

Feedback and uptake in videoconferences for online intercultural exchange

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Abstract

Incidental Focus on Form (FonF) refers to the treatment of linguistic elements incidentally arising in a communicative setting during a meaning-focused activity. Videoconferencing for Online Intercultural Exchange (OIE) projects represents a typical meaning-focused communication activity but incidental FonF in group-based OIE projects is underexplored. The present study investigated the longitudinal changes of feedback types and factors related to successful uptake in Zoom-based videoconferences during a five-week OIE project. Chinese students and US students participated in weekly Zoom videoconferences to collect intercultural student ethnography data for their group projects with English as the exchange language. The videoconferences were recorded, transcribed, coded, and subsequently analysed quantitatively. Results returned that recast, clarification request, and translation were more frequently used but their frequencies did not significantly fluctuate throughout the OIE project, while metalinguistic feedback, elicitation, and explicit corrective feedback were less commonly used but their frequencies of use varied significantly. Repair provider (self-repair vs. other repair) and English proficiency were significantly associated with Chinese students' successful uptake. The findings have implications for incorporating OIE and similar virtual exchange models into language teaching and learning.

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1. Introduction

Incidental FonF has been defined as the treatment of linguistic elements incidentally arising in a communicative setting during a meaning-focused activity (e.g. [Doughty & Williams, 1998](#); [Ellis, 2001](#)). Feedback and uptake are two related terms in a Focus on Form Episode (FFE) and also essential concepts in language learning. FonF can be further classified into two types: reactive and preemptive. The reactive type refers to an FFE where feedback follows an error, while the preemptive type is initiated with a query without the presence of an error ([Ellis, Basturkmen, & Loewen, 2001](#)). [Allwright \(1984\)](#) defined uptake as all that learners obtain from language classes. [Lyster and Ranta \(1997\)](#) claimed that uptake is a reactive move that immediately follows the teacher's feedback (any response regardless of its quality). Uptake, based on quality, has two categories, namely successful uptake and unsuccessful uptake. Successful uptake means that the learners successfully incorporate the linguistic information of feedback into their response ([Egi, 2010](#); [Ellis et al., 2001](#)). Successful uptake helps learners to benefit the most from feedback ([Shekary & Tahririan, 2006](#)).

Studies on FonF have gathered evidence for its occurrence and factors of successful uptake (e.g. [Chen & Eslami, 2013](#); [Loewen, 2005](#)), but research gaps exist. First, most studies to date have examined FonF in communication in classroom settings or laboratory settings (e.g. [Ellis, 2001](#); [Mackey, Oliver, & Leeman, 2003](#); [Sheen, 2004, 2006](#)). Second, research on FonF in Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) largely examined data from text-based chats (e.g. [Eslami & Kung, 2016](#); [Kung & Eslami, 2015](#); [Kwon & Lee, 2011](#); [Tudini, 2012](#)), while video chats as an oral-visual modality are underrepresented in FonF research (e.g. [Akiyama, 2017](#); [Wang, 2006](#)). However, videoconferencing can provide intensive exposure to the target language ([Kato, Spring, & Mori, 2016](#); [Lim & Pyun, 2016](#); [Spring, Kato, & Mori, 2019](#)). With the use of videoconferencing technologies like Zoom and Skype in an international virtual exchange project, feedback and uptake might have different attributes from those occurring in face-to-face communication or text-based chats. Also, video-based communication investigated in previous research is largely on dyadic interaction (e.g. [Saito & Akiyama, 2017](#)) rather than group chat, and FonF in group chat has been suggested to be different from FonF in dyadic interaction ([Tudini, 2012](#)). Furthermore, previous studies largely analysed cross-sectional data in FonF-related research rather than longitudinal data (e.g. [Ellis et al., 2001](#)). Last, when investigating factors related to successful uptake, researchers mostly take characteristics of FFEs as independent variables predicting successful uptake (e.g. [Loewen, 2005](#)), yet characteristics of language learners

(such as language proficiency), which might be significant predictors, are largely excluded from the regression model. Therefore, a thorough exploration of FonF in group-based CMC has not yet been addressed.

