

EXPLORING THE SPEECH ACTS OF TEACHER'S ORAL CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK IN EFL WRITING CLASSROOM

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Abstrak: An essential component of the writing-learning process is corrective feedback (CF). One of the strategies used by the teacher in giving CF is oral corrective feedback (OCF). It concentrates on identifying and correcting common errors and omissions so that students can develop their writing skills. This study employed the qualitative approach with case study design. Audio recording and interviews were employed to gather the data. The participants consisted of one lecturer who taught the thesis proposal writing class and three students who joined the course. The frameworks from Takahashi and Bebe (1993) and Ellis (2009) were employed to analyze the teacher's OCF. The data transcribed from the audio recording showed that the OCF used by the lecturer are direct, indirect, focused, and unfocused. Whereas, from the interview, the students perceived indirect OCF as the most effective one since it could drill students' writing ability and challenge them to solve their own errors in writing. In other words, it will be beneficial to incorporate both direct and indirect CF. However, for the tertiary level, indirect and metalinguistics CF will serve more benefits for the students' writing performance.

Keywords: Speech acts, Oral corrective feedback, Writing, EFL

INTRODUCTION

Academic writing is considered a crucial skill that must be honed by graduate students who aspire to become scholars in their respective fields. For this reason, English for foreign language (EFL) writing courses for master students are often focused more on the academic writing issues such as constructing arguments, avoiding logical fallacy, and harmonizing ideas. Hence, in catering to these needs, corrective feedback (CF) in writing classes for graduate students ideally should target those areas. CF refers to remarks or commentary on the appropriateness or accuracy of a second language learner's output or comprehension (Li & Vuono, 2019). Several studies have revealed the benefits of corrective feedback in writing such as it helps students to correct errors (Khadawardi, 2020); improves L2 written grammatical accuracy (Lim & Renandya, 2020; Sobhani & Tayebipous, 2015); allows both teachers and students to clear up any confusion (Cepni, 2016); helps students to ease their learning anxiety, and enhances their motivation in developing their writing (Hamidun et al., 2012; Saragih et al., 2021).

Moreover, writing instructors often employ various strategies in giving CF. According to Li & Vuono (2019) studies on CF tend to classify the focus into two according to its delivery means. First CF that is delivered orally or Oral corrective Feedback (OCF) and the second is CF that is delivered through written form or Written Corrective Feedback (WCF). This study reviewed 12 research related to OCF and WCF in the past 25 years and the results revealed the

similar and different characteristics between the two. The study affirms that the classification of strategies in OCF and WCF are essentially the same or similar with minor distinction related to the terms used. For instance, Both OCF and WCF can be classified based on the focus into “focused” or “unfocused” feedback. Whereas, when they are categorized according to whether the proper form is given or not, OCF is categorized into “input-providing” or “output-prompting” while WCF often uses the terms “direct” and “indirect”. This study also suggests that there are more studies related to WCF since it is mostly incorporated in writing class, which often produces more comprehensive feedback. On the other hand, with the focus on OCF, Alsolami (2019) argues that despite the fact that there are numerous types of feedback approaches used in learning, OCF is the most frequently employed technique in L2 teaching practices. This is primarily because it encompasses the variety of language-learning concepts, like pronunciation and writing. OCF offers a wide range of resources that help teachers and pupils locate and fix errors. From here, it can be concluded that although it may often be used in writing class, OCF has not been much explored in terms of its categorizations. Additionally, OCF is majority done in correcting students’ speaking performances instead of their written work (Aranguiz & Espinoza, 2016; Mulyadin, 2022; Saswati, 2021; Siska et al., 2018), whereas research exploring OCF in writing class is still scarce. Thus, this research gained interest in investigating the OCF implemented by the lecturer in correcting students' thesis writing.

