

EFL Teachers and Students' Perceptions and Preferences towards Oral Corrective Feedback: A Comparative Study

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Abstract

Oral corrective feedback in language classroom has received considerable attention for the last few decades. It plays a significant positive role in improving second or foreign language teaching and learning. However, it has different types to follow and different times of provision. The current study aims to explore EFL university teachers and students' perceptions and preferences towards oral corrective feedback. In light of that, data were collected via two questionnaires each consisted of (17) items on five themes: (4) items on oral corrective feedback in general, (6) items on types of oral corrective feedback, and (3) items on time of oral corrective feedback, (3) items on who provides corrective feedback, and (1) item on focus of oral corrective feedback. The questionnaires were presented to the sample of the study which included (13) instructors and (55) fourth stage students from the Department of English at Al-Noor University College. Following that, data were analyzed statistically using SPSS program and the results show that both teachers and students believe that oral corrective feedback plays a positive role in language teaching and learning, Recasts and repetition are the most adopted types of oral corrective feedback, correction after the activity finishes is the best time of providing oral corrective feedback, teachers are best to be the providers of oral corrective feedback and that mispronunciation is what should be focused on during oral correction feedback. Finally, the study ends with some conclusions and recommendations.

Keywords: *EFL, Feedback, Oral Correction, Oral Corrective Feedback.*

1. Introduction

English as a foreign language is not used by EFL learners as an everyday language. When learners speak English orally, they often make mistakes because they don't have enough time to think about using the right words. Making mistakes when speaking English is common for EFL learners. These learners seek to master all aspects of the English language in terms of fluency and accuracy. However, fluency is challenging for EFL/ESL learners. They understand the importance of avoiding mistakes in speech to communicate effectively with native English speakers. Therefore, it is important to address the problem of error prevention in speaking and listening in class (Fan, 2019).

EFL students face difficulties in mastering grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary and as a result they often make mistakes when speaking. This, in turn, negatively affects their performance, leading to stress. Despite their efforts, errors persist, suggesting that educators and researchers need to pay attention to language learning problems, especially the use of correction feedback (CF). CF helps learners identify mistakes and improve their fluency. Studies show that instructors should correct speech errors as they occur to facilitate learning (e.g., Coskun, 2010; Martin and Valdivia, 2017; Papangkorn, 2015). Therefore, EFL teachers have to decide whether to correct oral errors or mistakes and, if so, how to do it in a way that supports the student's learning without causing stress or embarrassment. This makes oral corrective feedback (OCF) crucial for all EFL teachers and their classroom practices.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The problem of the current study is embodied in the fact that if instructors do not give students feedback when they commit errors; it demotivates them from learning and that they may not know their errors leading to negative attitudes towards participating and language learning. On the other hand, if corrective feedback is given, then time of providing and what to focus on in correction might also lead to discrepancies between instructors and students which in turn affect learning process. In light of that, the following questions are addressed from both, teachers and students' perspectives:

1. What are the perceptions of EFL teachers and learners with regard to oral corrective feedback in general?
2. What are the perceptions and preferences of EFL teachers and learners with regard to types of oral corrective feedback?
3. What are the perceptions and preferences of EFL teachers and learners with regard to timing of oral corrective feedback?
4. What are the perceptions and preferences of EFL teachers and learners with regard to who provides the oral corrective feedback?
5. What are the perceptions and preferences of EFL teachers and learners concerning focus of errors correction feedback?

1.2 Hypotheses of the Study

It is hypothesized that:

1. Teachers and students have positive attitudes towards oral corrective feedback in general.
2. 'Repetition' is expected to be in favour among other types of oral corrective feedback for both teachers and students.

3. 'Providing oral corrective feedback after the activity ends is expected to be the best timing of oral corrective feedback.
4. 'teachers should provide the oral corrective feedback'
5. 'Mispronunciation' is expected to take priority among other errors in oral corrective feedback.

1.3 Aims of the Study

The current study aims at:

1. Providing a theoretical account on oral corrective feedback.
2. Exploring teachers and students' perceptions on oral corrective feedback.
3. Investigating teachers and students' perceptions and preferences towards types of oral corrective feedback.
4. Identifying which time is best in providing oral corrective feedback.
5. Identifying who is best to provide oral corrective feedback.
6. Determining which kind of mistakes should be focused on in oral corrective feedback.

