



The Impact of Constructive Feedback on Speaking Self-Efficacy among English Department Students, Faculty of Arts, Misurata University

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Abstract

This study aims to understand how oral feedback affects English-speaking self-confidence among students in the English Department at the Faculty of Arts, Misurata University. The research investigates the impact of various aspects of feedback, particularly clarity, tone, timing, and presentation, on students' willingness to engage in speaking activities within the classroom. In this paper, mixed methods are applied, including responses to a questionnaire from 41 English students and semi-structured interviews with 12 participants. The findings indicate that students appreciate positive feedback but prefer clear and personalized comments that are aimed at guiding their progress. Clear and encouraging feedback enhances speaking confidence, while unclear information or openly shared comments tend to have the opposite effect. Additionally, students' levels of emotional readiness influence how they receive and respond to the feedback. According to the study, EFL teachers should focus on both correcting mistakes and supporting learners' emotional needs. It suggests adopting more responsive feedback techniques to bolster students' confidence in their speaking abilities in Libyan classrooms.

Key words: *Oral feedback, Self-confidence, Positive feedback, Emotional readiness*

1. Introduction

Speaking is one of the fundamental language skills for language learners. According to Rao (2019), speaking enables learners to convey their ideas, feelings, and beliefs and is therefore at the heart of effective communication. English language learners in EFL settings—especially in Libya—face difficulties in developing their speaking skills. This phenomenon is largely attributed to traditional, teacher-centered teaching approaches, where communicative speaking activities are typically overlooked. Consequently, learners have limited opportunities for oral practice (El-Jeadi, Benrabha, & Rubiaee, 2023; Tawir & Baharum, 2024).

Despite years of studying English, many students are unable to speak English fluently and confidently. This is mainly because English is not used outside the classroom, which limits students' opportunities to practice English in real-life situations (Elabbar, 2011). Several studies have stressed the role of feedback in enhancing students' oral communication skills, particularly in terms of motivation and confidence. Bandura's (1977) theory of self-efficacy is based on the idea that individuals' belief in their capabilities strongly influences their task performance. In language learning, constructive and positive feedback can help strengthen speaking self-efficacy and in turn motivate students to engage more in speaking activities (Wang & Sun, 2020).

Constructive feedback is specific, encouraging, actionable, and aimed at facilitating learner development. It significantly influences learners' self-perceptions,

communication confidence, and willingness to engage in oral situations (Sotlikova, 2023).

Where feedback is positive and growth-promoting, students are more inclined to be risk-takers and stay engaged. Conversely, ambiguous or negative feedback—particularly where there is no direction—may elevate anxiety levels and reduce the readiness of students to contribute to discussions (Asswail, 2020).

In Libya, especially among the students in the English department, Faculty of Arts, Misurata University, students often show a lack of confidence in their speaking ability. Orafi and Borg (2009) note that the educational method of teaching English as a foreign language in Libya has long focused on grammar and reading comprehension with overwhelming use of methods like drills, memorization, and recitation.

The widespread use of Arabic in English classrooms has further restricted students' exposure to authentic English discourse. These outdated methods continue to impede fluency (Abukhattala, 2016). Students usually receive delayed, vague, or grammar-focused feedback rather than feedback aimed at communicative effectiveness. As a result, they lack the guidance needed for meaningful improvement (Elabbar, 2011).

1. 2 Statement of the Problem

Despite the importance of speaking skills for EFL learners in Libya, many students struggle to communicate effectively in English. Observations reveal that learners often avoid speaking tasks due to fear of mistakes and

hesitance in discussions. While feedback can aid improvement, it is often ineffective; public correction may embarrass students, and vague feedback offers little support.

In Libyan classrooms, instruction is mostly teacher-centered, focusing more on accuracy than on fluency and confidence (Elabbar, 2011). Although feedback is crucial for language learning, little research has examined its impact on speaking self-efficacy and learner attitudes in Libyan universities. This study aims to explore the role of constructive oral feedback in enhancing students' speaking confidence and participation.

According to Smith and Johnson (2023), constructive oral feedback is a verbal method designed to enhance performance improvement. This type of feedback consists of specific observations and recommendations rather than vague comments.

1. 3 Hypotheses

- 1- EFL students believe that constructive oral feedback would positively influence their speaking self-efficacy.
- 2- Students perceive a significant relationship between the quality of teacher oral feedback and their own speaking self-efficacy in EFL classrooms.
- 3- EFL students who perceive oral feedback as constructive and supportive are more likely to think they would participate in classroom speaking activities.