Furthermore, exploring the OCF strategies used by the lecturer can be conducted by classifying the speech acts used by the lecturer in delivering OCF. Speech acts is a substudy in pragmatics field which investigates the basic meaning expressed by the interlocutors (Ishihara & Cohen, 2010; Darweesh & Mehdi, 2016). These basic meanings can be taken from the meanings conceived and intended by the speakers, or from the listeners’ uptake. Besides, according to Siritman et al. (2020), speech act is known as one of the language abilities that is very practical, observable, usable, concrete, and empirical. It serves as a trigger to move a language and facilitate conversation. Moreover, in certain communities, many of these speech acts generally adhere to regular and predictable patterns (Ishihara & Cohen, 2010). Therefore, studying teachers’ OCF speech acts in writing classrooms may reveal the patterns of OCF that the teacher uses the most and unfold which category of OCF which are the most effective to be given to students.

In exploring teachers’ OCF speech acts, there are several theoretical frameworks that can be used. Takahashi and Beebe’s model (1993) classified corrective feedback into two types: positive remarks and softeners. Positive remarks involve giving praise, compliment, and positive evolution before providing the correction acts “It was a great presentation, but....”. Meanwhile, softeners refer to the use of down-toning expressions in delivering corrective feedback. The softeners here are divided into three forms: softeners, questions, and expressions to relieve the pressure of the error. An example of softeners in corrective feedback is “We think, we believe, that you may have”. The question in softeners refers to making the correction into the question “Did you say...”. Then, expression in relieving the error can also defend the interlocutors “You made a small error”. Moreover, in relation to classroom instruction, the framework from Ellis (2009) focused on the types of CF given by teachers to students. According to this model, there are six types of corrective feedback provided by the teachers in the classroom, including direct corrective feedback, indirect corrective feedback, metalinguistic corrective feedback, focused and unfocused corrective feedback, and electronic feedback. These types of corrective feedback are usually employed by teachers, especially in giving feedback to students on their writing performance. The following are the elaboration on each categories:

- Direct corrective feedback refers to the teacher’s act in giving the correction form to the students directly.

- Indirect corrective feedback is when the teacher indicates that an error exists but does not provide the correction directly.
- Metalinguistic corrective feedback occurs when the teacher gives a metalinguistic clue regarding the error.
- Focused and unfocused corrective feedback refers to whether the teachers correct all the students' errors or focus on correcting a specific error made by the students.
- Electronic feedback is the teacher providing a hyperlink that provides students with an example of the correct form.
- Reformulation is when the teacher gives a native-like correction to reformulate the students' incorrect sentences into the correct form.

Correspondingly, there have been previous studies that investigate teachers' speech acts in giving CF. Sato (2013) revealed that following a semester-long training in which students practiced giving and receiving peer feedback after participating in communicative tasks, they felt noticeably more positive about CF. Similarly, Trabelsi (2019) provides evidence on students' positive attitudes towards their teachers' feedback. In this study, the students claim that their teachers' feedback was thorough, timely, incorporating a variety of techniques, sufficient, effective, clear, and explicit. Furthermore, Li (2010) revealed that while explicit feedback provided larger and immediate outcomes, implicit feedback gave more long-lasting effects than the explicit ones. At the same time, all of these studies also revealed that students sometimes experienced some difficulties in understanding their teachers' comments. From here, it can be concluded that exploring teachers' speech acts in giving OCF will give insights into which types of CF are effective and more likely to be successfully transferred to students. Hence, this study is interested in investigating the lecturer's OCF in the thesis writing classroom.

METHOD

This study used a qualitative approach with a case study design. The participants were a lecturer who taught Thesis Proposal Writing and three master students who took the course. Data collection for this research was obtained from the recording analysis that the researchers conducted. The researcher recorded the lecturer's talk during the class. Then, the result of the lecturer's recording was transcribed and coded based on the determined criteria. An adapted framework from Takahashi and Beebe (1993) and Ellis (2009) regarding types of corrective feedback was used to classify the OCF type. The following is the adapted framework to analyze the data dealing with the lecturer's feedback.

