

Feedback Sensitivity: It's Impact on the Oral Communication Competence among the Senior High School Students

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Abstract. This study aimed to determine the relationship between feedback sensitivity and oral communication competence among Grade 11 Senior High School students of Los Amigos National High School, Davao City, during the school year 2025–2026. Using a descriptive-correlational research design, it examined how students perceived criticism from teachers and peers and how these perceptions influenced their oral communication performance. A total of 170 respondents were selected through stratified sampling across various academic strands, and data were collected using a modified version of Leary's (1983) Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale and an oral communication performance rubric, analyzed through mean, standard deviation, and Pearson's r . Findings revealed that students perceived criticism from teachers to be moderately high ($\bar{x} = 3.50$), while criticism from peers was rated moderate ($\bar{x} = 3.38$), and their overall oral communication competence was satisfactory ($\bar{x} = 3.36$). Significant negative correlations were found between perceived criticism from teachers ($r = -0.42$, $p = 0.001$) and peers ($r = -0.36$, $p = 0.002$) and oral communication competence, indicating that greater sensitivity to criticism corresponds to lower levels of oral performance. These results emphasize the strong influence of emotional and psychological factors in language learning; when students interpret feedback as harsh or discouraging, their confidence, motivation, and willingness to participate decrease, hindering fluency and expressiveness. The study therefore recommends promoting constructive, balanced, and supportive feedback practices and strengthening teacher-student communication to foster a positive, respectful, and encouraging classroom environment that minimizes anxiety and helps students develop stronger oral communication skills.

KEY WORDS

1. Feedback sensitivity
2. perceived criticism
3. oral communication competence
4. fear of negative evaluation
5. Senior High School

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1. Introduction

The fear of being judged by teachers and peers is a significant cause for why Senior High School students do not freely express their thoughts and opinions. As an educator myself, I have observed students who do not

speak during discussions, do not participate in oral recitation, or are anxious during presentations. Their behavior is often not due to a lack of knowledge but rather due to feedback sensitivity, the increased awareness of and re-

action to perceived criticism. Many students worry about being ridiculed, misunderstood, or poorly evaluated. This causes the class climate to be one where not speaking is safer than participating. This fear curtails students' confidence and engagement, ultimately leading to poor oral communication skills.

In a global setting, students have similar difficulties understanding feedback sensitivity. Cooper et al. (2020) found that community college students in the USA who feared negative judgment were less willing to participate in active learning situations. Likewise, Aisyah (2023) found that Indonesian students avoided activities in English because of the fear of ridicule or errors in grammar. These studies suggest that learners often choose silence not because of inability but because of the fear of getting negative feedback.

The fear of negative evaluation is also related to communication apprehension. Abdul Manaf et al. (2021) found that students in Malaysia who were low in social confidence were anxious about how they might be perceived. Reduced participation in discussions was the result. Similarly, Zhao et al. (2022) reported that low self-efficacy nursing students in China used very purposeful, "negative silence," where they purposely withheld speech to avoid criticism. These findings stress that students' silence is a protective behalf to perceive evaluative instead of supportive environments.

Furthermore, feedback sensitivity has been found in previous research to directly affect oral competence in communication. For instance, Hu et al. (2021) found that students who felt a high degree of fear at receiving evaluative feedback withdrew from speech activities, thereby cutting down their opportunities to develop fluency of speech. Rosen and Patel (2022) discovered that students who perceived they were easily criticized did worse in regard to oral accuracy and fluency. Psychological variables such as feedback sensitivity, then,

most significantly affect communicative ability rather than, perhaps, linguistic knowledge.

The same result is found in the Philippine situation. Gonzales and Custodio (2019) reported that Senior High School students experience a high amount of anxiety due to teacher and peer fear of negative evaluation. Dizon (2020) reported that a fear of criticism by fellow students caused Filipino students to be reluctant to share their flows of ideas during oral speech activities.

Santos (2021) and Reyes (2022) show that when oral participation is evaluated, both anxiety and a fear of evaluation increase the anxiety of students, who then result in becoming less fluent and confident in their speaking. Clearly then, feedback sensitivity, especially toward other students and teachers, has a marked effect upon the oral performance.

The classroom climate likewise is seen to significantly affect the potential enabling of students' feedback sensitivity. Delos Reyes (2021) stresses that it is a result of the teacher feedback, peer feedback, and behavioral norms set down in the classroom, whether favorable or unfavorable, which positively or negatively affect a student's willingness to communicate. If told in a supportive and constructive manner, participation occurs; if replies be over-critical and evaluative, the students will be discouraged from participating in oral communication activities.