Correspondingly, the present study explored the changes in feedback and uptake in students' verbal production during a five-week Native Speakers-Non-Native Speakers (NSs-NNSs) videoconferencing-based OIE project, and we also examined what factors were related to successful uptake. The videoconferences in this study were all group talk, which represents a different interaction mechanism from dyadic talk in aspects such as turn-taking, topic transition, and opportunities to speak out (Tudini, 2012). We included English proficiency as one of the predictors in the regression model to predict successful uptake. This study sheds light on feedback and uptake in an underexplored modality and extends FonF research by examining the longitudinal changes throughout the OIE project.

To sum up, scarce is research that examines FonF behaviours in group-based videoconferences within an OIE project. The purpose of this research was to investigate whether there were any changes in American university students' feedback and Chinese English learners' uptake during their weekly OIE videoconferences and what factors were related to Chinese students' successful uptake. The present study addressed the following research questions (RQs).

RQ1: What types of feedback, if any, were provided by US students during the five-week OIE project? Did the number of feedback moves change according to feedback types during the exchange?

RQ2: What factors were related to Chinese students' successful uptake?

2. Literature review

2.1. Feedback in incidental FonF

Incidental FonF refers to attention to language forms during meaning-oriented communication (Kwon & Lee, 2011). It can be reactive or preemptive. Reactive FonF includes errors and corrective feedback (Ellis, 2001), while preemptive FonF means that the interaction trajectory shifts to language form through one interlocutor's query about a language form in the absence of an error (Egi, 2010; Sheen, 2004). Feedback in FonF is conducive to improved language accuracy by reducing errors in later production. Peer feedback can help language learners notice the gap

between the target language and their interlanguage, and such noticing could be facilitative in language learning (Crystal, 2001; Tudini, 2012).

Feedback can be categorised into recast, clarification requests, metalinguistic feedback, elicitation, and repetition (Choi & Li, 2012). Recast is implicit reformulation or expansion of an ill-formed usage (Egi, 2010). Its implicit nature might mean that learners fail to notice the gaps in their interlanguage (Kwon & Lee, 2011). Clarification requests hold back correct forms and elicit reformulation or repetition from the students (Fernández-García & Martínez-Arbelaiz, 2014; Panova & Lyster, 2002). This feedback type often results in pushed output in the form of other-initiated self-repair (Clavel-Arroitia, 2019; Tudini, 2012). Metalinguistic feedback involves comments, information, or questions related to the well-formedness of an utterance without explicitly providing the correct answer (Lyster & Ranta, 1997). Elicitation does not provide linguistic information but prompts the learner to self-correct (Shekary & Tahririan, 2006). Explicit corrective feedback features explicit signals to the students that there is an error in the previous utterance (Panova & Lyster, 2002). Explicit correction is generally unfavoured in oral communication (Clavel-Arroitia, 2019; Lyster, 2005) because of its face-threatening feature. Recasts are the most commonly used feedback type in communication (Ellis et al., 2001), particularly in written synchronous computer-assisted communication (Akbar, 2017), owing to their time-saving and unobtrusive nature (Akiyama, 2017). Lyster (1998) found that most recasts were followed by acknowledgement instead of successful uptake, but Panova and Lyster (2002) reported that recasts and explicit corrective feedback may be followed by successful uptake because these feedback types offer target-like forms. Also, clarification requests, translation, and elicitation may be more likely followed by modified output because the learners are pushed to do so (Egi, 2010; Shirani, 2019).

Different frequencies of feedback types in meaning-focused communication are related to their different face-threatening natures and speakers' needs for face-saving. Tudini (2012) noticed that native speakers tended to sacrifice truthfulness for face-supporting behaviours to mitigate embarrassment. This could explain the popularity of recast and disapproval of explicit correction in meaning-oriented communication (Varonis & Gass, 1985).