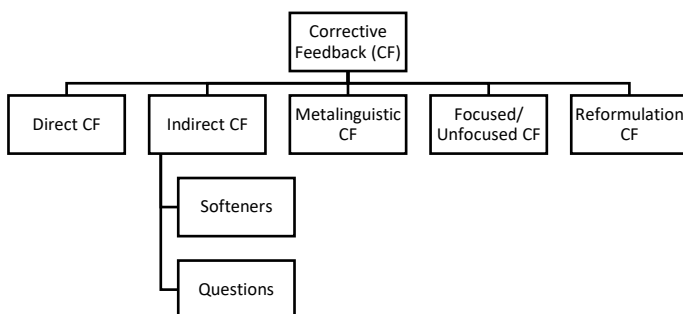


Figure 1. The adapted framework from Takahashi and Beebe (1993) and Ellis (2009)

The researchers adapted the framework by excluding the electronic corrective feedback that was included in Ellis's (2009) framework. This decision was made to match the framework with the classroom context in this study. Since the class was conducted offline, the teachers directly provided OCF to students writing proposals. Therefore, considering the

situation, we decided to only involve five types of corrective feedback based on Ellis (2009) in our analysis. After that, the analysis result was given to three students for confirmation through an interview. Three students were the students who were given feedback by the lecturer. The purpose of this interview was to cross-check and comprehend students' perceptions regarding the lecturer's method of giving corrective feedback.

The data from this study were analyzed using the interactive model analysis techniques by Miles et al. (2014). The stages in the data analysis consist of data condensation, data display, and formulating conclusions. Data condensation is selecting, focussing, simplifying, abstracting, formulating, and transforming data. In this study, we focused only on the lecturers' utterances that were addressed to students' writing. Hence, the lecturer's utterances that were not related specifically to students' writing, such as intermezzo or teaching fillers, are omitted from the data analysis. Then, the data was organized and classified based on the framework adapted from Takashi and Bebe (1993) and Ellis (2009). The last stage was formulating a conclusion to draw an accurate conclusion based on the data. In this study, two authors double-checked the analysis from this study to get a more precise and complete interpretation.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Oral Corrective Feedback Employed by the Lecturer

Based on the results of the study, the OCF that the lecturer delivered to the students can be categorized into two focuses: the writing, and the linguistic features. This is in line with Raimes (1985), which states that feedback that was given for students' writing can be divided into several parts, such as content, grammar, mechanics, and organization, depending on the lecturer's necessity. In this study, the lecturer first focused on the writing flow, such as the paragraph construction, flow of ideas, the formulation of arguments, and the coherence of the paragraphs. Next, he focused on linguistic features such as syntactic structure, mechanics, and grammar. Out of all 32 OCF, it is found that the lecturer delivered the writing-related OCF 25 times and the linguistic-related OCF 7 times. In other words, the lecturer focused more on correcting writing-related content from the students' drafts. This is in line with the result of Doughty and Varela's study (1998), which states that there was less discussion of metalinguistic issues when giving correcting feedback to students. Similarly, competence development, including cohesion and coherence knowledge in the text, is needed for the beginner writer (Wahyuningsih, 2018). Here, students are not a beginner in English writing, but they are a beginner in thesis writing and writing for publication. Hence, the lecturer may take this into his consideration in giving feedback.

Moreover, looking into the strategies employed by the lecturer in delivering OCF, it is found that the lecturer equally employed direct and indirect OCF. *Direct Feedback* is the type of OCF that the lecturer frequently used. In delivering the direct OCF, both in writing-related and linguistic-related feedback, the lecturer mostly directly pointed out the mistake or the error and then went to the correction right after that. For example, the lecturer would say "*This section here, it talks about concepts too much. Move it to theoretical underpinnings or theoretical framework and focus on your arguments here*". In that OCF, the lecturer made the feedback so explicit that the students knew what exactly her mistake was and knew how exactly she should fix it. This is actually against a study in corrective feedback, which claims that direct corrective feedback will give the most benefit to beginner to intermediate students (Lyster & Ranta, 1997). Besides, another important thing to highlight is that the lecturer tended to give direct OCF when the mistake is related to coherence or when there is a problem in formulating arguments within the draft. Coherence in writing text, according to Johns (1986), is a complex concept that includes the features of cohesion and unity. It is assumed that the lecturer

employs the direct OCF for this type of mistake even towards graduate students since coherence and argument formulation is a complex task even for this level of students.

