English grammar learning through WhatsApp and feedback type: Learners' perceptions

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Mastering English grammar can be a challenging task for many foreign language learners (Jean & Simard, 2011). However, with the increasing popularity of mobile instant messaging (MIM) applications like WhatsApp, new opportunities have emerged for more engaging language learning practices (Cremades et al., 2021; Tragant et al., 2022) and, more specifically, grammar development (Murphy et al., 2023). Besides, some studies have also evinced the potential different types of feedback have for grammar acquisition (Ellis et al., 2006). Yet, learners' views tend to be left aside. This study fills this gap by analysing learners' opinions about receiving feedback through WhatsApp as a platform for English grammar learning.

Three intact classes (*N*=95) of pre-intermediate English as a foreign language learners enrolled in the Primary Education degree were recruited. For an academic semester, they were taught three grammar structures following a traditional approach (Larsen-Freeman, 2003) and received extra exposure through WhatsApp. Participants completed six WhatsApp tasks (two per structure), plus an icebreaker, and received feedback from their teacher. One group received metalinguistic explanations, another reformulations, and the last one repetition prompts (Ellis, 2009). One week before and after the intervention, participants completed two grammaticality judgement tests –timed and untimed–, which tapped into the target grammar structures, to measure their grammatical ability. Together with the post-test, they answered a questionnaire enquiring about their views on how useful receiving feedback through WhatsApp had been to foster English grammar skills.

For this presentation, the results of the questionnaire will be analysed, focusing on participants' perceived value of the feedback received, feedback preferences, error identification and correction, and self-perceived improvement in grammar. Results will yield insights into the potential of a very popular MIM tool through which to receive feedback for fostering English grammar learning and for bridging the gap between classroom practices and extramural exposure.

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Short bio

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