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Confidence-Building Strategies and Feedback: Their Role in Reducing Self-Consciousness in English Language Speaking

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ABSTRACT

The present study analyses the types of feedback that are more effective to reduce learners' self-consciousness, the role of confidence-building strategies (CBS) in learners' willingness to communicate and the ways in which self-consciousness affects L2 production and participation in class. For that, pre- and post-questionnaire were handed out to participants of the study for them to answer before and after the intervention took place. The study was carried out with twenty participants who were divided into two groups of ten participants: the experimental group (who received positive and corrective implicit feedback, and CBS) and the control group (who received corrective explicit feedback). Each group underwent the same process: they were given a consent form, they answered the pre-questionnaire, the intervention took place and they answered the post-questionnaire. Results revealed that positive and corrective implicit feedback when combined with CBS has a positive impact in reducing learners' self-consciousness and enhancing their willingness to communicate in the L2.

Key words: feedback, self-consciousness, confidence-building strategies (CBS), L2 production, second language acquisition (SLA)

RESUM

Aquest estudi analitza els tipus de retroacció que són més efectius a l'hora de reduir l'autoconsciència (a l'hora de parlar anglès) dels alumnes, el rol de les estratègies de foment de la confiança en la predisposició dels alumnes per comunicar-se, i la manera en la qual l'autoconsciència afecta la producció de l'L2 i la participació a classe. Per això, es varen repartir un pre- i un post-qüestionari, abans i després de la intervenció. L'estudi es va realitzar amb vint alumnes, que van ser dividits en dos grups de deu: el grup experimental (que va rebre retroacció positiva, implícita i estratègies de foment de la confiança) i el grup de control (que va rebre retroacció explícita). Cada grup va passar pel mateix procés: se'ls va donar el document de consentiment, després el primer qüestionari, es va fer la intervenció i finalment, van respondre l'últim qüestionari. Els resultats mostren que la retroacció positiva juntament amb la implícita i les estratègies de foment de la confiança tenen un impacte positiu en reduir l'autoconsciència dels alumnes i en fomentar la seva predisposició per comunicar-se en l'L2.

Paraules clau: feedback, autoconsciència, estratègies per a la construcció de la confiança (CBS), producció en L2, adquisició de segones llengües (SLA)

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1. OBJECTIVES AND JUSTIFICATION

I decided on this topic as I believe it can help me have a better understanding of the second language acquisition processes while reflecting on the psychological side of language acquisition. When it comes to previous experiences, and although in English class I used to be confident, I believe I have felt self-conscious in a classroom several times in the past. I think most times it was because feedback was given to me in ways that impacted my confidence negatively. Moreover, throughout my high school years, I noticed how some of my friends felt very self-conscious in English class, especially if they had to speak in front of the class or even with their classmates; they did not want to participate, and they disliked the subject just because they thought they were not good at it. Nowadays, some of them are studying English and are very happy about their learning process. I believe more confidence-building strategies should have been used in class to help those students who lacked confidence.

I have been working in a language school for two years now, and I have had the chance to observe how feedback could affect the students' confidence. Not only did feedback affect their confidence, but confidence-building strategies also seemed to have an impact on them. Throughout the first term of my first year as a teacher, I used to be very traditional with regard to feedback, but some of my teacher coworkers gave me some advice. I immediately started giving feedback with positive reinforcement, I left an encouraging note at the end of each test, and by the last term of my first year as a teacher, I noticed how my students' performance and attitude improved.

Finally, the present study aims to 1) identify the types of feedback that are more effective in reducing the students' self-consciousness when speaking English in class; 2) explore how confidence-building strategies affect the students' confidence in speaking in the classroom; and 3) identify the impact of self-consciousness in English production and classroom participation.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

In the context of Second Language Acquisition (SLA), feedback and learner self-confidence have been two topics thoroughly researched in the field of language acquisition. Previous research has focused on the impact and effectiveness of the different types of feedback on the confidence of the learners as well as on the acquisition of a foreign language, but there were a few gaps on confidence-building strategies (CBS). For that, this review of the literature focuses on how feedback and the use of CBS influence learners' confidence in English language speaking. In this review of the literature, section 2.2 deals with feedback and its effectiveness. In section 2.3, learner motivation and confidence-building strategies are discussed, as the section is subdivided by motivation in the English classroom and confidence-building strategies' impact on motivation. Section 2.4 focuses on affective factors and the pedagogical implications, while section 2.5 discusses self-efficacy and achievement in a language learning context.

2.2. Feedback and its effectiveness

Hattie and Timperley (2007) focus on the impacts that feedback has on educational contexts, they claim that “feedback is one of the most powerful influences on learning and achievement, but its impact can be either positive or negative.” (p.81) Firstly, it is important to keep in mind the meaning that is given to feedback, which is described as “information about the content and/or understanding of the constructions that students have made from the learning experience” (Hattie & Timperley, 2007, p. 82). It is also crucial to consider that feedback might not only be given by teachers, but also by parents or other students. Secondly, it has been proven that feedback is in fact very powerful, however, its effectiveness might vary depending on the types of feedback. According to Hattie and Timperley (2007), the types of feedback that addressed “praise, rewards and punishment” were the ones that showed less effectiveness, whereas “information feedback about the task and how to do it more effectively” proved to be more powerful. (p. 83) Moreover, and considering that the main purpose of feedback is to reduce the gap that is between the actual understanding and/or achievement of the goal and the goal, it is crucial to understand that true effective feedback must answer the following questions: “Where am I going? How am I going? Where to next?” (p. 86). Additionally, feedback effectiveness might be more powerful based on the focus that it is given. There are four different levels of feedback: feedback about the task, which focuses on task performance and accomplishment; feedback about the processing of the task, which focuses on the

cognitive processes and understanding of the task; feedback about self-regulation, which addresses the ways in which students plan and organize themselves in relation to the task; and feedback about the self as a person, which focuses on reassuring or giving positive affirmations to the students in a more personal level, it is not as focused to the task. To conclude, by answering the questions and considering the four levels of feedback as well as timing, feedback might increase “effort, motivation or engagement to reduce this discrepancy, and/or it can increase cue searching and task processes that lead to understanding” (Hattie & Timperley, 2007, p. 102).

