

## Oral Corrective Feedback: Teacher's Selection in Actual Practices

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### Abstract

In coherent of an implementation of Common European Framework Research (CEFR) to enhance the English proficiency among the graduates, this study investigates one of the alternatives that can be applied by the language teachers to help the students especially low level groups to improve their English proficiency, namely Corrective Feedback (CF). The types and timing of CF used in the higher education language classrooms are investigated simultaneously. The types of CF (explicit and implicit) and timing of CF (online and offline) was the central focus of this study and four language teachers were observed. In order to discover the real practice of language instructors in their language classrooms, 16 hours of class observations was done. It was found out that even the language teachers frequently used explicit correction and recast in providing CF, they also tend to vary their types of CF to the students. It showed that they were all aware of the using types of CF in their language classrooms; however, most of them chose not to correct all their students' oral errors. In terms of the timing of CF, Offline CF or delayed feedback was the preference timing used by the teachers. This finding indicated that the oral CF also tends to receive offline timing. All in all, the findings of this study is important to be understood by the language teachers to enlighten them on the importance of CF as the platform to supply feedback to the low level graduates (A1 to A2 level) to improve their proficiency for the sake of L2 development.

**Keywords:** Corrective Feedback, English Second Language, Oral Errors, L2 Acquisition, Language Teaching

### Introduction

In any Second Language (L2) classrooms, teachers act as the mediator between the students and the language learnt. Nowadays, teachers are also responsible to achieve the target of Common European Framework Reference (CEFR) introduced by the Ministry of Education as providing a framework for the language syllabuses and curriculum in the teaching and learning materials as well as assessment for foreign language proficiency. CEFR which

currently being mainly used in Europe has set the target aimed for the university levels (Refer to Table 1).

Table 1:  
CEFR Levels Required From Students and Staff

CEFR Level	English Of Stage Of Study	Min. Of CEFR English Level Of Lecturers
<b>C2</b>	Final Level Of Master Student In English Language And Literature	C2
<b>C1</b>	Final Level Master Student	C2
<b>B2</b>	Final Level Bachelor Student/ Entry Level Master Programme	C1
<b>B1/B2</b>	Final Level Secondary School Bachelor	B2
<b>A1 + A2</b>	Not Relevant For University Teaching/Studying	B2

The language teachers at the university have to play the roles to utilise the materials and the syllabuses at optimum level to assist the graduates to achieve the targeted level of CEFR (B1/B2). To be wise and creative in the teaching method are the criteria to meet for the language teachers to act in the language classrooms. For example, the exposure to the oral presentations in class will help increase the students' speaking performance, yet, the language teachers need to facilitate the students for the oral proficiency. The incorrect language used by the students need to be corrected by the teachers and to be silent taking for granted hoping the students will learn and correct their errors by themselves is not the effective way for the L2 learning process.

#### Teacher's Selection on Types of Corrective Feedback (CF)

Due to this, Corrective Feedback (hereafter, CF) is being introduced to the language teachers as a term for the correction made on the students' oral errors. Language teachers used to practice CF in their teaching whether they realise it or not. CF is a common issue being debated and explored by the researchers since 20 years past. CF is a pedagogical technique which teachers can be best applied to their students to seek their attentions to the errors made and at the same time provide them space to learn from it (Suzuki, 2004). Various terms being used to indicate the types of CF being used in the CF studies. Chu (2011) came out with two types of CF namely as 'peer' and 'self-repair' whereas 'recast' and 'prompts' were being used by Dilans (2015). How the CF put into categories as well is different to each other's. Therefore, this present study uses Lyster&Ranta's taxonomy of CF known as 'Explicit CF' and 'Implicit CF' in order to be comparable with the categorizations used by the teachers presented in this study. The classification of CF as stated by Lyster&Ranta (1997) showed in the Table 2.

Situation given in class;

Teacher : Where did you go yesterday?

Student : I go to the movie.