1. 4 Research Questions

- 1- How do EFL students believe constructive feedback influences their perceptions of their speaking abilities?

- 2- Which characteristics of constructive feedback (e.g., specificity, actionability, focus, tone) do EFL students think are most effective in enhancing their speaking self-efficacy?
- 3- How do EFL students with varying levels of speaking self-efficacy think they would respond to constructive feedback?

1. 5 Review of Related Literature

Speaking is widely regarded as a complex yet essential component of second language proficiency. Rao (2019) emphasizes that speaking allows learners to express thoughts fluently and engage meaningfully in real time. However, many EFL learners face challenges such as fear of mistakes, lack of exposure, and low confidence (Derakhshan, Khalili, & Beheshti, 2016).

In Libya, these issues are worsened by traditional teaching methods that prioritize grammatical accuracy over communicative competence (Khalid, 2021; Tawir & Baharum, 2024). Owhda (2023) notes that fear and insufficient speaking practice hinder students' oral development. Additionally, research by Elsaadi and Aqila (2023) highlights that Sirte University students struggle with oral engagement due to low confidence and fear of negative evaluation.

Attempts at communicative curriculum reform by Orafi and Borg (2009) have not successfully shifted Libyan classrooms towards more interactive, student-centered models. Evidence suggests a pressing need for active learning strategies to enhance oral participation in EFL environments.

Globally, feedback is acknowledged as a crucial learning tool, providing insights into performance to improve abilities. Hattie and Timperley (2007) assert that feedback is the most significant factor influencing student learning, as it helps bridge the gap between current and desired performance.

In the EFL setting, there are three types of feedback: corrective (linguistic error correction), formative (developmental support), and summative (evaluative) (Ellis, 2009). Corrective and formative feedback are vital in speaking instruction, as instant responses enhance accuracy and motivate learners.

Moreover, a combination of verbal, written, and digital feedback has emerged to meet diverse learner needs. Digital feedback includes tools like online platforms and apps that provide immediate, personalized responses to student work (Hossain et al., 2024). Studies by Au and Bardakçı (2020) confirm that feedback from both peers and instructors improves oral skills and speaking confidence.

Self-efficacy, a concept developed by Albert Bandura, is the belief in one's ability to succeed in specific tasks. It influences motivation, goal-setting, and how challenges are approached. Higher self-efficacy leads to greater persistence and better performance, while lower self-efficacy can result in avoidance of tasks (Bandura, 1977).

Key features include specificity, immediacy, actionability, and a positive tone (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). These are crucial for EFL students, who are sensitive to oral corrections. Students respond better to motivational, individualized, and conversational feedback (Hossain et al.,

2024). Au and Bardakçı (2020) found that personalized feedback enhances speaking performance and self-efficacy.

In Libya, El-Jeady and Benrabha (2023) noted that feedback often lacks promptness and emphasizes grammatical accuracy over effective communication, revealing a gap between best practices and classroom realities.

Self-efficacy, as defined by Bandura (1997), refers to individuals' belief in their ability to succeed in tasks. In EFL speaking classes, learners with higher self-efficacy engage confidently and persist through challenges (Nasution & Nissa, 2024; Maharani, 2022).

Wang and Sun (2020) found a strong link between self-efficacy and language proficiency in various EFL contexts. Thus, feedback that boosts self-efficacy is essential for developing resilient and motivated speakers. Positive, clear feedback enhances intrinsic motivation and reduces speaking anxiety (Sotlikova, 2023), while unclear or harsh feedback can lead to avoidance behaviors and decreased engagement (Hossain et al., 2024).

Positive feedback creates a safe environment for learners to take risks and view errors as opportunities for growth. Nasution and Nissa (2024) demonstrate that learners with high self-efficacy respond more resiliently to corrective feedback, emphasizing the connection between feedback, emotional safety, and learning outcomes.

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study adopts a mixed-methods research design. It combines quantitative and qualitative approaches in investigating the effect of constructive oral feedback on the speaking self-efficacy of EFL students. This design allows the researcher to find patterns from a large population via a questionnaire. It also allows the researcher to obtain detailed information from individual points of view through interviews. Employing the two approaches triangulates data, making the results more reliable and valid through the comparison of findings from various sources.