1.4 Limits of the Study

The current study is limited to investigate teachers and students' perceptions towards oral corrective feedback in terms of OCF in general, types of OCF, time of OCF, who provides OCF and focus of errors correction in OCF. It is further limited to a sample of (13) instructors and (55) fourth year university students in the Department of English at Al-Noor University College during the second semester of the academic year 2022-2023.

2. Theoretical Background

This section provides information on the theoretical part of the research topic, as the following sub-sections tackle the details of the topic in terms of concept, definition, types, classifications, etc.

2.1 Concept of Corrective Feedback

Feedback refers to comments on the activities of others and is an important aspect of education and training programs. Learners typically receive feedback after completing assignments, presentations, essays, and other similar activities. Feedback includes interactions between teachers and learners to provide information about an individual's performance or comprehension. It is seen as a result of agent performance such as: teachers, colleagues, books, or parents (Hattie & Timperley, 2007: 81).

The term corrective feedback has been defined differently over time. It is generally defined as the process of sharing observations, concerns, and suggestions among individuals or departments within an organization with the goal of improving both

individual and organizational performance. Corinne (2013: 520, quoted in Mahdi & Saadany, 2013: 9) defines feedback as the process by which the factors contributing to a result are modified, or enhanced by that result, or as a response that initiates such a process. Chaudron (1977: 31) defines corrective feedback as a teacher response that visibly alters, disapproves of, or improves the learner's speech. Ellis, Rowen and Earlham (2006: 340) provide a more recent definition; they state that:

Corrective feedback takes the form of responses to learner utterances that contain error. The responses can consist of (a) an indication that an error has been committed, (b) provision of the correct target language form, or (c) meta-linguistic information about the nature of the error, or any combination of these.

Additionally, feedback is essential in various settings such as work, school, and classrooms. In fact, feedback is an integral part of classroom instruction and essential for learners to receive constructive and effective feedback from their teachers. According to Hattie and Yates (2007), providing feedback motivates learners to continue learning and improves skills by narrowing the gap between current and expected performance “empathy gap”. Feedback not only helps decrease errors, but it also strengthens the relationship between teacher and learner. In essence, feedback is the articulation of a teacher's thoughts on student performance. According to Race (2001), feedback is a natural outcome of learning-oriented activities. Thus, strong and well-delivered feedback can create ripples, ultimately leading to learning by doing and even motivating learners.

2.2 Types of Feedback

Feedback can be divided into two main types, namely oral feedback and written feedback as explained in the following subsections.

2.2.1 Oral Feedback

According to Li (2018), oral feedback refers to a teacher's verbal response to a student's incorrect verbal expression. Teachers are responsible for correcting these mistakes because students often believe that only teachers can correct these mistakes.

During a task, teachers can provide oral feedback which refers to their verbal responses to unacceptable language utterances made

by students (ibid). While oral feedback may be less formal than written feedback, it can be highly effective because it can be given during the task and prompt students to reflect on their learning. Immediate feedback, where the feedback is given immediately after the error is committed, is preferred by some scholars such as Doughty (2001), while others like Long (1997) advocate for delayed feedback to avoid disrupting communication. However, there is no clear evidence to show which type of feedback is superior.

2.2.1.1 Types of Oral Corrective Feedback

The framework developed by Lyster and Ranta (1997) has served as the basis for numerous studies on oral corrective feedback (OCF) in the classroom. Researchers such as Oliver (1995), Lyster (1998), and Ammar and Spada (2006), Sheen (2011) and Lee (2013) have conducted research to investigate various uses of OCF. They identify six types of OCF, including recast, explicit correction, clarification request, elicitation, repetition, and metalinguistic feedback. Table (1) provides explanations and examples for each type of OCF.

Table (1) Types of Oral Corrective Feedback adapted from (Knutsson, & Köster, 2020).

OCF Types	Definition	Example
Explicit Correction	Indicates an error; identifies the error, and provides the correction.	S: On May. T: Not on May, in May.
Recast	Reformulates all or part of the incorrect word or phrase to show the correct form without explicitly identifying the error.	S: I have to find the answer on the book? T: In the book
Clarification Request	Indicates that the student's utterance was not understood and asks the student to reformulate it.	S: What do you spend with your wife? T: What? (Or, Sorry?)
Meta-linguistic feedback	Gives technical linguistic information about the error without explicitly providing the correct answer.	S: There are influence person who. T: Influence is a noun.
Elicitation	Prompts the student to self-correct by pausing, so the student can fill in the correct	S: This tea is very warm. T: It's very?

	word or phrase.	S: Hot.
Repetition	Repeats the student's error while highlighting the error or mistake by means of emphatic stress.	S: I will showed you. T: I will SHOWED you? S: I'll show you.

