

Seminar Natural Language Processing (NLP) — Part 6

Basics of Feedback

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Notably based on Karsten and Scharlau (2022)

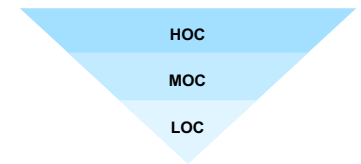


Outline

- **Basics of feedback**



- **How to provide feedback**



- **How to make feedback effective**



Basics of feedback

Feedback

▪ Feedback

- A response to a person on the person's results, performance, or behavior
- May be given in oral or written form
- May serve for support or for justification



▪ Feedback in the seminar

- **Oral talks.** Feedback to presenters as part of the discussion
- **Written articles.** Peer review of another one's article

More details on reviewing follow later.



▪ Learning goals

- Understand pro's and con's of different types of feedback
- Get to know common feedback techniques
- Learn how to make feedback achieve its purpose

Notice: Far from all will be needed in the seminar. The idea is to give a general background on feedback.

Feedback: Origins

- **Feedback in cybernetics** (Bröckling, 2006)
 - Self-regulating mechanism of dynamic systems to stabilize themselves
 - Continuous comparison of actual values with target value along with automatic adjustment
 - [Example](#). Thermostat
- **Feedback in social engineering** (Lewin, 1946)
 - Control of social behavior in group processes
 - Comparison of self-perception and external perception in order to improve communication within the group
- **Feedback today**
 - Often understood as a means to foster self-reflection
 - Also, performance improvement and success optimization in the focus



Feedback: Categorizations

- **Evaluative vs. developmental feedback**

- **Evaluative.** Assessment of good/bad aspects, often given as scores or similar
- **Developmental.** Guidance on what to improve in a text

- **Feed up vs. feed back vs. feed forward** (Hattie and Timperley, 2007)

- **Feed up.** Explanation of the goal of a learning task
- **Feed back.** Analysis/Assessment of past results and behavior
- **Feed forward.** Guidance on future results and behavior



- **Cognitive vs. affective feedback** (Nelson and Schunn, 2009)

- **Cognitive.** Focus on content of the presented result
- **Affective.** Focus on the quality of the presented result

Feedback: Settings

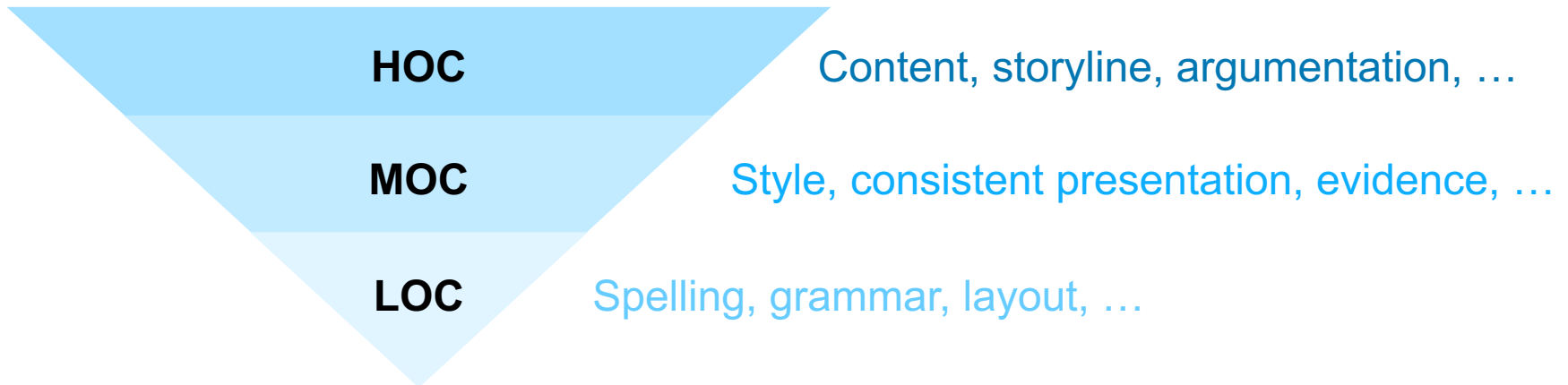
- **Private oral feedback (in individual meeting)**
 - **Pro.** Personalized, no exposure to public, questions possible
 - **Con.** Time-intensive, one subjective view, possible power asymmetry
- **Public oral feedback (in classroom)**
 - **Pro.** Immediate, possible to learn from each other
 - **Con.** Ad-hoc nature, often few time, may lead to defensiveness
- **Private written feedback (via mail etc.)**
 - **Pro.** Nuanced feedback, questions possible
 - **Con.** Can be overwhelming if long, may be misinterpreted if short
- **Anonymous written feedback (centralized)**
 - **Pro.** Authentic (from “real” readers), socially equal level
 - **Con.** Limited experience may affect quality, possible conflicts of interest

How to give feedback

Two important feedback rules first

- **HOC before LOC**

- Focus on and start with higher-order concerns (HOC)
- Cover lower-order concerns (LOC) at the end, only if time/attention permits



- **Who are you?**

- Clarify in what role you evaluate a presentation and give feedback
- Different perspectives may be taken on within the feedback
- Something may seem good from one perspective, but bad from another
- **Possible roles.** Reviewer, lay person, NLP expert, co-author, ...