2.2. Uptake and related factors in incidental FonF

Uptake refers to the response immediately after the feedback (Lyster & Ranta, 1997). Based on uptake quality in reactive FonF, uptake can be categorised into repair and need-repair in terms of whether learners successfully correct their errors after corrective feedback (Kwon & Lee, 2011). Repair means learners correct their errors in only one turn, and need-repair means that they fail

to do so. Repair can be self- or peer repair. Self-repair means the error is corrected by whoever commits it while peer repair indicates that the error is corrected by others.

To better categorise uptake quality, Ellis, Basturkmen, and Loewen (2001, 2002, 2012) introduced the concept of successful and unsuccessful uptake to describe learners' responses not only to reactive feedback but also to preemptive feedback. Studies have consistently found that learners' uptake with the production of a more target-like modified output contributes to L2 development, and successful uptake is the strongest indicator of interlanguage development (Loewen, 2005; McDonough, 2004, 2005; Nobuyoshi & Ellis, 1993; Shekary & Tahririan, 2006). Thus, successful uptake supports interlanguage development more than the mere presence of uptake (Egi, 2010; Loewen, 2005; Shekary & Tahririan, 2006; Williams, 2001).

Characteristics of feedback and uptake are often included as independent variables in regression models to predict successful uptake (e.g. Loewen, 2005, 2010; Shekary & Tahririan, 2006), but characteristics of the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners are largely ignored in the regression model.

2.3. OIE

OIE is an approach to engaging students in interaction and collaboration with partners from geographically and culturally different places (O'Dowd, 2007), aiming to develop language skills and intercultural communication skills (Belz, 2003; O'Dowd, 2018). It represents a class-to-class language-mediated intercultural partnership in which language is regarded as "a resource for doing things" instead of the predominant focus of learning (O'Dowd & Lewis, 2016, p. ix).

In second language acquisition studies, OIE and similar virtual exchange models such as e-tandem have been shown to help language learning in various ways (O'Dowd, 2011). For example, Saito and Akiyama (2017) reported that the Japanese EFL learners improved their comprehensibility, fluency, and lexicogrammar, with the feedback provided by their trained US partners in weekly dyadic video chats. Tudini (2012) found that native speakers and non-native speakers engaged in incidental FonF which helped the non-native speakers improve linguistic accuracy in later production. The modality affects FonF behaviour, as real-time video chats trigger more loss of face for language learners than text-based chats (Van der Zwaard & Bannink, 2014, 2016). Most previous studies, however, focus on dyadic communication (e.g. Akiyama, 2017; Kato et al., 2016; Spring et al., 2019), while group-based video chat is underexplored.

3. Research design

3.1. Participants

A total of 19 Chinese EFL learners (19-20 years old) at a university in China and 14 English native speakers (21-23 years old) at a university in the US participated in the study. All the Chinese students were sophomores majoring in Japanese, Russian, or electric engineering, and all the US students were junior students majoring in teacher education with different subject areas. Students on both sides were divided into seven international groups; each group had two to three Chinese and two US students. They all gave consent to have their Zoom videoconference recordings analysed for this study. Their personal information has been kept confidential.

3.2. Instructional setting

The five-week OIE project in this study was a collaboration between an education course at the US university and an *English for General Academic Purposes* course at the Chinese university. One of the objectives of the education course was to help students better understand intercultural differences and culturally responsive teaching, while one of the objectives of the *English for General Academic Purposes* course was to improve students' English production skills and intercultural communication competence. The OIE project was developed in alignment with these two objectives. A shared syllabus with a topic list was provided by the co-teaching professors. All the topics (e.g. housing, food, sports) were closely related to the real-life and personal experience of college students so that all the participants had something to ask or share. Every international group communicated as learning peers, not as English experts and English learners. However, the Chinese students inevitably noticed their English disadvantages and expected to learn idiomatic English from their US partners. The US students were not instructed to be language experts, though they were reminded of the language learner status of their Chinese peers and advised to be more patient when communication breakdowns occurred.