2.2 Participants and Setting

The study involves 41 undergraduate students from the English Department at Misurata University, specifically those in the fifth to eighth semesters, as they have completed key language skills courses and had more speaking practice. Participants are selected through convenience sampling, based on availability and willingness to participate.

Additionally, a sub-sample of 12 students from the same group was chosen for follow-up interviews. These students volunteered for interviews to provide more detailed feedback on their language learning experiences.

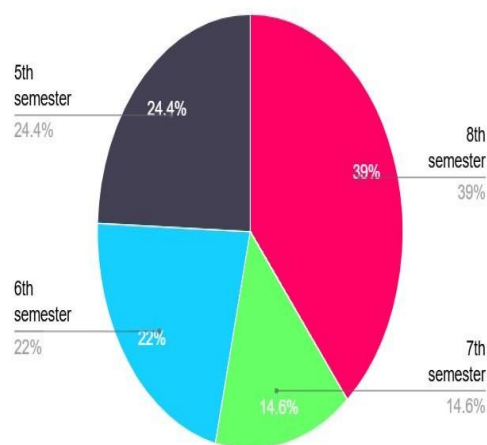


Figure 1: *Semester Distribution of Participants*

The majority of participants were from the 8th semester (39%), followed by 5th (24.4%), 6th (22%), and 7th semester (14.6%). This suggests that most participants were senior students with considerable experience in oral classroom interaction.

2.3 Research Instruments

Two tools were used for data collection:

Questionnaire: An online questionnaire created with Google Forms included closed-ended items (e.g., Likert scales, yes/no responses) to measure students' perceptions of oral feedback, preferences for feedback types, and self-efficacy in speaking English. This method enabled efficient data collection from a larger group.

Interview: A structured interview format allowed flexibility in discussing key topics while ensuring consistency. Interview questions examined students' experiences with feedback, emotional and motivational responses, and beliefs about the impact of oral feedback on their speaking skills and

confidence. Interviews were conducted face-to-face or online, based on participant convenience, and were voice-recorded with permission.

2. 4 Procedures

Data Collection

Data collection occurred in two phases. First, the questionnaire was distributed via Google Forms through class groups and personal messages, with students informed about the research and asked to respond anonymously. Afterward, 12 students were selected for one-on-one interviews, conducted either face to face or online (via Telegram or WhatsApp), lasting about 15 to 20 minutes.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data from the questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistics (e.g., means, percentages) to identify trends in students' attitudes and self-efficacy. Qualitative data from interviews were transcribed and thematically coded, focusing on feedback type, timing, clarity, and its effects on confidence and speaking behavior, facilitating triangulation for richer data interpretation.

3. Results

The survey was answered by 41 students from the 5th to 8th semesters in the English department, Faculty of Arts, Misurata University. It examined how receiving oral feedback affected students' belief in their speaking skills. By looking at the responses, we can identify how often students are given feedback, how clearly it is given, how useful

they find it, and how these aspects impact their confidence and role in the learning process.

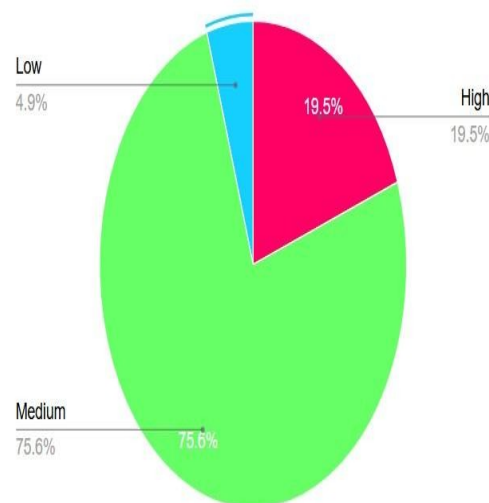


Figure 2: *Students' Self-Reported Speaking Confidence*

Figure 2 indicates that 75.6% of respondents ranked their English-speaking confidence as “medium.” (19.5%) of the participants reported high confidence, while only 4.9% said they had low confidence. It appears that speaking self-confidence is generally moderate; therefore, teachers might consider using more supportive teaching methods.