General feedback techniques

▪ Sandwich method

- Start with something positive, then criticize, end with positive
- The idea is to thereby create a constructive atmosphere



<https://pixnio.com>

▪ Perception, effect, reaction

- Describe subjective perception, explain effect on yourself
- The idea is to avoid judgment and, thus, personal criticism



<https://pixabay.com>

▪ DIALogue method

- **Description.** What have you perceived?
- **Interpretation.** How do you interpret it and are affected by it?
- **Activation.** What would you keep, what change?



<https://www.pexels.com>

▪ Hands on your back

- Perceive presentation with a relaxed but curious mind
- Answer as an interested audience, not as an assessor



<https://commons.wikimedia.org>

Feedback technique: Mix and match

- **Mix and match** (Elbow and Belanoff, 1989)
 - Select a subset of 11 different techniques that fits the situation

- **Overview of techniques**
 1. **Share without feedback.** Simply play recording of, or read, presentation
 2. **Gravitation center.** Name presentation parts that left a particular effect
 3. **Recap and reflect.** Summarize what was said and what its idea was
 4. **Almost said.** Describe what needs to be said more clearly
 5. **Real answers.** Describe thoughts based on what was said
 6. **Voice.** Constructively describe interpretation of the presentation's author
 7. **Mental image.** Describe what you pictured during the presentation
 8. **Metaphor.** Explain what you learned via metaphors
 9. **Belief and doubt.** Name parts that were believable and that made you doubt
 10. **Descriptive outline.** Interpret core points of presentation one after another
 11. **Criterion-based.** Assess presentation in terms of different quality criteria

How to make feedback effective

Effective feedback

- **Making feedback effective**

- The techniques above build on principles of effective feedback
- In addition, phrasing feedback constructively is important



- **Seven principles of effective feedback** (Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick, 2006)

1. **Define “good”.** Clarify learning goals, expectations, and their evaluation
2. **Foster self-reflection.** Guide presenters to learn to improve themselves
3. **Give high-quality feedback.** Give relevant, immediate, and focused feedback
4. **Foster dialogue.** Allow for follow-up questions and individual foci
5. **Motivate.** Include positive points, criticize the performance, not the person
6. **Complete feedback loop.** Allow for revisions based on feedback
7. **Get feedback.** Learn how feedback is perceived and could be adjusted

- **Notice**

- Not all principles apply to all feedback situations
- Some are more meant for advisors

Perception of feedback

▪ Feedback is subjective

- Fundamentally builds on individual perception
- Not objective truth, but personal view (not open to discussion)
- Affected by the given social situation and power relationship



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▪ Feedback is personal

- Critical feedback can be hurtful, even if constructive
- Harsh feedback may lead to defensive reactions
- Positive feedback can be encouraging... but is often not enough

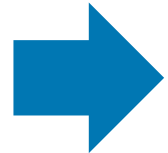
Techniques such as the sandwich method build on this idea.



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▪ Feedback should be constructive

- Feedback ultimately aims to make people improve
- Feedback should be honest but encouraging
- A mix of feed up/back/forward is often useful



Feed forward
Where to go next?

Constructive feedback

▪ Selected guidelines for constructiveness

- Don't criticize the presenter, criticize their presentation.

Avoid: You claimed that...

Better: Your presentation suggests that...

- Don't sell your opinions as facts.

Avoid: That point is wrong...

Better: In my view, that point is wrong...

- Don't be harsh, be fair and encouraging.

Avoid: I think that your talk lacked any clear structure...

Better: I think that the structure of the talk is improvable...

- Don't over-intensify negative points.

Avoid: In my view, this is very misleading and not clear at all...

Better: In my view, this is misleading and not clear...

- Don't criticize without giving a reason or improvement suggestion.

Avoid: I think that the structure of the talk is improvable.

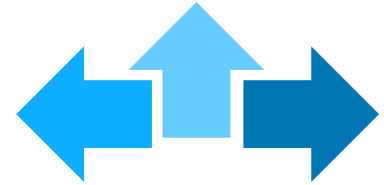
Better: I think that the structure of the talk is improvable, because... I'd recommend...

Conclusion

Conclusion

▪ **Feedback**

- Response to a person on results, performance, or behavior
- Can be oral or written, can be public, private, or anonymous
- May be evaluative or developmental



▪ **Giving effective feedback**

- Several feedback techniques exist for different situations
- Best practices exist for making feedback effective
- Feedback should be constructive



▪ **Feedback in the seminar**

- You may give oral feedback to the student talks
- Later, you have to do a peer review of another one's article
- More details on feedback in reviews will follow later



References

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