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Corrective feedback preferences of primary school and university students

Preferencias de retroalimentación correctiva de estudiantes de primaria y universidad

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ABSTRACT

Corrective feedback has attracted more and more attention as it has an important place in language teaching and learning process (Kim, 2004). In this respect, Sheen and Ellis (2011) define corrective feedback as “the feedback that learners receive on the linguistic errors they make in their oral or written production in a second language (L2)” (p. 593). The main aim of this study is to investigate the most and the least corrective feedback types preferred by primary school and university students. The participants of the study determined by the convenience sampling method comprise 50 primary school and 50 university students. Students are required to mark the feedback types they prefer when they make errors. The results indicate that recasts and asking direct questions are the most favored feedback types chosen by students despite the proficiency level gap.

Descriptors: Elicitation; recasts; corrective feedback.

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RESUMEN

La retroalimentación correctiva ha atraído cada vez más atención, ya que ocupa un lugar importante en el proceso de enseñanza y aprendizaje de idiomas (Kim, 2004). A este respecto, Sheen y Ellis (2011) definen la retroalimentación correctiva como "la retroalimentación que los alumnos reciben sobre los errores lingüísticos que hacen en su producción oral o escrita en un segundo idioma (L2)" (p. 593). El objetivo principal de este estudio es investigar los tipos de retroalimentación correctiva más y menos preferidos por los estudiantes de primaria y universitarios. Los participantes del estudio determinados por el método de muestreo de conveniencia que comprenden 50 alumnos de primaria y 50 universitarios. Los estudiantes deben marcar los tipos de comentarios que prefieren cuando cometen errores. Los resultados indican que los cambios y las preguntas directas son los tipos de comentarios más favorecidos elegidos por los estudiantes a pesar de la brecha en el nivel de competencia.

Descriptores: Obtención; refundiciones; retroalimentación correctiva.

INTRODUCTION

Corrective Feedback

In recent decades, corrective feedback (CF) has attracted more and more attention as it has an important place in language teaching and learning process during which it is believed to play a big role in students' language development (Kim, 2004). In this respect, Sheen and Ellis (2011) define corrective feedback as "the feedback that learners receive on the linguistic errors they make in their oral or written production in a second language (L2)" (p. 593). Additionally, Long (1996) handles corrective feedback from a broad perspective by focusing on the two types of responses given to the learners' L2 utterances in a way that while the response which provides learners with the appropriate forms used in the target language is called as 'positive evidence', the response including information about what is inappropriate in the target language refers to 'negative evidence' (Long, 1996). To put it another way, negative evidence points to the incorrectness of students' productions in L2, on the other hand, positive evidence signals that the correct forms in L2 are available to students (Gass, 2003).

Basically, corrective feedback, also known as error correction, is provided by teachers when students use target language incorrectly with the intention of developing students' interlanguage (Astia, 2018). At this point, it is suggested that there are some conditions required to be met for an effective corrective feedback; to illustrate, the feedback should be in accordance with students' developmental level so that they can

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perceive and process it (Lyster & Ranta, 1997). Corrective feedback should be also conducted intensively by focusing on errors over a period of time, so it requires teachers to be systematic and consistent while they are providing feedback (Kim, 2004). Lastly, the way feedback is given should provide students with opportunities to modify their utterances through self-correction (Swain, 1985).

Theoretical Positions on the Role of Corrective Feedback

The role played by corrective feedback in second language learning has been a controversial issue over the past few decades, in such a way that some SLA theorists consider corrective feedback as significant for language development, whereas others draw attention to the harmful or negative effects of corrective feedback upon language learning (Ellis, 2009). Hence, it is noteworthy to examine the standpoints adopted by different theorists and their theoretical positions in relation to the role of corrective feedback. First of all, under the Nativist Theory, language acquisition is believed to take place through the Universal Grammar (UG) which makes reformulation of target language structures possible for learners under the favour of positive evidence, however, the Nativists lay emphasis on little effect of negative evidence on learners' interlanguage development (Schwartz, 1993).

