

# The Impact of Classroom Evaluation on Chinese Learning Motivation: A Comparative Study of Oral Feedback and Written Comments

ZHU Anqi

Taizhou College, Taizhou, China

Classroom evaluation plays a critical role in shaping students' learning experiences, influencing not only their academic performance but also their motivation and engagement. In the context of primary Chinese language learning, oral feedback and written comments are two prevalent evaluation methods. This paper explores how these different types of feedback impact students' motivation, learning outcomes, and participation. By comparing the immediacy of oral feedback with the systematic nature of written comments, this study seeks to provide insights into how educators can utilize classroom evaluations more effectively to foster motivation in Chinese language learners. The findings indicate that both feedback methods have unique strengths, and a balanced approach may optimize learning outcomes.

*Keywords:* classroom evaluation, learning motivation, oral feedback, written comments, Chinese language learning, primary education

## Introduction

Classroom evaluation serves as a fundamental tool in the educational process, bridging the communication between teachers and students. It not only reflects students' current academic performance but also shapes their attitudes, engagement, and long-term motivation to learn. In primary education, where foundational language skills are cultivated, classroom evaluation takes on even greater significance. In Chinese language learning, teachers frequently use oral feedback and written comments as their primary methods of evaluation. However, while both serve the purpose of providing feedback, they differ in timing, delivery, and potential impact on student motivation (Brookhart, 2017).

Oral feedback is characterized by its immediacy and personal interaction, often providing students with real-time reflections on their learning performance. On the other hand, written comments allow for more structured and thoughtful analysis, offering students the opportunity to revisit their feedback and reflect on their progress. The question arises: How do these different forms of evaluation impact students' motivation to learn Chinese? This paper aims to explore the effects of oral feedback and written comments on student motivation, academic performance, and classroom engagement. By analyzing their respective strengths and limitations, the study aims to provide a clearer understanding of how teachers can utilize evaluation methods to enhance learning outcomes.

### **The Role of Classroom Evaluation in Language Learning Motivation**

The role of classroom evaluation in shaping students' motivation is well-documented. According to motivation theories such as self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000), feedback plays a crucial role in fulfilling students' intrinsic needs for competence and autonomy. In language learning, where constant practice and refinement are necessary, feedback becomes a key factor in keeping students motivated. Positive feedback, whether oral or written, can increase a student's sense of competence, thereby enhancing their willingness to engage with the learning material (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006).

Chinese language learning presents its own set of challenges, particularly in primary education where students are often still mastering the basics of reading and writing. Characters, vocabulary, and grammar can pose significant hurdles, and without proper motivation, students may become disengaged. Classroom evaluation, when done effectively, can help students overcome these challenges by providing clear guidance, constructive criticism, and encouragement (Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

#### **Oral Feedback: Immediacy and Interaction**

Oral feedback is one of the most immediate forms of classroom evaluation. Given its real-time nature, it allows teachers to correct mistakes as they happen, reinforcing correct behaviors and addressing errors before they become ingrained. In language learning, this immediacy is particularly beneficial. For example, when a student mispronounces a Chinese character or uses incorrect grammar, immediate correction through oral feedback can prevent the error from being repeated (Black & Wiliam, 1998).

The interactive nature of oral feedback also creates opportunities for dialogue between teacher and student. This interaction can help students feel more connected to the learning process, fostering a sense of belonging and support (Shute, 2008). Moreover, oral feedback allows for immediate clarification. If a student does not understand a particular comment, they can ask questions and receive further explanation on the spot, which is particularly important in language learning where nuances of meaning and expression can be easily misunderstood (Sadler, 1989).

However, oral feedback also has limitations. Its fleeting nature means that students may not fully process or remember the feedback provided. In a busy classroom setting, oral feedback can also become generalized, as teachers may not have the time to provide individualized attention to each student (Lyster & Ranta, 1997). Additionally, students who are shy or less confident may feel uncomfortable receiving oral feedback in front of their peers, which can negatively affect their motivation.

#### **Written Comments: Reflection and Structure**

Written comments, in contrast to oral feedback, offer a more permanent and structured form of evaluation. Teachers have the opportunity to carefully consider their feedback, providing detailed and thoughtful comments that students can refer back to as needed. In Chinese language learning, written comments are particularly useful for providing specific feedback on characters, sentence structure, and writing style (Gibbs & Simpson, 2004). This structured form of feedback can help students develop their writing skills over time, as they are able to track their progress and identify areas for improvement.

One of the primary advantages of written comments is that they give students the chance to reflect. Unlike oral feedback, which is often given in the heat of the moment, written feedback can be reviewed at the student's own pace, allowing for deeper processing. This reflective aspect is critical in language learning, where

understanding and applying feedback to future tasks is key to improvement (Brookhart, 2017). For example, if a student consistently makes the same grammatical error, written comments allow them to see this pattern and take corrective action.

Despite its advantages, written feedback also has its limitations. Because it is not immediate, it may lack the urgency needed to correct errors in the moment. Furthermore, without the interactive component present in oral feedback, students may misinterpret written comments or fail to understand the teacher's intent (Boud & Molloy, 2013). Written feedback also requires students to be self-motivated to review and apply the feedback, which may not always be the case.

### **A Comparative Analysis of Oral Feedback and Written Comment**

Both oral feedback and written comments have distinct advantages and disadvantages in the context of Chinese language learning. Oral feedback's immediacy can help correct errors on the spot and engage students in the learning process, while written comments offer the benefit of detailed, structured reflection. However, the impact of these feedback methods on motivation can vary based on individual student preferences and learning styles (Evans, 2013).

For students who thrive on personal interaction and need immediate guidance, oral feedback may be more effective in maintaining their motivation. These students may benefit from the real-time engagement and clarification that oral feedback provides, particularly in the early stages of language learning where foundational skills are being developed (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). On the other hand, for students who prefer a more independent and reflective learning style, written comments may be more motivating. These students may appreciate the opportunity to review and internalize feedback at their own pace, using it to guide their future learning (Boud & Molloy, 2013).

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, both oral feedback and written comments play important roles in motivating students to learn Chinese, though each method offers different advantages depending on the context and individual student needs. To optimize learning outcomes, teachers may consider employing a balanced approach that integrates both forms of feedback. By combining the immediacy of oral feedback with the structured reflection offered by written comments, teachers can cater to diverse learning styles and foster greater motivation and engagement in the classroom. Further research may explore how these feedback methods can be tailored to specific student populations, providing even more targeted strategies for enhancing motivation in Chinese language learning.

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