2.2.2 Written Feedback

Calderón (2013) defines written feedback as a means of explaining language errors in writing and providing students with information about what corrections are needed to achieve acceptable form. This type of feedback also provides grammatical explanations to help students understand the correct forms.

Students typically receive written feedback after the task. Effective written feedback gives students a clear understanding of their strengths and weaknesses, as well as suggestions to improve their writing. Feedback should be timely, immediately following the event, and written in an understandable and actionable manner. Feedback should also show where students have achieved their learning goals and where they need to improve, and encourage students to reflect on their responses and ask critical questions (Chappuis, 2012; Hattie and Timperley, 2007).

3. Previous Studies

Previous research has shown that teachers' oral feedback receives more attention than other types of feedback. It is believed that classroom setting influence the types of corrections teachers use and how students respond to them (Lier, 1988: 211, cited in Rydahl, 2005: 6-7). However, according to Nystrom (1983: 169 cited in *ibid*), a teacher's personal style can also influence how students receive feedback. A study conducted by Büyükbay and Dabaghi (2010, cited in Fungula, 2013), shows that repetition as a form of corrective feedback resulted in significant improvements in language acquisition and was effective in student comprehension.

According to Lyster's (1998) study, recast was commonly used by teachers to correct phonological and grammatical errors, whereas, elicitation, clarification request, repetition and meta-linguistic feedbacks were less effective for lexical errors. However, Rydahl's (2005) study shows that teachers generally prefer recasts to verbal feedback because it helps students understand most effectively. The main benefit is that students do not feel embarrassed in the class.

However, the current study investigates EFL University teachers and students' towards OCF in terms of concept, type, provider, time, and focus of correction.

4. Methodology

To achieve the aims and verify hypotheses of the current research, the practical steps that have been followed in the current study are described in the following subsections.

4.1 Population and Sample:

The research community included all of (27) instructors and (150) fourth-stage students at Al-Noor University College / English Department. In addition, the research sample included (13) instructors and (55) male and female students from the research community at Al-Noor University College / English Department, during the second semester of the academic year 2022-2023. The questionnaires targeted fourth stage students because they have come a long way in learning to conversation and oral presentation practice.

4.2 The Questionnaires

The items of the questionnaires have been adapted from deep theoretical research and previous studies. The questionnaires include (17) items and were designed to consist of three-point Likert scale, namely (Agree, Neutral, Disagree) and cover five themes as follows: (4) items on oral corrective feedback in general, (6) items on types of oral corrective feedback, and (3) items on time of oral corrective feedback, (3) items on who provides corrective feedback, and (1) item on focus of oral corrective feedback.

Following that, the questionnaires were presented to jury members, who are experts in the field of TEFL to judge on the suitability and validity of the questionnaires. Remarks concerning modifications, suitability and relevance of the items have been approved by the jury members to be suitable, relevant, and valid for the purpose of the current research.

4.3 Procedures

The questionnaires were submitted electronically through using Google forms; the link of questionnaires was submitted to the sample of the study for and they were informed about the purpose of the link (research purposes) with instructions on how to respond to the items of the questionnaires. After that, responses were collected and calculated statistically through using SPSS program.

5. Results and Discussion

Data were calculated and analyzed by the researchers statistically and the results are displayed in the following tables:

Table (2) Result of Teachers and Students' Responses

Theme	No.	Items	Teachers		Students	
			Sharpness	Weight Percentile	Sharpness	Weight Percentile
Oral Corrective Feedback in general	1	Whenever an oral error or mistake occurs in EFL classroom, teachers have to correct it.	1.923	64.10%	2.709	90.30%
	2	I think that correcting EFL learners' spoken errors can negatively affect their self-esteem and consequently discourage them from speaking.	2.154	71.79%	1.855	61.82%
	3	I feel it is important to use particular techniques that save learners' face in correcting their spoken errors.	2.846	94.87%	2.927	97.58%
	4	Oral corrective feedback helps to the development of learners' speaking skill.	2.692	89.74%	2.982	99.39%
Types of Oral Corrective Feedback	5	Teachers should indicate that student's utterance was not correct Explicitly. For example, "It's not X but Y".	2.077	69.23%	2.4	80.00%
	6	I think it is better if teachers repeat a student's utterance and provide the correction where student has made a mistake, without pointing out that student's utterance was incorrect.	3	100%	2.818	93.94%
	7	A teacher should repeat student's utterance stopping just before the error to refer to the student that a repetition or a reformulation is needed.	2.923	97.44%	2.673	89.09%
	8	I think it is better if teachers ask questions about the formation of the utterance and give tips about the errors.	2.538	84.62%	2.564	85.45%
	9	Teachers should try to get students to elicitation by using questioning techniques without tips.	2.769	92.31%	2.382	79.39%