In his Input Hypothesis, Krashen states that learners acquire a second language only when they are exposed to comprehensible input which provides learners with target language structures slightly beyond their current proficiency level, which signifies, Krashen's standpoint is on the side of positive evidence contributing to the learners' interlanguage development (Gass & Mackey, 2007). Furthermore, according to Krashen (1985), negative evidence or corrective feedback creates an emotional barrier on the part of learners, so it interferes with language acquisition process by increasing students' affective filter (Krashen, 1985). On the other hand, Swain (1985) proposes the Output Hypothesis to claim that language acquisition cannot be limited by only input students receive, as it also requires students' outputs which pushes them to process their own structures grammatically for target-like production (Swain, 1985). In this way, learners notice the gap between their own productions and the target language forms, which leads them to reformulate their utterances to comply with target

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language norms (Gass & Mackey, 2007). At this point, the Output Hypothesis is linked with corrective feedback as it paves the way for both students' awareness of their errors and students' error corrections (Kim, 2004).

In the similar direction, Schmidt's Noticing Hypothesis claiming conscious attention to the grammatical forms is necessary for language acquisition to take place regards corrective feedback as a stimulus which encourages learners to notice the mismatch between their own interlanguage system and target language system (Schmidt, 1995). Moreover, Long suggests in his Interaction Hypothesis that communication breakdowns arising during interaction results in modifications of speakers' utterances to ensure negotiation of meaning, in other words, "CF assists acquisition when the participants are focused primarily on meaning, commit errors and receive feedback that they recognize as corrective" (Sheen and Ellis , 2011, p.595). In this regard, Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory is in line with the Interaction Hypothesis in that it sees language learning as a result of interaction and scaffolding through which learners can gain the ability to produce correct utterances on their own (Ellis, 2009). All in all, while Krashen like the Nativists have a low opinion of corrective feedback in relation to language learning, Vygotsky and interactionists such as Swain, Long and Schmidt take note of the positive effects of corrective feedback on language development (Sheen and Ellis, 2011).

Contrary to different positions, it seems that in the course of time, there has been a growing consensus among the SLA researchers about the positive impact of corrective feedback on language learning, however, which feedback types are more effective in L2 learning is still a matter of debate (Ellis, 2009). The studies conducted in this research area have yielded contradictory results due to the difficulty of determining the effectiveness of corrective feedback types which depended on many factors such as "the particular aspects of the language being corrected, conditions relating to the provision of teacher correction, and characteristics of the student" (Amiri, 2016, p.1524). In that vein, the choice of corrective feedback types is regarded as a mirror reflecting the context created by the teacher and students together as Seedhouse (as cited in Sheen & Ellis, 2011) draws attention to the fact that there is "no single, monolithic organization of repair in the L2 classroom" (p.601).

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It is suggested that explicit feedback types are more beneficial than implicit feedback types as they provide students with overt and direct information about appropriate target language forms, which minimizes the possibility of misinterpretation on the parts of students in relation with the correct usage of target language forms (Rassaei & Moinzadeh, 2011). In this sense, Carroll and Swain (1993) compared the effectiveness of implicit and explicit corrective feedback in their experimental study with Spanish-speaking learners of English who were tested twice on the feedback items plus a number of novel items to determine whether they had generalized from the feedback items. Results showed that those learners who received explicit corrective feedback outperformed those learners who received implicit error correction, which is in line with the study of Lyster (2004) who compared the effects of recasts with more explicit types of corrective feedback such as prompts on French gender assignment and found a significant increase in the ability of students exposed to explicit corrective feedback to correctly assign grammatical gender. These findings comply with the other studies (Ellis, et al., 2009; Lightbown & Spada, 1990; Sheen, 2007) that emphasizes the advantage of explicit types of corrective feedback over implicit corrective feedback. On the contrary, there are claims based on the advantage of implicit corrective feedback over explicit ones since they do not interfere with students' utterances and give students chances to focus on the forms of their utterances while their focus is on meaning (Long, 1996). Researchers have laid stress on the significant gains of implicit corrective feedback types such as recast and clarification request in the long run, to illustrate; Leeman (2003) created different interactive learning conditions based upon recast and negative evidence. It was found that learners received recast do better than other students given negative evidence. Along the same line, Iwashita (2003) indicated a relationship between being exposed to implicit types of corrective feedback such as recasts and measurable gains in the acquisition of two grammatical structures in L2 Japanese, which yields similar results with other studies (Mackey & Philp, 1998; Sanz & Morgan-Short, 2004) specifying that of explicit types of corrective feedback do not bring more benefit than implicit corrective feedback in relation with language development.