Ellis (2013) addresses both positive and negative or corrective feedback (CF). While he discusses the importance of applying both types of feedback in a classroom context, positive feedback is praised as its aim is to build learners’ confidence and motivation by letting them know what they did right instead of focusing on the negative aspects. In addition, Ellis (2009) discusses corrective feedback in the context of second language acquisition, which is defined as the response to learner errors with the aim of informing the learner of the error and to promote language learning through either direct or indirect correction. Ellis identifies different types of CF, based on the questions that were raised when focusing on error correction, as “teachers did not know whether they had to correct errors, what errors they had to correct, how to correct them and when to correct them” (p. 3). There have been a few controversies regarding the concept of corrective feedback. Firstly, corrective feedback has been thoroughly discussed and questioned, but its effectiveness lies in how, when and in what context it is provided. Ellis identifies two types of corrective feedback: explicit and implicit. Explicit feedback happens when a correction is given directly and without giving the learners the chance to think about the correction themselves (explicit correction, metalinguistic explanation, elicitation, paralinguistic signal). Implicit feedback happens when the teacher signals there has been an error but does not provide a direct correction, giving the learners the opportunity to correct it themselves (Clarification request, repetition, recast). Explicit correction and recasts both aim at providing input for the learner, while the rest aim at prompting output.

It is important to identify the type of error or mistake that the learner has made, so as to give significant and effective feedback. Ellis (2009) also discusses the importance of the corrector, as students can either get teacher correction or self-correction. In this case, implicit feedback is more likely to take place. Moreover, it is essential to choose the corrective feedback strategy that is more convenient for the context, although several studies have proven that both implicit and explicit CF assist SLA successfully. Finally,

the timing of CF must be considered, especially in oral activities. When learners are practicing speaker, the teacher must decide whether he or she will give an immediate correction or a delayed correction, and “in accuracy-oriented activities correction should be provided immediately” (p. 11) but it has been questioned as immediate feedback in oral activities interrupts fluency and redirects focus on form rather than on meaning.

2.3. Learner motivation and confidence-building strategies

2.3.1. Motivation in the English classroom

It has been proven by studies that both feedback and CBS have a crucial role in fostering learner motivation. Motivation is one of the most important factors when it comes to Second Language Acquisition (SLA), however, it is not the only factor to consider, as it is just one variable amongst others that, combined, have an impact on learner success (Norris-Holt, 2001). Gardner (2007) identifies two motivational constructs: language learning motivation and classroom learning motivation. He refers to language learning motivation as the motivation to acquire a second language, whereas classroom learning motivation refers to the way learners perceive the task and to what extent they feel motivated in that specific situation. Thus, the latest motivational construct is influenced by several variables, such as the teacher, the environment, the materials and the state of the learners themselves. Although these two constructs can be defined separately, they both rely on each other. For that, it is crucial to consider all the factors that can influence learner motivation, and CBS (which focuses more on classroom dynamics) can have a positive impact on it.

2.3.2. Confidence-building strategies' impact on motivation

Although there is not a fixed list or a definition of CBS, there are several studies on different theories in the field of SLA, creating an illustrative set of strategies that should be more effective in the English classroom. These strategies could either focus more on their pedagogical implications or on their affective implications, so there would be pedagogical strategies which aim to support learners through structured tasks, scaffolding, and clear feedback, while affective strategies focus on reducing anxiety and promoting a safe environment. Together, both types of strategies can contribute to a classroom environment that boosts the confidence of the learners and increases their willingness to participate in class.

For instance, starting off with pedagogical strategies, Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) theory suggests that there is a difference between a child's

“actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving” and the child's “potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (p.86). This theory has been connected to scaffolding, which is defined as the teacher helping the student within their ZPD. Therefore, scaffolding is a crucial confidence-building strategy to consider, although “the notion of scaffolding only partially reflects the richness of Vygotsky's zone of proximal development” (Verenikina, 2003, p.3). When focusing on speaking tasks, scaffolding could be helped by the teacher if they are provided with sentence starters, lists of vocabulary or guidelines to help students through the task. Feedback might also be considered a powerful confidence-building strategy, as mentioned before, Hattie and Timperley (2007) emphasize the importance of feedback in language learning and assert that focus on information about the task, effort and improvement is more effective than focus on its correctness. That way, learners feel less self-conscious about their errors or mistakes and their focus is on the effectiveness of the task. Another pedagogical strategy to consider in a speaking activity would be allowing the students to choose a topic of their interest, fostering learner control which helps them feel more confident, giving clear instructions on the activity's goal and giving more time to students for them to be able to prepare the oral activity (Nation & Newton, 2009). Finally, according to MacIntyre et al. (1998), McCroskey and Baer (1985) conceptualized Willingness to Communicate (WTC) as the likelihood that an individual will initiate communication when given the freedom to do so and it is seen as a personality trait. When focusing on WTC in the SLA context, it must be kept in mind that there are many factors that might influence someone's WTC in their second language (L2), as L1 and L2 production is not influenced by the same variables. MacIntyre et al. explain that when there is WTC in a classroom context, it is because most of the learners' experiences with the L2 learning process have been pleasant and their self-confidence has increased through the years. This self-confidence with the use of the L2 may be influenced by different factors, such as motivation, personality or the social situation of the learners. Thus, it is important to encourage the learners' WTC in the classroom considering their needs and granting learner control in speaking activities.

