Teacher's Corrective Feedback to Students' Oral Production in EFL Classrooms

Nida Mujahidah Fathimah
Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia
Bandung, Indonesia
nida.mf12@gmail.com

Abstract—**Corrective feedback which requires the appropriate strategies in treating learner errors during the classroom interaction is known to have a greater impact on younger learners than to the older ones. Regarding this issue, this research paper investigated teachers' strategies in providing corrective feedback along with students' perception of teachers' corrective feedback strategies in adolescents classroom which are still rarely examined. This research involved four teachers and twelve junior high school students in two EFL classrooms in an English course in Bandung. A case study was employed in this study by conducting classroom observation through field notes and audio-video recording as well as interviews to collect the data. Based on the research findings, it was revealed that the eight corrective feedback strategies were employed during the classroom interaction. However, only the input-providing strategies were applied consistently by all teachers while the distribution of output-prompting strategies was varied among the teachers. Among those strategies, teachers mostly preferred recasts to correct learner errors which accounted for 51% of the total occurrences. Besides, it was revealed that most students expected their errors to be corrected through the use of explicit correction and perceived corrective feedback as a beneficial contribution to their language learning.**

Keywords: corrective feedback, EFL classrooms, oral production

I. INTRODUCTION

In language learning, feedback is necessary to support second language learning. Feedback can be positive or negative, and corrective feedback belongs to negative feedback as a response to language error utterance (Ellis, 2009). In the field of second language acquisition (SLA), corrective feedback has gone through a long and controversial history for over a past couple of decades. The concern regarding corrective feedback is closely related to the instruction of the language learning classroom.

In the 1980s, there was a major shift in the language classroom instruction from rule-focused approach e.g. grammar-translation method and audio-lingualism to meaning-focused one e.g. Communicative Language Teaching (Allwright & Bailey, 1991; Brown, 2000; Lightbown, 2000; Lightbown & Spada, 1990; Liu, 2015; Russell, 2009). When audio-ligualism was practiced in second language learning, the amount of correction should be limited since errors were to be avoided although it was viewed as inevitable (Russell, 2009;

Ur, 1996). This perspective is in contrast with the principle of the communicative approach in which errors were no longer avoided, but it has been viewed as a part of the language acquisition process. As communicative language teaching becomes popular, corrective feedback also gains much attention in which research in various contexts is conducted. Current SLA researchers now believe the positive influences of corrective feedback as it is proven to be facilitative to second language learning (Ellis, 2006; Ellis, Loewen, & Erlam, 2006).

Corrective feedback is a response to a learner's erroneous utterance by 1) indicating where the error has occurred, 2) providing the correct structure of the erroneous utterance, or 3) providing metalinguistic information describing the nature of the error, or any combination of these (Rahimi & Dastjerdi, 2012). There are some techniques that teachers can select in providing oral corrective feedback as proposed by Lyster and Ranta (1997). There are six different feedback categories including (1) recast, defined as "the teacher's reformulation of all or part of a student's utterance, minus the error," (2) explicit correction in which additional information is given to indicate students' errors, (3) clarification request which indicates that a reformulation is needed since the information cannot be understood, (4) repetition of an error in which teachers highlight students' errors by repeating it in rising intonation, (5) elicitation in which teachers directly elicit the reformulation, and (6) metalinguistic feedback in which teachers give comments, information, or questions related to the reformation of the student's utterance. Besides, Panova and Lyster (2002) include another corrective feedback strategy namely translation referred to as a teacher's move to translate learners' well-form utterances in their first language into the target language. Another strategy is proposed by Ellis (2009) namely paralinguistic signal which is defined as a teacher's gesture or facial expression to indicate that an error has been made in learner utterances. Based on those categories, this study focuses on eight techniques of oral corrective feedback that can be used to correct learner errors.

Corrective feedback can be either implicit or explicit. Ellis et al. (2006) suggest that when providing implicit feedback, teachers correct learner's erroneous utterance without overtly indicating that there has been an error and maintaining the focus on meaning. Explicit types of feedback either point out that an error has been committed or push learners to self-correct, or both. Based on its function, corrective feedback can also be categorized as input-providing (the teacher provides the correct form) or output-prompting (the teacher elicit the correct form from the student). The categorization of feedback named

as a taxonomy of corrective feedback strategy proposed by Sheen and Ellis (2011) is shown in Table I below.