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Consequently, the research findings in terms of the effectiveness of feedback types yield mixed results in that some research findings point to the effectiveness of explicit corrective feedback types such as metalinguistic feedback and overt correction, other findings stress the superiority of implicit feedback types including recast and clarification requests over explicit ones. Hence, uncertainty remains in this research area.

Types of Corrective Feedback

Corrective feedback can be conducted in the form of explicit and implicit correction (Ellis, 2009). Explicit correction takes place when teacher interferes with students' incorrect utterances to give a direct explanation, whereas in the implicit form of correction, teacher interferes with students' erroneous utterances to encourage them for self-correction without any grammatical explanation (Gass & Mackey, 2007). In this sense, explicit feedback types can be addressed in terms of metalinguistic feedback and explicit or overt correction, on the other hand, implicit feedback types can be categorized as repetitions, recasts and clarification requests (Ellis, 2009). Furthermore, Fu & Nassaji (2016) goes beyond the classification of feedback types in relation with implicit and explicit correction by adding some other categories such as elicitation, re-asks, translation, asking a direct question, directing question to other students, using L1-English, immediate and delayed recasts. To gain insight about corrective feedback types, it is important to analyze each of them in detail with examples:

1. Explicit correction

Explicit correction occurs when “teacher provides the correct form and clearly indicates that what the student said was incorrect” (Amiri, 2016, p.1525)

Example: S: I goed home after school.

T: You should say “went” rather than saying “goed”.

2. Metalinguistic Feedback

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Through metalinguistic feedback, the correct form of students' utterances are provided with some comments or questions without providing them overtly (Yoshida, 2008)

Example: S: There aren't no children in the garden.

T: Do we use "no" in negative statements?

S: There aren't children in the garden.

3. Immediate Recasts

Long (1996) regards recasts as "utterances which rephrase a child's utterance by changing one or more sentence components (subject, verb, or object) while still referring to its central meanings" (p. 434). In accordance with this definition, immediate recasts can be said to an instant alteration in students' inaccurate utterances.

Example: S: I am wondering whether will they come or not.

T: Whether they will come or not.

4. Delayed Recasts

Delayed recasts occur when teacher reformulate students' incorrect utterances after some time, so the feedback is not given students immediately as in the immediate recasts (Fu & Nassaji, 2016).

Example: During communicate tasks, teacher notes down students' erroneous utterances and tells the correct forms after students finish their tasks, so the teacher does not interfere with students' errors immediately while they are speaking.

5. Clarification Requests

Clarification requests give students the message that "either that their utterance has been misunderstood by the teacher or that the utterance is ill-formed and that a repetition or a reformulation is required" (Astia, 2018, p.115).

Example: S: Where will you go on holiday last summer?

T: Sorry?

S: Where did you go on holiday last summer?

6. Repetition

Teacher stresses the erroneous parts of the students' utterances through repetition with a rising intonation (Ellis, 2009).

Example: S: My friends and I come together for our project work yesterday.

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T: My friends and I CAME together.....

