Using Oral Corrective Feedback in English Classroom; A Case Study of Iranian EFL Students in Iranshahr

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the implementation of oral corrective feedback in a language classroom and its effect on students' eagerness to be involved in the learning process. It was conducted in a class where the focus was on the written form and comprehension, and their oral production. The study comprised 16 female students learning English as a foreign language in a language institute in Iran.The researcher used two techniques for collecting the data: interview and observation. The findings show that two types of oral corrective feedback were given in the class, i.e., explicit correction and clarification requests. The result also reveals that implementing verbal corrective feedback positively affects the student's learning process and eagerness to be involved in communicative activities.

Introduction

Findings related to first language acquisition have been linked to foreign language learning, and it has been concluded that the process works similarly, that children learning their native tongue can make many mistakes which is a normal part of the language acquisition process. When they get feedback from adults, they know how to make acceptable sentences in their native language. Foreign language learners are also functioning in the same way while learning the target language, which is not so different from a child acquiring his first language (ErdoÄŸan, 2005).

In most cultures, errors are seen as something that can cause unfortunate events and should be avoided.

Lightbown and Spada (1999) claimed corrective feedback is valuable. Swain's (1985) study also recommended that treatment of errors can help students to learn better, whether the

input is explicit or implicit. Recasts have also drawn considerable attention as a way to provide learners with feedback. Long (1990) believes information can help the process of learning a second language. The findings of other researchers are also in line with what Long says. Some researchers have focused on the different styles of corrective feedback and tried to find out which of the different approaches of giving input used by the teacher is more effective (Rahimi & Vahid Dastjerdi, 2012).

Errors

In general, errors have been viewed as language learners' speech that departs from the model they are trying to master (Park, 2010).

Errors vs. Mistakes

While defining error, many researchers often compare error and mistake. Corder (1967) stated that error is a systematic divergence made by learners who have yet grasped the use of the target language rules. He believed that error should be distinguished from mistakes.

Dulay (1982) defined errors as the divergence from a chosen model of language performance, while Chun (1982) and Richard (1992) think errors are mentioned as the use of the language or a linguistic item in a way according to native or fluent users of the language, suggested incorrect or unfinished language learning.

It shows an absence of language competence and mirrors a learner's present stage of L2 progress. Therefore, a learner can scarcely self-correct an error. In contrast, a mistake is produced by a lack of performance attention, exhaustion, carelessness, or some other aspects of performance (Jing et al., 2016).

Based on the dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics (1992), a learner can make a mistake due to the absence of attention, exhaustion, carelessness, or some other aspects of performance. Mistakes can be self-corrected when attention is gathered, while an error is the use of linguistic points in a way that a fluent or native speaker of the language counts it as showing defective or unfinished learning. In other words, it happens because the learner does not know what is correct, and thus it cannot be self-corrected.

Therefore the learners' errors mirror a lack of underlying competence in the language they are learning (Amara, 2015).

To differentiate between an error and a mistake, Ellis (1997) proposes two ways. Checking the consistency of a learner's performance is the first one. It is a mistake if he sometimes uses the correct form and sometimes the incorrect one. However, if he consistently misuses it, it is an error. The second one is asking the learner to try to correct his own wrong statement. Where he is unable to, the deviations are errors; where he is successful, they are mistakes (ErdoÄŸan, 2005).

Types of Errors

It is vital to find the type of error the learners make while correcting.

1) Morphosyntactic error: Learners misuse the word order, including tense, conjugation, and particles. 2) Phonological error: Learners mispronounce words. 3) Lexical error: learners' unfitting usage of vocabulary or code-switching to their first language due to their lack of

linguistic information. 4) Semantic and pragmatic error: The confusion of a learner's statement, even if there are no grammatical, lexical, or phonological errors. When dealing with errors, language teachers have to make many decisions, and one of them is the sort of error to correct. Though sometimes, some types of errors are ignored to some degree, or only the most severe errors are corrected (Hernandez, E. & Reyes, 2012).

Corrective feedback

Errors are known to be a common characteristic of language acquisition and learning. In the process of learning, everyone will make errors, no matter whether they are learning the first language or the second language. Though, in the second language classroom, the teacher usually wants pupils to speak as much as possible and encourage them to speak to enhance communicative competence. When students speak a second language, they will also make many errors, and if these errors are not modified, students will mistake them for the correct form and adapt them to their interlanguage system (Wang & Zhang, 2011).

Corrective feedback (CF) refers to the response that pupils receive on the linguistic errors they make in their spoken or written production in a second language. Both verbal and written corrective feedback has attracted considerable attention in recent years because of their importance for developing theories of second language acquisition and because they have held an important place in second language pedagogy (Sheen & Ellis, 2011).

The term corrective feedback has been explained at different times in a very similar way. Chaudron (1977) has given one of the earliest definitions, who considers it as any teacher response that transforms, critically mentions, or demands improvement of the learner's utterance (Hernandez, E. & Reyes, 2012).