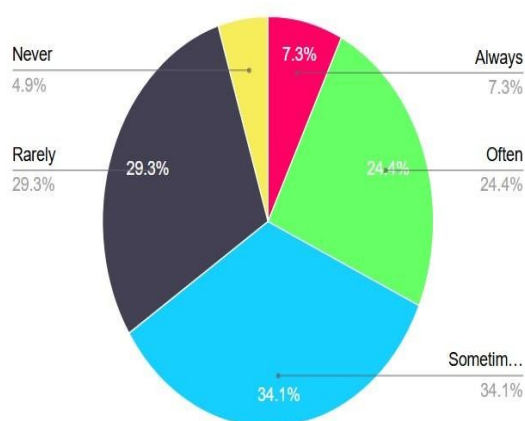


Figure 3: *Frequency of Oral Feedback from Teachers*

Figure 3 illustrates inconsistent feedback distribution: only 31.7% of respondents receive feedback often or always, while 34.1% get it sometimes, and 34.2% rarely or never. This inconsistency can hinder students' ability to improve their speaking skills due to insufficient guidance.

Table 1: *Students' Perception of Feedback Usefulness*

Item No.	Statement	SA (n/%)	A (n/%)	N (n/%)	D (n/%)	SD (n/%)
4	Feedback is clear and specific	5 / 12.2%	20 / 48.8%	14 / 34.1%	2 / 4.9%	0 / 0%
5	Feedback helps identify what to improve	12 / 29.3%	22 / 53.7%	4 / 9.8%	2 / 4.9%	1 / 2.4%
6	Feedback encourages growth, not just correction	9 / 22.0%	19 / 46.3%	8 / 19.5%	5 / 12.2%	0 / 0%

Note. SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, N = Neutral, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree

In table 1 items 4, 5, and 6 were grouped together as they assess similar aspects of students' perception of feedback usefulness. The table demonstrates that when students get feedback, they usually find it

helpful. Most respondents thought the feedback pointed out what they needed to improve and helped them enhance their abilities.

Table 2: *Preferred Feedback Type*

Type of Feedback	Selected by (n)	Percentage (%)
Positive comments (praise)	25	61.0%
Corrections with explanations	21	51.2%
Specific steps to improve	17	41.5%
Comparisons to past performance	8	19.5%

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As shown in Table 2, students tend to prefer feedback that includes both cheerful support and useful suggestions. Most respondents state that praise was the most useful (61.0%), followed by clear and helpful correction (51.2%). This means that providing

encouragement and detailed guidance motivates students. The focus was more on progress to be made, suggesting students react better to future-looking than previous assessments.

Table 3: *Effects of Feedback on Student Confidence and Motivation*

Item No.	Statement	SA (n/%)	A (n/%)	N (n/%)	D (n/%)	SD (n/%)
8	Feedback increases my confidence	5 / 12.2%	15 / 36.6%	17 / 41.5%	3 / 7.3%	1 / 2.4%
9	Feedback motivates me to participate more	7 / 17.1%	18 / 43.9%	13 / 31.7%	3 / 7.3%	0 / 0%
10	I apply feedback more easily when confident	10 / 24.4%	24 / 58.5%	6 / 14.6%	1 / 2.4%	0 / 0%
11	Even when anxious, feedback helps me improve	4 / 9.8%	20 / 48.8%	13 / 31.7%	4 / 9.8%	0 / 0%

In this table, items 8, 9, 10, and 11 were grouped as they assessed similar aspects of the effects of feedback on student confidence and motivation. The data in Table 3 demonstrated that feedback had a mostly positive impact on students' confidence and their willingness to participate in class. About half (48.8%) of the respondents felt more confident, and 60.9% were more involved after they received feedback. Additionally, 83% of students reported that they could apply feedback more easily when they felt confident, and 58.5% could do so effectively even when nervous.

Table 4: *Effect of Feedback on Willingness to Speak*

Effect of Feedback	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
I speak more because feedback helps me improve	24	58.5%
No change—feedback doesn't affect participation	7	17.1%
I speak less because feedback makes me nervous	10	24.4%

According to Table 4, 58.5% of respondents indicated that feedback increased their speaking, but 17.1% experienced no change. On the other hand, 24.4% reported that they communicated less because of feedback. These results prove that feedback can either encourage or discourage students depending on how and where it is given, reinforcing the importance of sensitive and supportive feedback practices in language learning environments.

Interview Results and Discussion

The following section discusses the results from structured interviews with twelve English major students in the Faculty of Arts, Misurata University. The analysis is structured according to the themes connected to the research questions and objectives. Key themes related to students' feedback, confidence, and speaking self-efficacy were highlighted by organizing the responses into groups. For every theme, relevant quotes are provided, and the theme is examined in the context of research on feedback and language learning.