S: My friends and I came together for our project work yesterday.

7. Asking a Direct Question

Teacher can ask a question in order to elicit how a specific target language structure is formed (Fu & Nassaji, 2016).

Example: S: She do her homework regularly.

T: Do we use “do” or “does” after third person singular?

S: She does her homework regularly

8. Re-asks

Re-asks are used by teacher in order to draw students’ attention to the correct forms of their incorrect utterances through the repetition of original questions leading students to self-correction (Yoshida, 2008).

Example: T: How would you say the “two times a year”?

S: Twice years

T: Two times a year!

S: twice a year

9. Translation

Teacher translates students’ L1 utterances into target language with the intention of encouraging students to use these target language equivalents for the next time (Astia, 2018).

Example: T: Who brought his or her posters?

S: Ben getirmeyi unuttum.

T: Oh, you forgot to bring your poster.

10. Directing Questions to Other Students

When a student produces utterances in L2 incorrectly, teacher can ask questions to other students in order to elicit correct forms (Fu & Nassaji, 2016).

Example: T: Have you ever gone to İstanbul?

S: No, I have not go to İstanbul.

T: Which forms of “go” do we use with present perfect tense?

Ss: Gone

S: I have not gone to İstanbul.

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11. Elicitation

Elicitation occurs when teacher tries to elicit the correct form by giving students a chance to discover their errors (Yoshida, 2008)

Example: S: I will not come to school unless I do not feel good.

T: I will not come to school unless.....?

S: I will not come to school unless I feel good.

12. Using L1-English

This type of corrective feedback includes the explanation of the structures through the mixture of L1 and L2 “to lighten up the cognitive load” (Fu & Nassaji, 2016, p.169).

Example: S: I put my eraser my pencil case.

T: In Turkish we say “Silgimi kalem kutumun içine koydum”.

S: I put my eraser in my pencil case.

Even if there are many different corrective feedback types that can be provided to students, the matter of which ones are more effective in language learning process is debatable. Hence, to gain a better insight into this research area in which uncertainty remains, two questions will be answered in the present study:

1. What are the corrective feedback types that are most preferred by primary school and university students?
2. What are the corrective feedback types that are the least preferred by primary school and university students?

METHODOLOGY

Participants

This study was conducted with 50 primary school students aged between 9 and 10 and 50 university students aged between 20-22 at a state university in the west of Turkey. The participants were selected by convenience sampling method. After consent forms were signed students were given the questionnaire.

Instrument

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In this study, primary school students' and university students' preferences of corrective feedback types were investigated. Data were obtained through a rubric developed by the researcher including 10 feedback types which are recast, clarification requests, translation, metalinguistic feedback, elicitation, explicit correction, asking direct questions, repetition, directing questions to other students and using L1-English. In the questionnaire, each feedback type is presented with example dialogues in which students make an error and the teacher gives corrective feedback to the students' erroneous utterances. Students were required to mark the example situations representing feedback types they prefer when they make an error as students.

Procedure

The rubric including different feedback types with example dialogues was given students during their English lesson. All of the students were informed about the aim of this study. On a voluntary basis, the students were asked to complete the questionnaire by marking the example dialogues in which feedback types are represented. Students' choices were calculated in relation to each feedback type and overall total was found. Then, the frequency of students' choices of each feedback type was indicated as percentages.

Results

The present study was conducted to elicit the corrective feedback types that are both most and least preferred by primary school and university students. The findings of the study revealed that a great majority of primary school students' preferences of feedback types fall into recast (14.13 %) and asking a direct question (12.01 %), however, explicit correction (5.65 %) and directing questions to other students (7.06) are the ones that constitute a relatively small part of students' preferences as seen in Table 1.

Table 1.