Table 2:  
Types of CF

Types of CF	Explanation	Sample Response
<b>EXPLICIT CF</b>		
Recast	The teacher repeats the student's utterance in the correct form without pointing out the student's error	"went to the movie"
Metalinguistic Feedback	The teacher gives a hint or a clue without specifically pointing out the mistake	"How does the verb change when we talk about the past?"
Explicit Correction	The teacher gives the correct form to the student with a grammatical explanation	"go is in present tense. You need to use past tense went here"
<b>IMPLICIT CF</b>		
Repetition	The teacher highlights the student's grammatical error by using intonation	"I go..??"
Elicitation	The teacher asks the student to correct and complete the sentence	"Yesterday, I.."
Asking for clarification	The teacher asks the student to reformulate the answer to indicate that the student's utterance was not understood	"What??" or "Oh, sorry??"

The practicality of CF among the language teachers is not a new phenomenon in the teaching and learning L2. The teachers are well aware the existence of the diverse selections in supplying corrections to the students in a way to help the students to uptake their errors in the oral tasks. However, the actual practicality of CF in the language classrooms sometimes is influenced by the several limitations and restrictions facing by the language teachers in reality. Number of students, teaching hours, class size and syllabus contents become the constraints and barriers to implement the suitable and appropriate types of CF to be provided to the students in the language classrooms. Other factors including teaching contexts, student proficiency, teacher experience and second or foreign language context may become the factors that influence the selections of CF (Brown, 2014). For example, recast (the teacher repeats the student's utterance in the correct form without pointing out the student's error) has been the most type of CF used by the teachers (Lyster&Ranta, 1997) and being supported by Long (2007) mentioning that recast as the most effective CF to be received by the students.

Likewise, Lyster&Ranta (1997) as well has found out that students in her studies accepted the lowest rate of uptake from the recast received. Based on these findings, the best inference applied for the selection of recast as the highest CF used by the teacher perhaps is related to

the reasons of teachers to overcome the limitations they faced since recast serves the right and immediate response to the students' errors even recast type is not really effective for the students. Case like this among the others is one of the reasons that lead to the continuous research on CF. Furthermore, it is crucial to provide as many recommendations as possible for the best implementation of CF for the language teachers at present and for the future. On the other hand, Implicit and Explicit CF have presented their own significant to the CF studies (e.g. Motlagh, 2015, Yoshida, 2010, Loewen & Erlam, 2007, Farahani & Salajegheh, 2015 and Lyster & Ranta, 1997). Based on these studies, the findings have proven that none of any types of CF to be the best selection for the language teachers to be practiced in neither English as Second Language (ESL) nor English Foreign Language (EFL) language classrooms. Recast as the most famous CF type practiced and preferred by the teachers in class (e.g. Farahani & Salajegheh, 2015, Lyster & Ranta, 1997) was not being always the first choice, yet, the Implicit CF was equally favored by the teachers. Yoshida (2010) found out that Implicit CF was much more frequently used than the Explicit CF. Besides, findings from Motlagh (2015) has revealed that over 62 teachers, 43 of them preferred to use Implicit types of CF for all error types.

Other than that, proficiency level of the students also becomes the main concern among the language teachers; lower, intermediate or high language competence. Various findings and discussions done in the past on CF have presented the relationship between types of CF and their effectiveness to the group of students. However, there is still no valid finding to prove which types of CF is particularly affect the best to the certain group of students automatically provide no rules and guidelines for the language teachers to practice certain types of CF in their language classrooms. The level of the students in the language classrooms has become the factor to the language teachers to find out solution on how to help them to improve their L2, specifically the low learner ESL students. One of the alternatives can be used in the language classrooms to not only expose the students on the language knowledge, but also to help them improve their proficiency is by practicing CF. The belief that CF chosen serve a positive learning environment to the students to learn the errors they have done in learning the language somehow trigger these low level students to be more interested in learning the language. As for now, many references can be made based on the previous research in relation to the CF and the low learner students. Several findings from the past research conducted have suggested that certain type of CF was dominant to one group of students particularly. For example, the observation demonstrated in the study of Lee (2013) suggested that recast was particularly effective for generating high rates of post-feedback learner repair among the high proficiency students. In addition, other finding showed that low anxiety students benefited most from the metalinguistic CF received as well as recasts (Faqeih, 2015). However, there were some of the teachers still in belief not to incorporate the types of the CF to the different level of students. For instance, Ahangari & Amirzadeh (2011) found out that the teachers in his studies tend to use solely on recast to all the students regardless their levels while Motlagh (2015) explained that the mix proficiency of students in the language classrooms had no relation with the CF feedbacks.

