

How do Portuguese as a Foreign Language Learners Perceive Feedback?

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Interaction in SLA

- ❖ According to the Interaction Hypothesis, negotiated interaction that allow language learners to gain feedback on their utterances can facilitate second language acquisition (SLA) (see Gass, 1997; Long, 1996; Pica, 1994, among others)
- ❖ However, in order for interactional feedback to influence SLA, it must be...
 1. *perceived as feedback* by the learner and,
 2. the learner must *perceive the target of the feedback* (Mackey et al., 2000).

Perception of interactional feedback

- ❖ Mackey, Gass, McDonough (2000) examined language learners' perceptions of interactional feedback.
- ❖ *Participants*: 10 ESL learners from various L1 backgrounds, and 7 Italian as a foreign language
- ❖ *Methods*: completed a “spot the difference task”. Later, watched a video recordings of their previous interactions and were asked to introspect about their thoughts at the time the original interactions were in progress.

Perception of interactional feedback

- ❖ Learners received feedback focused on a range of morphosyntactic, lexical, and phonological forms, suggesting that interactional feedback was indeed provided.
- ❖ The results of the recall task showed that learners were relatively accurate in their perceptions about lexical, semantic, and phonological feedback.
- ❖ However, morphosyntactic feedback was generally not perceived as such, suggesting that learners whether learners perceived the target of the feedback varied as a function of what the feedback was about.

The aim of the present study

- ❖ Examine the robustness and generalizability of the findings of Mackey et al., 2000 via a small-scale replication and extension.
- ❖ Investigate [1] what types of interactional feedback appears in an interaction between non-native speakers of Portuguese, as well as between a native speaker of Portuguese and a nonnative speakers, and [2] whether these learners perceive the target of the feedback or not.