Theme 1: Type and Clarity of Feedback

The usefulness and specificity of feedback varied among students. While positive feedback was appreciated, many expressed a desire for more detailed guidance. Participant 1 mentioned, "The feedback I found most helpful was always related to grammar... it helped me remember and apply it in conversations." Conversely, some students felt that feedback was often too vague. Participant 6 remarked, "The feedback was usually just 'good' or 'well done,' but it didn't help me know what I did right or wrong."

These views align with findings from Elabbar (2011) and El-Jeadi and Benrabha (2023), who noted that feedback in Libyan EFL classrooms often consists of general praise rather than clear instruction. While this can provide temporary encouragement, it does little to enhance speaking confidence or language development.

Theme 2: Timing and Mode of Feedback

Most participants preferred receiving feedback after their speaking activities, allowing them to focus on their performance without interruption or embarrassment. Participant 4 noted, "It's more comfortable to receive feedback privately, not in front of our classmates, so it doesn't feel awkward."

Many expressed a preference for private, one-on-one feedback, particularly when addressing errors. These views align with Ellis (2009), who suggests that feedback reception is influenced by the environment and emotional safety. In contexts like Libya, public corrections, even if well-intentioned, can be seen as face threatening.

Theme 3: Feedback, Confidence, and Emotional Readiness

Students' reactions to feedback varied with their confidence levels. Those with higher self-efficacy found feedback helpful and encouraging. Participant 5 noted, "When I feel confident, I take the feedback positively. But if I'm not confident, I might feel embarrassed or discouraged." Participant 3 echoed this, saying, "When I feel confident, I'm more open to receiving feedback and using it to improve." In contrast, students with low confidence were more affected by their teachers' feedback styles. Participant 8

remarked, “If the teacher is kind, I feel okay with correction. But if the tone is strict or cold, I get nervous and avoid speaking again.”

These findings align with Bandura’s (1997) assertion that those with strong self-efficacy tackle challenging tasks, while those lacking confidence are more susceptible to negative emotions. This highlights the importance of combining effective teaching with emotional support.

Theme 4: Positive and Negative Feedback Experiences

Participants shared both positive and negative experiences with oral feedback. Participant 1 highlighted a positive instance where feedback after a successful presentation boosted their confidence: “After my presentation, the teacher mentioned how clearly I talked and how my ideas were arranged.” This encouragement led them to participate more in classroom activities.

Conversely, Participant 6 recounted a negative experience where a teacher laughed at their mistake in front of classmates, stating, “I felt humiliated and didn’t speak again for weeks.”

These examples illustrate the significant emotional impact feedback can have on learners. Supportive feedback enhances confidence and encourages participation, while poorly delivered or public feedback can discourage students and reduce their willingness to speak. Hossain et al. (2024) emphasize that the manner of delivering feedback is as crucial as its content.

Theme 5: Suggestions for Improvement

Participants suggested various improvements for the feedback process. Most

advocated for a balance between praise and clear guidance on how to improve. Participant 7 remarked, “I wish they would provide more specific feedback... not just say ‘good’ or ‘try harder.’”

Additionally, several students felt that teachers should receive training on delivering feedback that builds student confidence. This aligns with Wang and Sun (2020), who emphasized the importance of teaching educators both the content and strategies for providing effective feedback.

Theme 6: Influence of Teachers and Peers on Feedback Reception

All participants emphasized that teacher and student behaviors significantly influence their feelings during speaking sessions. Participant 2 noted, “I feel motivated if the teacher is kind and supportive. However, I am anxious if the instructor is harsh or impolite.”

Peer responses, whether laughter or silence, also impacted student participation. These findings confirm that students engage with feedback in the context of interactions with both teachers and classmates, rather than in isolation.

Theme 7: Creating Supportive Learning Environments

Creating an emotionally safe classroom was a key concern for many students. Suggestions included providing feedback privately, acknowledging that mistakes are part of learning, encouraging collaboration, and using supportive language. Participant 8 proposed, “We should learn about how emotions affect learning, maybe in a special lesson or workshop.”

These insights indicate that students are increasingly aware of the impact of emotions on learning and prefer feedback that facilitates improvement without inducing shame. According to Thai (2021), emotionally responsive teaching is particularly crucial in EFL environments, where students often hesitate to participate due to anxiety and fear of evaluation.

