

Feedback in Pronunciation Training – Experience from Classroom Interaction

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This is a report on my personal experience as a teacher of German as a foreign language at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS) in Porto Alegre, Brazil. As a scholar of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), I spent ten months at UFRGS. The majority of the students I worked with were undergraduates of German and Portuguese who aim to become teachers or translators. Due to my background in phonetics, I emphasized the pronunciation aspect of language learning which the students appreciated because this aspect generally tends to be neglected in class.

Listen to the Poet! – A Multimedia Approach to Pronunciation Training and Feedback

In this project, each student was assigned a poem available at www.lyrikline.org¹, an online collection of poems that come with an original recording of the author. The students trained the recitation of their poems with the aid of the authentic recordings. Subsequently, the student's version of the poem was recorded. The students were provided with group feedback on their recordings by their fellow students and individual feedback by myself. Group feedback aimed at training the perception of phonetic detail among the students. Individual feedback was supported auditorily by playing back examples of phonetic deviations in the student's recordings and visually by showing spectrographic information from the student's recordings in *Praat*².

Feedback on Pronunciation Training by Students

Students were asked to provide their thoughts on the pronunciation training they underwent during my classes. In their answers, it became clear that information about the function of the vocal tract, phonetic properties of speech sounds (e.g. quantity and quality of vowels), and coarticulatory variation (e.g. influence of the preceding vowel on the following speech sound) were considered helpful for the personal development of pronunciation skills.

In general, corrective feedback on phonetic productions was considered important by the students and they would like pronunciation training to become a more pronounced element in their language classes.

¹ *Lyrikline – listen to the poet!* is created by Literaturwerkstatt Berlin in cooperation with its international network of lyricline partners.

² Boersma, Paul & Weenink, David (2013). *Praat: doing phonetics by computer* [Computer program]. Version 5.3.42, retrieved from <http://www.praat.org/>