Student's Preferences of Corrective Feedback: A Case Study

Akhmad Hairul Umam
Tanri Abeng University
ahmad.umam@tau.ac.id

Abstract

Students who learn second language or a foreign language will do a lot of errors during the learning process. In this case, instructors (teachers) have responsibility to repair the errors in order to prevent them doing the same errors at another occasion and make them closer to acquiring the target language. This research study examines the learners' preferences of corrective feedback as well as to investigate the reasons of corrective feedback's choices made by learners toward their language learning. The researcher modifies the scenario-based questionnaire which was constructed based on Lyster and Ratna's (1997) typology of corrective feedback (CF) for the purpose of collecting data from learners' preferences of corrective feedback types. The participants participated in this study are 30 learners of university students selected through purposive sampling. The results of the study indicated that language learners preferred direct CF more than indirect CF with the percentage Recast 27%, Explicit Correction 23%, Clarification Request 13%, Metalinguistic 10%, and Repetition 7%. This study has implications for teachers, learners, and material developers to pay attention in providing appropriate technique which is well accepted by EFL learners.

Keywords: Corrective feedback, second language acquisition, recast.

Introduction

It goes without saying students who learn a foreign language will do a lot of errors during the learning process. In this case, instructors (teachers) have responsibility to repair the errors in order to prevent them doing the same errors at another occasion and make them closer to acquiring the target language. Lately the process of correction made by teacher is known as corrective feedback (CF) which refers to the responses or treatments of teachers to guide them as close as to the target language production. Corrective feedback (CF) is also known as error correction or grammar correction in second language (L2) classroom.

In the process of developing second language acquisition (SLA), study of corrective feedback is regarded as an important element. It is argued that supplying comprehensible samples of target language is particularly necessary for SLA (Long, 1988). The clear input and feedback for the learners will help them a lot to acquire their second language effectively. As quoted from Chaudron (1997) who stated that any reaction of the teacher which clearly transforms, disapprovingly refers to, or demands improvement of the learner utterance are considered as feedback in a corrective way. Awhile Lightbown and Spada (1999) defined corrective feedback as "any indication to the learners that their use of the target language is incorrect". Therefore, with regard to their views, Li (2010) has recognized CF in second language classroom as the responses to a learner's non-target-like L2 production. Slightly simple and different from previous notion of feedback, Leeman (2017) argued that feedback is the reaction to the utterance of the language learners.

However, according to Diab (2006), CF will be more promising when both teachers and students share common ideas about the use of CF strategies. In addition, supporting to his argument, Lyster, Saito, and Sato (2013) called upon the significance of doing research on language learners' CF preferences. They argued that the knowledge about the learners' preferences can lead to a more effective error correction on the part of language teachers.

This study focuses to identify students' preferences of CF during the process of second language or foreign language acquisition as well as to investigate the reasons of corrective feedback's choices made by learners toward their language learning. As matter of fact, correcting students' errors sometimes lead students to be demotivated. Inappropriate correction or negative feedback from teacher might influence student's anxiety, which means it might cause fossilization (Vigil and Oller, 1976 in

Brown, 2000; Rahimi and Dastjerdi, 2012 and it can cause student blanking on to say something in the target language (Ortega, 2009).

It is clear that the task of teachers not only able to teach and correct students' error but also, they need to maintain students' motivation in acquiring second language. Therefore, giving correction to students' errors should meet their expectation (Katayama, 2007). For English learners, feedback is one way to make them closer to English and finally acquire it as their second language. In line with that reasons, this study aims to answer two research questions as follows: (1) What are students' preferences toward corrective feedbacks? (2) Why do students prefer to have particular types of corrective feedback?

The research study on corrective feedback has been conducted by many scholars. The study of error correction in second language acquisition (SLA) has been hotly debated for many years for both theoretical and practical reasons. There are several studies concerning the role of corrective feedback (CF) in SLA studies just to mention few (Ellis, 2009; Ellis, Loewen, & Erlam, 2006; Han, 2002; Leeman, 2007; Li, 2010; Li & Li, 2012; Lightbown & Spada, 1999; Lyster, 1998a, 1998b; Lyster, 2004, and Lyster, & Ranta, 1997). Responding to the increased attention to CF studies, Ellis (2005) stated that the theoretical motivation for this interest lies in the claim that L2 learning (unlike L1 learning) needs negative and positive facts. Language learners require clear example what is correct and what is not correct.

One of the research finding found that most teachers prefer to providing implicit feedback, in the form of 'recasts' (Carpenter, Seon-Jeon & MacGregor, 2006). In a comparative corrective feedback study, recasts accounted for 60% (Sheen & Ellis, 2006) and 55% (Lyster & Ranta, 1997) of the entire feedback types recorded; this highlights their prevalence amongst teachers and their relevance to SLA.