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Corrective feedback types preferred by primary school students

Corrective feedback types	N	%
1. Recast	40	14.13
2. Asking a direct question	34	12.01
3. Translation	33	11.66
4. Metalinguistic feedback	32	11.30
5. Elicitation	29	10.24
6. Using L1-English	28	9.89
7. Repetition	26	9.18
8. Clarification request	25	8.83
9. Directing question to other students	20	7.06
10. Explicit correction	16	5.65
Total	283	100

All in all, based on the students' preferences of corrective feedback types, it can be said that the most preferred feedback type is recast (14.13 %) and the least preferred feedback type is explicit correction (5.65 %).

When it comes to university students' preferences, the highest score goes to elicitation and recasts (16.2) and the least selected preferences are translation and explicit correction (2.3) as seen in Table 2.

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Table 2.

Corrective feedback types preferred by university students

Feedback Type	N	%
1. Recasts	35	16.2
2. Clarification requests	28	13
3. Translation	5	2.3
4. Metalinguistic feedback	34	15.8
5. Elicitation	35	16.2
6. Explicit correction	5	2.3
7. Asking a direct question	33	15.3
8. Repetition	25	11.6
9. Directing a question to another student	6	2.7
10. Using L1	8	3.7
Total	215	100

Table 3 highlights the similarities between the scores of the primary school and university students. It seems that proficiency does not lead to a sharp contrast between primary school and university students. Recasts, asking a direct question, metalinguistic feedback and elicitation score high on the list. The dissimilarities are using L1, explicit correction and translation techniques. University students seem to be less inclined to such corrective types as their proficiency is higher than that of primary school students.

Table 3

A comparison of feedback

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Corrective feedback types	Graders	University
1. Recast	14.13	16.2
2. Asking a direct question	12.01	15.3
3. Translation	11.66	2.3
4. Metalinguistic feedback	11.30	15.8
5. Elicitation	10.24	16.2
6. Using L1-English	9.89	3.7
7. Repetition	9.18	11.6
8. Clarification request	8.83	13
9. Directing question to other students	7.06	2.7
10. Explicit correction	5.65	2.3

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The aim of the present study was to discover the most and least chosen corrective feedback types by primary school and university students. The data were collected from 50 primary school students aged between 9-10 and 50 university students aged between 20-22 through a questionnaire including corrective feedback types given with example dialogues. The analysis of collected data pointed out that among the corrective feedback types, recast (14.13 16.2) is the most favored one by both primary school and university students, which is line with the findings of the previous studies (Iwashita, 2003; Leeman, 2003; Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Mackey & Philp, 1998; Sanz & Morgan-Short, 2004) in which recasts are considered as a popular feedback type chosen by students. In this regard, students' choices of recasts can be attributed to the fact that they are the echoes of students' utterances, so it is easy for students to perceive the correct forms of their erroneous utterances (Lyster & Ranta, 1997).

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Asking a direct question (12.01 and 15.3) takes place in the second rank in relation to the students' preferences of corrective feedback types, which yields similar results with the study of Fu and Nassaji (2016) and that of Sheen (2007) who highlighted the effectiveness of explicit forms of corrective feedback. Therefore, the popularity of asking a direct question as a feedback type among primary school students can result from its clearness and directness encouraging students to reformulate their utterances. Asking a direct question is followed by translation (11.66 %) as the third rank of the preferences of primary school students in relation to corrective feedback types, which is in parallel with the study of Panova and Lyster (2002) who pointed out that translation is a predominant corrective technique chosen by students. Primary school students' choices of translation may be related to their low proficiency level as they feel that they need to see the L1 equivalent forms of their utterances as a way of figuring out how to correct their errors.