As for the affective CBS, Dörnyei (2011) discusses the importance of teacher behaviour and coherence, as a study he conducted showed that teacher behaviour is the most important tool when considering learner motivation. Moreover, it is essential to ensure a safe and comfortable environment for all learners, which resulted to being the

second most important tool in the study. Although it is not easy to describe the ideal environment for the classroom, there are a few things to consider, such as discussing mistakes or learner errors without disrespecting the learner or acknowledging their effort. Creating a safe environment implies leaving judgment behind and focusing on learning opportunities whenever learners make a mistake. By considering the affective strategies teachers make sure that the students' self-confidence with the L2 grows, and that language anxiety is reduced.

2.4. Affective factors and pedagogical implications

Ni (2012) states that affective factors in English language learning are a topic of interest for many linguists who seek deeper linguistic descriptions. Four different affective factors are addressed: the Affective Filter Hypothesis, motivation, self-confidence and anxiety. Ni (2012) explains the Affective Filter Hypothesis proposed by Krashen (1982), which discusses that there are several psychological factors that might affect language learners' input and intake, preventing "language learners from absorbing available comprehensible input completely" (p. 1508). Thus, said hypothesis focuses on the emotional factors and how these can affect the learners' learning process, more specifically, how these affect the input that the learners receive and how much input turns into actual intake. Another affective factor that may impact the learners' input and intake is motivation, which, according to Jakobovits (1970), is divided into four groups: aptitude, intelligence, perseverance and other factors, which can determine the learners' success in learning a language. As stated by Ni (2012), "motivation is the process by which goal-directed behaviour is stimulated in language learning" (p. 1509). Likewise, self-confidence influences the learners' learning process, as a learner who lacks confidence might hesitate when producing the language in a classroom context and will inevitably give up if their self-confidence is not positive. For that reason, teachers ought to be committed to encouraging the learner's self-confidence. The last affective factor proposed is anxiety, more specifically language anxiety. Ni (2012) explains that when learners experience anxiety, they are not able to focus on the main learning points due to the emotions they are feeling, thus, they do not learn or comprehend the aimed contents as they only focus on doing what they are being asked to do. Moreover, Ni (2012) performed a study which addressed all these affective factors. It consisted of distributing fifty questionnaires to all the participants, who were fifty sophomore students and had studied English for over ten years. The participants were asked to self-evaluate their

English level, the impacts of affective factors and the preferences for feedback. Results showed that affective factors “decide the proportion of language learners’ input and intake” (p. 1512) and that feedback can have a positive impact on the learners’ emotional states. However, certain concern was shown when addressing the type of corrective feedback, as teachers should consider effective techniques to ensure the learners’ positive emotional states.

2.5. Self-efficacy and achievement

Goetze and Driver (2022) conducted a meta-analysis of different research that focus on second language (L2) self-efficacy, which is described as “an individual’s judgement of their capability to achieve goals” (Goetze & Driver, 2022, p. 233), and L2 achievement. Self-efficacy has been thoroughly considered in different studies and is a key variable in positive psychology. Several studies have proved that self-efficacy has led to significant language learning outcomes as it has been linked to higher motivation, enjoyment and attention. Goetze and Driver (2022) proposed three research questions to be answered with the different study results they encountered. The study showed that self-efficacy does have a positive impact on achievement in L2 learning contexts, although it is not highly noticeable, but rather medium-sized. The study concluded that believing in one’s abilities might, in fact, lead to learning success. Similarly, Butler (1998) identifies two sets of findings related to self-efficacy: the first one focuses on “[...] an increased likelihood of developing new skills [...] and greater resilience in the face of failure” (p. 470); the second one sustains that self-efficacy “can be acquired” (p. 470). It is considered of crucial importance to learn how to master self-efficacy, as people who can manage their own motivation as well as behaviour are more likely to achieve what they want.

The present study focuses on the following research questions: What types of feedback are more effective in reducing students’ self-consciousness? How do confidence-building strategies affect the students’ confidence and willingness to speak in the classroom? How does self-consciousness affect language production and participation in the classroom?

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. The study

For this study, a mixed approach was used to collect data. Although most data are quantitative, there are some qualitative results that were considered throughout the study. For instance, qualitative data was collected, as there were open-ended questions in the

questionnaire. However, the results of said questions were quantified and examples of some of the answers were provided. In order to know the students' perceptions on feedback and after they received strategies to build their confidence, quantitative data was collected when focusing on specific results, for instance, the analysis of the pre- and post-questionnaires (See Appendices 8.1. and 8.2.) that the students were handed out and answered using Likert scale questions besides the open-ended questions. Moreover, this study was an intervention project in the classroom in a high school setting.

The focus was on the use of questionnaires, which were handed out before and after an activity, allowing a collection of quantitative data. In this case, pre- and post-questionnaires were handed out to the students before and after an activity. That way, students were able to self-assess their confidence and anxiety when speaking before and after the activity and could state whether the feedback that was given to them had a positive impact or not.

The data collected through the open-ended questions was mainly qualitative data to analyse the students' responses to different interventions in the classroom. For instance, both groups answered these questions after speaking activities, which helped assess changes in their confidence and participation levels following the implementation of specific feedback types and CBS such as positive reinforcement in the experimental group. Although the data was qualitative, it was also quantified, and representative example quotes were included in the results section to support the findings.