### **Teacher's Selection on Timing of CF**

The timing of CF is about when is the teacher should provide CF to their students. The appropriate time to correct the students' errors during their oral task performance is essential to receive a good attention as to ensure the convenience and the effectiveness of CF to the students in developing their L2. Correcting the students' oral errors on time, right after they

have done the errors is known as 'Online CF' (immediate feedback). Besides that, teachers can choose to delay the CF until the students have done their oral task (Offline CF). To clarify, this study is using terms used by Long (2007); 'Online CF'(immediate feedback) and 'Offline CF' (delayed feedback). The matter of timing is the only difference between 'Online CF' and 'Offline CF'; whether the correction made at prompt after the errors done or delayed after the task, however, both 'Online CF' and 'Offline CF' work effectively on any particular linguistic features depending on the language teachers' individually particular targets.

In the light of many studies focusing on the effectiveness of types on CF to the group of students, there are not many references enlighten about the timing of CF. With the great attention from many previous researches on 'Online CF' or immediate response in the oral tasks, 'Offline CF' was taken too granted to be taken seriously. In a comparison to the written tasks, CF provided is solely 'Offline' and the language teachers have no choice to make (Sheen,2010). Teachers will only correct the student's written errors on paper and received by students afterwards. Most of the oral CF studies did emphasis the effectiveness of 'Online CF' towards the students' L2 regardless the timing of CF used by the teachers in particular (eg, Kennedy, 2010, Lyster, 2012, Lee&Lyster, 2015, Yoshida, 2010). In real cases, the timing of CF is to be the individual teacher's selection and preference. As cited in Harmer (2009), Willis and Willis (2007) on his preference, 'Offline CF' is better to preserve students' focus. By only teachers not to interrupt the students during the task, those students will not be predisposed to focus on a particular linguistic structure during the task. For this reason, the timing in oral CF should not be taken granted, supposed to be discussed in depth and more transparent to highlight its importance in the oral CF studies. Therefore, this article paper is going to investigate the actual practices of the language teachers on the types of CF and the timing used on their low level students.

## **Research Methodology**

### **Research Participants**

This research approached the higher institution students from the University of Sultan Zainal Abidin (UniSZA). Four experienced English Teachers from Faculty of General Studies and Advanced Education were being selected to be the participants in this study. In this research context, the natural setting of the classrooms and the participants was being well kept. The details of the teachers and the students involved in this research showed in the Table 3. There were 4 teachers and 140 students from different courses were involved as the participants. All of the students were from Undergraduate courses aged between 19-25 years old. To ensure that the participants' background is aligned with the research aimed, purposive sampling was being use as it is virtually synonymous with qualitative research (Palys,2008). Following the Criterion Sampling (searching for candidates who meet a certain criterion), this research particularly was being selective and be based on the participants' Malaysian University English Test (MUET) achievements. Band 1 and Band 2 students captured as 'Limited User' were first identified before being selected to be involved in this research.