The OIE project was divided into three parts, namely ice-breaker, ethnography interview, and wrap-up. The first week was for an ice-breaker. Both sides in every international group attended a Zoom meeting, familiarised each other with demographic information, hobbies, typical daily activities, etc. and decided on the date and time for the following Zoom videoconferences. Weeks 2 to 4 were for semi-structured interviews. Students of every international group asked their international peers prepared questions and further probing questions. Every speaker was both an interviewer (data collector) and interviewee (data provider). Students collected data about the assigned topic for each week for the final product. The interview approach was consistent with the intercultural student

ethnography discussed by O'Dowd (2006). Week 5 was for wrap-up when students summed up their previous communication and showed gratitude to each other. The presentation, the final product of the OIE project, asked students to synthesise their interview data and look for any patterns and themes showing up from their international partners' answers. The following week, students did their OIE presentations by local groups instead of international groups; therefore, this week was not counted in this study. The communication was meaning-focused and information-based and neither side was instructed to pay special attention to language forms; therefore, FFEs were expected to incidentally and naturally arise during the video chats. Activities like the interview, information synthesis, intercultural communication, and presentation are all important parts of academic English literacy.

Groups instead of dyads were adopted for several reasons. First, based on our informal interviews with students before the collaboration began, students (especially the Chinese EFL learners) would feel lower language and cultural anxiety because they could help each other with both content and language. Also, the weekly video talk could be better secured even when one student could not participate. Furthermore, group collaboration might resemble tasks in professional settings more than dyadic collaboration. Lastly, 'small groups' of four to five students accorded with stronger social presence and interpersonal dynamics than dyads (Dörnyei & Murphey, 2003), though dyads can also feature high social presence under certain circumstances (Satar, 2013, 2020). Students had to compete harder for the floor in group talk than in dyadic talk (Tudini, 2012).

3.3. Data collection and analysis

Every OIE group was required to submit their Zoom videoconference recording every week. The Chinese students were required to transcribe the recordings to the utmost of their efforts. Twenty-nine videos were collected in total. Three groups submitted all five videos as required; two groups submitted four videos; two groups submitted three videos. The videos were carefully watched and transcribed (verbatim). Additionally, the Chinese students' English proficiency data were collected. Before the OIE project, they took a test with items drawn from a commercial examination database system developed by Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press and delivered and assessed by the faculty team of the *English for General Academic Purposes* course in the Chinese university. The test resembled College English Test – Band 4 in structure; the latter is a test of non-English majors' English proficiency and is extensively used in Mainland China (Guo & Sun, 2014). We used the test result as a measurement of Chinese students' English proficiency. Besides, the Chinese instructor kept a teaching journal recording the OIE-related discussions in weekly classes.

FFE in the present study refers to the treatment of linguistic forms as it arises incidentally in a meaning-focused communication (Doughty & Williams, 1998; Ellis, 2001; Ellis et al., 2001, 2002, 2012; Loewen, 2005; Long, 1991). An FFE could be instigated by Chinese students' linguistic errors that received feedback from their US partners (reactive FFE) or by Chinese students' queries of some linguistic items during the ongoing videoconference (preemptive FFE).

Once the FFEs were identified, they were coded according to a range of characteristics adapted from the coding framework in Loewen's (2005, 2010) and Panova and Lyster's (2002) research. Table 1 shows the specific coding framework in detail. Feedback was categorised into recast, clarification request, metalinguistic feedback, elicitation, translation, and explicit correction. Linguistic focus had three categories: phonological, lexical, and grammatical focus. Instigation included preemptive FFE and reactive FFE. Repair move was classified into self-repair and other repair. Uptake quality was a binary variable, including successful uptake and unsuccessful uptake. Though Chinese students sometimes provided feedback to their Chinese peers, we did not include such FFEs in this study, because according to students' reports in classes, at times these FFEs occurred in the videoconference room whereas they occurred outside of the room on other occasions.

