FEEDBACK IN SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

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1 Feedback in second language acquisition

1.1 The notion of feedback

1.1.1 Introduction

One of the key questions concerning language acquisition is the question of how one can learn a new language while simultaneously being forced to communicate in that language. This is the situation which has probably always been the lot of the majority of children and adults acquiring a new language. It is the situation faced by the adults whose language acquisition we are examining in these volumes.

The learner has both to learn and engage in direct interaction in spoken language, so he or she will rapidly need to solve certain basic requirements that are connected with this type of communication. such requirements include what is mostly called turntaking, i.e., the distribution of turns at talking or listening, but they also concern what we, in this study, will be calling **feedback**, i.e, linguistic mechanisms which ensure that a set of basic requirements on communication, such as possibilities for continued contact, for mutual perception and for mutual understanding can be met. Since it is furthermore more or less impossible to engage in spoken interaction without employing these mechanisms and they turn out to be language specific in several respects, the learner is faced with an acquisition problem right from the outset.

The point of departure for the analysis of linguistic communicative feedback is the broad notion of feedback used in cybernetics and control engineering (cf Wiener 1948). Feedback is there taken to designate the processes by which a control unit of any kind gains information about the effects of its own actions, thus, enabling the unit to evaluate and control its own further activity.

The cybernetic notion of feedback has been applied to human communication in a broad holistic sense by several researchers. foremost among them, perhaps, Gregory Bateson. See, for example, Bateson (1972).

However, we will not be using the general cybernetic notion of feedback in this study. Rather we will be concerned with what can be regarded as a particular case of the general notion with some special features of its own. The concept we will be concerned with, we can call **linguistic feedback** or in the context of this study simply **feedback** (FB).

The point of departure for the analysis of linguistic feedback is an analysis of the regular linguistic (and in principle also bodily) mechanisms whereby a speaker and a listener keep each other informed about the following four **basic communicative functions**.

(i)   Maintenance of contact and interaction
(ii)   Perception
(iii)   Understanding
(iv)   Attitudinal reactions

The speaker normally wants to maintain contact and to make sure that the listener perceives and understands. The speaker also needs to find out how the listener reacts emotionally and attitudinally. He/she therefore needs to have means for "eliciting" and "giving"such information. We will refer to these two functions - **giving and eliciting** - as the two primary FB functions (**FBG** and **FBE**). The two primary FB functions intersect with the four basic communicative functions mentioned above, so that it is possible both to elicit and give information about all four of these, i.e., continued contact, perception, understanding and attitudinal reactions.

We are, in this chapter, mainly concerned with the kind of FB where the primary FB functions are carried out by regularised linguistic mechanisms; we have called this focal area **NFB** (feedback in a narrow sense).

There are two further types of FB processes that we have added to those that we have called NFB. We will refer to both of them as BFB (feedback in a broad sense). Both derive from the interaction between an adult language learner and a target language speaker (TLS). The two types of processes are: (i) the learner' s use of a TLS as a resource for language acquisition and (ii) the TL speaker´s way of adapting to the lesser degree of proficiency in the learner. Due to considerations of space, the emphasis in this chapter will be on NFB , with BFB being included less systematically (see, however 2.3.3 Repetitions as feedback). BFB is treated systematically in Allwood (ed.) 1988, to which the reader is referred.

1.1.2 The notion of feedback - background

In the grammatical tradition of the west, feedback phenomena have mostly been studied under the grammatical category of interjections and sometimes under the category of adverbs. Interjections were, for example, defined in the following way by Priscian: "interiectio (interjection): a class of words syntactically independent of verbs and indicating a feeling or a state of mind" (Robins, 1967) p.58.

One of the first authors in modern times to notice and describe parts of this class of phenomena was Charles Fries (1952) who analyzed a corpus consisting of his own telephone conversations in which he identified a set of "listener responses". Another author who described some of the expressions used for feedback from an interactional point of view was Victor Yngve. In an article called "On Getting a Word in Edgewise" (Yngve, 1970), a title which seems to reflect the old idea behind the concept of interjection, he discusses what he called "back channelling", i.e., a set of responses a person can use even when out of turn. This term was also used and made popular in psychology by Yngve´s colleague at the University of Chicago, Starkey Duncan in "Face to face interaction" (Duncan and Fiske, 1977).

Since the term "backchannel" has become fairly widely used, it is perhaps in place to clarify here the relationship between what we are called feedback (NFB) and backchannelling. Very briefly, the term feedback refers to the giving or eliciting of information concerning contact, perception, understanding and attitude, by regularised linguistic means, whether or not this is done by a speaker in or out of turn. The concept of "backchannelling" by contrast, seems to presuppose an intersection between the feedback mechanisms and the turntaking mechanisms so that what is included in the concept of backchannelling could be characterised as "feedback giving out of turn" while "feedback giving in turn" and "feedback elicitation" are excluded.

With the growing number of studies on linguistic interaction, the phenomena we are interested in have been reported under yet other terms such as: "listener responses" (Dittman, 1972), "acknowledgers" (Allwood, 1976), "linguistic particles" (Weydt, 1977), "change of state tokens" (Heritage, 1984) and "response words" (Anward, 1986).

Also the traditional term "interjection" has been used by some researchers. Compare, for example, James (1972) and a recent work by Ehlich (1986).

The term feedback has, as has already been mentioned, for some time been used in relation to communication, in a general and fairly abstract sense, see, for example. Bateson (1972). The more specific sense in which it is used in this work is suggested in Allwood (1979) and since then by several other authors such as Severinson-Eklund (1986) and Ahlsén (1985).

The reason for proposing that the term "feedback" be used in relation to linguistic communication is that the term focuses attention on the systematic organisational role of otherwise unnoticed linguistic mechanisms and constituents like the little words "mm", "yeah" and "eh". In spite of Priscian's classical definition of interjections, these words are not just uttered to express emotions, they are used, above all, to enable speaker and listener to control and regulate their own actions toward each other. It is doubtful whether this aspect of spoken interaction can be reduced to any other of the organisational features that have been suggested to be general in spoken interaction, for example. the turn-taking system suggested by Yngve (1970), and described by Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974), the systems for sequencing which have been described by Schegloff and Sacks (1973) or the system for repair described by Schegloff (1972), and by Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks (1977). If seems therefore justified to hold that what we are calling linguistic feedback is a fairly independent general functional and organisational dimension of spoken interaction and that this dimension, in turn, seems to be a specific case of the general need for feedback mechanisms (in the cybernetic sense) that exist both in natural and in cultural life.

1.1.3 Feedback and language acquisition

In relation to acquisition we can say that we have a dual interest in FB (i) as a part of language which has to be learned and (ii) as an instrument for the acquisition of other parts of language.

With regard to both of these interests, but particularly the first, we have investigated the following themes:

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(i)   **The relative weight of NFB**: Since the study of feedback phenomena is relatively novel both in linguistics in general, and in relation to language acquisition, one of our primary concerns has been to get an idea of the relative weight of NFB in relation to other types of verbal material among both learners and first language speakers. In order to do this, we have constructed a number of relative measures which are described in detail for the learners in Volume I, Chapter 8.1 and more briefly in 2.3 below.

(ii)   **Complexity**: One of the constant themes related to acquisition is complexity. It could be said that an overriding hypothesis for most acquisition studies is that "simple comes before complex", all other things being equal. Within NFB this can be used to claim that NFB which is easy to remember or easy to pronounce comes before NFB which does not have these qualities.

(iii)   **SL and TL influence**: Another basic concern, which is presupposed by many of the other concerns we have, is to get reliable and relatively complete descriptions of the NFB systems in the 6 source languages and 5 target languages. Connected with this concern is the wish to relate such descriptions (which inevitably show normative traces of so-called "standard languages"), to the particular SL and TL variants of spoken language that the learners we study have been in contact with, and to the learner´s own perception of this aspect of the language to be learned. This attempt is described in 2.3.5 below.

(iv)   **Structural categories**: A taxonomy of structural categories, which contains such categories as simple primary FB morphemes, e.g., "yes", "no" and "mm", alone or in combination: reduplications, repetitions, etc., is used to pose questions about SL and TL influence. It is also used to pose questions about whether there is an internal order of complexity which is reflected in the order of acquisition.

(v)   **Functions**: Combining the complexity thesis "simple comes before complex" with Kajsa Warg's maxim "you use what you have", (Kajsa Warg was the author of a famous Swedish cookery book) and the maximization thesis for language acquisition "make maximal use of minimal means" (cf. also Allwood and Ahlsén, 1986, and Strömqvist, 1983), we can further derive the suggestion that although initial FB will be simple and of few types it will have many functions.

These functions might initially be vague. Later there might be more distinct type of NFB. Below, we will discuss what kinds of initial vagueness we find and we will also investigate what kind of functions learners use FB expressions and mechanisms for.

The development of more complex types of FB will partly be determined by the interaction of the acquisition of the TL FB system with the acquisition of other parts of the TL system. For example. the acquisition of modals like *certainly* is probably jointly determined by their use for FB purposes and by their use as modal adverbials. Unfortunately, space will not permit us to report in any detail on functional development in this chapter.

(vi)   **Activity and interaction**: A number of possible questions concern the relationship between type of activity, type of interaction and NFB. With regard to the social relationship created or maintained by an activity, it could, for example, be suggested that if a TLS has more power than a learner, the learner will both give and elicit less FB.

An overriding goal of the ESF project on adult second language acquisition is to study how adults, who are as little pedagogically controlled as possible, learn a new language. If we take seriously the word "how", in the formulation given above, this means that we should attempt to find the processes and means whereby adults learn languages. Some of these processes and means will be tied to and depend crucially on what aspects of language are being learned. for other means and processes such a dependence will be less clear cut and we can perhaps speak of multipurpose instruments for language acquisition. We believe that FB processes provide the learner with such multipurpose instruments, which increases the importance of their study in an overall approach which sets out to describe how acquisition is achieved in interaction.

