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Oral Corrective Feedback: Exploring the Relationship between Teacher's Strategy and Students' Willingness to Communicate

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Abstract

This study seeks to investigate the types of oral corrective feedback implemented in class and its effect on students' willingness to communicate. As many as 35 senior high school students as well as the teacher were involved in the observation stage of this study and shared their perspectives about the relationship between teacher's feedbacks on the students' willingness to communicate through interview. The findings show that there are three types of oral corrective feedback given in the class, i.e. explicit correction, metalinguistic, and clarification request feedback. The students insist that the teacher's oral corrective feedback does not make them reluctant to communicate to their peers or teacher in the class. Therefore, it can be concluded that teacher's oral corrective feedback strategy does not disturb the interaction between the teacher and students in the class. It can be inferred that oral corrective feedback is necessary to be implemented in the class because it assists their second language learning.

Keywords: Corrective feedback, willingness to communicate, EFL learners.

1. INTRODUCTION

Recently, corrective feedback becomes a controversial issue in second language acquisition research (Agudo, 2013; Brown, 2007; Rezaei et al., 2011). Its effectiveness while being implemented in the class becomes the subject of debate (Agudo, 2013; Chen et al., 2016). In spite of the good potential of implementing corrective feedback in the

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class, most researchers come up with divergent results. Some researchers notice its effectiveness (Chu, 2011; Leontjev, 2014), while the others obtain the opposite (Naziri & Haghverdi, 2014). Moreover, its impact on second language learners' performance is also an interesting topic of discussion (Ayhan et al., 2011).

Ellis (2013, p. 3) states that "correcting students may be deemed necessary but it is also seen as potentially dangerous because it can damage learners' receptivity to learning. In this respect, some scholars shared their point of view". Harmer (2007) claims that it is necessary to point out and correct students' mistakes involving accuracy work due to its advantages that lead to complete accuracy. However, Harmer (2007) also believes that it is better not to interrupt students' related to their mistakes in grammar, lexical, or pronunciation errors during communicative activities because such circumstances can raise students' stress level and stop acquisition. In the other hand, Brown (2007) proposes that "too much negative cognitive feedback leads learners to decrease their attempts to communicate, while too much positive cognitive feedback causes the errors to become uncorrected" (p. 274). In line with Brown's statement, Truscott (1999) as cited in Agudo (2013) believes that feedback on error does not actually work because corrective feedback may cause embarrassment, anger, inhibition, and a sense of inferiority among learners.

Additionally, Macintyre (2007), as cited in Rashidi et al. (2016), mentions corrective feedback both as something that increases and decreases students' willingness to communicate, depending on how it is expected and offered. In line with this, Brown (2007) also believes that "too much negative feedback – a barrage of interruptions, corrections, and overt attention to malformations – often lead learners to shut off their attempts at communication" (p. 274). Both statements lead to the assumption that students' willingness to communicate is a result of corrective feedback implemented by teacher in the class. Therefore, it is important to investigate the relationship between teachers' corrective feedback and students' willingness to communicate.

Zarrinabadi and Abdi (2011) investigate about the effect of teacher on students' willingness to communicate, it showed that "teacher's wait time, error correction, decision on the topic, and support exert influence on students' willingness to communicate" (p. 288). In another study by (Tavakoli & Zarrinabadi, 2018) proposed that the effect of explicit corrective feedback could increase students' willingness to communicate. Moreover, in Zadkhast and Farahian's (2017) study, it showed that there is a significant effect of immediate and delayed corrective feedback on the students' willingness to communicate. In line with this, Rashidi et al. (2016) investigate the effect of different types of corrective feedback on students' willingness to communicate. The study reports that corrective feedback give a significant effect on the students' willingness to communicate. From those studies, it can be assumed that there were some studies investigating corrective feedback and relate it to the students' willingness to communicate, but they only focus on finding out whether it gives significant effect or not. They have not yet investigated the reasons behind such impacts and how teacher's strategy relates to the students' willingness to communicate.

Those previous researches and this current research have several things in common. First, the context of the research involved EFL learners (Chu, 2011; Naziri & Haghverdi, 2014; Zohrabi & Ehsani, 2014). Second, the types of corrective feedback used in the class are also discussed (Chu, 2011; Faqeih, 2015; Zohrabi & Ehsani, 2014). Despite having

two similar points, this current research is slightly different in terms of the subject of the research. This research involved senior high school students as the subject of the research. Meanwhile, most of the previous research involved university students (Chu, 2011; Naziri & Haghverdi, 2014). Therefore, in this study, the researchers would like to explore what is the types of oral corrective feedback used in the class and how is the relationship between oral corrective feedbacks toward students' willingness to communicate.