TABLE I.   A TAXONOMY OF CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK STRATEGIES

	Implicit	Explicit
Input-providing	Conversational recast	Didactic Recast Explicit Correction Translation
Output-prompting	Repetition Clarification Request	Metalinguistic Feedback Elicitation Paralinguistic Signal

Ellis and Sheen (2006) differentiate two types of recast, conversational recast, and didactic recast. This categorization follows their view on recasts in which it is argued that recasts cannot be seen as purely implicit feedback (Ellis & Sheen, 2006). Conversational recast is categorized as implicit feedback which reformulates a student's utterance which causes a communication problem. Even though conversational recast is usually performed to maintain the flow of communication, its implicitness may cause an ambiguity since it may be received as a confirmation rather than a correction.

In classroom settings, teachers are responsible for providing corrective feedback to support the development of students' interlanguage systems (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). Likely, students rely much on teachers' linguistic feedback and correction as teachers are considered to have superior knowledge who have a primary role as a feedback provider (Brown, 2001; Chaudron, 1986). Some research findings also revealed that students preferred teachers' correction to peer correction and self-correction (Méndez & Cruz, 2012; Tomczyk, 2013; Zhu, 2010).

In providing corrective feedback, the teacher should consider when and how to correct the errors (Gebhard, 2009; Lyster & Ranta, 1997). However, there is no certain technique which is considered appropriate for correcting learners' errors since there are many influential factors that influencing the effectiveness of corrective feedback, and one of them is learners' age.

Learners' age may cause an influential effect of language development since younger learners seemed to benefit from corrective feedback more than older learners (Lyster & Saito, 2010; Rezaei, Mozaffari, & Hatef, 2011). Younger learners appear to be more sensitive to corrective feedback in which the impact of corrective feedback will be greater than the older learners. Lyster and Saito (2010) suggest that teachers should take benefits of this potential to enhance the development of language learners' accuracy.

Many research concerning teacher's corrective feedback mostly dealt with adult learners in English classroom (Bakar & Abdullah, 2014; Faqeih, 2012; Fidan, 2015; Méndez, Cruz, & Loyo, 2010; Rassaei & Moinzadeh, 2011) while research involving younger learners such as adolescents is still rarely investigated (Taipale, 2012). Regarding this issue, this research tries to investigate teachers' corrective feedback strategies involving adolescents in EFL classrooms by following these research questions: 1) What are teachers' oral corrective feedback strategies used to correct students' oral production in EFL classrooms? 2) What are students' perceptions of teacher's oral corrective feedback strategies used in the classrooms?

II. METHOD

This research employed a case study as the research design. Four teachers and twelve junior high school students were involved as research participants. The data were collected for fourteen meetings through classroom observation and interviews conducted in one English course in Bandung. The data from observation were collected through video and audio recordings as well as field notes. Quantitative measurement was also involved to see the number, percentage, and distribution of teachers' corrective feedback strategies in the classroom. The interviews were also carried out to find out the learners' perceptions of teachers' corrective feedback. The data of teachers' corrective feedback strategy were coded and analyzed to investigate its frequency based on the categorization of feedback strategy proposed by Lyster and Ranta (1997), Panova and Lyster (2002), and Ellis (2009). Meanwhile, the findings from interviews were explored as supporting data.

III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A. Teachers' Corrective Feedback to Students' Oral Production

There are eight categories of oral corrective feedback strategies that can be used to correct learners' errors. Those strategies are categorized by Lyster and Ranta (1997), Panova and Lyster (2002), and Ellis (2009) comprising recast (RC), translation (TR), explicit correction (EC), clarification request (CR), metalinguistic feedback (MF), elicitation (EL), repetition (RP), and paralinguistic signal (PS). In this research, there were four teachers observed for fourteen meetings (3-4 meetings per teacher) in adolescent EFL classrooms to capture their strategies in providing corrective feedback as a response to learners' errors during oral production. The distribution of teachers' corrective feedback is displayed in Table II.

TABLE II.   THE DISTRIBUTION OF TEACHERS' CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK STRATEGIES

CF Type	1	2	3	4	Frequency	Percentage
RC	3	11	34	19	67	51%
EL		1	3	18	22	16.7%
TR	2	4	3	10	19	14.4%
EC	2	4	6	3	15	11%
RP				3	3	2.3%
MF			2	1	3	2.3%
PS				2	2	1.5%
CR			1		1	0.8%
Total	7	20	49	55	132	100%

The data from the Table II. above show that in general, teachers much more likely use recast (RC) as the strategy in providing oral corrective feedback to the learners, followed by elicitation (EL), translation (TR), explicit correction (EC), repetition (RP) as well as metalinguistic feedback (MF) with the same number of occurrences, paralinguistic signal (PS), and clarification request (CR) with the least occurrences. The only strategies used by all teachers are in the form of input-providing, namely recast, translation, and explicit correction while the use of output-prompting strategies is dominant in the fourth teacher's class.