We have therefore, in the study of FB, been interested not only in what type of FB means the learner acquires but also in what type of use these means are put to, in order to acquire other aspects of language. This is reflected in the areas of BFB, which we have mentioned above. To repeat, they are: (i) means whereby the learner uses the TLS as a resource for language acquisition and (ii) means whereby the TLS copes with the learner´s lack of proficiency in the TL. Among the means a learner should initially have at his/her disposal for using the TLS as a resource for acquisition should be imitation and repetition. If this is so, it is of a certain interest to investigate how these means are used. Are, for example, salient and simpler words repeated before words which are not simple and salient.

1.2   Informants, activities, data and coding

1.2.1 Informants

In this section, we present some sociobiographical information about the learners who were selected for the analysis of feedback processes. Totally, there were 20 longitudinal informants, two for each SL-TL pair, who were selected from the 40 informants in the project. The selection was done on the basis of the project criteria for informants, discussed in Volume 1, in order to match learners across SL and TL groupings.

There were also two native speakers of Swedish and two native speakers of English acting as TL controls and one speaker of Finnish (Mari) and one speaker of Spanish (Nora) acting as SL controls. Table 1 gives basic data on the informants and the controls.

Table 1.   Informants and native speaker controls in the feedback study

Informant pseudonym	SL	TL	Sex	Age	Marital status	SC schooling	TL competence
Mari	Finnish	Swedish	F	83:22	married	9 years	limited
Leo	Finnish	Swedish	M	82:18	single	9+2 years	limited
Nora	Spanish	Swedish	F	82:38	mar. 3 children	6 years	very limited
Fernando	Spanish	Swedish	M	82:34	mar. 1 child	7+2 years	limited
Alberto	Spanish	French	M	82:31	mar: 2 children	4 years	limited
Bernarda	Spanish	French	F	82:35	mar: 3 children	8 years	limited
Zahra	Arabic	French	F	82:34	mar: 4 children	none	limited
Abdulla	Arabic	French	M	82:20	single	elementary	limited
Mohammed	Arabic	Dutch	M	82:19	single	7 years	almost nothing
Fatima	Arabic	Dutch	F	F82:26	married	2 years	almost nothing
Ergun	Turkish	Dutch	M	82:18	single	5 years	very limited

Mahmut	Turkish	Dutch	M	82:20	married	5 years	almost nothing
Ilhami	Turkish	German	M	82:17	single	8 years	limited
Cevdet	Turkish	German	M	82:16	single	9 years	very limited
Marcello	Italian	German	M	82:23	single	10 years	very limited
Tino	Italian	German	M	83:20	single	8 years	almost nothing
Andrea	Italian	English	M	82:36	married,1 child	8 years	fairly good
Lavinia	Italian	English	F	893:?	married,1 child	8 years	limited
Madan	Punjabi	English	M	82:?	married	6 years	fairly good
Ravinder	Punjabi	English	M	82:?	married	7 years	almost nothing
TL Controls:							
Eva	Swedish	Swedish	F	85:45	divorced	8 years	native
Adam	Swedish	Swedish	M	85:20		9 +2 years	native
Martin	English	English	M	over 20	-	-	native
Sheila	English	English	F	over 20	-	-	native

SL Controls: Mari and Nora were used as Finnish and Spanish SL controls.

Over and above the characteristics given in the table, informants were also systematically compared with regard to source country home region (city, town, village, country), source country occupation and knowledge of a third language (L3).

1.2.2   Activities recorded

The 20 learners were recorded 6 times, each time in 2 activities. The six controls were recorded in two corresponding activities in their native languages. The study is, thus, based on a corpus of 120+12 recorded activity occurrences.

The data analyzed comes from activities of an interactive type, since it was thought that this type of activity would provide rich data on feedback. Although this was not intended initially, a majority of activities involved role play. There is, thus, a certain risk of artificiality in the data. However, this risk should not be exaggerated for at least two reasons: (i) the data seem very natural to all those who have come into contact with them, (ii) in a few cases, there are recordings available of activities in both role play form and in naturalistic form. Comparisons of these recordings have not revealed any important differences between the two types.

The activities that have been transcribed and analyzed fall into four groups: (i) scenario-related, (ii) conversational, (iii) interviews, (iv) accompanying observation. Each type is briefly described below.

(i)   **Scenario-related**: The group which contains the majority of the activity occurrences (88/132), has a kind of script or scenario which states a purpose and often several tasks and roles are described. This means, especially after the first time, that the learners can form expectations about how the activity is conducted (often it is a role play). So there will be familiarity effects related both to the interacting researchers and to the tasks to be carried out. Another effect could be a constraint on what is said. A certain task has to be carried out and this could be seen as more important than talking freely, which means that learners might try direct action or nonverbal substitutes when this is possible. Since a task is focused on, there will be no incentive to talk any more than is needed to carry out the task,

which means that activities of this type could become short. They could also contain a number of stereotyped words and phrases which are typical of the activity in question.

(ii) **Conversational**: Here there is no clear scenario, only a general conversation goal, in some cases also a general topic to be discussed. The topic can be developed freely and there is no pressure to meet any particular task requirement. which means that direct action or nonverbal substitutes cannot as easily be used as in the scenario type. There should be less expectations about the task but more expectations about the partner, if this person is the same as in the previous encounters. In other words, there should be a smaller influence from task familiarity but a greater influence depending on familiarity with person.

(iii) **Interview**: There are 21 activities of this type. In a sense, this type of activity could be viewed as a subtype of the scenario kind of activity. There is a clear purpose - an interview about a certain topic, the task is also clear, it is an interview, and the roles are clear - interviewer and interviewee, Thus, it is possible for participants to have expectations about the course of the interaction. There could therefore be both task familiarity and familiarity with person. Depending on the kind of interview, one could expect the learner to become less independent and more directly responsive to the interviewer than in a conversation. This could lead to nonverbal substitutes being possible in many cases. One of the interviews was characterized by extreme passivity on the part of the informant. Since it is very unlike the other interviews, we have pulled it out and called it "the lecture".

(iv) **Accompanying observation**: There are 7 activities of this type. Although the activities in this group are out of studio, they bear a great resemblance to activities recorded in the studio. That is to say the accompanying observations can be of either the scenario type or the interview type. This means that some of the possible effects of these two kinds of activities can also be observed here

1.2.3. Data

Our total corpus consisted of 58 602 words, distributed over 10 497 utterances. Of the words, 49 474 were contributed by 20 learners and 9 128 by 6 controls and of the utterances, 9772 were contributed by the learners and 724 by the controls. The learners produced 6 686 narrow feedback units occurring in 6 399 narrow feedback[1] containing utterances. The feedback containing utterances made up 65.5% of the total number of learner utterances and 9 666 words or 19.5% of all learner words were used for feedback purposes. Among the controls there were 363 feedback units occurring in 361 feedback containing utterances. The feedback containing utterances used by the controls made up 49.9% of all their utterances and the 624 words they used for feedback made up 6.8% of all their words.

The figures reported so far has given the reader some idea of the absolute size of the data upon which this study is based. Since we shall in the main part of the study be working, not with absolute numbers, but with relative numbers, in order to try to control the problem of differences in activity length, we will first present some more absolute

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[1] The term feedback will, if nothing else is indicated, be used in the sense of narrow interindividual feedback as defined above.

numbers to increase a realistic appreciation of the database that is being considered. In table 2 we present the absolute number of learner words over the 3 recordings (cycles) grouped according to the target language being learned and in table 3 we give similar information concerning the absolute number of learner utterances per cycle.

Table 2   Learner words per cycle: Absolute number
            (20 learners)

	C1	C2	C3	Total
Dutch	4801	4413	4839	14053
English	811	1154	1515	3480
French	3470	4268	5911	13649
German	1701	1853	3201	6755
Swedish	2004	2999	6534	11537
Total	12787	1468722000	49474	

Table 3   Learner utterances per cycle: Absolute number
            (20 learners)

	C1	C2	C3	Total
Dutch	1345	1214	1217	3776
English	268	216	280	764
French	643	634	588	1865
German	442	417	531	1390
Swedish	469	580	928	1977
Total	3167	3061	3544	9772

As we see the total number of words increases cycle by cycle. Some teams have used sampled data (Heidelberg, Paris and Tilburg). The sampling has been carried out by taking a sample of three sequences, together making up at least 100 turns (30-40 turns from the beginning, 30-40 turns from the middle and 30-40 turns from the end of the activity). Through this procedure it was hoped that selectional biases of feedback items for some part of an activity could be avoided.

Since the activities recorded by a particular target language team, over the three cycles, in a majority of cases have been the same or at least similar, the increase in words is compatible with the hypothesis that language acquisition is taking place. It is also compatible with such explanations as increased familiarity between researcher and informant and many other less transparent factors influencing the activities recorded.

For more or less the same reasons as one expects the number of words to increase cycle by cycle, one might also have expected the number of utterances to increase. However, increased proficiency does not have to result in a greater number of utterances. In particular the factors of task familiarity and increased efficiency in language use would tend to mitigate any increase in number of utterances.

1.2.4   Coding

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Coding has been used mainly to capture the use of feedback in a narrow sense as defined above. For this purpose, a coding schema with an interactive computer support has been designed, which has been used to code all activity occurrences in the main database (including control data).

The codings have been based on transcriptions primarily, but the original recordings have also been taken into consideration.

The schema contains coding for:

- identification (informant, activity type, cycle);
- line number (referring to the transcription);
- feedback unit ;
- type of feedback ;
- mood and function of preceding and succeeding relevant discourse;
- utterance status and utterance position of feedback unit ;
- structure of feedback unit ;
- function of feedback unit in relation to relevant context ;
- the speaker's hypothesized function (when deviant from the TL norm for the feedback unit);
- the speaker's state of emotion (when striking);
- the speaker's actual perception;
- the speaker's actual understanding;
- status of feedback unit with regard to turntaking;
- constituent which is the source of a repetition;

Before we turn to examine the most important categories of the coding schema, a note of scepticism is probably called for concerning the reliability of the coded data.