This research implements the views on oral corrective feedback proposed by Lyster and Ranta (1997), as cited in Yang (2016, p. 76). This theory is chosen because Lyster and Ranta's work involves learners' oral production and has been widely applied in many studies (Chu, 2011; Pfanner, 2015; Roothoof, 2014; Yang, 2016) due to its comprehensiveness in classifying the taxonomy of oral corrective feedback (Agudo, 2012).

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Corrective feedback has been defined differently yet very similar. One of the earliest definition is that of Chaudron (1977), cited in Méndez and Cruz (2012), who considers it as "any reaction of the teacher which clearly transforms, disapprovingly refers to, or demands improvement of the learner utterance" (p. 64). Moreover, Ellis et al. (2006) stated that, "Corrective feedback takes the form of responses to learner utterances that contain error. The responses can consist of (a) an indication that an error has been committed, (b) provision of the correct target language form, or (c) meta-linguistic information about the nature of error, or any combination of these" (p. 340). In addition, Li (2013, p. 2) states that corrective feedback refers to responses to learners' production errors, the purpose of which is, or is perceived as, remedial, regardless of whatever the errors cause communication problems. Considering these definitions provided by experts, it can be understood that corrective feedback is an action given by the teacher to eliminate errors made by the students or learners in producing the target language.

According to Lyster and Ranta (1997), cited in Yang (2016, p. 76), oral corrective feedback is classified into six classification, they are: explicit correction, recasts, elicitation, metalinguistic feedback, clarification requests, and repetition. In explicit correction, the teacher supply the correct form and clearly indicate that what the students say is incorrect (Chu, 2011). In recast, the teacher implicitly reformulates all or part of the students' utterance (Chu, 2011). The degree of implicitness of the recast can be reduced by rephrasing only a part of the utterance, or adding emphasis on the corrected element without indication that the utterance was ill-formed (Taipale, 2012). In elicitation, the teacher directly elicits by asking questions or by pausing to allow students to complete teacher's utterance, or asking students to reformulate their utterance (Chu, 2011). In metalinguistic feedback, the teacher emphasizes on explicit explanation of forms (Yang, 2016). In clarification request, the teacher requests for further information from a student about a previous utterance (Chu, 2011) or asks a student to reformulate her utterances which are hard to understand (Yang, 2016). Finally, in repetition, the teacher repeats the student's ill-formed utterances, adjusting intonation to highlight the error (Chu, 2011).

Méndez and Cruz (2012, p. 67) say “corrective feedback can be provided immediately after the error has been made, or it can be delayed until later, after the communicative activity the learners are engaged in is finished”. Moreover, the frequency of delivering feedback is also substantial. If the corrective feedback is being given too much, it will bring negative effect on the students’ attitude and performance (Méndez & Cruz, 2012). Meanwhile, if the corrective feedback is being given less, it will be perceived as a hindrance for efficient and effective language learning by learners (Méndez & Cruz, 2012). Therefore, finding the balance between the issues is very crucial for a teacher. The way teachers give corrective feedback are not always the same among learners. This is in line with Agudo (2013, p. 269) who relate the flexibility of providing corrective feedback to the learner’s cognitive and affective needs. Agudo (2013) says that the teacher should correct the students’ error individually because all students cannot be treated in the same way. However, this technique itself involves an enormous challenge for teachers and it becomes a difficult task for them.

According to MacIntyre et al. (1998, cited in Vongsila & Reinders, 2016), willingness to communicate is a readiness to enter into the discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using a second language. In line with this, Dörnyei and Ryan (2015) asserted that willingness to communicate describes how a number of factors interact to influence an individual’s likelihood of initiating communication in a specific situation. Moreover, in turn, Ellis (2012) points out that willingness to communicate can also be viewed as a trait of a situational variable, influenced by specific instructional factors. In short, willingness to communicate is defined as an individual’s readiness in initiating a communication in a specific situation with a specific person and also by specific factors.

3. METHOD

This study was conducted at one of the private schools in Surakarta, Indonesia. The researchers were interested in conducting the research in this school because the curriculum in which English is taught does not only focus on the written form and students’ comprehension but also focus on oral production. Therefore, the school makes an extra class in order to develop students’ oral production by having their students to join conversation classes.