The present study focuses on the following research questions: What types of feedback are more effective to reduce students' self-consciousness? How do confidence-building strategies affect the students' confidence and willingness to speak in the classroom? How does self-consciousness affect language production and participation in the classroom?

3.2. Context and participants

The study was conducted in a high school that is located near Barcelona, where English is only used in formal contexts, as the main languages spoken are Catalan, as the first language, and Spanish, as the second language. The high school teaches English as a mandatory subject, and French and German as elective subjects. During the week, students have three hours of English instruction, and the school proposes a linguistic project which involves Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) methodology.

The participants of the present study are aged 14 or 15, and all of them are currently in the 3rd year of secondary education in Spain. For that reason, before carrying out the study, the participants were handed out a consent form (See Appendix 8.3.) for their parents or tutors to sign, which influenced data collection, as only the results of ten students could be analysed. Although there are four classrooms with 25 students each, the study was conducted in two different classrooms, one classroom being the control group and the other being the experimental group. Most participants had an English proficiency level between A2 and B1, based on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), and the classrooms chosen were randomly selected, as all of them followed the same curriculum. Thus, as mentioned before, this study analysed the results from ten of the students in each group, which still ensures a reliable representation of the results of each group while considering the ethical aspects of research. The groups were composed of students from mixed-gender classrooms, and all of them were native Catalan and Spanish speakers with a similar educational and social background.

3.3. Instrument

The instruments that were used for this study were, firstly, pre-questionnaires (See Appendix 8.1.), in order to know the levels of language anxiety of different students before doing an activity that required speaking; secondly, post-questionnaires (See Appendix 8.2.) were handed out after giving a presentation in front of their classmates, which allowed students to self-assess their confidence and anxiety in the classroom when speaking, and state whether the feedback that was given to them had a positive impact on their confidence or not. The questionnaires were designed following some of the statements present in the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) by Horwitz et al. (1986). Moreover, a consent form was written and handed out to the students from every class, so their parents or tutors could sign them, allowing the students to participate in the study anonymously, so all data collected was anonymized to protect students' identities.

The pre-questionnaire had eight Likert scale questions or statements that students had to answer by stating how much they agreed with said statement, going from one point (strongly disagree) to five points (strongly agree). The questionnaire was written in Catalan as it is the participants' L1. That way, they could understand the questions better and give more detailed answers on their personal feelings, confidence and perception of feedback. Moreover, it also helped to avoid confusion or misunderstandings. Question

one (Q1) was “I feel confident speaking English”; question two (Q2) was “I feel anxious when I have to speak English in front of my classmates”; question three (Q3) was “I worry a lot about making mistakes when I speak English”; question four (Q4) was “I feel comfortable expressing my ideas in English, even if I make mistakes”; question five (Q5) was “When I receive feedback on my English speaking, I feel more confident to try again”; question six (Q6) was “I prefer receiving positive feedback rather than being corrected”; question seven (Q7) was “I believe that feedback from my teacher or classmates helps me improve my confidence when speaking English”; question eight (Q8) was “When I am corrected, I feel more self-conscious about my mistakes.”

Regarding the post questionnaire, there were the same questions with the same aim, but explicitly asking about their perception after the presentation. The post questionnaire was also written in Catalan in order to avoid misunderstandings and ensure comprehension of the questions as well as clear answers. In addition, the post-questionnaire contained one more question (Q9) which was a closed-ended question with two possible answers “After the presentation, how do you feel about speaking English?” in which the first possible answer was “I feel more confident than before” and the other possible answer was “I still feel anxious if I have to speak English”. Finally, there were two open-ended questions in each questionnaire, one of them was related in both the pre- and post-questionnaire. On the one hand, in the pre-questionnaire the question (Q10) was “Do you think feedback helps you improve, or does it make you feel more self-conscious?”, and in the post-questionnaire it was “Do you think feedback has helped you improve your confidence, or has it made you feel more self-conscious?”. On the other hand, the other two questions were exploratory, and their aim was to get answers from the learners that could be helpful for the study, without having a specific goal.

3.4. Procedure

One of the classes in which the study was conducted was the control group and the other class was the experimental group. The experimental group received positive and implicit feedback, and more CBS were used. Feedback was also given by focusing on the four levels of feedback (feedback about the task, feedback about the processing of the task, feedback about self-regulation and feedback about the self as a person) as well as considering timing. The control group received corrective explicit feedback, and the students’ confidence was barely reinforced, following a more traditional approach. This happened during the two weeks prior to the presentations that the students had to give in

front of their classmates. Before the students presented in front of their classmates, they were asked to answer a pre-questionnaire. After the presentation took place, students from the experimental group were given positive and delayed feedback and later, they were asked a question about the presentation, which most of them answered successfully. As for the control group, the same procedure was followed, but corrective and explicit feedback was given, and they simply presented and were asked something afterwards. After presenting, every student from the group that presented was asked to answer the post-questionnaire.

3.5. Data analysis

The data collected was analysed using descriptive and comparative analysis, as the mean scores for each question were calculated for both the experimental and control groups at both pre- and post-questionnaires. These means allowed for a clear comparison of students' self-reported confidence levels as well as self-consciousness levels and preference for the type of feedback. Moreover, variation in scores was also used, as the difference or variation (Δ) between pre- and post-scores for each question was also calculated to identify the change in self-confidence for each group.

Additionally, questions were categorized by theme, such as confidence when speaking English (Q1, Q4, Q5), self-consciousness when speaking English (Q2, Q3, Q8) and preference on types of feedback (Q6, Q7). These eight questions counted as quantitative results that were calculated out of five points following a Likert scale, in which one point represented “strongly disagree”, whereas five points represented “strongly agree”. Qualitative data, such as the open-ended questions, were also categorized by identifying recurrent themes in learners’ responses and calculating the variation of responses before and after the oral presentation in both the experimental and the control group. In order to analyse the effectiveness of feedback and CBS in more depth, a question in the post questionnaire was analysed in order to identify the levels of confidence of the learners of each group after the oral activity and the results were presented in percentages of students who felt more confident after doing the presentation and receiving feedback.