The study of naturalistic spoken language has still not reached a very high level of development in linguistics. This means that there is a lack of general agreement about how, for example, to transcribe the morphemes and words and the phonological and morphological processes which are employed in feedback processes. Since, in addition, feedback processes constitute a new field of enquiry, the same lack of established traditions also applies to the coding of different types of feedback.

Therefore, despite the fact that considerable efforts have been made in order to ensure high reliability in the transcriptions and in the use of the coding schema, it is not unlikely that we have not been totally successful in reliably capturing what we were after, ie primarily, the use of narrow feedback.

Feedback units and feedback words

A *feedback unit* is any continuous stretch of utterance - occurring on its own or as part of a larger utterance - the primary function of which is to give and/or elicit feedback in a narrow sense.
For example, FB units may consist of specialized feedback morphemes such as *yeah* or *mm*, formulaic expressions like *thank you very much*, modal phrases like *I think so*, as well as different combinations of these. In addition, a FB unit may be a repetition or a reformulation of a part of a preceding utterance.

A *feedback word* is any word contained in a FB unit (where words are identified essentially on the basis of spaces in the transcriptions).

The notions of FB unit and FB word will both be used in the presentation and discussion of results in section 2.3.

Type of feedback

Under the heading *type of feedback*, FB units are classified first with respect to the major functions of *FB giving* and *FB elicitation* (cf. chapter 1). Secondly, they are classified - in cases where this is applicable - as *repetitions* or *reformulations*.

It should be noted that these categories are not mutually exclusive. For example, a FB unit may at the same time be a giver, an elicitor and a repetition, as in B's utterance in the following example:

A: are you coming to town?
B: to town?
A: yes to town

Utterance status and utterance position

By *utterance status and utterance position* we mean the relation of a FB unit to the utterance in which it is contained. Four mutually exclusive cases are possible here. First, it may be that an utterance consists solely of a FB unit, in which case the FB unit is classified as *single.* Second, the FB unit may be contained in a larger utterance, in which case it is classified as *initial*, *medial* or *final* according to its position in the utterance in which it is contained.

Structural classification

The term *structural classification* refers to a classification of the internal structure of a FB unit. Each FB unit is classified as belonging to one of the following fourteen categories:

1.   Primary simple FB unit.
2.   Secondary simple FB unit.
3.   Reduplication of simple FB unit.
4.   Deictic or anaphoric linking.
5.   Idiomatic phrase.
6.   Modal phrase.
10.   Other single word or phrase.
11.   Simple FB unit + simple FB unit.
12.   Simple FB unit + reduplication of simple FB unit.
13.   Simple FB unit + deictic or anaphoric linking.
14.   Simple FB unit + idiomatic phrase.
15.   Simple FB unit + modal phrase.
20.   Simple FB unit + other single word or phrase.
21.   More complex combinations of words and phrases.

The first two categories cover FB units consisting of a single word - *simple FB units,* henceforth. Simple FB units are divided further into *primary* (category 1) and *secondary* (category 2).

Primary simple FB units are words or morphemes which are almost exclusively used for NFB purposes, such as *yeah*, *mm*, etc., traditionally classified as interjections.

Secondary simple FB units are adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions, pronouns, verb and nouns which may be used for feedback purposes but which have other important functions in the language as well. Examples of secondary simple FB units are *good*, *certainly*, etc., often they are epistemic or evaluative.

Category 3 includes *reduplications of simple FB units,* eg. *yeah yeah*, *good good*.

Category 4 covers the mechanisms of *deictic and anaphoric linking* (often by means of reformulations of preceding utterances), which are frequently used for feedback purposes in many languages, such as English: *it is*, *I do,* and Swedish: *de e de*, *de gör ja*.

Category 5 includes *idiomatic phrases* (of more than one word), eg. *thank you very much*, *by all means*.

Category 6 contains *modal phrases* (of more than one word), eg. *I think so*, *I don't know*.

Category 10 includes single words and phrases not covered by the six categories described so far, ie. single words which are not conventional feedback expressions and phrases which are neither deictic/anaphoric, idiomatic nor modal. The units included in this category are for the most part repetitions of preceding utterances or parts of utterances.

The remaining categories (11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 20 and 21) cover different combinations of the seven first categories. Two points should be noted in relation to these categories. First, the term **simple *FB* unit** refers (as before) to an expression belonging either to category 1 or to category 2. Second, the order and number of constituents may vary in the last seven categories. Thus, category 15 covers yes *I think so* (simple + modal), *I think so yes* (modal + simple), as well as yes *I think so yes* (simple + modal + simple).

It may be noted that the fourteen structural categories, as described above, are not altogether mutually exclusive. For example, a modal phrase may also constitute a deictic or anaphoric linking. Nevertheless, each FB unit has received a unique structural classification, and cases of conflicting criteria have been resolved by appeal to the following priority hierarchy (where > stands for "has higher priority than"): modal phrase > idiomatic phrase > deictic/anaphoric linking > reduplication.

We have, in this way, tried to capture a "kernel" area of expressions for FB functions. There is no hard and fast boundary between this area and more complex and elaborated ways of giving and eliciting feedback in the form of, for example, statements and questions. However, what we are here calling the "kernel area" often continues to figure as a subpart (mostly initial) of those more complex utterances. In any case, part of the point of the study of the acquisition of the FB system is exactly to see how the kernel area

gradually develops and makes contact with "non kernel" ways of giving and eliciting feedback.

1.3 Results and Discussion

1.3.1 The relative share of feedback containing utterances and feedback words

Table 4. shows how much of the learners' production at the different points of recording can be counted as feedback, in terms of percentages of feedback containing utterances and percentages of feedback words.

The two main measures we have used to get an idea of the relative share of narrow feedback expressions in the learners' linguistic output are FBU (relative share of feedback containing utterances in relation to total number of utterances in an activity occurrence) and FBW (relative share of feedback words in relation to total number of words in an activity occurrence). Using these two measures, table 4 gives us an idea of the relative amount of feedback expressions for the different learners over 3 cycles. The table contains the cyclic means for the individuals, and the percent unit difference between the means in cycle 3 and cycle 1.

Table 4. FBU and FBW, mean relative shares per learner and cycle
(20 learners)

			FBU				FBW			
			C1	C2	C3	C1-3	C1	C2	C3	C1-3
Sw	Fi	Mari	74	62	56	-18	23	20	12	-11
		Leo	81	79	79	- 2	42	40	26	-16
	Sp	Nora	74	77	63	-11	21	17	15	- 6
		Fernando	65	66	59	- 6	29	24	15	-14
Fr	Sp	Bernarda	69	65	57	-12	31	20	6	-25
		Alberto	63	67	56	- 7	11	11	7	- 4
	Ar	Zahra	79	79	63	-16	33	26	15	-18
		Abdelmalek	69	56	53	-16	34	13	17	-17
Du	Ar	Fatima	67	64	55	-12	27	34	20	- 7
		Mohamed	63	78	73	10	19	22	28	9
	Tu	Ergün	54	72	66	12	23	38	27	4
		Mahmut	69	78	80	11	27	30	27	0
Ge	Tu	Cevdet	64	61	53	-11	35	23	11	-24
		Ilhami	58	55	51	- 7	25	15	11	-14
	It	Marcello	57	64	55	- 5	26	23	17	- 9
		Tino	51	54	53	2	22	19	11	-11
Eng	It	Lavinia	80	48	72	- 8	27	22	17	-10
		Andrea	51	72	74	23	27	22	24	- 3
	Pu	Ravinder	61	66	84	23	40	25	37	- 3
		Madan	76	70	75	- 1	43	28	42	- 1
Total mean pr cycle			66	67	64	- 2	28	23	21	- 7
Total mean controls			62				16			

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The table shows that totally there is a small FBU decrease and a somewhat greater FBW decrease. The trend is clearer for FBW than for FBU. This judgement is motivated not just by the numerical difference, visible in the table, but also by a consideration of the base for the calculation of the relative shares of FBU (9 772 utterances) and FBW (49 474 words). Cf tables 2 and 3. Although both measures rest on secure grounds, we see that the absolute numbers required for a decrease in the relative share of FBW (as measured in %) are much greater than those required for a decrease in the relative share of FBU.

A comparison with the total means of the controls for FBU and FBW supports the analysis we have made of the trends for learners concerning FBU and FBW. The controls have both a lower mean FBU score and a lower mean FBW score than the majority of the learners exhibit, even in cycle 3. This means that high initial and successively decreasing scores of FBU and FBW can perhaps be taken as something which is typical of adult language acquisition. We will return to why this might be so below.

Let us now look a little more carefully at the FBU and FBW scores. We observe that six learners (Mohamed, Ergün, Mahmut, Tino, Andrea and Ravinder) increase their FBU from cycle 1 to cycle 3, while only 2 learners (Mohamed and Ergün) increase their FBW rate. The major decrease in FBW for most learners seems to come between cycle 1 and cycle 2 while for FBU there is a slight increase in cycle 2.

The individual variation in FBU ranges from 84% (Ravinder cycle 3) to 51% (Andrea cycle 1) and in FBW from 43% (Madan cycle 1) to 6% Bernarda (cycle 3).

Table 4 does not allow for any statistically sound inferences to be drawn. It can, however, be used to look for trends which can then lend support to certain hypotheses. The data can also be used to check for compatibility with and, thus, to gain initial support for hypotheses which can be proposed on partly independent grounds. Some possible such hypotheses are the following:

(i)   FB words often have a simple phonological structure. They can therefore be learned early and used fairly easily.

(ii)   There is a constant need and use of feedback in most types of spoken interaction. FB words are therefore usually available in the spoken input which the learners are exposed to and they have a high need to make use of this input.

(iii)   Initially, basic feedback functions and basic linguistic feedback mechanisms can be used to substitute for other more specific linguistic functions.