Table 1. Feedback and uptake coding framework

Characteristics	Definitions	Categories	Examples
Feedback type	Implicit reformulation or expansion of an ill-formed item in an unobtrusive way	Recast	C1: But the Opium makes China change a lot. U1: Bec you said it changed China a lot. It did in the past.
	Elicitation reformulation or repetition	Clarification request	C2: So I think we should dialectical view. U2: Dialectical view? C2: No, critical.
	Comments, information, or questions related to the well-formedness of the student utterance without explicitly providing the correct answer	Metalinguistic feedback	U2: Yeah, critical is a better choice than dialectical.
	Prompting the learner to self-correct	Elicitation	U1: Because you said it changed China a lot. It did in the past. C1: It made Chinese people addicted...
	A move after learners' unsolicited uses of L1	Translation	C3: 辩证法...
	Explicit signals to the student that there is an error in the previous utterance	Explicit corrective feedback	U8: 'should' is a strong word. It's not proper when you propose something.

Linguistic focus	Dealing with phonological errors	Phonological	U10: What do you mean? C12: Oh, I mean /pɪr/ pressure, not /per/ pressure.
	Dealing with lexical errors	Lexical	See the example for clarification request
	Dealing with grammatical errors	Grammatical	See the example for recast
Instigation	Instigated by a query about a language item	Preemptive	C16: Can I say you are rich? U12: Haha, I don't think so. A basement is common here.
	Instigated by a linguistic error made by a Chinese student	Reactive	See the example for recast
Repair provider	Repair made by the student who committed the error	Self-repair	See the example for clarification request
	Repair provided by a US student	Peer repair	See the example for recast
Uptake quality	EFL learners incorporated linguistic information into subsequent production	Successful	See the example for recast
	EFL learners did not incorporate linguistic information into subsequent production	Unsuccessful	See the example for preemptive

Two authors identified the FFEs together, then discussed the feedback and uptake characteristics and coded them independently. A third author was then invited to discuss disagreements with the authors who carried out the coding. Final decisions were made with 100% agreement of all three coders. Raw frequency of each characteristic of feedback and uptake was standardised as frequency/hour (length of videoconference) for comparability across the weeks. FFE frequencies were calculated per group per week. The significance level for all tests was set at 0.05. For all statistical analyses, we used the software SPSS 20.

To answer RQ1 (the changes of feedback), Friedman tests, which are the non-parametric counterpart of within-subject ANOVA, were performed to investigate weekly changes in the number of feedback and uptake instances during the OIE project. The Friedman tests were conducted because distributions of feedback and uptake characteristics violated the normality assumption (MacFarland & Yates, 2016). Before the Friedman tests, the missing values for the group(s) that had not submitted recordings were substituted by the mean value of the frequency of all related groups that week.

To answer RQ2 (factors related to successful uptake), a logistic regression test (for predicting a binary outcome variable) was conducted. In the case of data for the present study, logistic regression can help to determine what factors could predict successful uptake. Table 2 details the binary coding scheme for categorical dependent and independent variables and shows the values assigned to each

category. For easier interpretation, feedback type was transformed into a dummy variable *elicit* which equals one when the US students tried to draw out from their Chinese partners a language form or information about a language form and zero when the US students gave information about a language form by recast, metalinguistic feedback, or explicit corrective feedback (Loewen, 2005). Linguistic focus featured a categorical variable and was transformed into two dummy variables, namely *phonological* (equal to one when the linguistic focus was at the phonological level, and zero otherwise) and *lexical* (equal to one when the linguistic focus was at the lexical level, and zero otherwise), while the grammatical level was the reference category (coded as zero) as the comparison object. Instigation was transformed into a dummy variable *preemptive* (equal to one when an FFE was preemptive, and zero when an FFE was reactive). Repair move was also recoded into a dummy variable *peer_repair* (equal to one when the corrective form was provided by a peer, and zero when by oneself). Uptake quality followed the same recoding procedure, *succ_uptake* (equal to one when the uptake was successful and zero otherwise). Logistic regression analysis with SPSS returns results in terms of odds ratio (odds ratio = $\text{odds}_{x+1} / \text{odds}_x$; odds = $\text{probability}_x / (1 - \text{probability}_x)$).