However, one downside to recasts is there unpopularity among EFL students, according to Schulz (cited in Lyster et al., 2013). According to him, EFL learners expressed a preference to have their errors corrected more explicitly. In addition, EFL is usually learned in environments where the language of the community and the school is not English; Japan is an example of EFL pedagogy. This preference is due to the traditional way in which foreign languages are taught, which extols the importance of grammar instruction (Lyster et al. (2013).

Types of Corrective Feedback

There are six different corrective strategies have been identified and the most frequently used in giving feedback: explicit correction, clarification requests, metalinguistic information, elicitation, repetition, and translation (Lyster & Ranta, 1997). All of these techniques are placed in an explicit-implicit continuum. Below is the brief description of these corrective feedback techniques.

1. Recast

Lyster and Ranta (1997) define recast as 'teacher's reformulation of all or part of a student's utterance, minus the error'. In addition, according to them as cited in Tarone and Swierzbin (2007), there are different forms of corrective feedback, but the most common type provided by teachers in the classroom is the recast, where the teacher correctly paraphrases a leaner's error.

2 Explicit feedback

This type describes teacher in providing the correct version of the error by saying "Oh, you mean…," "You should say…" to indicate student's error clearly. This feedback is also known as overt and clear indication toward the existence of errors. In providing the feedback, teacher can provide both positive and negative evidence by clearly mentioning what the

learners have produced is incorrect or erroneous. In contrast, teacher only provides students with "comments, information, or questions related to the well-formedness" of their utterances (Lyster & Ranta, 1997).

3. Clarification Requests

Feedback that carries questions indicating that the utterance has been ill-formed or misunderstood and that a reformulation or a repetition is required identified as clarification requests. In this type, teacher uses phrases like "Pardon me" to require student self-correct the error. This kind of feedback encapsulates "problems in either comprehension, accuracy, or both" (Lyster & Ranta, 1997). Clarification request is different from explicit error correction, recast, and translation. This can be more consistently relied upon to generate modified output from learners since it might not supply the learners with any information concerning the type or location of the error.

4. Metalinguistic Feedback

Lyster and Ranta (1997) categorize metalinguistic feedback as "comments, information, or questions related to the well-formedness of the student's utterance, without explicitly providing the correct form". It contains comments, information, or questions related to the correct version implicitly. Usually, teacher will use question like "Can you find your error?" or statement like "No, no X", or just "No"

In addition, unlike its name, the inclusion of metalanguage is not its deterministic characteristics; rather the encoding of evaluations or commentary regarding the non-target-like nature of the learner's utterance is considered as the defining feature. Lyster & Ranta (1997) classified the metalinguistic feedback into three subcategories: comment, information and questions.

5 Elicitation

According to Panova & Lyster (2002) stated that elicitation is a correction technique that guide the language learners to do self-correction. It refers to three teacher's techniques to make student provides the correct form of the error and may be accomplished in one of three following ways during face-to-face interaction, each of which vary in their degree of implicitness or explicitness. The techniques are 1) strategically pausing to allow student continue teacher's sentence with the correct form, 2) using question like "How do we say X in English?", and 3) asking students to reformulate their utterances occasionally.

6. Repetition

This feedback is simply the teachers or interlocutors' repetition "of the ill-formed part of the student's utterance, usually with a change in intonation" (Panova & Lyster, 2002). Repetition is considered less communicatively intrusive compared to explicit error correction and metalinguistic feedback.

Research Methodology

The research study uses quantitative approach to gather data of students' preferences toward types of corrective feedback and qualitative approach to collect data of students' reasons for preferring particular types of corrective feedback through questioner and student interview. Overall, the questionnaire consists of six examples that cover all type of corrective feedback. The questionnaires used in this study were the adaptation of Chaudron's (1977) error correction, (Katayama, 2007) questionnaire, and Lyster and Ranta's (1997) error correction.

a. Participants

This study involved 30 university students of Tanri Abeng University as the source of data for questionnaire and 5 students as the source of data for student interview. The age of learners ranged from 20 to 22 including 17

female and 13 male students. They are majoring in Corporate Communication School of Management and Leadership at Tanri Abeng University. From the data of questionnaires, the researcher did simple calculation by calculating how many students had answered for each item of questionnaire. After that the researcher counted the percentages and analyzed them by using frequency distribution.

b. Instruments

For the purpose of collecting data on the learners' preferences, the writer uses a point Likert-scale scenario-based questionnaire constructed based on the CF typology by Lyster and Ranta (1997). The main source of this data is questionnaire awhile the interview conducted only for deeper information from respondents.

c. Procedures

Initially, a subsample of English learners was selected through purposive sampling. Afterward, a researcher-made questionnaire was constructed based on the literature on CF. The instrument was distributed to English learners collectively in their classes by the same researcher. After that, the quantitative data collected through questionnaire were subjected to descriptive and inferential statistics, and then the interview data were analyzed and compared with the quantitative data to triangulate and confirm the results.