The case study chosen for this study were due to several reasons. First, the objective of this qualitative study was to explore and describe the phenomenon which happened in the real-life context. Specifically, the phenomenon of this study was the implementation of oral-corrective feedback by the teacher in teaching speaking. Moreover, by using a case study, the researchers can get details and accurate information about the ways the teacher gives oral-corrective feedback to the students in the class, the ways students apprehend the oral-corrective feedback from the lecturer, and the compatibility between the implementation of oral corrective feedback in the class and related theories. And finally, by conducting a case study, the researchers can explore the situations happening in the class that have not been revealed, yet.

There are two kinds of data sources used in this study, informants and events. The informant of this study was an English teacher and three students of the tenth grade at the school under study. In addition, they were selected through purposive sampling. The events included the process of the implementation of oral corrective feedback by the teacher in teaching speaking in an English conversation class. Another event was the activity of learning English speaking skill done by the students in the class.

The researchers used two kinds of techniques of collecting the data: interview and observation. The researchers made interviews with three students and one teacher involved in the class. The observation data were obtained through observations by the researchers by joining the English conversation class three times (in which the class was conducted once in a week). The researchers made field notes and voice recordings while doing observation in the class. Moreover, in analysing the data, the researchers used three steps of organizing and familiarizing data, coding and reducing data, and interpreting and representing data (Ary et al., 2010).

4. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

4.1 Types of Oral Corrective Feedback Used in the Conversation Class

4.1.1 Explicit Correction

In the conversation class, the teacher often used explicit correction as a feedback for the students. Explicit correction occurred when the teacher gave both the correct form and additionally pointed out that the students' utterances were incorrect (Taipale, 2012). In this case, after the teacher pointed out that the students' utterances were incorrect, she gave them the correct forms of the errors. It can be seen from the conversation between the teacher and the students in the class in the following example:

Example 1

Students: Poor you. (phonological error)

Teacher: Poor you, you have to put intonation, too. **Poor you.** (explicit correction)

Students: **Poor you.** (repetition)

In Example 1, the class discussed about the expression used in daily activity. The teacher was asking the students to read aloud the expression that had been studied. While the students said 'poor you' without intonation, then the teacher directly corrected their pronunciation errors into the proper one. In addition, the teacher also gave advice to emphasize the intonation of the expression 'poor you'. After that, all of the students directly corrected their pronunciation.

Example 2

Teacher: Save it or change it?

Student1: *Apa, Miss?* [What, Miss?] Save it or **chichit?** (phonological error)

Teacher: **Change it.** (correcting the student's pronunciation)

Student2: Change it. Change it.

In this case, the situation is almost the same as in Example 1. After the students made a mistake in phonological error, the teacher directly corrected their utterance by pronouncing the correct one. Pronouncing the word with the proper intonation to emphasize that what the students had said was wrong and she provided the correct one.

Some information from the students' interview revealed that it was common when they had pronunciation problems in the class, the teacher would directly corrected their mistakes right way. They further informed that she would not use complicated explanations on the mistakes, but merely correct it for them explicitly.

4.1.2 Metalinguistic

As for metalinguistic feedback, the way the teacher gave the feedback is based on their linguistic knowledge. In this conversation class, the teacher also gave metalinguistic feedback to the students. Metalinguistic feedback occurs when the teacher emphasizes on explicit explanation of forms, such as comments, information or question (Yang, 2016; Taipale, 2012). Example 3 is an instance of metalinguistic feedback where the teacher gave additional information provided on a phonological error.

Example 3

Students: Leather your bathroom. (phonological error)

Teacher: *Oke* [Okay]. This is...there is an example, the difference between UK and US (accents), can you hear it? Pay attention. *Ini yang* [This] UK "lather", *ini yang* [this] US "lether", *oke* [okay]? (metalinguistic feedback)

Students: Yes, Miss. Leather. (they said that in both UK and US) (acknowledgement)

Here, the teacher asked the students to read *leather your bathroom*, however, the students did not pronounce it correctly. Then the teacher said, "*Oke* [Okay]. This is...there is an example, the difference between UK and US (accents), can you hear it? Pay attention. *Ini yang* [This] UK "*lather*", *ini yang* [this] US "*lether*". In this situation, the teacher gave a metalinguistic feedback by giving an authentic example by listening to a recording of how to pronounce 'leather' for both British and American accents. The students finally gain knowledge on how to pronounce 'leather' in both of the English accents.