4. RESULTS

The effectiveness of feedback and confidence-building strategies and their impact on learners’ confidence were analysed through pre- and post-questionnaires. Results revealed that, generally, the experimental group had a better perception of feedback and

its effectiveness in improving confidence; students felt less self-conscious and their willingness to speak increased.

Regarding types of feedback and their effectiveness in reducing learners' self-consciousness, results showed that generally, the experimental group shows greater preference for positive and implicit feedback than corrective and explicit feedback after the intervention (See Table 1). Results in Q6 reveal that learners in the experimental group prefer receiving positive feedback rather than being explicitly corrected, as the variation in the results increases by 0.2 points while the results in the control group do not show any variation. However, in the pre-questionnaire, learners in the control group showed a slightly higher preference for receiving positive feedback than learners in the experimental group.

Moreover, the results in Q7 show that the learners in the experimental group think that feedback helps them improve their confidence in English speaking, as the variation in the results of the pre- and post-questionnaire is positive by 0.9 points, whereas the results in the control group are negative by 0.1 points. The control group had a better perception of feedback in the pre-questionnaire than the experimental group.

Table 1. Learners' preference for type of feedback in Pre- and Post-Questionnaires

QUESTIONS	EXPERIMENTAL GROUP			CONTROL GROUP		
	PRE-	POST-	Δ	PRE-	POST-	Δ
Q6	3.8	4	0.2	3.9	3.9	0
Q7	3.4	4.3	0.9	4.4	4.3	-0.1

Results from the open-ended questions also showed that learners in the experimental group have a better perception of feedback, as the intervention in which they received positive feedback increased their levels of confidence (See Table 2). In the pre-questionnaire, and before the intervention, seven out of ten learners stated that they believed feedback helped them increase their confidence, whereas in the control group, eight out of ten learners believed that feedback helped them improve their confidence. However, in the post-questionnaire, ten out of ten learners from the experimental group believed that feedback helped them increase their confidence, while eight out of ten learners in the control group stated they believed it helped them. Thus, in the experimental

group, three learners changed their perception on feedback after the intervention took place, while zero learners changed their perception on feedback in the control group.

Table 2. Learners' Perception of Feedback in Pre- and Post-Questionnaires

THEME	EXPERIMENTAL GROUP			CONTROL GROUP			EXAMPLE QUOTE
	PRE-	POST-	Δ	PRE-	POST-	Δ	
Increased confidence	7	10	3	8	8	0	“Since the feedback was positive, I think it helped me.”
Fear of being wrong	3	0	-3	2	2	0	“It depends on the mark, but in general it makes me feel very nervous.”

The variation in the levels of confidence of the learners in the experimental group was higher in contrast to the learners in the control group, whose confidence either decreased or stayed the same (See Table 3). The results of Q1 showed that the learners in the experimental group felt more confident before doing the oral activity than after doing the oral activity, as the score decreased by 0.2 points. The learners in the control group also felt more confident before the presentation than after, as their levels of confidence decreased by 0.4 points from the pre- to the post-questionnaire. However, the learners in the experimental group showed greater levels of confidence in the pre-questionnaire than the learners in the control group. Furthermore, the answers to Q4 revealed that learners from the experimental group initially felt less comfortable expressing their ideas in English (even if they made mistakes) than the learners in the control group. However, the variation in their answers reveals that learners from the experimental group gained more confidence after doing the oral activity, as the levels of confidence in the experimental group increase 0.6 points while the levels of confidence in the control group do not show any variation. The results of Q5 show that the learners in the experimental group show greater confidence levels and increase their willingness to speak again when they receive feedback on their English speaking as there is a variation of 0.9 points in the results of the pre-questionnaire and the results of the post-questionnaire, whereas the learners in the

control group show less confidence when receiving feedback about their English speaking as the variation is negative decreasing 0.4 points. The results of the pre-questionnaire for the experimental group show that its learners felt less confident than the learners in the control group when they received feedback on their English speaking, as initially, the learners of the control group felt more comfortable receiving feedback.

Table 3. Levels of Learners' Self-Confidence in Pre- and Post-Questionnaires

QUESTIONS	EXPERIMENTAL GROUP			CONTROL GROUP		
	PRE-	POST-	Δ	PRE-	POST-	Δ
Q1	4.1	3.9	-0.2	3.9	3.5	-0.4
Q4	3.1	3.7	0.6	3.3	3.3	0
Q5	3	3.9	0.9	4.3	3.9	-0.4

In addition, results in the post-questionnaire showed that a higher number of learners in the experimental group felt more confident in speaking English after the presentation (See Table 4). In the post-questionnaire, eight out of ten learners stated that they felt more confident after the presentation and two out of ten learners stated that they still felt self-conscious after the presentation. As for the control group, six out of ten of the learners stated that they felt more confident after the intervention, and four out of ten of the learners stated that they still felt self-conscious after the presentation. Thus, 80% of the learners in the experimental group felt more confident after the intervention, whereas in the control group only 60% of the learners felt more confident.

Table 4. Learners' Confidence in Speaking English After the Presentation

GROUP	MORE CONFIDENT	STILL SELF-CONSCIOUS	% MORE CONFIDENT
EXPERIMENTAL	8	2	80
CONTROL	6	4	60

Moreover, results also showed that generally, the learners in the experimental group showed slightly lower levels of self-consciousness or language anxiety when

speaking English after the intervention (See Table 5). While the control group generally felt less self-conscious before the oral activity, results show that their self-consciousness did not improve as much as the experimental group after the presentation.