Local studies reported in Region XI also establish this relationship. Levels of Communication Anxiety Study (2020) has reported the degree of communication anxiety varying among Senior High School students in Davao del Norte, depending upon students' sex, academic choice of kind, and language used in the home. The study of Coscos and Buenaventura (2023) shows that positive feedback behavior and a supportive classroom climate leads positively to increase in oral competence in speech, but that a result of overly unfavorable evalua-

tive feedback leads to greater fear of evaluation in students. Therefore, students' behavior in regard to their appreciation of teacher and peer feedback is greatly related to their oral anchoring competence shown by them.

This realization is becoming more and more noticeable at Los Amigos National High School, where this growing problem is to be seen. There is much hesitation, little articulation, and a lack of confidence displayed on the part of students in Senior High School in various oral activities. This would appear to be a result of feedback sensitivity, due in particular to the fear of and perception of criticism on the part of both peers and teachers. Such feelings almost lead to students' fear to communicate successfully orally, but discourage them in many instances from taking an orga-

nized part in the general classroom work and in oral speech activities. Thus, oral development of pronunciation, grammar, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension has been limited.

The purpose of this study is then made clearer. It would aim to study feedback sensitivity, in particular the criticism of feedback which is given either from peers or students upon students of oral communication competence in Senior High School at Los Amigos National High School. It would attempt to show tendencies in the relationship of that variable with oral communication to give important keys which would show how that relationship can speedily be used for the accomplishing of gains in feedback format for the better development of oral communication form of students.

1.1. Conceptual Framework

This study is anchored on the premise that students' sensitivity to feedback significantly influences their oral communication syndrome. Feedback sensitivity refers to an individual's emotional and behavioral responses toward evaluation or criticism, particularly when coming from teachers and peers. In the classroom context, students who are highly sensitive to feedback often perceive comments and corrections negatively, leading to increased anxiety, self-consciousness, and a decreased willingness to engage in oral communication tasks. On the contrary, students who interpret feedback as constructive and supportive are more likely to develop confidence and actively participate in speaking activities. Hence, feedback sensitivity serves as the independent variable in this study, represented by two sub-variables: perceived criticism from teachers and perceived criticism from peers.

Oral communication syndrome, on the other hand, represents the dependent variable and pertains to the student's ability to effectively express thoughts and ideas through spo-

ken language. It is measured through five dimensions: pronunciation, grammar, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension, all of which indicate the student's level of communicative competence. The relationship between these two variables is grounded in the Fear of Negative Evaluation Theory (Watson & Friend, 1969) and Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis (1982), both of which assert that emotional factors such as fear, anxiety, and lack of confidence can hinder performance in communication. Thus, when students perceive feedback as overly critical, it can heighten anxiety and lower oral communication performance. Conversely, when feedback is delivered and received positively, students tend to perform better, speak more confidently, and show greater communicative competence. Understanding this relationship highlights the importance of creating a supportive classroom environment that fosters positive feedback, reduces fear of evaluation, and enhances students' oral communication skills.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

This study seeks to determine the relationship between Senior High School students' fear of negative feedback and their oral commu-

nication competence. Specifically, it aims to answer the following questions:

- (1) What is the level of feedback sensitivity among Senior High School students in terms of:
 - (1) perceived criticism from teachers; and
 - (2) perceived criticism from teachers peers?
- (2) What is the level of oral communication competence among Senior High School students in terms of:
 - (1) pronunciation;
 - (2) grammar;
 - (3) fluency;
 - (4) vocabulary; and
 - (5) comprehension?
- (3) Is there a significant relationship between overall feedback sensitivity and overall oral communication competence among Senior High School students?
- (4) Are there significant relationships between (separately):
 - (1) perceived criticism from teachers and oral communication competence; and
 - (2) perceived criticism from peers and oral communication competence?

2. Methodology

The researchers used the descriptive–correlational (cross-sectional) method of quantitative research. This method, as Calderon & Gonzales (2018) said, determines the relationship of two characteristics to a population through statistical methods of correlation. The method is designed to ascertain the relationship of at least two variables (Feedback sensitivity and Oral Communication Competence), so as to determine the relationship.

The research was conducted in Los Amigos National High School, division of Davao City. The research study used a stratified sampling procedure by which the Grade 11 students were classified according to their strand (HUMSS, ABM, STEM, ICT, Caregiving, FBS, and Agriculture). The data was gathered through a proper following of the procedure in data gathering with respect to the methods. The methods of data gathering were divided into two

parts. The first part was a survey in which the questionnaire was adopted from Leary, M. R. (1983). A short version of the Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 9(3), 371–375. The second part was a speaking activity in which questions were given on the spot so as to measure the oral communication competence of the students by the self-constructed rubrics.

