

PROVIDING FEEDBACK AND GRADES TO SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNERS: SUPPLEMENT 4

Using Error Codes to Respond to an L2 Paper

This document uses the codes provided in the [Supplement 3: Error Code List](#) to mark some language errors in an L2 paper.

The assignment asked students to investigate how an English idiom was used historically and in current society. This student chose to study “face the music” and the handout includes the first page of the student’s paper. We chose to use this section mainly because of the apparent language issues and the fairly effective use of rhetorical strategies.

The feedback included in this handout is part of the instructor’s first round of feedback. The instructor later went over the written feedback with the student in an instructor-student conference.

When you read the paper, you will notice this student can express himself/herself in English fairly clearly. For students at this level, the instructor can be more indirect and leave the student more space to self-correct. For example, when the student mistakenly used “their” for “they,” no error code was given. The instructor simply left a green highlight to draw the student’s attention. But there are quite a few determiner related errors. The instructor used the code DETC, MDET (See [Supplement: The Error Type List](#) for a comprehensive description of all error codes) to give students hints on what the problem is there. A pink highlight is used for an entire sentence because this goes beyond the L2 language scope. The sentence is not wrong, but not as effective as it could be. The instructor then gave more direct suggestions on how to restructure this sentence.

SAMPLE A

Research on the American Idiom "face the music" and Reflection on Foreign Language Learning

"Face the music" is the American idiom I conducted research into. It is used when people have to accept the unpleasant consequences of their actions or have to confront and cope with difficult situations. The reason why I chose this idiom is that this English phrase was once ^{WC} kind of popular in my non-English speaking school in China. Students said it when their got an ugly score on the exam ^{MOET}. They said it when they had to visit Dean's office for over absence. They said it to encourage friends to stand up and look ahead when difficult ^{MOET} time came. This idiom seemed to have the magic power to show one was quite familiar with English culture and enable one to sound like a native speaker. Using "face the music" somewhat secretly gave students a sense of achievement and superiority in English speaking. The idiom went along our Chinese ^{MW} and finally became a fashion at one time. However, as my research went on, I got the surprising results that

it was not the case in America at all. Therefore I furthered the survey into roughly contrast the current usage of this idiom between Americans and Chinese and analyze the reasons behind the phenomenon and finally provoke some thoughts on the foreign language learning.

When we used the idiom "face the music" in China, we came naturally to curious about its origin. "Why Americans use the seemingly agreeable word "music" to represent unpleasant things? What kind of music are they referring to?" I searched for answers on the Internet as well as books. The earliest citation of this idiom dated back to mid nineteenth century in American. In the New Hampshire Statesman & State Journal, August 1834, it wrote: "Will the editor of the Courier explain this black affair? We want no equivocation - 'face the music' this time."

try to break this sentence into at least 2 new sentences (1 idea = 1 sentence)
Verb choices
may need to change;
we'll talk about this when we meet.