INDIAN JOURNAL OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS
VOL. 35, NO. 1, JAN-JUN 2009

Learning Outcomes and Learner Perceptions in relation to Computer-based Feedback

MIEKE ROSSELLE
LIES SERCU
SONIA VANDEPITTE
University College of Ghent and University of Ghent, Belgium

ABSTRACT

This article reports on the findings obtained from an exploratory study on the effectiveness of feedback in a computer-based learning environment. The main aim of the study was to gain insight into learning outcomes and student perceptions in relation to different types of feedback. This aim was operationalised in terms of an investigation amongst Dutch-speaking Belgian second-year students of translation studies. While translating grammatically difficult sentences from Dutch into English in a computer-based environment, the students were confronted with five feedback types, which differed in their degree of explicitness concerning the grammatical problem hidden and the mistake made, and the degree of learner involvement required towards finding the correct solution. Questionnaires and grammar test and delayed post-test data yield insights into the learners' reactions and learning outcomes in relation to the different feedback types. We found that more explicit feedback, combined with adequate depth of processing, led to better learning outcomes and more positive student perceptions.

Keywords: Computer-based feedback, degree of explicitness, depth of processing, automatization, grammatical translation competence, learner perceptions.

1. INTRODUCTION

Providing adequate and timely feedback is an essential part of stimulating teaching. Teachers providing feedback, orally or in writing, hope that this will help their learners improve their competence in the foreign language. Yet, from a substantial amount of research in the area of Instruction & Learning (see Entwistle & Ramsden 1983; Elen &