Example 4

Teacher: What is the meaning of 'go clean up yourself'?

Students: *Segera bersihkan dirimu*.

Teacher: If you write, *segera bersihkan dirimu*, it can be 'go tidy up yourself', but 'go clean up yourself' means *cepatlah mandi sana*. (metalinguistic feedback)

In Example 4, the teacher asked the meaning of 'go clean up yourself' to the students, then they answered '*segera bersihkan dirimu*'. After this, the teacher's feedback was, "if you write *segera bersihkan dirimu*, it can be 'go tidy up yourself', but 'go clean up yourself' means *cepatlah mandi sana*". This conversation contains metalinguistic feedback done by the teacher that is related to the semantic error.

Another evidence from the interview found that the teacher did give the metalinguistic feedback during the teaching and learning process. The teacher also

confirmed that she often gave metalinguistic feedback to the students in order to make them learn from their mistakes. Considering all of those cases, it can be interpreted that metalinguistic feedback is one of the types of oral corrective feedback which was usually used by the teacher in conversation class.

4.1.3 Clarification Request

Different from metalinguistic feedback and explicit correction, in this clarification request, the teacher does not directly correct the students by giving detailed explanation, but by questioning them. In this study, the researchers found that clarification request feedback is also used by the teacher in order to correct students' mistakes. Some examples from data are:

Example 5

Teacher: What is the meaning of 'take it easy'?

Students: *Dibikin indah aja.* (L2-L1 translation error)

Teacher: Are you sure? (clarification request)

Students: Yes, ma'am. (acknowledgement)

Example 6

Teacher: Okay, next, 'I got to go'.

Student3: (comes forward and writes on the board, *Aku harus pergi*)

Teacher: Are you sure?

Students: Yes (loudly)

Teacher: Okay. (gives a correct mark on the white board)

In Examples 5 and 6, the students were asked by the teacher to find the meaning of 'take it easy' and 'I got to go' in the Indonesian language. The students directly gave the translation of those words and the teacher feedback was, "are you sure?". In this case, the teacher asked for clarification by asking "are you sure?" to the students. It was done by the teacher in order to know whether the students were certain with their answers. Sometimes, the teacher gave a clue if their answers might be wrong by facial expressions. One of the students informed that the teacher often gave them clarification request and she assumed that this might happen because the teacher wanted to increase the students' self-confidence. The teacher also approved that asking students' opinions are important to make them think critically.

4.2 The Effect of Teacher's Oral Corrective Feedback on the Students' Willingness to Communicate

It is widely believed that teachers' ways of correcting students' mistakes or errors might affect their willingness to communicate. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate this case. In this study, the researchers conducted interview with both the teacher and students in order to gain more information on this issue. In addition, the researchers also observed the teaching and learning activities. Based on the data, teacher's oral corrective feedback gave a positive effect on the students' willingness to communicate.

The teacher insisted that the use of oral corrective feedback did not distract the student's activity in the class. Although there were some students who were quite shy to join the conversation at first, as long as the teaching and learning continued, all of them became active in the conversation class. Moreover, all students stayed active in the class despite the fact that the teacher kept giving corrective feedback in pronunciation, grammar, etc. The teacher commented:

"Alhamdulillah [praise to Allah], the students are comfortable enough with my oral corrective feedback. Maybe, at the first, there are some students who are shy to participate in the class, however, as the days pass by, all of the students are active in the class, although I always gave them corrections toward their pronunciation, grammar, and so forth."

Additionally, the students commented that the teacher's oral corrective feedback was not a threat for them that caused them to be shy or to be unwilling to speak.

"I am not shy, they (teacher's corrective feedback) frequently happen, the teacher treats us the same, so that we have similar experiences." (S1)

"Yes, Miss, I am not shy, it is just so-so." (S2)

"I am not shy, because by getting the teacher's feedback, we understand about our mistakes". (S3)

Besides, the students and the teacher have different views of variables affecting the students' willingness to communicate in the class such as the environment, responsibility, individual characteristics, personality, self-confidence, emotion, motivation and linguistic factors. These can be found in the following excerpts of data from the students:

"Hmmm...the factors are that hmmm because my friends in the class keep on talking using English, so that I voluntarily follow them to use English {classroom environmental condition}. Maybe because I want to prove myself, I am in a bilingual class so I have to speak in English {responsibility, individual characteristics, personality, self-confidence, and emotion}". (S1)

"Of course, friends {classroom environmental conditions}, moreover, in the near future, it is very useful for me in order to study abroad {motivation}". (S2)

"Maybe because of being afraid of making mistakes while speaking {linguistic factors}". (S3)

In addition, the teacher commented:

"Vocabulary mastery, self-confidence, speaking skill, topical familiarity and classroom environmental condition".

