, in regard to students' attitude towards oral feedback, the results showed that students mostly have a positive attitude towards different types of oral feedback. The answers to focus group questions revealed that students prefer receiving a quick and effective oral feedback in the classroom. They were satisfied with the teaching methods and the teacher overall. They stated that the teacher is always ready to assist them with all possible ways to overcome the difficulties and make use of the provided feedback. Similar ideas have been discussed by Hatty (2002) and Irawan and Salija (2017) who mentioned that for enhancing student achievement, teachers need to provide them with quality feedback as well as decide accurately the way and timing of providing feedback. Moreover, Irawan and Salija (2017) suggest that even though some students could be sensitive towards oral feedback, nevertheless they find it useful and state

that it has a positive effect on their learning.  The majority of the both groups also mentioned that teacher feedback helps students perform better.

The results of the survey questions and focus group interview also indicated that the students mostly prefer corrective delayed feedback rather than direct, as they feel confused and uncomfortable when being interrupted and are not able to continue their speech most of the time.

Interestingly, most of the students of the treatment group also prefer peer feedback and find it useful as opposed to the comparison group students. This is due to the treatment procedure as the provision of the peer feedback was done only in the treatment group. Peer feedback was also found useful among the students in Carmell's (2000) study, who mentioned that peer feedback gave them a chance to work with others and discuss their works.

Another interesting finding of the research was the influence of oral feedback on students' feelings. The majority of the students from the treatment group mentioned that feedback helps them perform better, while the students from the comparison group gave equal answers for two variants. Half of them mentioned that feedback helps them perform better and the other half answered that feedback hinders them from using the language.

Hence, the results suggest that several types of oral feedback are used in EFL classrooms in an Armenian public school and the students' attitude towards oral feedback is mainly positive.


## 5.2 Pedagogical implications

Several pedagogical implications r have been derived to make the provision of oral feedback in the classroom more effective considering students' attitude towards it.

The first recommendation is to use different types of feedback during the class. It will be useful to incorporate them with different activities so that the students are also engaged in the process.

Second, it is recommended that teachers give more time to students to think and respond and do not always provide them with direct feedback. Direct feedback hinders the students from using the language and makes them uncomfortable to communicate. Moreover, it is difficult for students to keep the track of their thoughts when interrupted and they are usually being stuck.

And finally, it is recommended to plan the provision of different types of oral feedback beforehand, as it will become easier to shift between them depending on the situation.

**5.3 Limitations and Delimitations**

The study came across several limitations and delimitations.

The first limitation is the possibility of biased answers of the student surveys. As mentioned, the surveys were given to the students after the class. The teacher was present during the whole procedure and she refused to leave the classroom or not to interfere. This could cause student anxiety and lead to biased answers to the questions. Another limitation is the winter break during the research. Because of the pandemic and New Year holidays, the last week of the semester was postponed for 20 days. The students had final tests before and after the recess, so the observations and data collection temporarily stopped. And finally, the duration of the study is also considered a limitation. It would be more effective to conduct such kinds of studies in a longer period of time.

The study encountered the following delimitations; first, the age of the participants and the proficiency level, which described the range of the study and second, the educational context. The following study could have different results if conducted in a different educational context such as a private school or another public school.

**5.4 Recommendations for further research**

Firstly, it is highly recommended to conduct such studies for a longer period of time, with different age groups and sample size. Future research could also explore the influence of oral feedback on students' speaking skills. It would be interesting to examine how helpful feedback is for the improvement of speaking skills. And the final recommendation would be to carry out further research in two groups with different teachers. This would help to examine and compare different teaching styles and methods.

**5.5 Conclusion**

The results of the study revealed that several types of oral feedback are used in public schools EFL classrooms in Armenia. The most common ones are, direct and delayed feedback, as well as corrective feedback. Though the action research aims at finding out the types of oral feedback which are used in public school EFL classrooms and improving the ways of providing different types of feedback to the students, a large amount of descriptive data is provided so that the teachers having the same similarities in their teaching practice could make use of the current study and implement the tolls in their classrooms.

Moreover, most of the participants showed a positive attitude towards oral feedback. Students find teacher oral feedback useful as it mainly helps them learn and perform better.