Table 3:

Details of the Language Teachers and Students Involved as the Research Participants

Language Teacher	Gender	Age	Teaching Experience	Student (Course)	Num. of Students
A	Female	35	7	Bach in Usuluddin & Counseling (Group A)	14
				Bach in Dakwah	15
B	Female	31	5	Bach in Syariah (Group A)	18
				Bach in Syariah (Group B)	18
				Bach in Social Work	20
C	Female	45	8	Bach in Usuluddin (Group A)	20
				Bach in Usuluddin (Group B)	17
D	Female	37	10	Bach in Usuluddin & Counseling (Group B)	18
Total					140

### Instruments and Procedure

The data was collected by means of qualitative design. The data was collected through the class observation done in the normal semester class contact hours.

The class observation took over eight classes where the teachers were teaching MPU 32022 (English for Communication 2) subject for the second semester of undergraduate students 2015/2016 session. The 16 hours observation was done during week 11 of the semester where the students were practicing their meeting presentations as the preparation for the real meeting presentation on the following week. In the class, the students conducted their meeting practices in their respective groups, whereby the teacher would make any necessary comments and advices to the better oral presentation. No evaluation was made by the teachers yet until the real presentation takes place (week 12). This was the right and most suitable time to observe the teachers on the CF practices since the teachers would help the students to improvise their presentations on the delivery, content including language used. During this time as well, the language teachers were observed on their initiatives taken to correct their students' errors (language use in particular) in terms of the types and timing of CF among these low learners.

### Data Analysis

By using an observation checklist, the necessary information including student's name, types of errors, types of CF and the timing of CF used by teachers were recorded. To ensure that no missing data is occurred, a voice recorder was attached to the teacher, and meanwhile students' were recorded their oral presentations using a video recorder simultaneously. The data collected then was converted into percentages.

### Results

#### Teacher's Selection on the Types of CF

Table 4 shows the total number of feedbacks used by all four English Teachers in their language classes based on the 16 hours observation conducted. The teacher's method in

providing the CF to their students were following well as the CF categories used to be referred in this research, stated by Lyster&Ranta (1997). According to the Table 4, the teachers preferred not to provide CF in their classes (only 42% errors received corrections) which not all the students got the chance to be corrected. The teachers tend to correct only some of the major errors done by the students and ignored the others.

Table 4:

Number of Errors Done by Students and Number of Corrections Received

Language Teacher	Num. of Errors	Num. of Feedbacks Provided
A	18	8 (44%)
B	62	28 (45%)
C	43	22 (51%)
D	38	10 (26%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>68</b>

Generally, Table 5 explained that the selection on the types of CF among the teachers was only concentrated on the two types of CF; recast and explicit correction. Recast used by the teachers was very less constructed in simple description. For example;

Student : Our company have...

Teacher : Use has after singular noun.

Table 5:

Frequency of each Types of CF Provided by the Language Teachers

Language Teacher	Recast	Explicit Correction	Metalinguistic	Asking Clarification	Repetition	Elicitation
A	5	1	1	1	0	0
B	12	14	1	0	0	1
C	6	10	1	4	1	0
D	4	1	3	2	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b> <b>(40%)</b>	<b>26</b> <b>(39%)</b>	<b>6</b> <b>(9%)</b>	<b>7</b> <b>(10%)</b>	<b>1</b> <b>(1%)</b>	<b>1</b> <b>(1%)</b>

Apart from that, the other types of CF (metalinguistic, asking clarification, repetition and elicitation) also being used based on the observation conducted. This indicated that the teachers were being selective and varied in their CF selections. Overall, language teachers in this study preferred to choose Explicit types of CF (explicit correction, recast, and metalinguistic) compared to the Implicit types of CF (asking clarification, repetition, and elicitation).

### Teacher's Selection on the Timing of CF

Based on the observation done during the class time, the types of CF and the timing of CF practiced by the teachers to their students were recorded simultaneously. Table 6 shows the details of timing used by the teachers for the every feedback supplied.