As a result, it can be concluded that classroom environmental condition, responsibility, individual characteristics, personality, self-confidence, emotion, motivation, linguistic factors, proficiency, and topical familiarity were variables affecting the students' willingness to communicate. The students believed that the teacher's feedbacks did not disrupt the process of teaching and learning in the conversation class. They acknowledged that the teacher's oral corrections were common in the class.

Therefore, it could be interpreted that the teacher's feedback did not make them shy or reluctant to join the conversation class.

4.3 Discussion

The findings of this research showed that there were three types of oral corrective feedback mostly used by the teacher in the conversation class, they are: explicit correction, metalinguistic, and clarification request. Unlike the findings of this study, the previous studies showed that all types of oral corrective feedback were thought to be provided to an equal measure in the class. Thus, Dilans (2015) considered recasts to be the most common type used in class. Meanwhile, in this present study, no recast was found. Based on the observation, the teacher tended to use metalinguistic feedback in order to cope with the students' errors. The reason that this was used most in the conversation class was because the teacher wanted to make the students learn from their mistakes or errors. This finding corresponded to Yang (2016) who also showed that learners preferred to have metalinguistic feedback compared to others for all error types.

The findings also revealed that the students frequently made phonological and semantic errors. This result partly echoes the study of Eini et al. (2013) who find that the students showed lack of improvement in the content and structure of their speech in their study. Moreover, Dilans (2015) find that feedback was mainly provided in response to morphological, lexical, and phonological errors. However, in better contexts, Yang (2016) states that explicit correction and recast are endorsed for phonological, lexical and grammatical errors.

Moreover, in this research, it was also found that the teacher preferred to use immediate correction rather than delayed correction. This finding is supported by the work of Shabani and Safari (2016) who find that the effect of immediate type of error correction was larger than delayed correction in improving learners' accuracy on their oral production. The reason of that choice is that the teacher wanted to invite the students to be more critical so that she knew whether the students have understood the materials being taught. Moreover, she also insisted that guarding her students from errors is her responsibility. Furthermore, despite of giving a lot of feedback while teaching and learning with her students, she did not give feedback to all errors that occurred in the class from her students. The time spent on giving error correction depended on the focus of the teaching learning activities. For instance, if the conversation class that day focused on grammar, the teacher mostly focused on correcting students' grammar errors.

In addition, it is also found that the teacher's oral corrective feedback gave a positive effect on the students' willingness to communicate. The teacher insisted that the use 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 corrective feedback have a beneficial effect on students' ability in post speaking activity. It can develop students' critical thinking, learner autonomy and social interaction among students. Ahmad et al. (2013) find that corrective feedback improve students' learning. In the same way, students who get corrective feedback from their teacher perform better in the examination. It can enhance students' confidence, self-esteem and also improves their communication and writing skills.

5. CONCLUSION

This study provides an understanding of the implementation of oral corrective feedback used in the conversation class. The findings show that the teacher used a range of oral corrective feedback types. Explicit correction, metalinguistic, and clarification request were the types of oral corrective feedback found in this study. Metalinguistic feedback was the most dominant type of oral corrective feedback used by the teacher in the conversation class. The study also reveals that phonological errors and semantic errors were mostly discovered from the conversations between the teacher and students in the class. In regard to the variables that affected the students' willingness to communicate, they are environmental condition, responsibility, individual characteristics, personality, self-confidence, emotion, motivation, linguistic factors, proficiency, and topical familiarity. The teacher's oral corrective feedbacks did not cause students' unwillingness to communicate in the conversation class. Instead, they insisted that the teacher's feedback was not a certain case that hindered them to speak up in class. Conclusion

As a closing, it can be inferred that oral corrective feedback is necessary to be implemented in the class. It is not only useful for the students' linguistic development but also for their second language acquisition. If the students' mistakes or errors are not well addressed by the teacher, those errors will lead to fossilization which can cause damages for future language learning development. Although oral corrective feedback is used generously by the teacher, the students' preference was not being investigated here. Therefore, potential researchers should take this into account for further research. By being aware of the students' preference, the teacher can provide feedback as needed by the students.

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