INTRODUCTION

In this publication, feedback is presented in its many forms, with a special focus on language teaching and learning in the school classroom, especially in relation to teaching English as a second or foreign language. Despite this focus, the contents of the individual chapters can easily be transferred to other school subjects. The book's emphasis on school-based foreign-language teaching is also due to the fact that relevant practice-oriented presentations, such as those by Wiliam, Hattie, and their colleagues, are primarily focused on teaching mathematics and science. In contrast, the publications of the renowned scholars do focus to some extent on language teaching; however, the few examples with practical relevance relate to higher education and second/foreign language writing. Consequently, the subtitle of this book could be: *Applications in the Second/Foreign Language Classroom and Beyond.*

The book is aimed at teachers in training (undergraduates and graduates) who, with the help of their instructors, can learn about and try out the various feedback practices. In-service teachers who wish to give feedback greater prominence in their teaching may also benefit from the publication. The presentation is designed to allow students and in-service teachers to select and implement individual feedback strategies and techniques entirely on their own. Therefore, the individual teaching examples that are an important part of the following presentation are presented in a concrete context. They provide elaborated worksheets for the learner, usually preceded by brief explanations for the teacher. They are also available for download and can be adapted to the specific learning context.

When using the strategies and techniques presented (cf. Chapter 2), there are numerous aspects to consider:

- Most feedback recommendations contrast poor classroom instruction with independent learning (cf. Chapters 3 and 4). They ignore the scientific evidence for the effectiveness of *direct instruction*, which is quite different from *didactic teaching* and can also be integrated into so-called open forms of instruction (cf. De Florio, 2016).
- There is often a misunderstanding underlying the approach to instruction: the desirable independent learning is not usually achieved by letting students work independently without preparation. In order to gradually approach the desired level of learner independence, it is necessary to explain to learners the reasons for independent learning and the procedures associated with it, as well as to practice the respective procedures with them.
- The unconditional demand for variety of methods is too broad a demand for two main reasons. First, the chosen "methods" in a teaching unit must be coordinated with each other. Second, the learning context, the needs and interests of the individual learners, and, last but not least, the personality of the teacher are decisive.
- The choice of a strategy as well as the associated teaching and learning techniques depend primarily on subject-specific goals and content. In scientific publications, the approach is sometimes described; however, subject-specific goals and content are rarely specified.
- The rightly propagated orientation toward real-life situations and real communication should also be transferred to the methodological approach in foreign-language teaching. While cooperative learning in the sense of think-pair-share can easily be transferred to real life, many "methods" are characterized by artificiality. Moreover, their implementation usually involves a great deal of effort.

The book is divided into three parts:

Part I   Basic Concepts of Assessment and Feedback in the Foreign-Language Classroom

1   Feedback in Everyday Life and in Foreign-Language Education

Each of these parts as well as each individual chapter can be read separately and in the sequence that makes sense for the purposes of study or teaching. In virtually all of the chapters, the aim is to go beyond the linguistic and (inter)cultural goals

and to relate them to life. The learners act as themselves and, depending on their circumstances and personality, can transfer insights acquired in class, in whole or in part, to their (later) lives. In order to actually achieve all the intended goals for (most of) the learners, (almost) all proposals are based on cooperative learning in the sense of think-pair-share; partner and group work are consequently the norm. In addition, teachers are required to provide appropriate support in the sense of scaffolding.

When looking through the chapters and especially the teaching examples, one realizes that individual approaches and methods, such as cooperative learning, allow and require a whole range of approaches. This shows that "methods" are rarely found in pure form. Questions such as "What can I achieve with this method or with a special form of feedback?" or "Where can I use it?" are consequently difficult to answer without a concrete reference to teaching, quite apart from the fact that they do not sufficiently involve the learners.

Part I
Basic Concepts of Assessment and Feedback in the Foreign-Language Classroom

In Chapter 1, I argue that we should first consider everyday forms of feedback, which differ from language to language, before we turn to pedagogically and didactically oriented feedback in the classroom. Then, in Chapter 2, the relevant terminology used throughout this book is presented. Evaluation and assessment as well as different forms of feedback are explained and related to second-/foreign-language learning. This leads to an overview of the most important scientific studies that determined the emergence of the feedback models created by Dylan Wiliam and John Hattie and their respective coauthors (Chapter 3). In Chapter 4, I briefly trace developments in pedagogy and didactics that have favored the implementation of feedback and continue to shape it in the foreign-language classroom.

1 FEEDBACK IN EVERYDAY LIFE AND IN FOREIGN-LANGUAGE EDUCATION

1.1 Feedback in Everyday Life

At some point in our lives, we all feel the need to get feedback from friends and acquaintances. This is especially true when we are not satisfied with the results of our efforts and cannot quite explain what went wrong or what we should have done to better achieve our goals. **We depend on feedback in our everyday life** – be it our private or professional life.

In everyday communication, the term **"feedback" stands for verbal or (more rarely) written feedback from a trusted person or a superior on our performance, but also on our behavior and our personality** (for scientific terminology, see Chapter 2).