Table 2. Binary coding scheme for logistic regression

Variables	Values	
	1	0
Elicit	Drawing out form-related information from EFL learners	Providing form-related information explicitly
phonological	FFE at the phonological level	FFE on other linguistic levels
Lexical	FFE at the lexical level	FFE on other linguistic levels
preemptive	FFE initiated by queries from the EFL learners without errors	FFE initiated by an error made by the EFL learners
peer_repair	Repair provided by peers	Repair provided by the error maker or query raiser
succ_uptake	Successful uptake	Unsuccessful uptake

4. Results and discussion

4.1. Changes in the frequency of US students' feedback

As shown in Table 3, the frequency of FFEs by students from the US was quite low in the video chats, corroborating the findings by van der Zwaard and Bannink (2016). Friedman test results did not indicate a consistent FFE pattern across the six feedback types. Three feedback types did not show significant differences throughout the five-week OIE project, namely recast, clarification request, and

translation, while the other three types revealed significant differences, i.e. they were employed in significantly different amounts across the weeks. Those feedback types with no significant changes, however, were more frequently used than the three feedback types with significant changes. Recast, clarification request, and translation feature implicit, embedded feedback strategies; less face-threatening to the speaker of the problematic utterance. They are also less disruptive than metalinguistic feedback, elicitation, and explicit corrective feedback, which might bring EFL learners' errors to the surface (Tudini, 2012).

Table 3. Frequencies of US students' feedback moves across five weeks (standard deviation is reported in parenthesis)

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	P
Recast	0.75 (0.69)	0.25 (0.42)	0.30 (0.40)	0.33 (0.60)	0.42 (0.83)	0.203
Clarification request	0.33 (0.60)	0.33 (0.60)	0.20 (0.35)	0.17 (0.53)	0.17 (0.36)	0.589
Metalinguistic feedback	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (1.52)	0.08 (0.27)	0 (0)	0.000
Elicitation	0.08 (0.27)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0.08 (0.28)	0 (0)	0.044
Translation	0.79 (2.225)	0 (0)	0.07 (0.267)	0.07 (0.267)	0.07 (0.267)	0.406
Explicit corrective feedback	0 (0)	0 (0)	0.10 (0.26)	0.08 (0.27)	0 (0)	0.002

Recast was the most dominant feedback type by the US students in the present study. Many previous studies also find that interlocutors in online communication prefer recast because of its implicit, polite, and unobtrusive nature (Shekary & Tahririan, 2006; Tudini, 2012), but its implicitness and ambiguity may reduce its visibility as corrective feedback and thus entail a low uptake rate (Kwon & Lee, 2011; Lyster, 1998; Sheen, 2004). Although no significant fluctuations in the number of recasts were observed across five weeks, they were used the most in the first videoconference, which might be due to unfamiliarity among the students of both sides and with the videoconferencing system.

Clarification request was the second most commonly used feedback type by the US students. It demonstrated no significant change across the weeks, but a relatively equal distribution through the OIE project. Although we did not code error types, our observations of the videoconference recordings and engagement with the data indicated that most of the clarification requests were likely due to communication breakdowns caused by pronunciation errors or inappropriate word choices (see relevant illustrative examples in Table 1). To continue the communication, repetition

or reformulation of ill-formed or inappropriate utterances was necessary (Panova & Lyster, 2002), corroborating the findings in Clavel-Arroitia's (2019) and Tudini's (2012) studies on online communication.

The amount of translation as an FFE did not show significant difference throughout the OIE project, but it was adopted predominantly in the first videoconference when the Chinese students were not accustomed to communicating 100% in English, and thus they resorted to Chinese occasionally. Since the second videoconference, they rarely showed unsolicited use of their native language. EFL learners demonstrated less use of their native language when they communicated with people of a different native language than with people of the same native language as reported by Ozdener and Satar (2008). In this sense, OIE videoconference represents an L2-rich environment (Smartt & Scudder, 2004).

