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Title of Project

Corrective Feedback and Second Language Vocabulary Learning

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TIRF Research Topics Investigated

English for Specific Purposes
Individual Learner Differences and Effective Language Education

Supported by

Duolingo

Bio

Yanxue (Michelle) Feng is a Ph.D. candidate in Applied Linguistics at Western University, Canada. Her research interests include cognitive linguistics, incidental vocabulary learning, and corrective feedback. Her doctoral research features a meta-analysis examining the effects of corrective feedback on L2 vocabulary learning and two empirical studies examining the role of metalinguistic feedback in learning single-word and multi-word items.



Project Summary

This doctoral dissertation presents three interrelated studies designed to investigate the effects of corrective feedback (CF) on second language (L2) vocabulary learning. CF is highly researched in Second Language Acquisition, yet previous meta-analyses have not teased apart its effects on grammar versus vocabulary learning. Consequently, the overall effect of CF on L2 vocabulary learning remains unclear. To address this gap, Study 1 reports on a meta-analysis synthesizing previous CF studies targeting different aspects of L2 vocabulary acquisition. A random effects model estimates the overall effect size of CF on vocabulary learning, while moderator analyses will examine how different CF types and learner-related variables moderate these effects.

Building on this synthesis, Studies 2 and 3 empirically investigate whether adding metalinguistic notes to written CF improves the retention of specific lexical items using a mixed-method design. Both studies involve adult English and a Second Language speakers and English for Academic Purposes learners at a Canadian university, randomly assigned to either a Reminder CF group (correct answers only) or a Reminder Plus CF group (correct answers plus metalinguistic notes) across three sessions involving text-

embedded recall tasks and an unannounced posttest. Interviews are conducted to explain the findings in relation to individual differences.

In Study 2, logistic mixed-effects models reveal that participants retain little vocabulary, suggesting that simply copying feedback requires too little cognitive effort. Informed by retrieval practice theory, Study 3 replicates Study 2 but temporarily removes the worksheets during CF to create a retrieval demand, which is expected to enhance vocabulary retention.