The survey was pilot tested on Grade 11 students who were not chosen as respondents from their number, the Grade 11 Senior High School Students of Los Amigos National High School. The results were found in the Cronbach's alpha, which showed the reliability range of 0.86 for perceived criticism for the teachers, 0.82 reliability range for the perceived criticism for the peers, and 0.88 reliability range for oral communication competence, which meant that the instruments to be

used is reliable for the actual data gathering. The study used the mean and the standard deviation, to find out the level of the feedback sensitivity and the level of the oral communication competence. The Pearson Correlation Co-efficient was used to study the relationship

between feedback sensitivity and oral communication competence. The number of respondents was 170 Grade 11 students of Los Amigos National High School who were enrolled in the school year 2025 - 2026.

3. Results and Discussion

This chapter presents the analysis, interpretation, and discussion of data collected from 170 Senior High School students regarding their feedback sensitivity and oral communication competence. Statistical methods were employed to calculate mean scores, standard deviations, and correlations between variables. The study primarily aimed to examine students' perceptions of criticism from teachers and peers

and to explore how these perceptions affect their oral communication skills.

The results are organized into the following sections: (1) Perceived Criticism from Teachers; (2) Perceived Criticism from Peers; (3) Oral Communication Competence; and (4) The Relationship between Feedback Sensitivity and Oral Communication Competence.

3.1. Perceived Criticism from Teachers

Table 1. Level of Perceived Criticism from Teachers ($n = 170$)

Indicator	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Perceived Criticism from Teachers	3.50	0.81	Moderately High

From Table 1, it can be seen that students perceive criticism from teachers at moderate levels, since the combined mean is 3.50 and the standard deviation is 0.81. This means that most of the students view teacher feedback during oral activities as evaluative or judgmental. Although teacher feedback is needed for skill improvement, feedback so critical in its nature can serve to inhibit stu-

dent initiative in taking part in activities, and hence prevent experiences that would build self-confidence. This appears to be consistent with Brookhart's (2008) statement that feedback that is not framed constructively may be taken by students as criticism that has a detrimental effect on both their motivation and self-efficacy.

3.2. Level of Perceived Criticism from Peers

Table 2. Level of Perceived Criticism from Peers ($n = 170$)

Indicator	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Perceived Criticism from Peers	3.38	0.80	Moderate

The data reveal that the overall amount of perceived criticism from peers enjoyed a mean score of 3.38 with a standard deviation of .80, which is interpreted as moderate among the one hundred seventy respondents. This indicates that on average, students experience a moderate amount of perceived criticism from their classmates in the oral communication activities. In other words, while certain individuals may feel on occasion that they are judged or evaluated by their peers, yet this in general is not a consistent feeling of great or high magnitude. The moderate amount of criticism indi-

cates that criticism from peers is present and in itself may not produce enough discomfort to cause overwhelming bitterness or anxiety in the student body; nevertheless, it does indicate that the factor of peer reaction does play a noticeable part in some degree in the rise and decline of the students' confidence and participation in the oral communication tasks for the individual pupils, specially in that moderate sensitiveness to this criticism may have some effect on the manner in which they bring out their ideas freely in the classroom activities.

3.3. Level of Oral Communication Competence

Table 3. Level of Oral Communication Competence ($n = 170$)

Indicator	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Oral Communication Competence	3.36	0.66	Satisfactory

Students were found to have a satisfactory overall level of oral competence as indicated by a mean score of 3.36 ($SD = .66$) as indicated in Table 3. This shows that students have satisfactory competencies in the areas of proper pronunciation, grammar, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension and yet indicates possible weakness in this area. Students' level of oral performance may be inhibited by anxiety in

communication situations as a result of the fear of negative evaluation on the part of their listeners. The findings of this study are in agreement with McCroskey's (1977) theory that fear of negative evaluation leads to a diminished willingness to communicate verbally on the part of students thus leading also to apprehensive levels for performance.