Corrective feedback is a response in which the teacher aims to correct the student's wrong utterance. The incorrect statement can involve grammatical errors, meaning errors, or inappropriate use of lexical items. According to Ellis et al. (2006), corrective feedback is a response to a learner's wrong utterance by: i) demonstrating where the error has occurred; ii) providing the proper structure of the erroneous statement; or,

iii) providing metalinguistic information explaining the nature of the error or any combination of these (Rahimi & Vahid Dastjerdi, 2012).

Although all these definitions involve the learners' and teacher's presence, and thus, a classroom is considered a setting

1.5 Oral corrective feedback

Corrective feedback, an essential part of teaching and learning in various second language settings, has interested both second language teachers and researchers in linguistics and second language acquisition (SLA). It can be provided either in an oral mode (e.g., teachers' oral responses to learners' spoken errors) or a written mode (e.g., teachers' written comments on students' written assignments). Both verbal corrective feedback (OCF) and written corrective feedback are effective for learners' second language development.

OCF, defined as teachers' or peers' replies to learners' erroneous statements, has received wide research attention for the past two decades. Most of the previous research examining the

effectiveness of OCF has shown OCF to be helpful and needed for L2 learners' language development (Ha et al., 2021).

2.Statement of the problem

In second language classrooms, teachers usually want students to speak as much as possible and encourage them to speak to improve communication competence. When students talk to SL, they will also make various errors. If these errors are not corrected, students will mistake them for the correct form and internalize them into their interlanguage system. So, oral English will be easy to fossilize if teachers do not provide corrective feedback.

But over-correction or destitute adjustment strategies can be demotivating for the learners, particularly when verbal execution is centered, where it may lead to hesitant speakers who may never attempt a new language or indeed talk at all.

3.Research question

The following research question is characterized by focusing on the presented information: To what extent does OCF affect the student's eagerness to communicate?

4.Research hypothesis

OCF doesn't have a significant influence on students' eagerness to communicate.

5.Methodology

5.1 Participants

The objective of this qualitative study was to explore the implementation of Oral Corrective Feedback by the teacher; therefore, the study was conducted in a class where the focus was not only on the written form and

Comprehension but also on their oral production. This study comprised 16 female students learning English as a foreign language in a language institute in Iran. The student participants' proficiency levels varied from low-intermediate, to Advanced. The institute's placement tests assessed their English proficiency, which included reading, writing, grammar, and oral interview components.

5.2 Instruments

This classroom research was conducted on a set of 16 students in a general English program with particular emphasis on oral production. The researcher used two techniques for collecting the data: interview and observation. The researcher conducted interviews with four teachers who were working in the institute. The observation data were obtained through comments by the researcher by joining the English conversation class three times a week. The researcher made field notes and voice recordings while doing observation in the class.

6.Procedure

6.1 Data collection

Four language instructors with ages thirty-six to fifty were interviewed. Their teaching experiences ranged from fourteen to eighteen years. The interviews were recorded and analyzed considering variables such as value and necessity of corrective feedback, followed by

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questions including their opinions and perspectives on language teaching issues.

To ensure and maintain a highly positive interviewing climate, the researcher listened attentively and gave the participants the full opportunity to express their opinions freely without interruption or disturbance. The same conditions were given to the observation process, where the researcher observed the classroom activities without interrupting the teaching and learning process.

6.2 Data analysis

1: As an English teacher, what do you think about Oral Corrective Feedback?

Teacher A: It is a powerful tool that could always be used to solve problems in any classroom, an essential skill that every classroom teacher should practice and perform properly.

Teacher B: Any language learning process involves oral errors. Verbal corrective feedback has a central role in learning, as it highlights these mistakes made by a learner, enabling them to eradicate such errors in the future.

Teacher C: a person who lacks oral skills in a specific language cannot communicate effectively. Language tutors are expected to take a central role in ensuring that their classes effectively learn the oral form of different words, where they can use them to communicate.

Teacher D: It is an approach that language teachers commonly use to evaluate and reflect on the learners' progress that contains utterances and pronunciations. It gives insight into how students can eradicate their oral mistakes.

Result: Oral corrective feedback is chosen as an effective tool by teachers, which has a vital role in learning where it can highlight the errors or mistakes made by students.

2: What are some approaches you use to improve students' oral language skills?

Teacher A: my method involves the usage of videos, speeches, group work, and discussions.

Teacher B: I do my best to encourage them to engage in conversations. The more they are willing to share their words and thoughts, the better they can practice and improve their speaking skills.

Teacher C: Authentic materials, such as videos, podcasts, and songs. I would also ask them to give a brief presentation about a particular topic.

Teacher D: I like to mention the essential role of games that can be used to play with students in a class. And this is not just for children but for adult learners as well. Because we all enjoy games, and they can help us learn. English games help to create an educational environment that's positive and relaxed, and when your brain associates English learning with fun, you retain new grammar points and vocabulary even better.