	10	I think that teachers have to correct a student's error by repeating the utterance with a change of intonation to draw student's attention to the error.	3	100%	2.836	94.55%
Time of oral corrective feedback	11	Oral errors should be corrected on the spot. (immediately after the error)	1.923	64.10%	2.655	88.48%
	12	It is preferable to provide oral corrective feedback in the class after the speaking activity ends so that all learners get benefit.	3	100%	2.909	96.97%
	13	It is more appropriate to give oral corrective feedback to the learners on their errors after they finish the oral activity in private.	2.231	74.36%	2.127	70.91%
Who provides oral corrective feedback	14	It is best that teachers supply the correct answer.	2.692	89.74%	2.927	97.58%
	15	I think that teachers should get students' spoken errors corrected by their peers.	2.615	87.18%	1.582	52.73%
	16	I feel that getting students to self-correction is more beneficial in speaking activities.	3	100%	2.382	79.39%

Based on the results shown in table (2) above, and as far as the first theme is concerned, both teachers and students believe that it is important to use particular techniques that save learners' face when correcting their errors. Besides, both parties of the study, teachers and students, find oral corrective feedback of high importance in improving students' speaking skill. This is due to the highest percentages of items number (3 and 4) which contradicts with the lowest percentages of items number (1 and 2) showing that teachers and students do not agree with the idea that OCF can negatively affect students' self-esteem and consequently discourage them from speaking. This indicates that the first hypothesis concerning that teachers and students have positive attitudes towards OCF and that it has positive effects on students' learning is proved.

As for the second theme, types of OCF which were as follows, item number 5 represents *Explicit Correction*, item number 6 represents *Recasts*, item number 7 represents *Clarification Requests*, item number 8 represents *Meta-linguistic cue*, item number 9

represents *Elicitation* and item number 10 represents *Repetition*. Results show that both teachers and students are in favour of Recasts and Repetition. This indicates that the results of the current study are compatible with the results of the previous studies especially with those of Lyster (1998) and Rydahl (2005).

Concerning time of OCF, it is found that both teachers and students prefer after activity ends so that all learners get benefit from the oral correction.

However, concerning provider of OCF, teachers believe and prefer that getting students to self-correction is more beneficial in speaking activities while students believe that It is best that teachers supply the correct answer. Figure (1) and (2) give more illustration of these results.