It is not surprising that recast happens to be the most frequent strategy used by the teachers which comprises 51% of the total occurrences since it had been proven to be the most favored strategy to treat learners' errors (Hampl, 2011; Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Maolida, 2013; Pandu, 2014; Panova & Lyster, 2002; Sheen, 2004; Taipale, 2012). Recast is commonly considered as implicit feedback as it gives no explicit indication that the utterance is ill-formed, but its degree of implicitness may vary since recasts can occur in different forms (Lyster & Ranta, 1997).

The use of recast has been popular among teachers as they offer various advantages for students (Ellis & Sheen, 2006; Lyster & Panova, 2002). First, it will not break the flow of communication thus the fluency can still be maintained. Second, they help students to notice the differences between the error and the well-formed utterances. Moreover, they also correct without the risk of embarrassing the students.

The following recast, elicitation strategy occurred 22 times out of 132 accounting for 16.7% of all corrective feedback moves. This finding supports previous studies (Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Pandu, 2014) which revealed that following recasts, teachers preferred elicitation rather than other output-prompting strategies. Elicitation is an explicit type of corrective feedback categorized as output-prompting feedback (Sheen & Ellis, 2011) which directly elicits the reformulation of learner errors (Lyster & Ranta, 1997). Lyster and Ranta (1997) found out that the elicitation strategy was facilitative to encourage learner uptake with both repair and needs-repair in almost even distribution.

The next feedback strategy used is the translation which occurs 19 times or at about 14.4% from the total of corrective feedback moves. The translation is a teacher's move to translate learners' well-form utterances in their first language into the target language (Panova & Lyster, 2002). Similar to recast, translation is categorized as input-providing feedback since teachers provide the correct form without trying to elicit it from the student. As a result, the translation strategy follows recasts to be commonly preferred by the teachers leaving little opportunities for the other corrective feedback strategies that allow learners to repair (Panova & Lyster, 2002).

Regarding this issue, the students probably did not respond to the teacher's feedback for two reasons. First, teachers might not give many opportunities for the students to repair their utterances for the sake of maintaining the flow of communication. Second, there was no indication that the use of L1 is prohibited which result in ambiguity since students perceived teachers' correction as an affirmation to their L1 utterance (Panova & Lyster, 2002).

If teachers' concern is on the students' speaking accuracy, teachers should make translation strategies more explicit, so the students can make a comparison between their error and the target form (Ellis, 2009). Sheen (as cited in Ellis, 2009) argues that an explicit correction not only provides a clear explanation of the error but also helps students to notice the location of their error which can be facilitative in fostering second language acquisition.

With a little difference with the number of occurrences of translation strategy, an explicit correction occurs 15 times or at about 11% of the total corrective feedback moves. Explicit correction provides additional information that is given to indicate students' errors (Lyster & Ranta, 1997). In this study, all teachers use this strategy as one of their options to provide feedback to the learners. As this corrective feedback type contains further information to indicate that the student's utterance is in the ill-form, this type of feedback is an explicit one categorized as input-providing feedback (Sheen & Ellis, 2011).

Repetition only occurred three times out of 165 turns. Repetition requires teachers to highlight learner's error by repeating it in a rising intonation which is expected to be noticed by the students that a reformulation is needed (Lyster & Ranta, 1997). The low occurrences of repetition are not surprising since it often became the least strategy of feedback used by the teacher even though it is considered effective to elicit the correct form from the students. The low occurrence might be caused by the fact that it will not be effective to provide this type of feedback if the students cannot do self-repair, such as beginner students who still lack linguistic competence (Allwright & Bailey, 1991).

Metalinguistic feedback only occurs two times during the meetings. This strategy usually gives explicit indications that an error has occurred by giving additional comments, information, or questions without providing the correct form (Lyster & Ranta, 1997). It attempts to elicit the metalinguistic information from the learner. It is suggested that teachers should take the benefits of metalinguistic feedback as it was revealed that metalinguistic feedback led to more repair compared to other prompts strategies as long as students have sufficient linguistic knowledge of the target language (Taipale, 2012).

Similar to metalinguistic feedback, the paralinguistic signal only occurred two times. The paralinguistic signal is a teacher's gesture or facial expression to indicate that an error has been made in learner utterances (Ellis, 2009). The occurrences were combined with another strategy since the paralinguistic signal only could not elicit the correct form from the students. It might be because the students found it confusing that they could not locate the error.