On the one hand, results in Q2 reveal that both learners in the experimental and in the control group showed lower levels of self-consciousness while doing the presentation and/or after the presentation, as the variation is negative for both groups. However, learners in the control group show a slight improvement as their levels decreased by 0.5 points while the levels in the experimental group decreased by 0.4 points. On the other hand, results in Q3 show that neither the experimental group nor the control group improved their fear of making mistakes when speaking English, as there is no variation in results. However, learners in the control group generally have less fear of making mistakes when speaking English than the learners in the experimental group. Moreover, results in Q8 reveal that learners in the control group felt more self-conscious when being corrected during the intervention than learners in the experimental group, as the variation in the experimental group shows a decrease of 0.4 points while the variation in the control group increases by 0.4 points. Learners in the control group, however, felt less self-conscious before the presentation than learners in the experimental group.

Table 5. Levels of Learners' Self-Consciousness in Pre- and Post-Questionnaires

QUESTIONS	EXPERIMENTAL GROUP			CONTROL GROUP		
	PRE-	POST-	Δ	PRE-	POST-	Δ
Q2	3.5	3.1	-0.4	3.4	2.9	-0.5
Q3	3.5	3.5	0	3.3	3.3	0
Q8	3.2	2.8	-0.4	2.5	2.9	0.4

5. DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to explore the effectiveness of the different types of feedback and confidence-building strategies on self-consciousness and willingness to communicate in English language speaking, and the impact of self-consciousness on language production and participation. Results of the study revealed that the experimental

group, who did receive positive feedback and CBS, perceived positive feedback as something that helped them improve their confidence when speaking English and thus reduced their self-consciousness. They generally got higher scores regarding levels of confidence in the post-questionnaire, after the intervention took place.

Firstly, the implementation of positive and implicit feedback alongside CBS revealed that it generally had a positive impact on the experimental group's confidence, as their preference for positive feedback increased after the intervention, whereas the control group did not change preferences. As Ellis (2013) states, it is crucial to implement both positive and corrective feedback in a classroom context and understanding what type of error or mistake is being corrected is going to make feedback more effective and significant. In this sense, the control group did not receive proper feedback, as they received corrective feedback only, which might be the reason why this group did not change their feedback preference. The variable stayed the same, thus, they did not necessarily find corrective feedback as something that impacted their confidence negatively, but rather as a useful correction that did not impact their confidence, whereas the experimental group perceived positive and implicit feedback as something that boosted their confidence when speaking English. In addition, the results in Q7 back the results in Q6, as learners in the experimental group believed that feedback helped them improve their confidence in English speaking after the intervention. Moreover, results from the open-ended questions also showed that learners in the experimental group have a better perception of feedback as their levels of confidence increased after the presentation. That might be due to the fact that learners from the experimental group received positive and implicit feedback while focusing on the four levels of feedback that Hattie and Timperley (2007) propose (feedback about the task, feedback about the processing of the task, feedback about self-regulation and feedback about the self as a person) as well as timing. As Hattie and Timperley state, the effectiveness of feedback varies depending on the types of feedback that are used, and, in this case, results showed that considering the types of feedback, the types of errors or mistakes and the timing in which feedback was given, the intervention in the experimental group increased learners' confidence and motivation. Thus, positive and implicit feedback, when implemented correctly, is more effective when reducing learners' self-consciousness when speaking English.

Secondly, as for the impact of CBS on the learners' willingness to communicate and motivation, results revealed that learners in the experimental group improved their

levels of confidence due to receiving positive feedback alongside CBS. Although learners from both groups showed higher levels of confidence before the intervention, results also showed that learners in the experimental group felt more confident when having to express their ideas in English even if they made mistakes after receiving positive feedback and implementing CBS in the classroom, whereas the control group did not show any changes in confidence. Thus, the impact of pedagogical and affective CBS on learners from the experimental group was positive. As stated by Hattie and Timperley (2007), receiving information about the task and the ways that it can be improved, rather than on correction alone, is going to impact learners' self-confidence positively. Moreover, Nation and Newton (2009) emphasize the importance of fostering learner control in the classroom as well as giving more time to learners for them to prepare an oral activity, as it will help improve their confidence. Considering that the experimental group did receive said CBS as well as positive feedback, these findings affirm that implementing CBS in the classroom, more specifically when doing an oral activity or when learners are being asked to speak in front of other classmates, has a positive impact on learners' confidence. Additionally, results from the present study have also revealed that the experimental group showed greater confidence levels and increased their willingness to speak when they received feedback on their speaking. After receiving both pedagogical and affective CBS, the experimental group showed higher levels of willingness to communicate. As MacIntyre et al. (1998) explain, WTC occurs when most of the learners' experiences during the L2 learning process have been positive, making their confidence increase progressively, and that happens when CBS are granted, such as fostering learner control in the classroom, giving them more time to prepare oral activities or giving them effective feedback that aims at helping them and enhancing the understanding of the task. It can be asserted that CBS had a positive impact on the experimental group's WTC as well as on their motivation. Furthermore, Gardner (2007) identified two motivational constructs: language learning motivation and classroom learning motivation and considering the variables that can be found in classroom learning motivation (such as the environment, the teacher, the materials and the learners' state), higher levels of motivation can be granted. Considering these strategies and constructs alongside the results from the present study, it can be asserted that the implementation of CBS in a classroom context enhances the learners' confidence when speaking English and their willingness to communicate, too.