(iv)   Initially, feedback functions are also used by the learner as a means for language acquisition.

(v)   The reasons given in (iii) and (iv) but not in (i) and (ii) can be expected to diminish in importance as the learners proficiency increases.

The data in table 4 seem compatible with these assumptions. The total FBU rate remains fairly constant with a slight decrease. Both learners and controls have a high FBU rate, with an average difference of only 4%.

This can be taken as support of the hypothesis that there is a constant and fairly high need of feedback for everyone and that this need is slightly higher for language learners. However, the fact that there is fairly great variability between learners with regard to FBU (eg. six learners increase their rate from cycle 1 to cycle 3) seems to indicate that FBU is sensitive also to other factors than language acquisition. Such factors could, for example, include motivation and the kind of activity in which the learner is engaged.

1.3.2 The development of the linguistic categories for eliciting and giving feedback

Let us now take a look at the developmental trends associated with the different linguistic categories used to elicit and give feedback.

FB for elicitation (FBE)

Table 5 presents the most used types of FBE, in terms of number of learners and first cyclic occurrences (we only indicate first cyclic occurrence for a specific learner.)

Table 5   Most used elicitors (learners and first cyclic occurrences)

	Learners	From C1	From C2	From C3	Judged learner availability
1. Repetitions	20	16	3	1	2
2. Conv FB elicitor	15	8	5	2	5
3. Primary FBG w. pros. switch	13	11	2		3
4. Q-words	14	10	2	2	4
5. Deictic - Modal	9	5	3	1	8
6. Deictic	9	5	1	3	9
7. Idioms	9	6	1	2	7
8. Secondary simple - deictic	7	6	1		6
9. Modals	4	3	1		10
10 Disjunctions	4	2		2	11
11. SL	3	3			1

In the fifth column, we have indicated what ought to be the rank order, if we were to consider the data from the point of view of what should be most easily available for learners. In the discussion below, we will take this rank order as our point of departure.

From the point of view of availability, we have ranked SL items highest. As we can see, they are used by only 3 informants and their use is initiated in cycle 1. An interesting question is why so few informants have used SL items, given that we are studying adults with well entrenched automatic habits concerning FB in interaction.

The second most available types of FBE ought to be repetition and primary FBG with prosodic switch (from falling to rising prosody).They can be seen as two versions of what seems to be a very basic evocative communicative action - rising intonation placed on some expression which, in the case of repetition, is linked to previous discourse (speaker's or listener's) indicating that there is a need for further information. Of the two types, repetition, with rising prosody, seems the more elementary since, on the one hand, it is used by all learners and on the other hand, 16 of the learners use it from cycle 1 and

14

onward. Primary FBG with prosodic switch is used by 13 learners, 11 of whom use it from cycle 1.

The fourth most common category, which we have also judged to be the fourth category from the point of view of availability, is "Q-words". This category is even more common if we include reduplicated Q-words and Q-words included in phrases. If we include these two subtypes, there are, in fact, 18 learners who use Q-words and 14 who do so from C1. But since this use of Q-words is often embedded in longer phrases, it could just as well be the large phrase as the Q-word alone that has been acquired.
The fifth category from the point of view of availability, we think is conventional FB elicitors which is used by 15 learners, who come from all source and target language groups eight of these learners use it from C1. But there are as many as 7 learners who do not acquire this category before C2 or C3 which indicates that this category is perhaps not so easily acquirable or that it is not common on the TL´s of these learners.

In sixth position, from the point of view of availability, we have what we have called "secondary simple + deictic" ie mostly Q-words + verb (non modal) + deictic pronoun, eg Swedish *va sa du* (what did you say) or German *was ist das* (what is that). There are only 7 learners who use this type of expression but 6 of them do so already from C1 which perhaps means that some forms of this type of expression are easy to acquire.

In seventh position, we have put "idioms", a category which seems easy to acquire but which is mainly used by Swedish and English learners and the availability of which therefore seems highly TL dependent.

We have ranked "deictic-modal" and "deictic" as categories eight and nine, eg *do you understand?, you know?* and deictic elements, eg *me?, ik?, moi?*. 9 learners use these categories, 5 of whom use them from cycle 1. Category ten is "modals" which is used by 4 learners, 3 of whom use it from cycle.1.

The last category included is that of disjunction which, as an FBE, seems to be used exclusively in Swedish and German.

FB giving (FBG)

We now turn to feedback giving. In table 6 we can see the most used categories of FBG, in terms of number of learners and first cyclic occurrences.

Table 6   Most used givers (learners and first cyclic occurrences)

		Learners	From C1	From C2	From C3	Judged learner availability
1.	Repetition	20	20			2
2.	Primary simple FB word	20	20			3
3.	Combination of simple FB	20	19	1		4
4.	Reduplication of simple FB	20	16	2	2	5
5.	Deictic-Modal	18	11	3	4	6

6.	Primary simple + 2 of deict-anaph linking, modal, idiom	18	11	3	4	7
7.	Primary simple + deictic	12	7	3	2	9
8.	Idiom	11	7	3	1	8
9	Secondary simple + 2 of deict. anaph, mod. idiom	7	4		3	11
10.	SL	7	6	1		1
11.	Reduplication + diect-anaph., modal, idiom	4	2	1	1	10

As we can see, the learners have a few types of feedback givers available already from cycle 1. These types are SL items, repetition and primary simple feedback words. We find that out of these three types, SL items are used very little. Their influence can more often be seen in the use of TL items which are similar to SL items. Repetition is used by all learners in all cycles, but there is a clear decrease from C1 to C3. The learners also use more repetition than the controls, cf section 2.3.3. This indicates that repetition is both available and very useful to beginning learners. It is used for showing participation and contributing to the interaction as well as for learning new items. There are however also, as we have seen, language specific influences on the use of repetition for feedback and we will come back to them below. The third early available category, primary simple feedback words, is, by far, the most frequent category of all, containing 57-65% of all feedback items. There is an increase of primary simple feedback from C1 to C3, as the learner develops a wider repertoire of primary items for different feedback functions.

We have judged the fourth most available category to be "combination of simple feedback". This category is also a very frequent category already in cycle 1 (cf Allwood ed. 1988). Combinations seem to be frequently used in all the languages, like the categories above. They are useful to learners as markers of hesitation and self correction (eg *yes hmm* and *no yes*) and they are also part of the repertoire of simples being developed by the learners.

When we turn to the slightly less frequent categories, we find reduplication of simple feedback, idioms and combinations of simple feedback with deictic/anaphoric linking, modal phrase or idiom. For all of these categories, we see a difference from those discussed above, in that they are not as frequently used in all the target languages. The categories are generally available in all the target languages, but there is a tendency for certain languages to favour use of certain categories. This will be further discussed in relation to the target languages below.

2.3.3 Repetitions as feedback

Repetition, as a means for feedback giving and elicitation, is important for second language learners. We find repetitions of many different linguistic structures and they can have several functions (cf Allwood and Ahlsén 1986, Vion and Mittner 1986). Repetition is a simple means of feedback giving for the learner who does not have many other means of expression. In this function, it is used by learners early in their acquisition. By adding a questioning intonation to the repetition, the learner also has a way of eliciting, eg to show non-understanding or ask for clarification. All of these functions of repetition are probably acceptable in most languages, but they will be more or less common. Some learners start out with more attempts to use repetition than other learners, due to source language influence. In a similar way, some learners will find more support for their use

of repetition in the target language than others. The use of repetition in the different languages also has to be put in relation to the availability of other types of feedback in both source and target languages, as well as to factors like learner characteristics and activity type.

The use of repetition as feedback was studied in two ways. The total amount and share of repetition among the feedback units for the 20 learners in the 3 cycles was calculated and used as a basis for a general overview. In this overview are included both the set of repetitions which are not simple feedback words, idioms, linkings or modal phrases and repetitions belonging to each of the structural categories in the coding schema.

Let us first have a look at the number and the relative share of repetitions in the feedback of the learners and the controls, cf table 7.

Table 7.   Repetition - relative shares in relation to total number of feedback units. Total number for each individual is given in brackets.

			C1	C2	C3	C1-C3	C1-C3 (Pure repetitions cat. 10 + 20)
Sw	Fi	Mari	12(77)	5(94)	18(155)	6	-6
		Leo	10(170)	5(130)	6(176)	-4	-4
	Sp	Nora	6(65)	4(145)	5(83)	-1	-4
		Fernando	7(71)	4(97)	12(200)	5	7
Fr	Sp	Bernada	16(86)	14(65)	17(51)	1	-5
		Alberto	36(55)	17(82)	14(56)	-22	-36
	Ar	Zahra	16(195)	13(261)	10(220)	-6	-3
		Abdelmalek	63(139)	28(109)	11(67)	-42	-46
Du	Ar	Fatima	58(195)	5(239)	5(282)		-1
		Mohammed	10(246)	4(299)	6(155)	-4	-2
	Tu	Ergun	13(161)	17(151)	15(193)	2	2
		Mahmut	30(252)	14(322)	13(296)	-17	15
Ge	Tu	Cevdet	50(46)	17(58)	6(78)	-44	-37
		Ilhami	20 (41)	2(47)	6(64)	-14	-14
	It	Marcello	69(49)	13(84)	6(83)	-63	-49
		Tino	50(67)	28(67)	11(112)	-39	-27
Eng	It	Lavinia	69(26)	14(14)	2(41)	-67	-32
		Andrea	43(21)	10(59)	10(79)	-33	-6
	Pu	Ravinander	3(69)	6(89)	5(40)	2	3
		Madan	33(86)	4(70)	14(123)	-19	-5
Mean relative share			31	11	10		

TL Controls:			SL Controls		
Sw	Adam	7(81)	SP	Nora	7(91
	Eva	12(60)	Fi	Mari	16(61)
Eng	Martin	9(34)			
	Sheila	0(34)			

Table 7 shows a generally high use of repetition. The mean relative share of FBU is 10% or more in all cycles. The trend is clearest exemplified by Alberto, Bernarda, Abdelmalek, Zahra, Mahmut, Ergun, Tino, Andrea and Madan. Of these learners, all except Bernarda and Ergun, show a decrease in their use of repetition from cycle 1 to cycle 3, but still keep at a level over 10%. A decrease is also found for Ilhami, Cevdet, Marcello and Lavinia, who show an initial high use of repetition, but end up with less than 10% of their feedback units being repetitions. An increase use of repetition, reaching 10% in

cycle 3 is shown only by Fernando and Mari. A generally low use of repetition (around 5% of the FBU) is found only in the data from Nora, Fatima and Ravinder. (The controls also have quite low shares of repetition.)