Participants

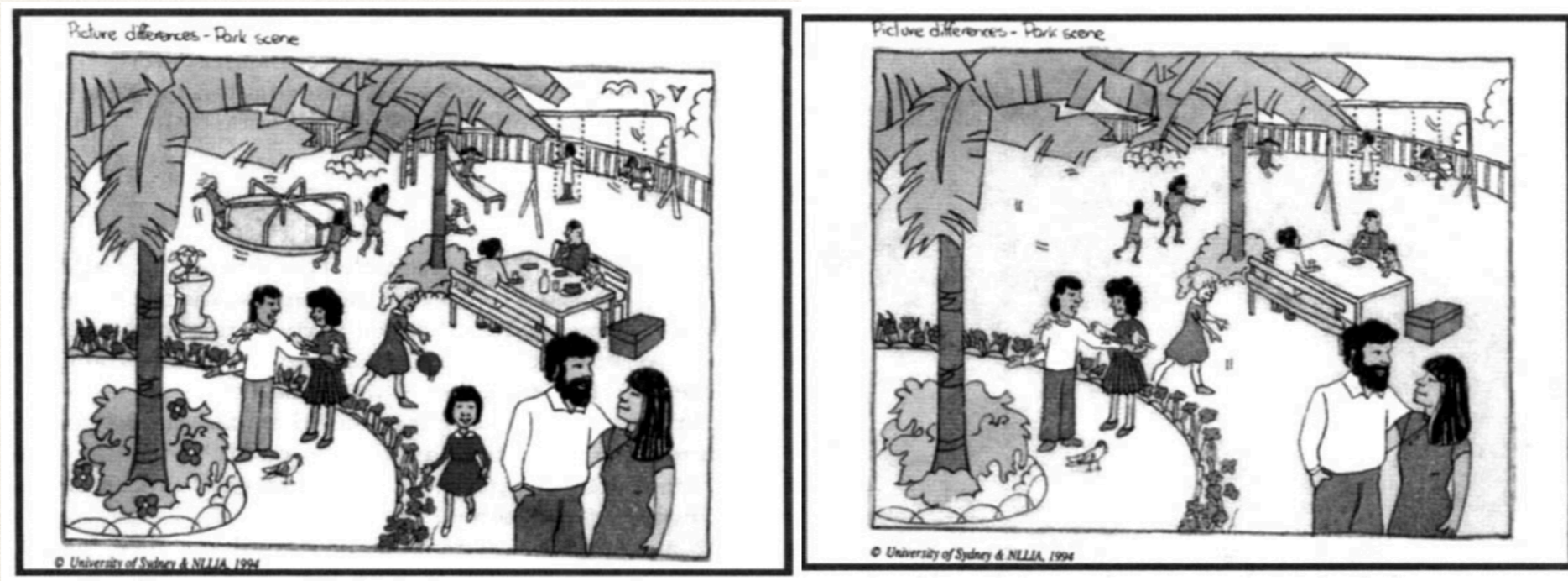
Two native English speakers

- ❖ *Participant 1* - lived in Brazil for over 2 years and came back to the USA to study Portuguese at the University of Utah.
- ❖ *Participant 2* - began his studies of Portuguese at the University of Utah 3-4 months ago, however he is married to a Brazilian and he has had contact with the language before.

Methods

Following Mackey et al., 2000:

- ❖ Spot the difference task (~15-20 minutes).



- ❖ Followed by Stimulated Recall

Results – Interactional Feedback

- ❖ Feedback was relatively infrequent overall.
- ❖ Morphosyntactic and lexical feedback were more frequent than phonological and semantic feedback.

| Number of occurrences | Target of the feedback | Source of Feedback |
|-----------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| 5 | lexical | Interviewer |
| 1 | phonological | Participant 1 |
| 10 | morphosyntactic | Participant 1 |
| 2 | semantic | Participant 1 |

Examples of interactional feedback

- Na imagem tem duas....duas palmas (sound a bit unsure)
- Ah, sim, sim! Tem duas palmas na imagem!
- *There are two....two 'palm trees' in the image*
- *Oh, yes, yes! There are two 'palm trees' in the image!*

- Tem um jogo onde vc pode fazer isso.....(gestures) Mary-go-round (L1 use)
- Ah, sim, não tem isso

- Esse homem está com a mão no.... (make gestures)... no “poquéte”.
- Bolso?
- Yes, yes! Sim, bolso!
- *This man has his hand in his.....'pocket'.*
- *Pocket?*
- *Yes, yes! Yes, pocket!*

- Tem uma menina que tem o cabelo assim (faz gestos)
- hummm... (does not seem to understand the gestures)
- Maria chiquinha (interviewer interference)
- There is a girl who has a hair like this (make gestures)
- Hummmm.... (does not seem to understand the gestures)
- Maria Chiquinha (interviewer interference)

Results - Recall

- ❖ Unexpectedly, all feedback was perceived accurately as feedback of the intended type.

Discussion

- ❖ The present study replicates Mackey et al., 2000 in finding morphosyntactic feedback to be the most frequent type of feedback provided.
- ❖ The distribution of feedback types observed in the present study were very similar in proportion to those found for the Italian as a foreign language learner group.
- ❖ However, the target of the feedback provide by native speaker (lexical) and nonnative speaker interlocutors (mostly, morphosyntactic) differed.

Discussion

- ❖ Unlike Mackey et al., 2000, the feedback provided was consistently perceived as feedback of the intended type by the learners.
- ❖ This may be related to the fact that the learners share L1s or that these learners are presently receiving formal training in Brazilian Portuguese in a classroom setting.

Conclusion

- ❖ The Interaction Hypothesis holds that interactional feedback provided to language learners facilitates SLA.
- ❖ However, in order for learners to benefit, feedback must be provided, and must be perceived as feedback of the intended type by learners.
- ❖ The present study suggests that these conditions are met.
- ❖ However, more work is needed to understand how the type of feedback provided and learners interpretation and use of the feedback varies with learners' language background, proficiency level, context of learning, interlocutor, among other factors.

Thank you!

Questions or comments (morena.santana@utah.edu)

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