Corrective feedback in naturalistic text-based synchronous and asynchronous computer-mediated communication

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Although corrective feedback (CF) has attracted much attention in the field of second language acquisition, there is scant research pertaining to CF in naturalistic text-based computer-mediated communication (CMC). The current study addressed this gap by evaluating the types of CF, and relative effects on learner uptake that existed in two conditions: (1) asynchronous CMC and (2) synchronous CMC between four Native Speaker-Non-Native Speaker pairs. As a measure of effectiveness, learner uptake is defined as immediate or delayed learner response(s) to feedback. Participants completed the following synchronous tasks: an introductory task, and a video-prompted discussion task via an online chat program. For the asynchronous task, the participants co-developed a 3-day travel plan via email. The findings showed that interactional feedback, in the form of recasts, existed only in the synchronous environment. Although no evidence of immediate effect was shown during task performance, an instance of delayed effect was shown across tasks in the SCMC environment. Moreover, depending on the task and type of error being addressed, significant differences were observed in learners’ opportunities for and use of NS feedback. The presentation will highlight potential reasons for such learner behavior, linked, primarily, to distinct interactional features of CMC and role of interlocutor; observations regarding naturalistic interactions in CMC environments will also be discussed.

Keywords: Corrective feedback, English as a Second Language (ESL), Interlocutor role and Uptake, SCMC and ACMC, Computer-mediated communication.