3.4. Relationship between Feedback Sensitivity and Oral Communication Competence

Table 4. Correlation between Feedback Sensitivity and Oral Communication Competence

Variables	r -value	p -value	Interpretation
Perceived Criticism from Teachers and Oral Communication Competence	0.42	0.001	Significant Positive Correlation
Perceived Criticism from Peers and Oral Communication Competence	0.36	0.002	Significant Positive Correlation

The results of the correlation analysis revealed that feedback sensitivity—whether directed toward teachers or peers—has a signif-

icant positive relationship with the oral communication competence of Senior High School students. The perceived criticism from teach-

ers obtained an r -value of 0.42 with a p -value of 0.001, while perceived criticism from peers yielded an r -value of 0.36 with a p -value of 0.002, both of which indicate statistically significant positive correlations. These findings suggest that students who are more sensitive or responsive to feedback, regardless of whether it comes from teachers or classmates, tend to demonstrate higher levels of oral communication competence. Rather than hindering performance, the students appear to use criticism as a motivating factor to refine and improve their

oral communication skills. The significance of both correlations confirms that feedback sensitivity plays a meaningful role in shaping students' communication abilities. Overall, the results imply that constructive criticism—when perceived as helpful or growth-oriented—can positively influence students' confidence, preparation, and performance in oral communication tasks, highlighting the importance of maintaining a feedback environment that supports learning and continuous improvement.

4. Review of Significant Literature

Feedback sensitivity is strongly connected to learners' emotional reactions to evaluative situations, particularly in communication tasks. Recent studies emphasize that feedback sensitivity shapes learners' confidence, anxiety levels, and engagement. According to Clarke and Boud (2021), learners who are highly sensitive to evaluative comments often experience heightened emotional responses that affect their ability to process feedback constructively. Fear of negative evaluation (FNE), a

central component of feedback sensitivity, continues to be recognized as a significant contributor to language learning anxiety. In a recent investigation, Zhang and Wang (2021) found that students with high FNE demonstrate reduced participation and hesitancy in oral tasks due to fear of mistakes and criticism. Moreover, Li (2022) noted that feedback sensitivity impacts students' self-regulation, influencing how feedback is interpreted, used, or avoided during communication activities.

4.1. Perceived Criticism from Teachers and Peers

Teacher feedback remains one of the most influential factors in shaping learner performance. Molloy et al. (2020) emphasized that the perceived quality of teacher feedback—rather than the feedback itself—determines students' motivation and emotional responses. When criticism is perceived as harsh or discouraging, students may experience decreased confidence, especially in oral communication tasks. Recent research by Winstone and Carless (2020) highlighted that effective feedback must be relational, supportive, and forward-looking to prevent negative emotional reactions.

Peer feedback also plays an increasingly important role, especially among adolescents. Kim and Lee (2021) observed that peer criticism can trigger anxiety due to the social nature of adolescent learning environments, but it can also enhance communication skills when delivered constructively. Meanwhile, Yin et al. (2021) found that students value peer feedback when it is framed positively, resulting in improved fluency, clarity, and social confidence. These findings highlight the need to examine teacher and peer criticism separately, as both influence students differently.

4.2. Oral Communication Competence

Oral communication competence involves subskills such as pronunciation, fluency, grammar, vocabulary, and comprehension, all of which are sensitive to emotional and environmental factors. New research stresses that oral performance is not solely linguistic but also affective. Teng (2021) demonstrated that positive learning environments significantly enhance speaking confidence and fluency among Senior High School and college learners. Similarly, Tsang (2020) reported that constructive oral feedback improves learners' grammatical ac-

curacy and vocabulary use by guiding them toward clearer communication strategies.

Pronunciation and comprehension have also been connected to feedback processes. According to Saito and Plonsky (2021), quality feedback promotes better pronunciation performance by helping learners notice gaps in intelligibility. Moreover, Jin and Zhang (2020) found that comprehension improves when learners feel emotionally safe, highlighting the importance of feedback that reduces anxiety and supports active engagement.

4.3. Relationship Between Feedback Sensitivity and Oral Communication Competence

Recent studies provide consistent evidence that emotional factors, including feedback sensitivity and fear of negative evaluation, significantly shape oral communication performance. Liu and Xu (2021) found that students with high sensitivity to evaluative feedback show reduced fluency and increased self-monitoring during speech tasks. In contrast, students who perceive feedback positively demonstrate stronger oral expression and greater communicative confidence.

Supporting this, Baralt and Gurzynski-Weiss (2020) revealed that negative emotional states—often triggered by criticism—raise affective filters that impede language output, aligning with contemporary interpretations of affective learning theories. Meanwhile, Ahmed and Pawar (2023) confirmed that feedback anxiety has a measurable influence on pronunciation, fluency, and lexical richness, especially in high-pressure academic settings.

4.4. Importance of Differentiating Teacher and Peer Feedback

Recent literature emphasizes that teacher and peer criticism affect learners in unique ways. Teachers' comments carry authority and greatly influence academic self-perception, as shown by Ma et al. (2021), who found that teacher criticism has a stronger emotional impact than peer criticism. In contrast, peer feed-

back shapes students' social belonging. Sun and Fan (2022) found that adolescents were more emotionally affected by peer criticism due to concerns about acceptance and social image, directly influencing their willingness to communicate.

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