

Individual Paper Session 27
CALL
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3:15-3:45pm

Corrective feedback in a computer mediated communicative context: an experimental study

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The present study addresses a number of research gaps that have been identified in the field of computer mediated communication (CMC), that is, knowledge about the types of online interaction by teachers that facilitate learning (Meskill & Anthony, 2005) and whether there is long-term retention of grammatical forms emphasized in the CMC environment (Beauvois, 1998). It replicates, in a synchronous computer-mediated learning environment, a classroom-based study which examined the effectiveness of two types of corrective feedback on the acquisition of past tense –ed (Ellis, Loewen & Erlam, 2006).

Elementary learners of L2 English at a private language school in New Zealand ($N = 31$) completed two computer mediated communicative tasks, during which time they received either recasts (implicit feedback) or metalinguistic information (explicit feedback) in response to any utterance that contained an error in the regular past tense. A third group served as a control. Learning was measured by computer administered Timed and Untimed Grammaticality Judgement tests. These tests were administered prior to instruction, immediately following instruction and two weeks later.

Results show that learners at a beginning level of L2 proficiency are able to perform communicative tasks in the chatroom. However results also contrast with that of the original study in that they show no statistically significant gains in response to either type of feedback. An examination of chatscripts suggests some possible reasons as to why learning, in response to feedback given and as measured on the tests used, did not take place in a computer-mediated communicative context.