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**Appendices**

**Appendix A**

**Teacher Pre-interview Questions**

1. How long have you worked at school?

2. What kind of formative assessment strategies do you use in your classroom?

3. What are your perceptions about classroom assessment?

4. What system or strategies do you use to evaluate student work?

5. What techniques do you use for error correction?

6. Which of them are more effective?

7. How do you give oral feedback to the students? When and how?

8. What type of feedback results in student engagement?

9. How do you motivate your students?

10. What effect does this feedback have on students?

**Appendix B**

**Classroom Observation Field Notes**

1. Feedback- nodding, gestures, saying "yes" or "no" sharply, praises and punishments.

2. Instructions and explanations are in L1.

3. Error correction is done at the moment of speaking and sometimes after the student finishes the speech.

4. T corrects the errors in the form of repetitions and recasts.

5. T ask questions and doesn't give time to Ss to think and answer.

6. The Ss use gestures to tell the meaning of the word and the teacher says the word out loud in L1 (translates).

7. No chance is given to the Ss to correct their mistakes and think.

8. Interrupts the Ss while reading, asking to read faster.

9. Interrupts (pauses) the student in order to help (the student was not able to continue).

**Appendix C**

**Student Pre-survey Questions**


1. What grade are you in?

2. What is your gender?

3. Why do you learn English?

4. Do you enjoy learning English?

5. Do you enjoy coming to English classes?

6. When does the teacher provide you with oral feedback in the classroom?

7. Which type of the following oral feedback do you usually receive?

8. How helpful is it?

9. Does teacher oral feedback help you perform better?

10. Are you given time to think and answer the question?

**Appendix D**

**After Class Student Survey 1**

1. Which type of feedback did you receive during the lesson?

2. How effective they were? Please rate.

3. Did you have enough time to think and answer the question?

4. Was peer feedback useful?

5. Would you like to receive peer feedback more often?

6. Was teacher feedback useful?

7. Did you like the lesson? Please rate.

**Appendix E**

**After Class Student Survey 2**

1. Which type of feedback did you receive during the lesson?

2. How effective they were? Please rate.

3. Did the teacher give you enough time to think and answer the question?

4. Did the teacher's feedback help you understand the material better?

5. Which type of feedback do you find more effective?

6. Did you like the lesson? Please rate.

**Appendix F**

**Focus Group Interview Questions**

1. Why do you learn English?

2. Do you enjoy English classes?

3. Do you like the teaching style and methods of the teacher?

4. How useful are they?

5. If something is unclear, do you ask for clarifications?

6. What type of feedback do you usually receive in that case?

7. Does it help you to understand the material?

8. Do you usually have enough time to think and answer the questions given?

9. How do you like to receive feedback? Directly? After your answer or at the end of the lesson?

10. What happens in case of receiving direct feedback?

11. How helpful is teacher feedback?

12. After receiving corrective feedback, do you make the same mistake again?

13. What motivates you and what hinders you from learning English in the classroom?

14. Do you use English or Armenian during the classes?

15. What changes would you like to see in your English lessons and teaching methods?

16. Does the grade motivate you? (Do you learn for receiving good grade or just for yourself?)

17. Does the teacher explain materials explicitly or she helps you to get the answer yourself?

**Appendix G**

**Teacher Post-study Interview Questions**

1. What are your perceptions about formative assessment and feedback now?

2. What effects does the feedback have on students?

3. What kind of oral feedback do you give to students in order to encourage and motivate them?

4. What systems or strategies do you use to evaluate student work?

5. What techniques will you use for error correction? Which are the most effective to you?

6. When and how will you provide the students with oral feedback?

7. Has your attitude towards giving feedback changed?

**Appendix H**

**Student Post-study Survey Questions**

1. Which of the following types of feedback do you receive?

2. Which one is more preferable?

3. What influence does it have on your feelings?

4. Does it hinder you from using the language more often?

5. Which kind of feedback motivates you to continue learning?

6. Do you think you need more time to think and answer the question?

7. How helpful is the teacher oral feedback when you ask questions?

8. Are you often encouraged to do your best during the class?

9. Do you learn to correct your mistakes yourself?

10. Does the feedback you receive help you understand and improve your work?