On the other hand, the lecturer also employed indirect feedback in delivering OCF. Indirect feedback, according to Ferris (2002), is a type of corrective feedback used by the lecturer to avoid students' despair, particularly those with a low mentality. In written corrective feedback, indirect feedback is usually delivered in the form of signs such as underlines or circles on the students' errors without providing the correct answers (Ferris, 2002). Indirect feedback can be delivered in the form of *softeners*. *Softener* is a kind of indirect feedback that make each speech act of corrective feedback less threatening (Takahashi & Beebe, 1993). The examples of softeners that were used by the lecturer in giving OCF are *"I believed that there have been a lot.. So, it means that you need to review more..."* and *"You may concern with the activities of Madani..."*

Moreover, besides softeners, there are also questions. *Question* is a type of indirect OCF which intends to make the correction into question (Takahashi and Beebe, 1993). The examples of question indirect OCF are: *"Anything missing from the title?"*; *"What about our academic way of deciding on which we are concerned with?"* and *"In reviewing previous studies related to core curriculum activities, no? Not yet right? you know what to do?"*

Another type of indirect OCF employed by the lecturer is metalinguistic feedback. Metalinguistic feedback according to Ellis (2009), metalinguistic feedback is a type of feedback related to linguistic features that is delivered indirectly through the use of questions or pointers to the errors. The examples are: *"The word 'perception' here should be plural or singular?"* or *"And you need to use capital W?"*. From the type of indirect OCF above, it can be inferred that the lecturer tried to provide a clue about students' errors and asked the students first. He did not directly point out the error or give the suggestion to the students. However, he gave opportunities for students to think about and understand their writing errors first. Indirect feedback happens when the teacher demonstrates in some way that there is an error but does not give the correction, thus letting the student discover it (Eslami, 2014). This type of correction can encourage students to think critically about something they must do to improve their writing.

Additionally, in providing feedback for students' writing drafts, the lecturer not only tried to correct the errors in students' writing flow but also errors in linguistic features. The classification of linguistic feature correction in this study can be divided into focussed corrective OCF and unfocussed OCF. Focussed OCF is the feedback that focuses on one language feature, while Unfocused OCF is feedback focused on more than one language feature (Ellis, 2009). Language features, according to Budiharso (2006), consist of syntactic structure, sentence construction, and mechanics. In our analysis, we found that the lecturer used the unfocussed OCF for each of the students. However, the lecturer also divided the feedback into more specific sections that are primarily focused. Thus, it can be concluded that the lecturer applies both focused and unfocused strategies in delivering OCF for each of the students.

For example, for the student A, the lecturer gave the feedback *"The word 'perception' here should be plural or singular?"* that is focused on the grammatical structure. Following that feedback, the lecturer gave the feedback *"You can twist it to an adverbial clause, right? as undergraduate research writing is challenging for EFL students blablabla skills, - right? that is an adverbial clause."*. The later feedback focused only on sentence construction. From here, it can be seen that in smaller sections, the lecturer employed focused feedback focusing only on one linguistic feature. However, that focused feedback is actually a part of extensive unfocused feedback, as all of them are delivered to correct the same draft that focuses on various language features, such as students' grammatical errors and sentence construction. The same thing also happened in giving feedback to student B. The lecturer attempted to correct the

grammatical, as in “*Anything missing on the title?*”, and student capitalization error, as in “*And you need to use capital W?*”.

From the excerpts mentioned above, it can be seen that the lecturer used both focused and unfocused feedback to correct students’ linguistic feature errors. This type of OCF can help students in improving their thesis writing structure. As Karimi & Fotivatnia (2010) mentioned, focussed and unfocused OCF can contribute equally to grammatical accuracy in L2 writing. Focussed and Unfocused feedback can support students in acquiring valuable feedback on their new inaccuracies, allowing them to eliminate errors in their future writing (Fazilatfara et al., 2014). Thus, this focused and unfocused OCF can give meaningful insight into students’ writing improvement as it does not focus on correcting one specific language feature.