Finally, regarding self-consciousness and its impact on language production and participation in class, results revealed that learners in both the experimental and the control group reported lower levels of self-consciousness when speaking English in the post-questionnaire than in the pre-questionnaire. Surprisingly, the control group showed slightly lower levels of self-consciousness after the intervention by 0.1 points. As stated by Dörnyei (2011), affective CBS such as the role of the teacher in the classroom, their coherence, behaviour and the environment, play an important role in learners' motivation and confidence. Therefore, although these interpretations are speculative, this finding might have been influenced by the behaviour of the teacher, the dynamics of the class, or the relationship amongst the group itself. However, it is important to take into account that learners in the experimental group, who received positive and implicit feedback as well as CBS, also reduced their self-consciousness after the intervention. Results in Q3 revealed that neither the experimental group nor the control group improved their fear of making mistakes when speaking English. Although learners in the experimental group generally seemed to improve their confidence and willingness to communicate, they were still afraid of making mistakes. Ni (2012) explains the four different affective factors in English language learning, those being the Affective Filter Hypothesis by Krashen (1982), motivation, self-confidence and language anxiety. Regarding language anxiety, and despite the fact that the experimental group self-reported feeling more confident after the intervention, they felt anxious when having to speak English, which, according to Ni, means that they were only focused on doing what they were being asked to do instead of learning or comprehending what they were saying during the presentation. It is also important to consider that, as stated by MacIntyre et al., learners' positive experiences during their L2 learning process have an impact on both WTC and self-confidence. This suggests that while the intervention helped boost confidence and participation, it didn't help learners have less fear of making mistakes. Language anxiety might be tied to past experiences or fear of judgment and might require a longer or more focused approach to truly address. Furthermore, results showed that learners in the control group felt more self-conscious when being corrected than learners in the experimental group. These findings emphasize the importance of implementing effective feedback and CBS, as the experimental group felt less self-conscious when being corrected. As stated by Ni, feedback can have a positive impact on the learners' emotional states, and, if not implemented effectively, it can contribute to their self-consciousness. Findings affirm that self-consciousness affects language production and participation using the L2 in class, as

there is a series of affective factors to take into account. As mentioned before, Ni proposes four affective factors in English language learning, and they are implicitly related. Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis discusses the psychological factors that might influence the learners' learning process, more specifically, how these factors affect the intake of the learners. If the learners' intake is altered, their language production might be affected and therefore, their self-confidence when speaking might also be affected, which impacts their motivation negatively. Thus, as stated by Goetze and Driver (2022) it is of crucial importance to focus on the learners' self-efficacy, which is described as "an individual's judgement of their capability to achieve goals" (p. 233), as their study proves that self-efficacy does have a positive impact on achievement in L2 learning contexts. Thus, as Butler (1997) explains, learners who master self-efficacy are going to be more likely to develop new skills and manage their own motivation. The results of the present study indicate that self-consciousness does affect language production and participation as it is closely linked to learners' affective states, such as anxiety, motivation, and self-confidence. It is important to consider the learners' emotional states and to implement effective feedback and CBS in order to contribute to a positive language learning experience for them.

All that considered, this study also had some limitations. Firstly, the results might have been influenced as the participants were exposed to different types of feedback and CBS in one context only, which is the context given by the present study. For instance, the results could differ if the students were exposed to these strategies and feedback for a longer period and in different contexts. Secondly, by giving a questionnaire to the participants before the study is carried out, they could have become more aware that a study was being conducted, and therefore, the results might be biased. Moreover, the fact that there were only 10 students whose results were analysed could also influence the final conclusion, as there might be self-conscious students who have experienced feedback and CBS very differently. For future research, the present study could be conducted during a larger period and with a wider range of participants. Additionally, research could dive into language anxiety and how it could be improved through feedback and CBS long-term, ensuring positive language learning experiences for the learners.

6. CONCLUSION

This study aimed to explore the effectiveness of the different types of feedback and confidence-building strategies on self-consciousness and willingness to communicate in

English language speaking, and the impact of self-consciousness on language production and participation. The findings indicate that the implementation of positive and implicit feedback combined with CBS had a significant positive impact on learners' confidence and willingness to communicate (WTC) in English. Learners in the experimental group, who received positive feedback alongside CBS, demonstrated higher levels of confidence and a better perception of feedback after the intervention. In contrast, the control group, which received corrective feedback, did not show significant changes in feedback preference or confidence levels, which suggested that the use of corrective feedback may not promote learners' confidence or reduce their self-consciousness. Moreover, the integration of CBS influenced learners' motivation and willingness to communicate positively. Regarding self-consciousness, both groups reported a lower level after the intervention, though the control group's levels were slightly lower than the experimental group's. That might have been due to higher class cohesion or a better class environment. Surprisingly, fear of making mistakes persisted among learners in both groups, suggesting that language anxiety is a complex affective factor that may require longer or more specific interventions to analyse and overcome. Additionally, learners in the experimental group reported feeling less self-conscious when being corrected, showing the importance of effective feedback and confidence-building strategies in order to contribute to a positive language learning experience for learners. These findings also affirm that self-consciousness impacts language production and classroom participation, as it is closely related to learners' affective states, including anxiety, motivation, and self-confidence. The study emphasizes the need for teachers to implement effective feedback and CBS that support learners' emotional well-being and foster a positive learning environment.

To conclude, this study showed that implementing positive and implicit feedback combined with confidence-building strategies (CBS) helps learners feel more confident and willing to speak English. Students who received this kind of support felt better about feedback and were less self-conscious when corrected. However, fear of making mistakes remained, indicating that reducing language anxiety may need more time and effort. The results highlight the importance of effective feedback and CBS to boost learners' confidence and participation.