Findings and Interpretation

In this part, we will show the student's preferences of corrective feedback which include data description as you can see in the following summary.

Table 1.

Students' Preferences of Corrective Feedback
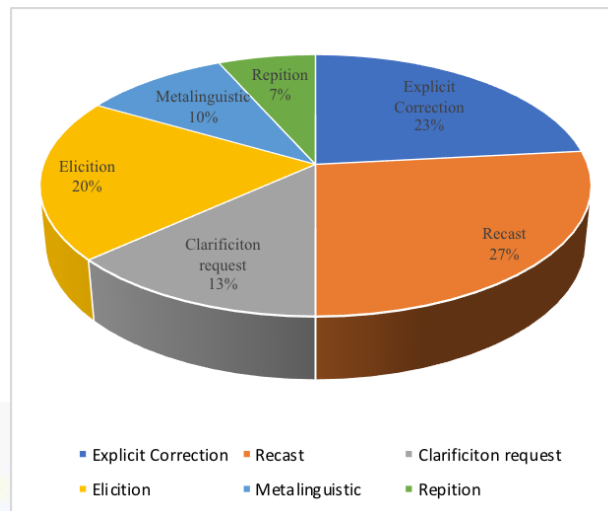
From the result of questionnaire shown in Table 1, we found that 27% students preferred Recast, 23% preferred Explicit correction, 20% preferred Elicitation, 13% preferred Clarification request, 10% preferred Metalinguistic, and 7% preferred repetition. In other word, based on students' responses on questionnaires they preferred to have (1) Recast, (2) Explicit correction, (3) Elicitation request, (4) Clarification Request, 5) Metalinguistic, and (6) Repetition.

From this finding, we can conclude that most of students at Tanri Abeng University preferred to have recast and explicit corrective feedback with percentage 27 % and 23 % instead of other types. The big number of choices taken by students is probably their lecturer provided more explanation on the location of error and the right version of errors, it was not puzzling, it was more detail and clearer so they can learn more.

Due to the recast and explicit are preferred the most instead of implicit or other types of corrective feedback, University students expect their lecturers' explanation for the reason why it was errors and how to repair them, besides, just giving the correct version directly. The big percentage of students devoted to recast and explicit correction as the most frequently used corrective feedback is in line with other surveys done by Carroll & Swain,1993; Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Panova & Lyster, 2002.

However, from interview with 5 interviewees we found that most of students could accept corrective feedback because it made them know the location of their error. According to the results of the interview, the most preferred was recast, and repetition was the least preferred. So, the finding of interview is not so much different from questionnaire result. Actually, the acceptance of feedback may vary based on how the correction is given. Few students said that correction might make them feel nervous, dispersed concentration and feel embarrassed. Moreover, according to Han (2002) also identified four conditions that may affect the utility of recasts: (1) individualized attention, (2) consistent linguistic focus, (3) learners' developmental readiness, and (4) intensity of the treatment. Both data showed that students preferred explicit corrective feedback rather than implicit corrective feedback. However, since Explicit correction was prefered the most, students still expected lecturers' explanation for the reason why it was errors and how to repair them. Apart of just giving the correct version directly.

Extracts from Students' Interviews

During the interview, the informants provided different reasons for their preferences of corrective feedback. The main reasons were related to the advantage of the immediate classification of the correct form and the certainty of the correct answer. As one student said, 'It is because it would be clearer for me when revising my pronounciation.' Students were concerned that an error may not help them to the correct spelling. Below are selected extracts from 5 students:

Student 1: "Comparing all the types of corrective feedback, I prefer recast most. I need to comprehend clearly with my errors. It would be clearer for me when my teacher revising my pronounciation. I don't need to think anymore. However, I also like repetition. It gives me chance to correct with myself." (Andika)

Student 2: "I found my lecturer gave me different types of feedback explicit and implicit. I prefer to get an implicit feedback. I like a challenge and I think that one is interesting. However, if I have to choose other options I go with recast. It seems recast is better than repetition. Recast gives the lecturer tries to give me the correct form of my error"". (Farida)

Student 3: "For all the types of corrective feedback are good depend on how the lecturer uses them in teaching learning process. As language learner, I am ok to be given direct or indirect feedback. However, overall, I think recast is the best. I like and prefer recast and clarification request as well". (David)

Student 4: " For me I like to receive immediate feedback for my error. If my lecturer does not provide the correct answer, then I may not be sure that the one I speak can be correct. I think I can immediately understand about the error. (Nina)

Student 5: "I am lazy to think and always feeling embarrassed to be corrected directly in front of my classmates. So, I prefer repetition I can see my mistake clearly as guided by my lecturer". (Sulaiman)

Conclusion and Suggestion

The findings of this study may have implications for the progress of language learning. Based on the observation, ideally students' errors are not viewed failures but as mediums that contribute to second language acquisition. Therefore, teachers must pay attention toward learners' expectations and preferences into consideration and take advantages of them in their classes.