The least feedback strategy used was clarification request with only one utterance out of 132 moves of teachers' corrective feedback. Clarification request indicates that a reformulation is needed as the information is given cannot be understood (Lyster & Ranta, 1997). They further suggest that this feedback type contains phrases such as "Pardon me," and

"I don't understand." Moreover, a repetition of the error may be included as in "What do you mean by X?"

In general, the distribution of teachers' corrective feedback is fairly similar to the previous research in which recasts as input providing feedback were highly preferred followed by elicitation strategy as output prompting strategy (Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Maolida, 2013; Pandu, 2014; Taipale, 2012). Even so, the data show that teachers' strategy in providing corrective feedback can vary greatly among them. It was also found that each teacher had its uniqueness in treating students' errors.

B. Learners' Perceptions of Teachers' Corrective Feedback Strategies

The students' perception of teacher's corrective feedback was investigated mainly because there is usually a discrepancy between teachers' and students' views (Lightbown & Spada, 2011; Ur, 2000). The findings revealed that in general, the students showed positive attitudes to the teacher's corrective feedback. Most of them said they were happy when receiving feedback. Moreover, the students perceived corrective feedback as something beneficial for their learning. It was argued that teachers' feedback gave information on the correct form. Therefore, they can distinguish between the correct form and incorrect form. Besides, teachers' feedback was also perceived as a helpful tool to remember the linguistic knowledge of the target language better. This supports the previous research where students preferred teacher's feedback to peer and self-correction (Méndez & Cruz, 2012; Tomczyk, 2013; Zhu, 2010).

Concerning teachers' corrective feedback strategies, most of the students preferred explicit correction to the other corrective feedback strategy. This is in line with the findings of Tomczyk's (2013) research which revealed that the students found it is best to correct the errors through explicit correction which provides metalinguistic information. The students believed that explicit correction enabled them to learn better for two reasons. They could notice the error while also were provided by the well-formed utterances. The students' perception regarding explicit correction is supported by Ellis and Sheen (2006) who state that explicit correction can be more effective than recasts since it makes the error more salient that raises students' consciousness of the target language. Lyster and Ranta (1997) further claim that explicit correction will be beneficial for beginner to intermediate students who still have limited knowledge of the target language.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Recast became the most frequent strategy used out of the eight corrective feedback strategies, namely recast, translation, explicit correction, elicitation, repetition, metalinguistic feedback, clarification request, and paralinguistic signal. Recast has been popular among teachers mainly because it will not break the flow of communication, then the fluency can still be maintained (Ellis & Sheen, 2006; Lyster & Panova, 2002). The result also showed that all teachers employed input-providing strategies while the distribution of output-prompting strategies

was varied among the teachers. Teachers faced different students and classroom situations hence the teachers might have their consideration in providing corrective feedback to their students.

Besides, the students perceived corrective feedback as beneficial for their learning since it allowed them to learn better through the correction. The students were generally happy when the errors on their utterances were pointed out, especially when the correct form was provided. Furthermore, they also preferred explicit correction to the other corrective feedback strategies as they could notice the error easier while also were provided by the well-formed utterances. It is argued that explicit correction leads to a better understanding through its metalinguistic explanation rather than other corrective feedback which is rather brief, such as recasts.

REFERENCES

Allwright, R., & Bailey, K. M. (1991). *Focus on the language classroom: An introduction to classroom research for language teachers* (1st ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bakar, Z. A., & Abdullah, M. R. T. L. (2014). Undergraduate L2 learners' perception and preferences towards error correction type on pronunciation errors: An exploratory study. *Advances in Educational Technologies*, 93.

Brown, H. D. (2000). *Principles of language learning and teaching* (4th ed.). White Plains, NY: Pearson ESL.

Brown, H. D. (2001). *Teaching by principles* (2nd ed.). White Plains, NY: Pearson ESL.

Chaudron, C. (1986). The role of error correction in second language teaching. *University of Hawaii Working Papers in English as a Second Language*, *5*(2). Retrieved from http://scholarspace.manoa.hawaii.edu/handle/10125/38553

Ellis, R. (2006). Current issues in the teaching of grammar: An SLA perspective. *TESOL Quarterly*, *40*(1), 83. doi: 10.2307/40264512

Ellis, R. (2009). Corrective feedback and teacher development. *L2 Journal*, *1*(1). Retrieved from http://escholarship.org/uc/item/2504d6w3.pdf

Ellis, R., Loewen, S., & Erlam, R. (2006). Implicit and explicit corrective feedback and the acquisition of L2 grammar. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, *28*(2), 339–368.