Metalinguistic feedback (11.30 and 15.8) is another most preferred one by primary school students. This finding corroborates the study of Ellis et al. (2009) and that of Tamayo & Cajas (2017) who regarded metalinguistic feedback as a more helpful way of giving feedback to students. Metalinguistic feedback may be chosen by students because of the fact that it provides students with linguistic clues which eliminates the ambiguities about how to correct their erroneous utterances, which in turn, increases their linguistic awareness helping them to realize their strengths and weaknesses. Similarly, it is suggested that corrective feedback becomes more effective when it is given in conjunction with the metalinguistic clues (Lightbown & Spada, 1990). Elicitation (10.24 and 16.2) follows metalinguistic feedback among students' preferences, which complies with the related studies (Amiri, 2016; Fu & Nassaji, 2016; Khani & Janfeshan, 2017) laying emphasis on the importance of elicitation technique as it promotes student-generated reformulation. In other words, the reason behind students' preferences of elicitation as a corrective feedback type can be attributed to students' desire to engage in monitoring their own outputs actively by drawing on what they know.

Using L1-English (9.89 and 3.7) and repetition (9.18 and 11.6) are among the preferences of students to some degree, which corroborates the other studies

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conducted this research area (Fu & Nassaji, 2016; Lyster, 1998). Firstly, students' preferences of using L1-English as a feedback type can be attributed to their low proficiency level as they feel safe when they hear a mixture of their mother tongue and target language. As their proficiency goes up, this preference goes down. Besides, they choose repetition as a feedback technique as the teacher make students' errors clear for them by stressing their erroneous parts through the use of intonation patterns. Clarification request is also one of the feedback types students chose with the percentage of just 8.83, so it can be inferred that clarification request as a feedback type occupies a little place among the students' preferences. The unpopularity of clarification request can be related to the ambiguity which arises when students do not have an idea about their errors, so they may feel anxious and lost while they are trying to clarify their messages again. Correspondingly, in his study, Golshan (2013) stated that clarification request is less effective than other feedback types such as metalinguistic feedback or recasts since the clarification request signals that an error occurs, but it does not indicate the location of that error.

A small portion of the students' preferences in relation to corrective feedback types corresponds to the directing question to other students (7.06) but this preference is higher among university students (13). As to explicit correction (5.65 and 2.3), which score low on both primary and university students is in parallel with the studies (Carroll & Swain, 1993; Fu & Nassaji, 2016; Rassaei & Moinzadeh, 2011; Sheen, 2007). Therefore, directing questions to other students and explicit correction are counted as the least favored feedback types chosen by students. The reason that makes 'directing questions to other students' unfavorable as a corrective feedback type can be the resentment experienced by students when their errors are corrected by their classmates. Additionally, they may regard 'explicit correction' as interfering with their utterances without giving any chance them to reformulate their own utterances, in other words, students want to become autonomous language learners who have an opportunity to form and reform their own sentences. In this regard, it is suggested that explicit feedback does not promote effective language learning in the long run since it does not encourage students to take an active role in correcting their own utterances which requires focusing on both form and meaning (Long, 1996). To sum up, recast

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becomes prominent among the corrective feedback types chosen by students, whereas, explicit correction takes place in the last rank of the students' preferences. To sum up, the present study was conducted to investigate the least and the most preferred corrective feedback types by primary school and university students. With this aim, students were given a rubric including 10 corrective feedback types which are recast, clarification requests, translation, metalinguistic feedback, elicitation, explicit correction, asking direct questions, repetition, directing questions to other students and using L1-English with example dialogues occurred between students and teachers. The findings revealed that the most chosen feedback type is recast by students, on the other hand, explicit correction was found to be the least popular feedback type among students' preferences.

The present study may suggest implications for language learning; to illustrate, to increase students' language development, teachers should take into consideration their choices of corrective feedback types. In this regard, it can be concluded from this study that students choose to be corrected through alterations, clues, questions or the usage of L1. Therefore, students wish their teachers to create opportunities for them to correct their own errors engaging actively in the language learning process. To put it differently, students desire to become more autonomous learners who reformulate their own utterances instead of accepting their teachers' explicit and direct corrections passively. All in all, it is important to note that teachers should pay attention to students' preferences of how to be corrected to increase the effectiveness of language learning.

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