The researcher also realized that the number of sampling is only 30 students and may not representative for the whole students of Tanri Abeng University in students' preferences of corrective feedback. However, this study offers insights to assist students to clarify their misconceptions about

their teachers' CF strategies and to decrease the mismatch between their lecturers' CF strategies and their expectations. Hopefully this research study can contribute to efficient language learning for language learners. As suggestion for upcoming research study can be conducted with a larger sample of language learners at other level university settings.

References

Brown, H. Douglas. (2000). *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching*. New York: Longman.

Carroll, S., & Swain, M. (1993). Explicit and implicit negative feedback. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 15(3), 357-386*.

Carpenter, H., Jeon, K., Mac Gregor, D., & Mackey, A. (2006). Recasts and repetitions: Learners' interpretations of native speaker responses. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 28(2), 209-236*.

Chaudron, Craig. (1988). *Second Language Classrooms. Research on Teachin and Learning*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Diab, R. L. (2006). Error correction and feedback in the EFL writing classroom:Comparing instructor and student preferences. *English Teaching Forum, 44(3), 2-13*.

Ellis, Rod. (2003). *Second Language Acquisition*. Hong Kong: Oxford University Press.

Ellis, R. (2006). Current issues in the teaching of grammar: An SLA perspective.
TESOL Quarterly, 40(1), 83-107.

Ellis, R. (2009). Task-based language teaching: Sorting out the misunderstandings. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics, 19(3), 221-246*.

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*.

Han, Z. H. (2002). Rethinking of corrective feedback in communicative language teaching. *RELC Journal, 33(1), 1-34*.

Katayama, Akemi. (2007). Japanese EFL Students' Preferences toward Correction of Classroom Oral Errors. *Asian EFL Journal, 9(4)*, Conference Proceedings, 298-305.

Leeman, J. (2007). Feedback in L2 learning: Responding to errors during practice. In R. DeKeyser (Ed.), *Practice in a second language* (pp. 111-137). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Li, S. (2010). The effectiveness of corrective feedback in SLA: A meta-analysis. *Language Development, 60(2), 309-365*.

Long, M. H., Inagaki, S., & Ortega, L. (1998). The role of implicit negative feedbackin SLA: Models and recasts in Japanese and Spanish. *The Modern Language Journal*, 82, 357-371.

Lyster, R. (1998a). Recasts, repetition, and ambiguity in L2 classroom discourse. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 20,* 51-81.

Lyster, Roy & Ranta, Leila. (1997) Corrective Feedback and Learner Uptake: Negotiation of Form in Communicative Classroom. *SSLA, 20, 37-66.* USA: Cambridge University Press.

Lyster, R. (1998b). Negotiation of form, recasts, and explicit correction in relation to error type and learner repair I immersion classrooms. *Language Learning, 48,* 183-218.

Lyster, R. (2002). Negotiation in immersion teacher-student interaction. *International Journal of Educational Research, 37,* 237-253.

Lyster, R., & Izquierdo, J. (2009). Prompts versus recasts in dyadic interaction. *Language Learning,* 59(2), 453-498.

Lyster, R., & Mori, H. (2006). Interactional feedback and instructional counterbalance. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 28,* 321-341.

Lyster, R., & Ranta, L. (1997). Corrective feedback and learner uptake: Negotiation form in communicative classrooms. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 19, 37, 66.*

Lyster, R., Saito, K., & Sato, M. (2013). Oral corrective feedback in second language classrooms. *Language Teaching, 46(1), 1-40.*

Ortega, L. (1999). Planning and focus on form in L2 oral performance. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 21(1), 109-148.*

Panova, I., & Lyster, R. (2002). Patterns of corrective feedback and uptake in an adult ESLclassroom. *TESOL Quarterly, 36(4), 573-595.*

Rahimi, Afsaneh & Dastjerdi, HosseinVahid. (2012). Impact of Immediate and Delayed Error Correction on EFL Learners' Oral Production: CAF. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences, 3* (1),45-54. Retrieved on October 24, 2012