The amount of metalinguistic feedback offered by US students changed significantly during the OIE project, but the significant difference was gained only in two pairwise comparisons, namely between the second videoconference and the third one, and the third one and the fourth one. According to the Chinese instructor, the third videoconference was the most relaxing one, as students on both sides had already been relatively accustomed to the Zoom videoconference and communication style of their international peers, but probably they did not yet feel pressed to prepare for their OIE presentation. Therefore, Chinese students could be more aware of the English expert status of their US partners and not feel too embarrassed to ask language-related questions. When the Chinese students took initiative to ask questions related to language form, arguably, the US students might be less worried about being face-threatening when taking an English expert role. Therefore, there was more metalinguistic feedback in the middle of the OIE project. Still, metalinguistic feedback shifted the communication from topical talk to pedagogical talk (Tudini, 2012). Pedagogical communication was not a central feature of the OIE project in this study, similar to the findings by Akbar (2017) on CMC.

The frequency of elicitation and explicit corrective feedback in US students' FFEs also changed significantly across five weeks, but their frequencies were very low throughout the OIE project. Both types are somehow face-threatening and interfere with ongoing communication (Sheen, 2004; Tudini, 2012), especially in videoconferences where virtual co-presence and cross-cultural communication required additional care of face-saving than text-based chat (Lamy & Hampel, 2007). This dovetailed the finding by Akiyama (2017) that students in synchronous, video-based communication preferred unobtrusive feedback like recast over the explicit correction.

The relatively small number of feedback moves might be related to various factors. First and foremost, the OIE videoconference of this study was conducted for completing group projects,

and therefore predominantly meaning-oriented. Focus on language form did not conform to the orientation toward meaning and thus only occurred occasionally, mainly when the gap between the EFL learners' interlanguage and the target language might cause a communication breakdown (Loewen, 2005). Second, group talk often featured multiple conversation threads and quick turn switching among interlocutors (Tudini, 2012), and thus time and opportunity were both more limited for feedback and uptake with modified output than that in dyadic chat.

4.2. Factors related to Chinese students' successful uptake

The logistic regression model was statistically significant, $\chi^2(7, n=65) = 31.26$ ($p < .001$). The model explains 51.4% (Nagelkerke R^2) of the variance in successful uptake. The Chinese students successfully uptook 42% of all the language forms in the 65 FFEs. This percentage was lower than successful uptake rate (60%) reported in text-based online chat (Sotillo, 2010), but higher than that (30%) reported in in-person face-to-face NS-NNS and NNS-NNS interaction (Mackey et al., 2003). A likely explanation for this is that video chat is more time-constrained than text-based chat (which features extra processing time with longer acceptable pauses between turns) and hence allowing less time for uptake. There were no significant differences in the likelihood between feedback types, between linguistic levels, and between instigation types, but significant differences in the likelihood were found, relating to repair provider and Chinese students' English proficiency (Table 4).

Table 4. Factors related to successful uptake (n=65) (standard deviation in parenthesis)

	B	Exp(B)	Wald	P
Elicit	1.13 (1.37)	3.04	3.79	0.417
phonological	-1.22 (1.29)	0.30	0.89	0.345
lexical	-1.465 (1.28)	0.23	1.32	0.252
Preemptive	0.31 (1.29)	1.37	0.06	0.810
peer_repair	3.58 (1.35)	35.78	7.06	0.008
Proficiency	-0.14 (.05)	0.87	7.00	0.008

Notes: a. The omitted category is the grammatical level.

A main effect was found for repair provider ($B=3.58$, $SE=1.35$, $Wald=7.06$, $Exp(B)=35.78$, $p=.008$), and for peer repair versus self-repair. The result indicates that when all other factors were controlled, the predicated odds of successful uptake when a Chinese students' language gap was filled by their US peers were 35.78 times the odds when the language gap was filled by the Chinese student him/herself. This might be caused by EFL learners' potentially limited competence of self-repair in synchronous video chats, while the repair move provided by the US peers might be more easily

accepted with perceived better repair quality and immediacy. When an error was repaired by the US students, possibly the Chinese EFL learners treasured such language learning opportunities and actively incorporated the other-repairs into their subsequent utterance. This result contradicts [Tudini's \(2012\)](#) findings that self-repair is more likely to result in successful uptake.