Table 6:

Frequency on timing of CF Used by the Language Teachers

Language Teacher	Number of Feedbacks Provided	Online (Immediate)	Offline (Delayed)
A	8	0	8
B	28	13	15
C	22	4	18
D	10	4	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>21 (31%)</b>	<b>47 (69%)</b>

Obviously, it can be seen that 'Offline' or delayed response was being the main preference for the timing of CF. All the teachers chose to delay the errors corrections until the students finished their presentations. Based on the observation conducted, the teachers used to jot down all the necessary comments and corrections and only be delivered once after particular one group's presentation had finished the presentation. The teachers showed little interest to correct the students' errors at prompt and just let them finished their presentations without any interruptions. No oral even body language showed to the students to give signs for any oral errors made. As for the comments, the teachers used to deliver the corrections in brief and went through the most frequent also obvious errors done by the students in their oral presentations in front of the other students orally, no written made on the whiteboard instead. Even more, some of the teachers chose to make general comments as the summary instead of details corrections on individual's errors done. For example;

Teacher: Thank you for the presentation. As I can see, most of group members did error in pronunciation. Tourist, coast, should be pronounced as 'too r-ist' and 'kohst'

### Final Students' Evaluation Reports

As this study was conducted during the mock meeting practices done in class (week 11), no evaluation was made until the students presented their real mock meeting in Week 12. The final mock meeting presentation gives 30% marks from the overall assessments. Table 7 below used to show the relation between the number of feedbacks received by the students and their real mock meeting evaluation marks.

Table 7:

Details of Number of Errors Done, Feedbacks Received and Final Mock Meeting

Teacher	Group	Num. Errors	of	Num. Feedback received	of	Final Meeting Evaluation (/30%)	Mock Mark
<b>A</b>	Usuluddin & Counselling (USUK) Group A1	8		2 (25%)		14	
	USUK Group A2	6		3 (50%)		11.5	
	USUK Group A3	4		2 (50%)		12	
<b>B</b>	Syariah Group A1	10		8 (80%)		25	
	Syariah Group A2	15		7 (47%)		20	
	Syariah Group A3	20		6 (38%)		21	
	Syariah Group A4	17		8 (47%)		22	
	Syariah Group B1	7		3 (43%)		19	
	Syariah Group B2	4		2 (50%)		21	
	Syariah Group B3	3		0 (0%)		18	
	Syariah Group B4	4		1 (25%)		20	
	Social Work (Group 1)	7		4 (57%)		19	
	Social Work (Group 2)	4		3 (75%)		17	
	Social Work (Group 3)	5		2 (40%)		21	
	Social Work (Group 4)	5		1 (20%)		23	
<b>C</b>	Usuluddin (Group A1)	5		4 (80%)		16	
	Usuluddin (Group A2)	7		4 (57%)		22	
	Usuluddin (Group A3)	5		1 (20%)		22	
	Usuluddin (Group A4)	6		3 (50%)		24	
	Usuluddin (Group B1)	4		2 (50%)		22	
	Usuluddin (Group B2)	3		0 (0%)		22	
	Usuluddin (Group B3)	7		4 (57%)		30	
	Usuluddin (Group B4)	6		4 (67%)		23	
<b>D</b>	Usuluddin & Counselling (USUK) Group B1	11		3 (27%)		25	
	USUK Group B2	9		2 (22%)		26	
	USUK Group B3	8		2 (25%)		27	
	USUK Group B4	10		3 (30%)		26	

#### Evaluation Marks

Based on the reports above, it can be seen that the frequency of the corrective feedbacks provided by the language teachers have no relation with the students' final mock meeting evaluation marks. Group of students who received less corrections in their oral presentations (below 50%) were successfully achieved good marks (highest at 27/30) as good as students who received more than 50% feedbacks from their teachers (highest at 30/30). To sum up, the feedbacks received by the students during their mock meeting practice time (Week 11) were not significant for them to achieve the good evaluation marks on the final meeting presentation (Week 12).