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8. APPENDICES

8.1. Example of pre-questionnaire

Pre-Questionnaire

Aquest formulari té com a objectiu recopilar dades per un estudi sobre el *feedback* o retroacció i les estratègies per millorar la confiança a l'aula de llengua anglesa. Les dades recopilades seran confidencials i s'utilitzaran només per a motius acadèmics.

* Indica que la pregunta és obligatòria

1. Nom i Cognoms *

2. Em sento segur/a parlant anglès. *

Marqueu només un oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Tots Totalment d'acord

3. Em poso nerviós/a quan he de parlar anglès davant dels meus companys/es. *

Marqueu només un oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Tots Totalment d'acord

4. Em preocupa molt cometre errors quan parlo anglès. *

Marqueu només un oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Tots Totalment d'acord

5. Em sento còmode expressant les meves idees en anglès, fins i tot si faig errors. *

Marqueu només un oval.

1 2 3 4 5
Total Totalment d'acord

6. Quan rebo *feedback* sobre la meua manera de parlar anglès, em sento més segur/a per tornar-ho a intentar.

Marqueu només un oval.

1 2 3 4 5
Total Totalment d'acord

7. Prefereixo rebre *feedback* positiu en lloc de ser corregit/da. *

Marqueu només un oval.

1 2 3 4 5
Total Totalment d'acord

8. Crec que la retroacció del meu professor/a o companys/es m'ajuda a millorar la meua confiança a l'hora de parlar anglès.

Marqueu només un oval.

1 2 3 4 5
Total Totalment d'acord

9. Quan em corregeixen, em sento més cohibit/da pels meus errors. *

Marqueu només un oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Tots Totalment d'acord

10. Què et fa sentir més segur/a quan parles anglès? *

11. Creus que el *feedback* t'ajuda més a millorar, o et fa sentir més insegur/a? *

Google no ha creat ni aprovat aquest contingut.

Google Formularis

8.2. Example of post-questionnaire

Post-questionnaire

Aquest formulari té com a objectiu recopilar dades per un estudi sobre el *feedback* o retroacció i les estratègies per millorar la confiança a l'aula de llengua anglesa. Les dades recopilades seran confidencials i s'utilitzaran només per a motius acadèmics.

* Indica que la pregunta és obligatòria

1. Nom i Cognoms *

2. Durant la presentació, m'he sentit més segur/a parlant anglès. *

Marqueu només un oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Totè Totalment d'acord

3. M'he posat molt nerviós/a parlant en anglès davant dels meus companys/es durant la presentació.

Marqueu només un oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Totè Totalment d'acord

4. M'he sentit insegur/a per si cometia algun error durant la presentació. *

Marqueu només un oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Totè Totalment d'acord

5. M'he sentit còmode expressant les meves idees en anglès, encara que hagi fet errors. *

Marqueu només un oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Totè Totalment d'acord

6. Rebre *feedback* sobre la meua manera de parlar anglès, m'ha fet sentir més segura per tornar-ho a intentar.

Marqueu només un oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Totè Totalment d'acord

7. Prefereixo rebre *feedback* positiu en lloc de ser corregit/da. *

Marqueu només un oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Totè Totalment d'acord

8. Crec que la retroacció del meu professor/a o companys/es m'ajuda a millorar la meua confiança a l'hora de parlar anglès.

Marqueu només un oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Totè Totalment d'acord

9. Quan em corregeixen, em sento més cohibit/da pels meus errors. *

Marqueu només un oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Tota Totalment d'acord

10. Després de la presentació, com et sents a l'hora de parlar anglès? *

Seleccioneu totes les opcions que corresponguin.

- Em sento més segur/a ara que abans
 Encara em sento nerviosa si he de parlar en anglès

11. Creus que el *feedback* t'ha ajudat a millorar la teva confiança, o t'ha fet sentir més insegur/a?

12. Després de la presentació, creus que has millorat la teva confiança per parlar anglès? Explica per què.

Google no ha creat ni aprovat aquest contingut.

8.3. Consent form for participants

Autorització relativa a l'alumnat: recopilació de dades per a un projecte

Dades de l'estudiant

Nom i cognoms de l'estudiant que realitza el projecte: Emma Griera Adam

Estudiant del Màster en Formació del Professorat d'ESO i Batxillerat a la Universitat de Vic (UVIC-UCC).

Durant l'estudi, es demanarà que els estudiants emplenin un qüestionari abans i després de fer una presentació davant dels seus companys. NO s'avaluarà sobre el seu coneixement de l'anglès o sobre els temes parlats. Tant la seva informació personal com les dades recollides seran confidencials, només s'utilitzaran per motius acadèmics.

Dades de l'alumnat i dels pares, les mares o els tutors o tutores legals

Nom i cognoms de l'alumne/a:

.....

Nom i cognoms del pare, la mare o el tutor o la tutora legal de l'alumne/a

.....

DNI/NIE/PASSAPORT

.....

() Autoritzo la captació de dades per tal que puguin ser utilitzades amb les finalitats de recerca establertes en el Treball Final de Màster de l'estudiant.

() Autoritzo la captació de dades per tal que puguin ser utilitzades amb finalitats docents i de divulgació acadèmica.

Lloc i data

Signatura del pare, la mare o el
tutor o tutora legal de l'alumne/a

Les dades de caràcter personal es tractaran com a dades personals. S'emmagatzemaran en carpetes de OneDrive del compte d'usuari de l'estudiant i, d'acord amb la Llei 3/2018, de 5 de desembre de 2018, de protecció de dades personals i garantia dels drets digitals, es podrà exercir el dret d'accés, rectificació i cancel·lació d'aquestes dades adreçant-se a la UVic- UCC (cal indicar una adreça electrònica de contacte).