Students’ Perspective on Lecturer’s Corrective Feedback Strategies

After analyzing the recording, an interview was conducted with three students who had been given feedback from the lecturer. They were asked about their perspective and preference regarding the oral corrective feedback provided by the lecturer. From the interview, it is found that some students prefer to have the indirect OCF and some others prefer to have the direct one. Students who prefer to have the direct OCF stated that direct OCF will help the students in comprehending the direction of the feedback and revise it accordingly. This reason is in line with several previous studies which points out the reason of why some students prefer the direct feedback (Anggrainy, 2014; Irwin, 2017; Ratih & Abdidah, 2022; Tursina & Chuang 2016). Student C spesifically mentioned that she preferred to have direct OCF for her thesis writing class because she could understand the error she made in his writing or something that she needed to improve about the content in her writing. Student C argued that she did not prefer indirect OCF because she had to guess what the lecturer wanted her to do to improve her writing, which may increase the chance of misunderstanding. She perceived that direct OCF could help her understand her lecturer's intention well. This is in line with what was suggested by Chandler (2003) that direct OCF is more beneficial because it lowers students' confusion type that can take place if students fail to comprehend or take into account the feedback intent. Giving direct CF is also more corresponding as not all students can resolve the problem by themselves; it is not time-consuming and can help them revise their errors easily (Guénette & Lyster, 2013). Therefore, the use of direct OCF can be an option for the lecturer in facilitating better improvement in students’ thesis writing drafts.

On the other hand, some students also mentioned that sometimes they prefer to have the indirect OCF. Student A perceives that indirect OCF using questions will give her more benefits although it is harder to understand. Since the nature of writing class is argumentative, she perceives that by having questions as feedback, she will have the opportunity to explain and defend her argument to the lecturer. One thing to be highlighted from Student A’s statements is that through Indirect OCF, not only will she learn more about the error, mistakes, and logical fallacies in her writing, but she will also practice her critical thinking and problem-solving skills. This is in line with Ferris’s (2006) statement that Indirect OCF is superior to direct feedback in the long run as it engages students in problem-solving learning and hence helps them to become independent learners. Similar to Student A, student B also favored the indirect OCF. She argued that by having indirect OCF there are a lot of chances and opportunities for her to think and have more understanding about her own draft. Since in this direct OCF one way through it is by questioning, then the student herself will be tried to answer those questions and at the same time do the brainstorm about her draft. This case is in line with Kahraman & Yalvac (2015) and Westmacott (2017), that students choose for OCF since it can be a challenge for them to determine which words or sentences should be included in their essays. Additionally, they thought that it inspired them to think critically, which required them

to strive to address their problems. So that indirect OCF benefits student B a lot in her thesis writing since it is challenging, guiding her to overcome the problems.

In conclusion, this type of OCF preference can be a consideration for lecturers in constructing better improvements for students' thesis writing. The success of instructional practices might be attributed to adjusting the students' preferences (Atma & Widiati, 2015). This led to the conclusion that the application of OCF for students not only by considering the proficiency level of students but students' situation can also be taken into consideration.

CONCLUSION

According to the study findings, the lecturer implemented some of the types of OCF to provide feedback on graduate students' writing drafts. Those are direct, indirect, focussed, and unfocussed OCF. Direct feedback was provided to correct students' writing idea flow and argument formulation, as those components can be considered challenging for the students. Then, for indirect feedback, the lecturer used this OCF type to avoid students becoming demotivated in writing their thesis draft. The lecturer used focussed and unfocussed OCF to correct the student's linguistic features error. In addition, this study found that students preferred to have indirect OCF for their draft writing feedback from the lecturer. They stated that indirect OCF could improve their thesis writing because they thought that it could train them to think deeply from the clue or question provided by the lecturer about their thesis writing draft. This study suggests implementing OCF not only based on the student's proficiency level however students' current situation can be taken as consideration. Since there is participant limitation in this study, a study that involves more student participants to gain a broader understanding of effective oral corrective feedback given to students is highly recommended.

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