A non-decreasing use (no change or very slight rise) is found for Fernando, Fatima, Bernarda, Ergun and Ravinder.

Table 7, thus, shows a clear decrease in the number of repetitions used for feedback from cycle 1 to cycle 3 for 14 of the 20 learners and for 17 of the 20 learners if reformulations are left out and only pure repetitions alone or in combination with simple feedback is included (the second of the two C1-C3 columns in table 7). This tendency is so clear that it can probably not be accounted for in terms of source language influence. We can therefore on fairly safe grounds assume that second language learners use repetition as an especially prominent type of feedback in early stages. This is also supported by the low shares of repetition for the controls.

Repetitions of the structural categories (01,02,03,04,05, 06,11,12,13,14,15) turn out to constitute only a marginal part of the data.

Another question is whether repetition is most used for feedback giving or for eliciting purposes. This could vary between learners and it could also differ in importance between languages. In table 8, we compare the learners over 3 cycles with regard to "pure feedback giving" and cases where repetition has been used with both a giving and an eliciting function. We have used this classification, since the eliciting function can also be seen as a way of giving feedback.

Table 8.   Repetition used for pure FBG and for FGB/FBE as relative shares of the total number of feedback units

| | | | C1 | | C2 | | C3 | | C1-C3 | |
			FBG	FBG/FBE	FBG	FBG/FBE	FBG	FBG/FBE	FBG	FBG/FBE
Sw	Fi	Mari	3	8	6	1	16	2	13	-6
		Leo	3	7	2	2	6	1	3	-6
	Sp	Nora	6	0	2	2	5	0	-1	0
		Fernando	7	0	4	0	10	3	3	3
Fr	Sp	Bernarda	13	3	12	1	18	0	5	-3
		Alberto	36	0	13	4	14	0	-22	0
	Ar	Zahra	13	4	11	2	6	4	-7	0
		Abdelmalek	58	6	21	7	10	0	-48	-6
Du	Ar	Fatima	4	1	4	4	3	7	-1	6
		Mohammed	3	7	2	2	3	3	0	-4
	Tu	Ergun	5	8	9	9	6	9	1	1
		Mahmut	11	19	9	6	8	5	--3	-14
Ge	Tu	Cevdet	46	4	17	0	6	0	-40	-4
		Ilhami	17	2	2	0	5	2	-12	0
	It	Marcello	43	27	8	11	6	0	-37	-27
		Tino	39	12	27	1	11	0	-28	-12
Eng	It	Lavinia	12	0	7	7	2	0	-10	0
		Andrea	29	14	7	3	9	2	-20	-12
	Pu	Ravinander	1	1	4	1	5	0	4	-1
		Madan	26	6	3	1	13	1	-13	-5
Mean relative share			19	6	9	3	8	2	10	-4

Table 8 shows that repetition used as feedback diminishes both in a "pure" giving function and in an eliciting function. It further shows that repetition to a greater extent is used for "pure giving" than for elicitation.

In general, we might say that the decrease in use of repetition as a means both for giving and eliciting is connected with an increase in the use of simple primaries for the same purpose. The majority of repetitions are connected to understanding problems. When repetitions are no longer needed for solving this kind of problems, they seem to be substituted, in most cases, for simple primaries, which perhaps are more easily usable when understanding problems diminish.

If we look at table 8, more in detail, it shows that for 9 of the learners, including the Italian learners of German, the Arabic learners of French and also Cevdet, Andrea, Madan, Bernarda and Mahmut, both repetition used for pure giving and repetition also used for eliciting show a decrease from cycle 1 to cycle 3. For these learners the initial use of repetition for pure giving could be caused by SL-influence or by a "learner repetition strategy". The repetitions used for giving/elicitation are likely to be more "learner strategy" specific, even though SL-influence might play a role also here.

If we look at the development for pure feedback giving, we find that 13 of the learners use less of this in cycle 3 than in cycle 1. This includes the SL-TL-pairs Italian-German, Italian-English, Turkish- German, Arabic-French and Spanish-French and the individual learners Madan, Mahmut and Fatima.

Repetitions used for giving/elicitation also show a decrease for 13 of the learners, including the SL-TL-pairs Italian-German, Arabic-French, Punjabi-English and Finnish-Swedish, as well as Cevdet, Andrea, Bernarda, Mahmut and Mohamed. Learners who show non-decreasing numbers of repetition from cycle 1 to cycle 3 are much fewer. For both functions, rising or even numbers are found only for the two Spanish-Swedish learners and for Ergun, a total of 3 learners.

A "no decrease" development for repetition for pure feedback giving is found for 7 learners, the two Finnish-Swedish learners, the two Spanish-Swedish learners, Ergun, Mohamed and Ravinder.

1.3.4 Feedback and activity type

Another issue which was to some extent investigated in the project concerns the relation between activity types and the development of primary simple FB words. In table 9, the relative shares of the structural categories have been calculated for the five activity types scenario, interview, conversation, accompanying observation and lecture . The shares for each activity type are not means of the shares in single activities but sums of the occurrences in all activities belonging to a certain activity type, in a particular cycle, calculated as a percentage of all FB items occurring in that activity and cycle.

As regards, the scenario, interview and conversation types, they all show an increase in the share of simple primaries. In the scenario type, the increase is from 60% to 71% and occurs mainly between cycle 1 and cycle 2. It seems to correspond directly to a sharp decrease of repetitions, mainly category 10 but also category 20. The share of the other structural categories remains rather stable in the scenario type.

In the interview type, the increase of simple primaries is from 57% to 67% but occurs, in contrast to the scenario type, mainly between cycle 2 and cycle 3. The increase of simple primaries seems to be connected with a quantitative re-organization, more than in other activity types, both of the repetition categories 10 and 20, and of most of the other categories (mainly categories 02, 03, 10, 20, 21, 4, 13). The share of simple primaries is lower than in the scenario type and the conversation type, The reason for this might be that in the interview type, specific questions are put to the learners which require answers containing more elaborated feedback than in the other activities. Using simple primaries is often not enough.

In the conversation type, there is a sharp increase between cycle 1 and cycle 2 and then a slight decrease between cycle 2 and cycle 3: 58% - 77% - 73%. There is, thus, a wider variation in the share of simple primaries between cycles, in the conversation type than in the scenario and the interview types. In cycle 1 and cycle 2, there are only 3 activities of the conversation type, and this can be one reason for the irregularity (cf the discussion on the relation between activity types and MLU, FBU and FBW in part I). In the conversation type, again, as in the scenario type, the increase of primary simples seems to be connected to the decrease of repetitions. Initially, when the learners are more dependent on feedback giving, more vague, multifeatured feedback, often in the form of repetition, is needed. Later, the increase of simple primaries could imply that the learners have developed new more specific conversational skills.

The accompanying observation type shows a sharp decrease of simple primary FB words: 75% - 62% - 45%. Unfortunately, there is only one occurrence in cycle 2 and only 2 occurrences in cycle 3, which makes it hard to weigh activity influence against other factors.

Table 9   Development of simple primary FB words, in relation to other structural categories in the five activity types

	Simple FB			Redupl,		Repetition			D/A		Idiom		Modal	
	1	2	11	3	12	10	20	21	4	13	5	14	6	15
Scenario														
C1	60.0	4.0	4.1	3.3	0.4	13.4	7.4	0.7	1.1	1.0	1.2	0.8	0.6	2.1
C2	68.3	2.6	3.9	4.2	0.8	6.3	4.8	0.7	0.8	0.8	1.6	0.8	1.6	2.9
C3	70.7	3.9	5.0	2.5	0.3	5.6	4.5	0.7	0.5	1.0	1.2	0.7	0.7	2.5
C1-C3	+10.7	-0.1	+0.9	-0.8	-0.1	-7.8	-2.9	+0	-0.6	+0	+0	-0.1	+0.1	+0.4
Contr.	57.4	5.2	8.1	3.7	2.2	1.5	2.9	0	0.7	5.2	5.2	4.4	1.5	2.2
Interview														
C1	56.2	2.8	6.8	3.5	0.5	12.9	8.5	3.8	1.2	0.9	0.7	0	0.9	0.9
C2	58.8	5.6	7.0	6.1	0.7	8.0	5.8	1.0	1.5	2.2	1.5	0.2	0.7	1.0
C3	66.6	2.8	6.2	3.1	0.8	7.3	3.7	0.6	2.5	2.5	2.3	0.6	0.3	0.8
C1-C3	+10.1	+0	-0.6	-0.4	+0.3	-5.6	-4.8	-3.2	+1.3	+1.6	+1.6	+0.6	-0.6	-0.1

Convers.

C1	57.5	0	6.3	0.	6 0	13.1	14.4	0	2.5	0.6	0	0	3.1	1.9
C2	76.7	1.4	4.8	1.4	0.7	6.2	4.8	0	0	1.4	0	0	1.4	1.4
C3	72.5	0.5	4.4	1.9	0.7	5.6	5.8	0	1.6	3.2	0	0	2.8	1.2
C1-C3	+15.0	+0.5	-1.9	+1.3	+0.7	-7.5	-8.6	+0	-0.9	+2.6	+0	+0	-0.3	-0.7
Contr	64.4	4.4	4.0	3.6	1.3	6.7	2.7	0.4	2.7	4.0	1.3	0.4	0.9	3.1

Acc.obs.