4. Discussion

The findings suggest that receiving oral feedback from the teacher greatly influences students' confidence in speaking and their involvement in class. Positive, clear, and helpful feedback can help students make progress and take part in class activities. At times, not delivering feedback on a consistent schedule and not being emotionally aware can reduce its impact. The evidence suggests that feedback should guide learning and show understanding of students' emotions.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study examined how constructive oral feedback influences the speaking self-efficacy of EFL students at Misurata University. Drawing on data collected from 41 questionnaire respondents and 12 interview participants, the findings revealed that most students perceive oral feedback as a valuable factor in improving their speaking confidence, especially when it is clear, specific, and encouraging.

The results support the first hypothesis, showing that constructive feedback positively affects students' belief in their speaking abilities. Additionally, the second hypothesis was confirmed by

identifying a significant relationship between students' perceived quality of teacher feedback and their level of speaking self-efficacy. The more helpful and emotionally supportive the feedback, the more confident and motivated students were to participate in oral activities.

These results highlight the significance of how and when feedback is delivered, in addition to the content of the feedback. When teachers provide feedback in a respectful, private, and supportive manner, students are more likely to receive it positively and use it to improve their performance. Conversely, feedback that is vague, delayed, or delivered publicly may discourage learners and reduce their classroom engagement.

Although the study was limited to English major students within one faculty, it offers valuable insights for improving feedback practices in Libyan EFL classrooms. Teachers are encouraged to adopt feedback strategies that foster both linguistic development and emotional readiness, thereby enhancing students' self-efficacy and overall speaking performance.

Recommendations

For EFL Instructors:

- 1- Provide feedback that is both specific and encouraging. Focus on giving learners clear, actionable suggestions alongside positive reinforcement.
- 2- Deliver feedback privately whenever possible, especially when correcting mistakes, to reduce embarrassment and promote emotional safety.

3- Avoid interrupting students mid-task. Post-task feedback gives students time to reflect and keeps them from being discouraged while performing.

4- Be mindful of tone and word choice, as emotional sensitivity strongly affects how students respond to feedback.

For Curriculum Designers and Teacher Educators:

- 1- Integrate feedback training into teacher development programs, with emphasis on both the content and delivery of feedback.
- 2- Motivate teachers to use self-reflection techniques that support them in measuring both the emotional and teaching impact of their feedback.

For Future Researchers:

- 1- Conduct similar studies with larger or more diverse populations, including learners from other universities or educational contexts.
- 2- Examine the lasting effects that various feedback approaches can have on both speaking skill and students' confidence.
- 3- Explore teachers' points of view to find out the difficulties they encounter while giving oral constructive feedback.

Conflict of Interest:

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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ملخص البحث:

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى فهم كيفية تأثير التغذية الراجعة البنّاءة الشفوية على ثقة الطلاب الناطقين باللغة الإنجليزية في أنفسهم، وذلك بين طلاب قسم اللغة الإنجليزية بكلية الآداب، جامعة مصراتة. تبحث هذه الدراسة في تأثير جوانب مختلفة من التغذية الراجعة البنّاءة، وخاصة الوضوح، والنغمة، والتوقيت، والعرض، على رغبة الطلاب في المشاركة في أنشطة التحديث داخل الفصل. تم تطبيق أساليب مختلطة في هذه الورقة، بما في ذلك استجابات لاستبيان من 41 طالباً في اللغة الإنجليزية ومقابلات شبه منظمة مع 12 مشاركاً. أظهرت النتائج أن الطلاب يفضلون التغذية الراجعة الإيجابية، لكنهم يفضلون التعليقات الواضحة والشخصية التي تهدف إلى توجيه تقدمهم. ساعدت التغذية الراجعة الواضحة والمشجعة في تعزيز ثقة الطلاب في التحديث، بينما كانت المعلومات أو التعليقات غير الواضحة التي تمت مشاركتها بشكل مفتوح تؤدي عادةً إلى نتائج عكسية. أثر مستوى الاستعداد العاطفي للطلاب على كيفية تلقيهم للتغذية الراجعة وتصرفهم بناءً عليها. وفقاً للدراسة، يجب على معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية التركيز على تصحيح الأخطاء ودعم مشاعر المتعلمين. وتقرح الدراسة اعتماد تقنيات تغذية راجعة أكثر استجابة لدعم اعتقاد الطلاب في قدرتهم على التحديث في الفصول الدراسية اللمبية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التغذية الراجعة الشفهية - الثقة بالنفس - التغذية الراجعة البنّاءة - الاستعداد العاطفي