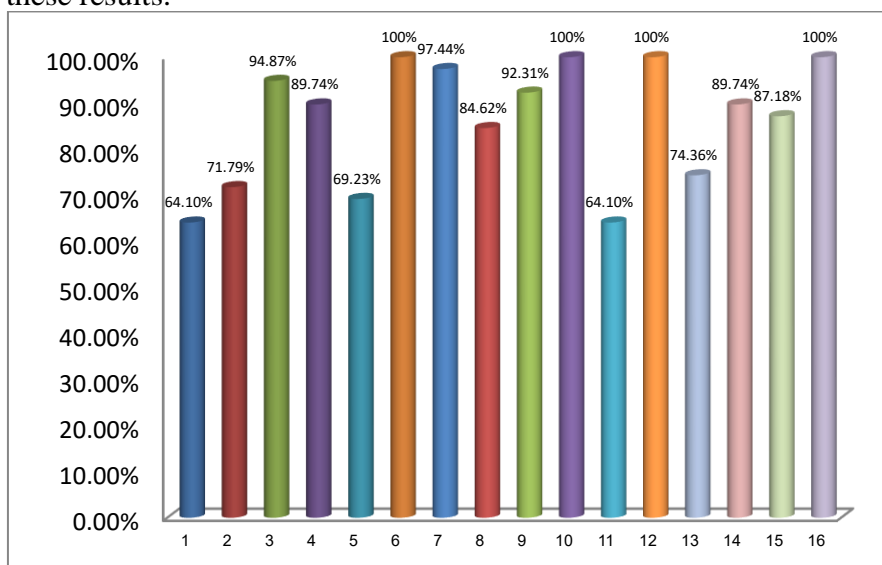


Figure (1) Results of Teachers' Responses

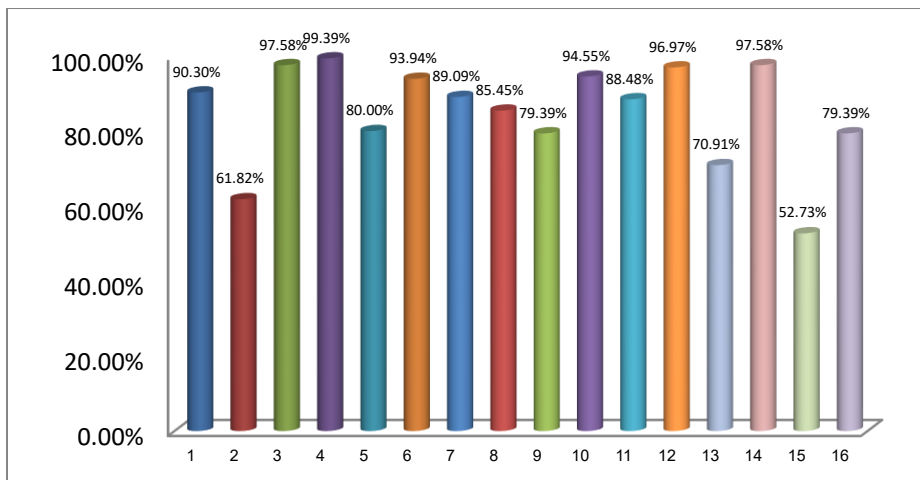


Figure (2) Results of Students' Responses

In respect to the last theme, it is separated from the other items of the questionnaire because participants were required to answer to different options, i.e. Grammatical mistakes, mispronunciation and inappropriate vocabulary use, which were calculated according to frequency of answers. Results of this theme are shown in table (3) below:

Table (3) Results of Teachers and Students' Responses to Focus of Correction

Theme	No.	Options	Teachers		Students	
			No.	%	No.	%
Focus of Oral Corrective Correction	1.	Grammatical mistakes	1	8 %	16	29 %
	2.	Mispronunciation	12	92 %	33	60 %
	3.	Inappropriate vocabulary use.	0	0 %	6	11 %

Results in the preceding table show that both teachers and students are in favour of focusing on mispronunciation mistakes to improve speaking skill and fluency rather than focusing on grammatical mistakes which is related to accuracy.

6. Conclusions

In general, most students like to receive oral corrective feedback from their lecturers. The questionnaire analysis reveals that teachers and students believe that feedback provided by instructors is valuable and promote their learning. The students showed the same perceptions and preferences about the items of the questionnaire except the provider of feedback in that teachers believe that self-correction is best in OCF, while students believe that it is best that teachers supply the correct answer and feedback. Moreover, teachers and students consider Oral Corrective Feedback as very important element to foster learning. They also find it beneficial that students can find out errors and correct their mistake through corrective feedback. More interestingly, different approaches of feedback are used in oral class activities, but among them recasts and repetition types are used most frequently. Mispronunciation correction is what should be focused on in oral activities.

7. Recommendations

On the basis of the findings derived from teachers and students' responses, the study puts forward the recommendations below that might help teachers in providing oral corrective feedback during oral classroom activities:

1. Teachers and students perceive recasts and repetition, as OCF types, quite positively. Thus, teachers should utilize these feedback types more frequently in their classes.
2. Teachers are recommended to avoid providing immediate corrective feedback because it might discourage students from participating in the lesson.
3. In terms of the timing of oral feedback, it is recommended that teachers wait until finish their activity and then provide feedback.
4. Concerning who provides corrective feedback, it is best that teachers try to get students to self correction before supplying the correct answer themselves or by denoting that the students' self-correction was correct or modify it.
5. As far as the focus of oral correction is concerned, it is best to focus on mispronunciation mistakes.
6. Large number of students might make students do not want to participate in order to avoid embracement of making mistakes or getting corrective feedback. For this reason, it is recommended to take number of students in class into consideration.

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