C1	75.3	0	8.3	4.1	0	6.2	0	0	0	0	2.1	1.0	2.1	1.0
C2	62.3	0	5.8	2.9	5.8	8.7	0	0	0	5.8	0	4.4	0	4.4
C3	44.6	1.8	5.4	5.4	0	5.4	3.6	0	0	12.5	8.9	3.6	3.6	5.4
C1-C3	-30.7	+1.8	-2.9	+1.3	+0	-0.8	+3.6	+0	+0	+12.5	+6.8	+2.6	+1.5	+4.4

Lecture

C2	78.7	1.1	4.5	1.1	1.1	3.4	4.5	3.4	0	1.1	0	0	0	1.1

The number of occurrences of each activity type:

Scenario   C1: 28   Conversation C1: 3   Lecture C2: 1
                C2: 28   C2: 3
                C3: 24   C3: 6
            Controls: 8   Controls: 4

Interview   C1: 5   Acc. obs   C1: 4
                C2: 7   C2: 1
                C3: 8   C3: 2

The lecture type (cf section 2.2.2) also consisting of only one instance, contains 79% simple primary FB words.

The control data available represent only the scenario type (8 instances) and the conversation type (4 instances). In both of these activity types, the learners show an unexpected development, compared to the control data. They increase the difference to the control data, instead of decreasing it as we would have expected. There is, though, a development towards the control data, as regards the relation between the scenario type and the conversation type. The control data shows more simple primaries in the conversation type than in the scenario type. Initially, the learners use more simple primaries in the scenario type, but in cycle 3, there are more simple primaries in the conversation type. Thus, in cycle 3, also the learners show more simple primaries in the conversation type, even if the difference is not as clear in the learners as in the controls.

2.3.5 Discovering simple feedback systems

Since linguistic feedback is a fairly novel field of enquiry, the behaviour of the learners does not only reveal their discovery, acquisition and creation of linguistic feedback systems but, perhaps also, lets us as analysts discover some of the feedback relevant properties of the various source and target languages involved. Consider table 10 below.

Table 10   Structural FB categories
            (Total mean % FB units, 20 learners)

			Simple FB			Redupl		Repetition			Deictic/ Anaph.		Idiom		Modal	
			1	2	11	3	12	10	20	21	4	13	5	14	6	15
Sw	Fi	Mari	69	4	10	2		6	2	1		1			2	2
		Leo	67	1	4			8	3	4	2	3	4			4
	Sp	Nora	54	2	7	6	1	7	4	1		8	1	4	3	5
		Fernando	77	2	5	2	1	2	4	2	1	2		1	1	1
Fr	Sp	Bernarda	49	12	8	10	4	9	3	3	1		1			1
		Alberto	48	4	5	8	3	6	13	3	2	5		2		
	Ar	Zahra	67	2	7	1		10	6		2	2	1		2	1
		Abdelmalek	52	2	8	9	1	14	10	3						1
Du	Ar	Fatima	79		9	2		5	3		1			1	1	1
		Mohamed	79	4	2	3		6	2		1				1	3
	Tu	Ergün	66	5	3	2		12	3				1		2	5
		Mahmut	70	2	2	1		12	9		1					2
Ge	Tu	Cevdet	73	2	3	2		11	6				2			1
		Ilhami	81		1	1		9	4		1		3			
	It	Marcello	52	2	5	11	1	12	9			1	3	1		3
		Tino	45	4	5	10	3	16	9	2	1	1	3	1	1	1
Eng	It	Lavinia	51		13	5		1	2	3		6	15	2	1	1
		Andrea	42	5	7	1		7	7	4	1	1	10	1	3	10
	Pu	Ravinder	55	2	4	6		7	4	2		2	7	5	5	2
		Madan	43	9	6	1		10	8	2		2	8	4	4	2
Total mean			61	3	6	4	1	8	6	1	1	2	3	1	1	2

Table 10 shows that learners, when grouped according to source and target language, in fact, do show some consistent similarities and differences. One way of bringing this out is to rank order learners with regard to their shares of the different structural FB categories (in relation to their total number of FB units).

Starting with primary simple FB words the following list can be made:

1.   Arabic - Dutch, Turkish - German, Turkish - Dutch, Finnish - Swedish (Fatima 79, Mohamed 79, Cevdet 73, Ilhami 81, Ergün 66, Mahmut 70, Mari 69, Leo 67)

2.   Spanish - Swedish, Arabic - French (Nora 54, Fernando 77; Zahra 67, Abdelmalek 52)

3.   Italian - German, Italian - English, Punjabi - English, Spanish - French (Marcello 52, Tino 45; Lavinia 51, Andrea 42; Ravinder 55, Madan 43; Bernarda 49, Alberto 48).

The learners seem to fall into two groups, with the Spanish learners of Swedish and the Arabic learners of French occupying an intermediate position.

In the group with a high share of primary FB words, we find all Turkish, all Finnish and all learners of Dutch. Somewhat speculatively, this could be seen as an indication that the

linguistic norms for feedback favor a higher rate of simple primary FB words in Arabic, Turkish, Finnish, German, Dutch and Swedish.

Correspondingly, and likewise speculatively, we think that Italian, Spanish, Punjabi, English and French tend toward a lower rate of simple primary FB morphemes. The two intermediate cases of Arabic - French and Spanish - Swedish can thus be seen as a kind of compromise between conflicting pressures. The case of German is here interesting since it seems to show that, at least, in the cases of Tino and Marcello the SL pattern is stronger than the TL pattern. Whereas in the cases of Arabic - French and Spanish - Swedish, if our speculation is correct, Zahra and Nora stay with the SL pattern while Abdelmalek and Fernando, to a greater extent adjust to the TL pattern.

Turning to category 2, secondary simples, the Spanish learners of French, Bernarda and Alberto, seem to have a larger share of this category than other learners. Since this category can be regarded as a kind of expansion of category 1 into lexically more complex material, possibly the larger share of Alberto and Bernarda can again be explained by the typological closeness of Spanish and French. Category 11 can then be regarded as a further expansion of categories 1 and 2. It is used mostly by the Finnish, Spanish, Arabic and Italian speaking informants or, if we look at it from the point of the target language, it is used mostly by the learners of Swedish, French and English.

Category 3 has been linked with category 12 since both involve reduplication. The relationship between the two categories can be regarded like the relationship between categories 1, 2 and 11, so that 12 is a kind of expansion of 3. Reduplication which should be a universal mechanism seems however to be less used by the Turkish and Finnish learners, two groups who both have an agglutinative source language. It seems to be most used by the Spanish speaking learners of French and the Italian learners of German, while the Spanish speaking learners of Swedish and the Italian learners of English also use reduplication but to a lesser extent. Possibly, again there might be a greater difference between Spanish - Swedish and Italian - English patterns of reduplication on the one hand, than between Spanish - French and Italian - German patterns, on the other.

Categories 4 and 13 involve deictic/anaphoric linking. These categories are tackled particularly by the learners of Swedish but also by the learners of French and English. They occur less among the learners of German and Dutch. From a source language point of view, the categories occur mostly among the Finnish, Spanish, Italian and Punjabi speaking learners. At least, in the case of Swedish the occurrence of this category is motivated since, in Swedish, deictic/anaphoric linking to a large extent replaces repetition as a basic FB mechanism.

Categories 5 and 14 concern idioms used as feedback. These categories play a major role for the learners of English and a smaller role for the learners of German and Swedish. This could partly be the result of the data sampling procedures used in some teams, eg. in the Paris data some initial and final sequences which include greetings have been left out and in the English data many activities are fairly short. But, in the main, we think the results actually reflect target language norms. As any learner of British English will know, idioms of politeness are extremely common, and our data probably reflects the British TL norms.

For feedback which involves modality (categories 6 and 15), we see that also these categories are most common among the learners of English. The categories are also fairly common among the learners of Swedish and Dutch.

Finally, for feedback concerning repetition (categories 10, 20, 21) we see that among the target languages, this type of feedback is used most by the learners acquiring French and Dutch. With regard to SL background, repetition is most prevalent among learners who have Italian, Turkish, Punjabi and Arabic as source languages.

Going through table 10 has given us some idea of what structural categories of feedback the learners of the different target languages have mostly used. It is likely that their employment of a specific category has been influenced, firstly, perhaps by the dominance of the category in the target language but also, secondly, by how prevalent the category has been in the learners' own source language. The target language, so to speak, provides a range of selectables out of which the learner makes a selection. In some cases, the selection is made with additions and transformations. In most cases, it is made over time and under the influence of many factors, including prominently the learners own source language.

Some more control data on the categories

Before we go on to examining the various specific categories in greater detail, we will attempt to enhance our picture of the possible differences between the different source and target languages described above, by taking a look at how the available control data corresponds to the learner data in table 11.

Table 11 Controls: Mean total share of structural FB categories
(Total mean % FB units, 6 controls X 2 activities)

	Simple FB			Redup.		Repetition			Deictic/ Anaphoric		Idiom		Modal		Abs No.of FB units
Structural categories	1	2	11	3	12	10	20	21	4	13	5	14	6	15	
Martin	65	9	3		3	3	6	3		3	6			34	
Sheila	52	8	18	5	2		2	5		8				34	
Adam	64		5	5		3	3		11		2	2	4	81	
Eva	83	1				2			1	9	4				60
Mari	76		8			1	8		3		2			3	61
Nora	34	11	7	12	5	8			1	1	8	3	4	6	91
Mean Total	62	5	7	3	2	3	3		2	4	4	3	1	2	361

In table 11 we give the mean total shares concerning the 14 structural categories of feedback for the 6 controls. Each mean share is calculated over two activity occurrences.