A main effect was also found for English proficiency ($B=-.14$, $SE=.05$, $Wald=7.00$, $\text{Exp}(B)=0.87$, $p=.008$). Holding other variables constant, with one more point in English proficiency score ($x+1$), the predicated odds of successful uptake decreased to 0.87 times the odds of the original score (x). A more detailed examination of the videoconference recordings indicated that the Chinese EFL learners of higher proficiency tended to show acknowledgement (e.g. "Thank you for pointing out"), apology (e.g. "Sorry for the mistake"), or proceeded with the topical talk trajectory rather than incorporating the feedback into subsequent responses, consistent with [Tudini's \(2012\)](#) findings. This may sound counter-intuitive, but EFL learners of lower proficiency cared more about linguistic accuracy ([Loewen & Erlam, 2006](#)), and showed higher awareness of the language value of OIE than the learners with higher language levels. The Chinese students of higher English proficiency might emphasise interpersonal affiliation and keep the trajectory more communicative rather than pedagogical, while the students of lower proficiency paid more attention to acquiring correct or more appropriate language forms to improve their interlanguage, as was similarly argued by [Tudini \(2012\)](#). As more than half of all the feedback moves (58%) was not successfully uptaken in the videoconferences, Chinese students need to improve their apperception of the feedback from their native-speaker peers.

5. Conclusions and implications

During the five-week NS-NNS videoconferences, the number of observed feedback instances for three out of six feedback types (metalinguistic feedback, elicitation, and explicit corrective feedback) changed significantly. Though the number of observed instances of recast, clarification request, and translation did not change significantly over five weeks, they were more frequently used than the three feedback types with significant changes. Repair provider (self-repair vs. peer repair) was related to uptake quality (successful uptake vs. unsuccessful uptake), with peer repair predicting a higher likelihood of successful uptake. English proficiency was negatively associated with uptake quality. Other factors, including feedback type, linguistic level, and instigation were not significant predictors of successful uptake. OIE videoconferencing represents meaning-oriented communication where form-focused feedback concerning ill-formed language could be considered face-threatening and interfering. FFEs in this study occurred incidentally and resulted in a moderate level of successful uptake.

The research results have implications for incorporating OIE and similar virtual exchange models into language teaching and learning. Since NS-NNS videoconferences for the OIE project only focused on form incidentally, English teachers who integrate an OIE element into their teaching might consider adapting the videoconference recordings as teaching materials, to better guide EFL learners as suggested by [Spring et al. \(2019\)](#). Meanwhile, the co-teaching instructors can set a minimum length of the weekly videoconference and require participation by all students ([Spring et al., 2019](#)), so that they could be further encouraged to conduct more in-depth and extensive discussions. Naturally, EFL learners can benefit from greater exposure to English. Last, OIE videoconferences provide a production-oriented ([Wen, 2016](#)) language learning environment for Chinese English learners. For such online international learning experiences to be more effective, EFL learners can prepare for the videoconference better, for example, by creating questions to ask their international peers and possible answers to these questions from their perspective.

This study has several limitations. First, the small sample of participants, relatively short duration of the longitudinal study, and consequently small number of FFEs might influence the significance of quantitative data analysis. Future research can recruit more participants and include a longer OIE project and accordingly a larger sample of FFEs. Another limitation of this study is that data analysis did not include paralinguistic and non-verbal features like tones, stress, facial expressions, and body gestures. Therefore, some feedback and uptake instances indicated by such features might have been excluded in the analysis. Arguably, we are particularly interested in successful uptake which is not affected by the paralinguistic and non-verbal features. Nevertheless, future research can include these features to draw a more detailed picture of the FFEs in NS-NNS videoconferences. Besides, this study is descriptive without a control group and tests of language learning. Future research can adopt a (quasi) experimental design and tailor-made tests based on the language items in the FFEs, to draw causal relationships between OIE and language learning, and then we will have hard evidence of language learning as a product of OIE.

6. Ethics statement and acknowledgements

This study has been reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committee of Foreign Language College, Tianjin Normal University.

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