

## Interactional Feedback in Naturalistic Interaction between L2 English Learners

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### Abstract

Theoretical and empirical data support that the feedback given in small group activities promote second language acquisition. There are many studies that have examined the impact of interaction on second language acquisition in controlled language situations. This study examines the small group activity 'conversation partner' in order to find out how much feedback takes place in an out of classroom activity such as conversation partner where the language is not controlled. The conversations were recorded and examined for instances of interactional feedback. Later a tailor made test was given to find out whether the participants remembered the language items that they received feedback on. The results show that feedback in natural speech among learners occurs relatively at a low level but the learners remember whatever language that was used in feedback instances.

**Keywords:** second language acquisition, interactional feedback, small group activities

### 1. Introduction

Interactional and small group activities are widely used in second language teaching contexts. It is believed that group work presents learners more opportunity to actually use the target language than teacher fronted activities (McDonough, 2004). Learners provide each other with learning opportunities during pair and group activities. Group activities lessen anxiety in using a second language and the feedback one gets from her/his peers is said to enhance acquisition. Numerous studies support these views and confirm the theories such as interaction hypothesis (Long, 1983, 1985, 1996) and output hypothesis (Swain, 1995). The Interaction Hypothesis claims that second language acquisition is enhanced by having L2 learners negotiate meaning. It is also found that input becomes comprehensible through the speech modifications between native speakers of the target language and learners (Long 1983).

McDonough (2004) examined learner- learner interaction during pair and small group activities in a Thai EFL context in order to find out whether theoretically attributed learning opportunities take place in an intact classroom. Sixteen Thai EFL learners had carried out four pair and small group activities and completed three oral tests over a period of eight weeks. Her study shows that learners who had more involvement with negative feedback and modified output during pair and small group activities demonstrated improved language production particularly in the production of both real and unreal conditionals. The implication of this study is that learners can create language opportunities during task-based interaction and benefit from these opportunities.

Dobao (2014) discusses the opportunities interaction offers for vocabulary learning. This study shows that the knowledge about language was jointly constructed by the participants in both the pair activity and group activity. Dobao looked at 60 learners working as groups of 4 and a further 50 learners working in pairs. Findings show that the groups produced more Language Related Episodes (LREs) than the pairs. Further the study shows that the number of participants in an interactive conversation has no adversary impact on vocabulary learning.

In another study John Bitchner (2004) investigated, the role of negotiation in interaction and the relationship between the negotiation of meaning and language learning. 30 pre-intermediate ESL learners had been asked to repeat two different communication tasks one week and 12 weeks after their first performance. This study confirms that low proficiency ESL learners initiate negotiation routines when they are faced with communication