Result: By using authentic materials, games, and proper activities, teachers do their best to encourage pupils to engage in conversations. The more they are willing to share their words and thoughts, the better they can practice and improve their speaking skills.

3: Is accuracy more important than fluency in oral language production?

Teacher A: I put more emphasis on developing speaking fluency rather than accuracy during my teaching. As long as students are accurate enough to be understood, building fluent,

confident, and competent communicators are more critical.

Teacher B: too much focusing on accuracy would enable the student to use the language fluently. Beginning with fluency can lead the student to a good amount of precision, and then it becomes easier to learn the English language.

Teacher C: I don't believe that it is proper to choose one and neglect the other. Students need a balance of fluency and accuracy activities to learn effectively.

Teacher D: I try to plan my lessons in a way that would include both types. Sometimes, I would try accuracy activities after teaching a new class, and when the students are comfortable, I can move to fluency-focused activities.

Result: Both of them are important in the process of learning. Too much focusing on one and neglecting the other would enable students to use the language properly.

4: Do you think oral corrective feedback negatively influences students' willingness to communicate?

Teacher A: It depends on how a teacher uses these strategies. If it is used correctly, it wouldn't be an obstacle for students' communicative desires.

Teacher B: On the contrary, it would have a positive effect. Corrective feedback has a beneficial effect on students' ability in a speaking activity. It can develop students' critical thinking and social interaction among students.

Teacher C: students who get corrective feedback from their teacher perform better in the examination. It can enhance students' confidence and self-esteem and improve their communication skills. I also have to mention that if the strategies are not used effectively, they can play as an obstacle in the process of learning.

Teacher D: If the teacher does not reasonably address the students' mistakes or errors, those errors will lead to fossilization, which can cause damage to future language learning development. This damage negatively influences their communicative willingness, as they would feel like they are not ready for it.

Result: The willingness of students to communicate depends on how a teacher uses oral corrective feedback strategies. If it is used effectively, it can have a positive effect as it has a beneficial effect on students' ability in a speaking activity.

In this study, the researcher found that the teacher often used explicit correction as feedback for the students in the conversation class. The exact correction happened when the teacher gave both the proper frame and pointed out that the student's expressions were incorrect, and in this case, she gave them the correct shapes of the errors. At other times, the teacher implicitly reformulated the student's error or corrected it without directly indicating that the student's utterance was incorrect. The teacher also used clarification request feedback to correct students' mistakes. In this way, the teacher does not directly correct the students by giving detailed modifications but by questioning them.

Some students were nervous about joining the conversation at first, but as long as the teaching and learning continued, all of them became active in the conversation class. The use of oral corrective feedback did not distract the student's activity or willingness the communication in

the class. All students stayed active in the course even though the teacher gave corrective feedback on pronunciation, grammar, etc.

Discussion

Two types of oral corrective feedback are frequently used by the teacher in the conversation class: explicit correction and clarification requests. Some studies showed that all types of verbal corrective feedback were believed to be applied to an equal degree in the course; Dilans (2015) considered recasts to be the most common type used in class. However, in this current study, no recast was found.

It was also found that the teacher's oral corrective feedback positively affected the students' eagerness to communicate. The teacher insisted that Oral corrective feedback is a powerful tool, which has a crucial role in learning, and that it can highlight the errors or mistakes made by students. The usage of oral corrective feedback did not disturb the students' activities in the class. In line with this, Eini et al. (2013) say that teacher corrective feedback and peer feedback positively affect students' ability in post-speaking activities. It can enhance students' critical thinking, learner autonomy, and social interaction among students. Ahmad et al. (2013) find that corrective feedback improves students' learning. In the same way, students who get corrective feedback from their teacher perform better in the examination. It can enhance students' self-reliance and confidence and improve their communication and writing skills.

Teachers preferred to use many authentic materials to engage students in the learning process, involve them in learning the English language skills, and demonstrate their skills in and outside the classrooms. They are frequently adopted in teaching the English language using real-life situations. This goes in line with what Tajibayev (2016) explained about authentic materials, where the teachers can use them as additional material to develop the overall skills of the learners' learning.

Conclusion

The implementation of oral corrective feedback positively affects the students' eagerness to communicate. The findings show that teachers used two sorts of verbal corrective feedback: Explicit correction and clarification requests were the types of oral corrective feedback found in this study. The teacher's most dominant type of oral corrective feedback in the conversation class was explicit correction.

The study also reveals that teachers can encourage pupils to engage in conversations by using authentic materials, games, and proper activities. The more pupils are willing to share their words and thoughts, the better they can practice and improve their speaking skills. When the teacher's oral corrective feedback was given to these utterances, it did not cause students' refusal to communicate in the conversation in class.

In conclusion, as a closing, it can be inferred that oral corrective feedback is vital for the learning process and should be applied in class. It is an approach that language teachers can use to evaluate and reflect on the learners' progress that contains utterances and pronunciations. It gives insight into how students can eradicate their oral mistakes and errors and can also be helpful for students' linguistic enhancement.

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