Ellis, R., & Sheen, Y. (2006). Re-examining the role of recasts in L2 acquisition. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, *28*(4). doi: 10.1017/S027226310606027X

Faqeih, H. (2012). *The effectiveness of error correction during oral interaction: experimental studies with English L2 learners in the United Kingdom and Saudi Arabia*. Retrieved from http://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk/2602/

Fidan, D. (2015). Learners preferences of oral corrective feedback: An example of Turkish as a foreign language learners. *Educational Research and Reviews*, *10*(9), 1311–1317.doi: 10.5897/ERR2015.2162

Gebhard, J. G. (2009). *Teaching English as a foreign or second language: A teacher self-development and methodology guide* (2nd ed.). Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press/ELT.

Hampl, M. (2011). *Error and error correction in classroom conversation* (uniwien). Retrieved from http://othes.univie.ac.at/14138/

Lightbown, P. M. (2000). Anniversary article classroom SLA research and second language teaching. *Applied Linguistics*, *21*(4), 431–462. doi: 10.1093/applin/21.4.431

Lightbown, P. M., & Spada, N. (1990). Focus-on-form and corrective feedback in communicative language teaching. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, *12*(4), 429. doi: 10.1017/S0272263100009517

Lightbown, P. M., & Spada, N. (2006). *How languages are learned* (3rd ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Liu, D. (2015). A critical review of Krashen's input hypothesis: Three major arguments. *Journal of Education and Human Development*, *4*(4), 139–146.

Lyster, R., & Ranta, L. (1997). Corrective feedback and learner uptake. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, *19*(1), 37–66. doi: 10.1017/s0272263197001034

Lyster, R., & Saito, K. (2010). Oral feedback in classroom SLA. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, *32*(2), 265–302. doi: 10.1017/S0272263109990520

Maolida, E. H. (2013). *Oral corrective feedback and learner uptake in a young learner EFL classroom*. Indonesia University of Education, Bandung.

Méndez, E. H., & Cruz, M. Del R. R. (2012). Teachers' perceptions about oral corrective feedback and their practice in EFL classrooms. *Profile Issues in teachersprofessional Development*, *14*(2), 63–75.

Méndez, E. H., Cruz, R. R., & Loyo, G. M. (2010). Oral corrective feedback by EFL teachers at Universidad de Quintana Roo. *Memorias Del Vi Foro De Estudios En Lenguas Internacional*, 240–253.

Pandu, G. (2014). *Oral corrective feedback for students of different proficiency level*. Indonesia University of Education, Bandung.

Panova, I., & Lyster, R. (2002). Patterns of corrective feedback and uptake in an adult ESL classroom. *Tesol Quarterly*, *36*(4), 573–595.

Rahimi, A., & Dastjerdi, H. V. (2012). Impact of immediate and delayed error correction on EFL learners' oral production: CAF. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, *3*(1), 45–54.

Rassaei, E., & Moinzadeh, A. (2011). Investigating the Effects of Three Types of Corrective Feedback on the Acquisition of English Wh-question Forms by Iranian EFL Learners. *English Language Teaching*, *4*(2). Doi: 10.5539/elt.v4n2p97

Rezaei, S., Mozaffari, F., & Hatef, A. (2011). Corrective feedback in SLA: Classroom practice and future directions. *International Journal of English Linguistics*, *1*(1), 21.

Russell, V. (2009). Corrective feedback, over a decade of research since Lyster and Ranta (1997): Where do we stand today. *Electronic Journal of Foreign Language Teaching*, *6*(1), 21–31.

Sheen, Y. (2004). Corrective feedback and learner uptake in communicative classrooms across instructional settings. *Language Teaching Research*, *8*(3), 263–300.

Sheen, Y., & Ellis, R. (2011). Corrective feedback in language teaching. In E. Hinkel (Ed.), *Handbook of research in second language teaching and learning* (Vol. 2, pp. 593–610). New York, NY: Routledge. Gemeinsamer Bibliotheksverbund ISBN.

Taipale, P. (2012). *Oral errors, corrective feedback and learner uptake in an EFL setting* (University of Jyväskylä Department of Languages English). Retrieved from https://jyx.jyu.fi/dspace/handle/123456789/37544

Tomczyk, E. (2013). Perceptions of oral errors and their corrective feedback: Teachers vs. Students. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, *4*(5). doi: 10.4304/jltr.4.5.924-931

Ur, P. (1996). *A course in language teaching: Practice of theory*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Zhu, H. (2010). An analysis of college students' attitudes towards error correction in EFL context. *English Language Teaching*, *3*(4), 127-131.