**Discussions**

The findings reveal that the language teachers in this study were preferably used Explicit types of CF (explicit correction, metalinguistic and asking clarification) compared to Implicit CF (implicit correction, repetition and elicitation) in their language classrooms. It is a common finding and not surprisingly to find out as few previous researchers have showed the same pattern of CF used by the language teachers in classes. Several reasons including uncontrolled entry number of students per classes, inadequate contact hours, inconvenient class size have been the constraints for the language teachers to practice more Implicit CF than Explicit CF. Other than that, the reason why the English teachers were prone to use more recast and explicit correction than the other types probably due to the easier explanation and efficiency in which the teacher could focus directly on the targeted errors in a short time. It may also convenient for the teachers when the Explicit CF given can save a lot of time and allow the language teachers to increase the frequency CF given. On the other hand, the variety selections on types of CF supplied by the teachers was a good sign that the language teachers have knowledge on types of CF and well aware the needs to provide CF accordingly to the students' proficiency. This contrast finding from the previous studies (eg. Motlagh, 2015 and Ahangari&Amirzadeh, 2011) was good to discover as language teachers in this study believed that they had been selective in providing CF as to fulfill the need of different level of students.

Apparently, the teachers tend to be silent to the obvious oral errors done by the students even they attentively listened to the presentations was all about to consider the restrictions and limitations that the language teachers were having. It was supported by Lee (2013) that the teachers in his study disagreed to provide CF for all the errors done by the students even they did realize the importance and efficacy of immediate feedback to improve students' oral proficiency because of some external factors. Therefore, English teachers should be given alternatives in order to overcome these barriers in teaching language and help them to practice more CF in their language classrooms.

This study is also intentionally investigating the timing used by the teachers. Findings defined clearly that all the teachers agreed to choose 'Offline CF' or delayed feedback. Even relatively little work on the timing of oral CF has been done before, this study is able to discuss the teachers' preferences on the timing of CF. There are several reasons can be related to the chosen of 'Offline CF'. First, referring to the Malay social norms, speaking disruptions sometimes is inconsiderate and considered as low respect attitude at certain circumstances. Not to interrupt too much on the students' speaking during oral presentation is a reflection to the respect given to the norms. Other than that, explanation on the language teachers chose delayed feedback was due to the external problem occurred. Correcting only some errors after students had finished the presentations gave the language teachers no choice as to save time and allow the class to finish on time. Besides, teachers were afraid to correct the students during their presentations due to the respect they paid for the students' preparation and focuses. It is well understood that the low learners have higher anxiety and lower confident level for any oral tasks; hence, the teachers will possibly avoid giving them pressure by interrupting their presentations and indirectly affect their performances.

Last but not least, referring to the final students' evaluation reports, there was no correlation between the corrective feedbacks given and the students' oral presentation performance. Obviously understood, the corrective feedbacks provided by the teachers during their mock

meeting practices were not an absolute method that can help students to get a better score for the final mock meeting presentations. Therefore, the teachers need to be more familiar themselves with the effective using of types and timing of CF in order to treat their students' oral errors successfully. Not only providing the CF is the matter, yet the students' uptake from the CF received becomes the other important matter.

### **Conclusion And Recommendations**

Several major conclusions and recommendations can be drawn for this current study. First, despite all the reasons, all four language teachers were likely to choose recast and explicit correction (Explicit CF) for their low level students. However, the CF provided was less significant to the students. Secondly, 'Offline CF' or delayed feedback given by the language teachers had enough to shed light up the practical used of offline timing in the oral tasks, not only in written tasks. It is recommended that the authority and responsible bodies should take the necessary actions to overcome the external barriers in teaching language. With the smaller number of students per classes and relevant contact hours and also syllabus contents, it is expected that the language teachers will optimize the implementation of CF towards their low level students in particular. The CF provided would be the good effort and platform to help the university students in achieving the target (B1/B2) level. By individually, the language teachers also need to expose themselves to the knowledge on using the CF in order to increase their awareness on the importance of CF. All in all, further valid empirical research need to be done to investigate in depth the reasons of the teachers' implementations of CF in their language teaching and also students' uptake from the CF received to find more suggestions to increase the effectiveness of CF.

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