The data indicate that the highest use of primary simple FB words is made by the Finnish and Swedish informants followed by the two English informants. The lowest use of this category is made by Nora, the Spanish speaking informant. As for the other types of

feedback involving simple FB units as well as reduplications, we see that these are mainly used by Martin and Sheila, the two English informants, and by Nora. The categories involving repetition are used mostly by Martin, Mari and Nora. The categories involving deictic/anaphoric linking are used mostly by Adam and Eva, the Swedish informants, and the categories involving idioms are used mostly by Martin, Sheila and Nora. Nora is also the highest user of modal phrases in her SL recording.

Implications concerning SL and TL norms

In table 12, we summarize our observations on target and source language characteristics based both on learners´ data and the available control data (cf. Allwood ed. 1988). We remind the reader that control data is only available for Swedish, English, Spanish and Finnish.

Table 12 Hypothesized feedback characteristics of target and source languages on the basis of learner data and control data. The table is derived from tables 10 and 11 above and tables 4.14 and 4.15 in (Allwood ed. 1988).

Target languages

	Swedish		French	Dutch	German	English	
	Learners	Controls	Learners	Learners	Learners	Learners	Controls
Primary simple FB	67	74	54	74	63	48	59
Secondary simple FB	9	3	12	6	7	12	19
Reduplication of simple FB	3	3	9	2	7	3	5
Simple FB + deictic/ anaphoric linking	4	11	3	1	1	3	2
Idioms	3	3	1	1	3	13	9
Modality	5	3	1	4	2	7	0
Repetition	11	4	20	13	20	14	6
FB giving	91	89	90	73	90	84	99
FB elicitation	9	11	10	27	10	16	1

Souce language

	Finnish		Spanish		Arabic	Turkish	Italian	Punjabi
	Learners	Control	Learners	Control	Learners	Learners	Learners	Learners
Primary simple FB	68	76	57	34	70	73	48	49
Secondary simple FB	10	8	11	18	9	5	11	5
Reduplication of simple FB	1		9	17	4	2	8	4
Simple FB + deictic/ anaphoric linking	3	3	5	2	2	1	3	2
Idioms	2	2	2	11	1	2	9	12
Modality	4	3	3	10	3	3	5	7
Repetition	12	9	14	8	15	14	18	17
FB giving	90	100	92	83	83	80	86	85
FB elicitation	10		8	17	17	20	14	15

The comparison of learner and control data confirms the central role of feedback giving, chiefly through simple primary FB and deictic anaphoric linking in Swedish. However, it shows a discrepancy between learners and controls with regard to repetition and use of secondary simples. The greater share of repetition is probably due to a combination of learners needs and SL influence while the difference with regard to secondary simples is mainly SL influence from Spanish.

For English, the comparison of learners and control data confirms the role of idioms while it gives primary simples and secondary simples a stronger position than is to be expected from the learner data which, in fact, accords with independent observations of the English FB system. The learners use more modal expressions than the controls. Possibly this is due to SL influence. The controls, in comparison to the learners, use FB more in a giving than in an eliciting function, while the learners use more repetition. This might be explained by the learners´ greater needs for repetition and eliciting FB.

When it comes to the two SL controls, the comparison is less meaningful since the learner data here, only indirectly, through a hypothesis about SL influence, reflect the SL norms. The role of FB giving through simple primary FB is, however, supported for Finnish. The table also suggests that linking through repetition rather than through deictic, anaphoric means, plays a larger role in Finnish than Swedish. For Spanish, primary simples play a lesser role while the role of secondary simple FB, reduplication, idioms and modality is more important. The table further suggests that deictic, anaphoric linking and the prevalence of feedback giving is an influence of Swedish, while the use of repetition and the prevalence of eliciting FB is both a characteristic of Spanish and a characteristic of the learning situation.

Tables 11 and 12, although quantitatively very insufficient, provides an indication of some of the ways in which the source and target languages under consideration can differ. The indications are compatible with the descriptive material we have available on the feedback system in different source and target languages.

However, the reader is reminded that these descriptions suffer from a problem which to a greater or lesser extent is valid for most descriptions of spoken language phenomena. There is both a lack of thorough studies and a lack of consensus about which theoretical framework to use. The range of phenomena which we are here calling linguistic feedback mechanisms suffers from both of these lacks. What we have to say about SL and TL norms for linguistic feedback must therefore be regarded as extremely tentative.

Some SL and TL background on simple FB words

Since simple primary FB makes up the most used FB category in all the languages considered, having a mean relative share of more than 60% of all FB, cf table 10, we want to give the reader some feeling for these simple FB words in target and source languages and so present some of the relevant words below.

Target languages

Dutch	Givers:	hela, ja, jawel, nee, nou, okee, zo
	Elicitors:	he?, hoor, wat?, welk?
English:	Givers:	ah, mhm, mm, no, oh, ok, please, sorry, ugh, uhuh, well, ya, yeah, yes
	Elicitors:	eh, right, (potentially, most givers with question intonation)
French:	Givers:	ah, eh, he, hein, mm, mhm, non, oké, ouais, oui, si
	Elicitors:	combien, comment, et?, hein, no, ou?, pourquoi, qui, quois, voila

German:	Givers:	achja, achso, aja, ah, aha, also, doch, ja, mhm, naja, ne, nein, oh, okay
	Elicitors:	ne, nicht, wann, warum, was, wenn, wie, wofür
Swedish:	Givers:	a, ah, aj, e, ha, ja, ja (inhale), jo, jo (inhale), mm, n, nej, nja, nä, nä (inhale), o, oa, oj, ä, ö (all a-sounds may be realized with two different qualities [ ] and [a])
	Elicitors:	va, nå, eller, väl, la, vem, vad, hur, när, var, vilken, visst (potentially, at least, some givers with question intonation)

Source languages

Arabic: (Tunisian Source)	Givers:	äh** , eh, ehi, ih, lè, mm, okee, ähää, ähäzä, öj*, smack
	Elicitors:	ehoa
(Algerian)	Givers:	ih, la, mmh, oke, saha, wah, äh
Finnish:	Givers:	ahaa, ei, ja, joo, juu, kyllä, mm, niin (ei, ja, joo, juu, niin possible with inhaling)
	Elicitors:	hä, mitä, vai, joo/ko, niin/kö (potentially, some givers with question intonation)
Italian:	Givers:	ah, mhm, mm, oh, si, uhuh
	Elicitors:	bene?, beh?, che?, chi?, come?, davvero?, eh?, no?, quale?, sicuro?, (potentially, most givers with question intonation)
Punjabi:	Givers:	ha, dzi, mh
	Elicitors:	he?, ki, mh?
Spanish:	Givers:	ah, mm, no, oh, si
	Elicitors:	eh, no
Turkish:	Givers:	evet, he, ha, hayir, yok, var, öyle, öyledir
	Elicitors:	mi, nasil?, ne?

As has already been mentioned the amount of available information varies from language to language. In some cases our informants have mentioned that Q-words and most "givers" with question intonation potentially can function as "elicitors". In some cases they have not. We believe, until counter evidence has been presented, that this probably is true for all the languages considered. Also, the line of demarcation between what, on functional grounds, should be considered simple primary FB words and what should be considered secondary FB words has not been analyzed thoroughly enough for every language to avoid a certain amount of arbitrariness, in the way the words have been classified.

Bearing in mind the problems mentioned, we still hope that the data provided, can help to give some idea of the range of variation which exists between different source and target languages with regard to what we have called primary simple FB words.

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* We use ä to denote a half-open anterior vowel and ö to denote a rounded half-closed anterior vowel.

The kernel of primary simple FB

If we observe the primaries in different SL-TL pairs we find that 3 to 5 basic word types cover 62-98% of all primaries which in turn means covering 37-71% of all FB units.

A comparison with the available control material shows a slightly greater variation in word types for the controls but fundamentally the picture is the same. A small number of primary word types with phonological, prosodic, morphological and structural elaboration go a long way both for learners and first language speakers when it comes to feedback. The difficulties for the learners is to acquire the right basic word types and the right connections between context, function and phonological, prosodic, morphological and structural elaboration.

Table 10.1 Basic primary word types used by learners in different target languages (% primaries, % FBU)

		Basic primary word types	% primaries	% FBU
Swedish	3	ja (a, jå, å), mm, nej	62	45
French	4	euh, hm, non, oui, (ouais)	82	44
Dutch	4	he, hm, ja, nee	98	71
		ja alone	71	51
German 5		ah (ach), ja (ahja, aja), mhm,		
		nein (ne), okay	88	56
English 5		er, mm (mhm, mh), no, okay,		
		yes (yeah)	78	37

2.4   Conclusions

What possibilities of acquisition are there in a situation, where one simultaneously has to learn and communicate whilst achieving other communicative and noncommunicative goals, in relation to target language speakers who can be more or less understanding, friendly, helpful or dominant? If the enterprise is to be successful, the means for acquisition must be such that they can both fit into normal patterns of communication and yet allow a flexible accommodation to both acquisitional and non-acquisitional goals as well as to different types of interlocutors.

We can characterize the TL communication of all early language learners as being governed by the following two principles:

1.   Kajsa Warg's principle: "Use what you have got", ie the learner should fall back on what he intuitively senses might be generalizable and whatever else (like knowledge of parts of TL or other languages) he thinks might be relevant.

2.   The maximization principle (or the principle of maximal use of minimal means): "Maximally use what you have got".

We believe that the ways in which the learners solve the problem of "how to learn while communicating" is a matter of applying a kind of "intuitive rationality" to the conditions of communication as they vary with different circumstances. It is here that the

phenomenon of "linguistic feedback" enters the picture. We have used this name to stand for the ways in which different languages have developed means to ensure that basic functions of communication (like contact, perception, understanding and attitudinal reactions to content and interlocutor) can be taken care of , and we believe that these ways not only are a requirement for normal communication and an entrance to communication in a particular language but also are an instrument for language acquisition.