In general, we have certain ideas about how feedback in the private or professional sphere should be designed so that it helps us to progress. After all, we, ourselves, give feedback to others – whether asked for or not. In order for a friend's feedback to help us move forward, it must not be too abrupt. Statements like "Too bad, and you've made such an effort" do not get us anywhere. **Only more detailed explanations of our performance and/or our behavior are useful (if they are indeed useful at all).** Only in this way can we find out how to continue and, above all, what we can improve – next time. **Brief evaluations of our actions** like the following **do not help us to move forward:**

– Really bad luck!
– Unfortunately, that didn't go well.
– Actually, you did everything right.

One way to learn more is to engage in conversation with our counterpart. The best thing is to ask for advice.

–   What should I have done? Could I have handled the matter differently?
–   What would you have done in my place?
–   What advice would you give me in this situation?

If even then it remains noncommittal talk, the interlocutor is unable or unwilling to formulate meaningful feedback.

A positive example will help us to understand "everyday" feedback better. A thoroughly qualified young man only ever receives rejections on his applications. He is not even invited to an interview. Finally, he asks a former fellow student, with whom he has been friends for a long time, for advice. The friend takes his time. He inquires about the circumstances and finally asks to see the applications. His assumption is that potential employers sort out applications that do not correspond to certain conventions. Finally, he refers the "applicant" to a website where he can find many useful tips. Above all, **helpful feedback comes about when the feedback giver discusses individual procedures with the person seeking advice** and can finally refer them to further sources.

It goes without saying that contrary opinions should not clash harshly in such feedback conversations. Rather, it will often be the case that the discussion partners try to avoid or at least clarify misunderstandings.

–   Did I understand you correctly? You have …
–   How did you come to do it in this way?
–   What did you expect from this approach?

The same applies to the professional sphere. A boss or a higher-ranking colleague with appropriate leadership qualities will not just abruptly evaluate the performance(s) of subordinates, but will first acknowledge the positive aspects of their actions. Only then will he carefully address what, for example, a subordinate could have done better – what may have been lacking. If bosses or other supervisors were to do otherwise, it would be detrimental to the employees' work performance and motivation.

1.2   Feedback in Foreign-Language Education

What happens or should happen in the foreign-language class-room is quite similar. But it depends on the perspective.

TEFL Example: Résumé-Writing Conventions

In most countries, the writing of an application follows specific conventions. Applicants should be familiar with them; otherwise, their application may not be considered for formal reasons.

TEFL Example 1.1 How to Write a Résumé

Read the following dialogue:

> Jonas has been studying computer science at the University of California–Berkeley for two semesters. Now he wants to work at an IT start-up during the next semester break. For the application, he needs a résumé, among other documents. He suspects that not only linguistic conventions, but also other peculiarities have to be taken into account when writing it. He therefore turns to a fellow American student with whom he is good friends.

Jonas: Hello, Bernie, how are you doing?
Bernie: Fine. And you?
Jonas: Me too. But I have sort of a problem.
Bernie: Oh! May I help you?
Jonas: Yes, please. As I told you, I want to work in a start-up during the next semester break.
Bernie: And what is the problem?
Jonas: I have to enclose a curriculum vitae with my application. I think there are some rules I should stick to.
Bernie: You are perfectly right. We call it a résumé. Let me think for a moment.
Jonas: It isn't that difficult, I hope.
Bernie: No, but let me have a look at the Internet. Sometimes they have useful tools.
         [He enters "curriculum vitae" and "résumé" into a search engine. After some minutes he has found what he was looking for] Have a look: This is an overview of the most important conventions you should follow and there are also annotations in German.
Jonas: That's very helpful. Let me take the URL. On the basis of this overview, I can write my résumé without too many problems. May I show my final version to you?
Bernie: Sure. I was about to suggest that.
Jonas: Thanks!

(see De Florio-Hansen, 2022)

You may expect something different when it comes to feedback in the foreign-language classroom. Let us have a look at what happens in most cases. In a short introduction, the teacher explains the different ways of writing a résumé in the English-speaking world, especially when applying for a job in the United States, in order to give the learners an orientation. The students then write up résumés in tandems or groups of four and compare their drafts with the results of other groups. After a correction process, selected students present their new versions. The teacher tries to correct violations of language correctness in an appropriate procedure (corrective feedback; see Chapter 7). **Depending on the learning context, she seeks discussion with individual learners and gets them to reconsider and further improve their formulations, if useful, after an exchange with their tandem partners.**

> This simple combination of instruction and feedback in the foreign-language classroom should be preceded, wherever possible, by an example through which learners can familiarize themselves with the procedure in (some kind of) everyday world communication. Foreign-language skills (i.e. in their advanced form, Intercultural Discourse Competence), should **introduce learners to the knowledge and skills to be learned in a form that approximates communication in everyday life** before resorting to procedures that occur only in the classroom. In any case, the students should become more and more able to differentiate between real-life talk and classroom-determined discussions.

TEFL Example: Varieties of English

The following classroom activity gives advanced students (as well as the teacher) an opportunity to recall the different varieties of English and to consider which English should be the subject of the lesson: British English, American English, or International English?