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"TEACHER, YOUR VOICE……" EXPLORING STUDENTS PERCEPTIONS ON THE USE OF AUDIO FEEDBACK

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ABSTRACT
The purpose of this study was to examine students' perceptions of audio feedback for assignments in their writing class. Data were collected through interviews. The findings highlight the fact that the students would like to see more of this type of feedback across their courses. The findings also indicate that providing feedback to students via audio files is feasible despite some pitfalls of this format. Guidance for teachers concerning the effective use of audio feedback and suggestions for further research are presented at the end of the paper.
Keywords: audio feedback, students' perception, writing class

INTRODUCTION

Feedback, defined by Narciss (2008) as "[the] post-response information which informs the learners on their actual states of learning and/or performance in order to help them detect if their states corresponds to the learning aims in a given context" (p. 292), is one of the fundamental tools in teaching-learning contexts. It is an indispensable component of every writing course as it plays the role as "the most important aspect of the assessment process in raising achievement" (Bloxham & Boyd, 2007, p.20).

In writing courses, high quality feedback may motivate students, inform them of their strengths and areas to improve, and guide them on how to develop (Brown, 2001). Effective feedback has a significant powerful influences on student learning and attainment (Rodway-Dyer et.al. 2011) and that this in turn promotes language improvement (Hyland, 1998; Ferris, 1997) and the learning process as a whole (Balzer et al., 1989; Kluger & Denisi, 1998).

Research shows that high quality feedback should connect to performance in terms of objectives, criteria and anticipated standards (Nicol & MacFarlane-Dick, 2006) and has to comply with some features: manageability, meaningfulness, timeliness, and constancy (Hartshorn, 2008; Shute, 2008). The first feature (manageability) refers to time the teacher spends on giving feedback. The second one (meaningfulness) proposes that feedback on writing should put more emphasis on content over form to help students focus on the communicative purpose of their written work. The third feature, timeliness, has to do with the promptness with which feedback is given, for example, the sooner a written text is commented on, the better. The fourth one, constancy, refers to the continuous practice of one's knowledge to improve his/her writing skills.

Feedback is central to one's learning experience, and giving feedback on student papers may be the most important activity a writing teacher does. When teachers give comments to their students on writing assignments, they typically do it in the text form (Silva, 2012) and will generally be no more than a few hundred words in length (Hennessy & Forrester, 2014). The provision of written comments on students' assignments appears to be a crucial component of feedback procedure (Nicol, 2010) and that delivering written

addition, a study measuring grade differences between students who received audio feedback versus written feedback might shed light on the type of feedback that students more readily implement.

Despite of its importance, feedback is still seen as an often underemphasized component of teaching (Brown et al., 2003), where "day-to-day effective assessment and feedback practice is rarely reported in the literature" (Hepplestone et al., 2011, p. 124). Ongoing research across schools, universities, and courses is clearly needed to test the potential of feedback especially the audio feedback.

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