Both normal communication and language acquisition require contact, perhaps extended contact, between interlocutors (in the special case of acquisition, between learner and TLS). Both also require correct perception and understanding and both require expression of attitude and emotion. One could say that language acquisition requires from interaction more or less the same things as normal communication but in addition some more. For example, giving and eliciting feedback, about the fit between basic communicative functions and achieved result, is needed in normal communication but is clearly needed even more in language acquisition.

The feedback mechanisms of a language are therefore, from a rational point of view, a functionally suitable place to find instruments of language acquisition which are such that they can, simultaneously, flexibly, be put into use in normal communication. This, in turn, requires that the language specific traits of the feedback mechanisms be learned. This has given our study its two primary foci:

(i)   how learners use linguistic feedback mechanisms as an instrument of (spontaneous) language acquisition (not reported on in this chapter cf Allwood (ed) 1988)

(ii)   how learners acquire the forms and functions of the linguistic feedback system of a particular target language (partially reported on in this chapter).

On the basis of the data we have presented in this chapter and some data which for reasons of space has not been presented, the following claims can be made (for an explanation of the abbreviations, see section 2.3.1.

(1)   There is a high and constant need for feedback for both learners and controls. This is reflected in a high FBU score for both groups and in the fact that the FBU share only shows a slight decrease for the learners over the 3 cycles.

(2)   Although there is always a need for feedback there is a special need for it in early adult language acquisition. This is supported by the higher FBU and FBW scores among learners than among controls and by the fact that the FBW score shows a clear decrease over cycles while the FBU rate shows a slight decrease.

(3)   A large part of the initial prevalence for feedback expressions among language learners consists of single FB expressions, used multifunctionally or for pure giving, which subsequently decrease over cycles. This is supported by the data on decrease in FBW and the data on the decrease of singles, in general, and more particularly by the data on the decrease of singles as carriers of "pure giving" or of ambiguous "giving/eliciting".

(4)   We assume that a significant part of learning how to handle feedback signalling in a new language is to learn to structurally position the feedback expressions in a

larger utterance. The data then indicate that, over cycles, there are changes in this respect and that most learners seem to undergo a process whereby single FB expressions decrease in favor of FB expressions in initial utterance position. There is also a smaller increase in final utterance position and an almost negligible increase in medial position. All the changes go in the direction of the patterns used by the TL controls which indicates that we are probably dealing with acquisition and not with some more random form of concatenation.

(5)   From a functional point of view the learners have to learn both to "give" and "elicit" feedback. There is evidence for a process of functional differentiation taking place in this direction, since the majority of the learners exhibit a decrease in the share of the ambiguous category FBG/FBE from cycle 1 to cycle 3. This decrease for a majority of the learners concerns singles and corresponds to a raise in the share of either "pure givers", mostly in initial position or "pure elicitors", mostly in final position.

(6)   With regard to the two primary FB functions of giving and eliciting, we find that "giving" is a great deal more common than "eliciting". 85% of all learners' FB units and 92% of all controls' FB units are used for what we have called "pure giving". When it comes to the development of the two functions the learners can be divided into 3 groups: (i) the participant observers - 6 learners who increase their "pure giving" and decrease their "pure eliciting", (ii) the "participant activators" - 5 learners who increase their "pure elicitation" and decrease their "pure giving" and (iii) the "participants" - 9 learners who either increase or decrease both "pure giving" and "pure elicitation", or who increase or decrease one of the categories without changing the other.

(7)   There are several signs of an acquisition process with regard to feedback, ie. the decrease in FBW, the functional differentiation of giving and eliciting and the concurrent decrease of singles leading to an integration of FB signals into more complex utterances. These signs are paralleled by an increase in MLU for a majority of the learners. This could show that the learners' acquisition of appropriate means for feedback is connected with a more general development of the means a learner has at his/her disposal for constructing utterances with a contextually sufficient level of syntactic, semantic and pragmatic cohesion.

(8)   The data considered so far does not give any clear evidence for direct influence from SL or TL. Perhaps the quick progress of the Latin American Spanish speaking learners of French, Alberto and Bernarda, is evidence that typological closeness between two languages facilitates an adult's acquisition of an adequate feedback system. There is some evidence based on MLU, FBW and FBU that sex/gender might play a role for the speed of acquisition. But since, in our data, sex/gender is systematically confounded with SL and TL differences, no definite statement can be made. Similarly, no clear results concerning activity influence could be obtained using MLU, FBW and FBU and the division into external and internal activities described in chapter 2.

(9)   When we divide the activities into scenario type, interview type and conversation type (instead of internal and external), we find that the scenario type activities (ie role plays with a strict scenario) are characterized by relatively high and stable FBU and FBW scores, whereas in the interviews and conversations both FBU

and FBW show a clear decrease over the cycles. This is compatible with the hypothesis that different activity types have different requirements with respect to feedback. In particular, it seems that the scenario type, given the roles of the informants, requires more feedback than the other activity types. This is further supported by the fact that in scenario type activities the TL controls have FBU and FBW scores which are as high as those of the learners. In conversations, on the other hand, the controls have much lower FBU and FBW scores than the learners, and it may therefore be assumed that the learnersº decrease in FBU and FBW here represents a development towards the TL norm and that the high scores in cycle 1 depend - in this activity type, but not in the scenario type - on factors which are particular to the learner situation.

2.5   Where do we go from here? - Perspectives for further research

This chapter has presented a study, which has explored the intersection of three comparatively novel approaches and/or areas of linguistic enquiry:

(i)   linguistic feedback processes and
(ii)   spontaneous adult language acquisition, using
(iii)   a combination of experimental and naturalistic methodological approaches.

The fact that all of the three intersecting areas/approaches are novel, means that our enquiry can be regarded as a contribution to the foundation of a kind of enquiries into both linguistic interaction and language acquisition that we think will prove to become increasingly relevant for our understanding of linguistic communication.   To be somewhat more specific, we think that it would be interesting to continue work in the following directions:

(i)   Better descriptions of the FB systems in different languages: Since FB, as it is defined and characterized in this volume, is a novel field of enquiry, more thorough and complete descriptions from as many languages as possible is needed as a background for acquisition studies. Such descriptions would also have a value independently of acquisition studies, as a contribution to a better understanding of spoken interaction in natural language.

(ii)   Better descriptions of how the FB system is related to other major structural aspects of spoken language: In the text we have given several examples and brief descriptions of how FB mechanisms are related to, for example, deixis, anaphoric relations and modality. It would be valuable to obtain more complete descriptions of such interdependence between structural aspects in an increased number of languages. Studies of this type have a special interest as a background for investigations of language acquisition, since they would be an aid to understanding how and when a learner can functionally and/or structurally generalize from one type of structure or function to another.

One might here add that we need a better understanding of the relations between FB and other interaction management (IAM) devices in spoken language, such as turntaking and sequencing, and an understanding of how such interaction devices in turn interact with Own Communication Management (OCM), phenomena such as hesitation and self correction, and with devices for producing foregrounded main messages (MM) (roughly those parts of an utterance which are used to

convey information about some external topic , cf Allwood, Nivre and Ahlsén, 1988) . These three, IAM, OCM and MM could be said to be three main types of functional structuring for spoken language. Our study has dealt with FB, an aspect of IAM and, to some extent, with OCM, (although not reported on in this chapter), but it does not deal with how FB and OCM are functionally and structurally integrated with each other, and with MM. It is likely that an understanding of the structural and functional acquisitional generalizations that a learner makes also requires an understanding of this broader picture.

(iii)   Descriptions of the use of body movements and prosody for FB functions in communication and acquisition:

Due to lack of time and resources, we were not able to start any serious exploration of how prosody and body movements are used in conjunction with spoken morphological and syntactic means to give and elicit FB. We believe that this is a serious lack in our description, both from the point of view of communication studies and acquisition studies. It should perhaps be pointed out that studies of this kind are much needed for spoken language in general, but that there are two serious obstacles to success; (i) high costs, in terms of money and resources and (ii) lack of a workable and clear conceptual framework, in which to integrate body movement and prosody with spoken morphological and syntactic means. We can only hope that such a framework will be forthcoming.

(iv)   Better analysis of the functions of FB:

For various reasons, we were not in the study able to go as deeply into a functional analysis of FB as we had originally intended. We have only started to explore the functional aspects of FB, cf .Allwood (ed) 1988. We believe that the best way to conduct such studies would be to use a combination of a structurally oriented analysis with an in-depth interpretative contextual analysis.

(v)   Better analysis of the causal dynamics underlying acquisition (and communicative interaction):

More conceptual work is needed in order to obtain a model of language acquisition which allows for a) interaction between causal factors, b) interdependence of causes and effects, and c) dynamically changing relevance of causes.

A conceptual model is needed, which allows for such dynamics, interdependence and multidimensionality of both causes and effects and which is at the same time as simple and perspicuous as possible. It is only if the model possesses the latter qualities that it will, in the long run, be of wider use in language acquisition research.

(vi)   Combination of methods:

As a result of this study, one might say that we have been reinforced in our belief that a combination of methods is required in acquisition studies and in studies of linguistic communication in general.

A combination of methods which we believe will prove fruitful could be characterized as a combination of "the deep" with "the superficial". By this we mean a combination of an in depth case study with a cross-sectional study. The

case study should have a smaller number of learners, possibly smaller than in the present study. Perhaps the number should be as low as 2 or 3 learners. However, the data from these learners should be subjected to a thorough investigation, combining an atomistic analysis of specific aspects (such as the FB system or temporal reference) with a more holistic analysis integrating the various aspects with each other. At the same time, a tentative functional and causal analysis should be carried as far as possible.

The in-depth study should be carried out first and be combined with a more superficial cross-sectional study of a far larger number of learners, performing specific tasks which have been designed to test connections which have seemed especially interesting in the in-depth study. In this way, we hope it might be possible to combine the best of the world of thorough interpretative linguistic analysis with the world of statistically valid representativity. We further believe that such a combination of two fairly different, but topically linked, studies would perhaps reach further than a study which attempts more of a compromise (like the present one) between the two approaches.

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