

The Effective Method of Corrective Feedback in English Language Learning

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Abstract

Corrective feedback is a complex method with several functions. It has a very significant role in the realm of second language learning. The teachers' styles (ways of learning), and the students' perceptions are very important factors that should be considered in studying the effectiveness of CF. Forty students (20 females and 20 males) from all stages in the Department of English, college of Arts, University of Kufa have been subjected to the questionnaire of CF. Answers of the questionnaire reflect that whom the students prefer to be corrected by, when to be corrected, which errors they prefer to be corrected, and which types of CF they prefer to be followed by their teachers during

correction. Data have been analyzed by using a Microsoft Excel program. The test shows the frequency among all statements. The percentages are taken according to the gender and stage of each student. As a result, the research shows that most of the students want their errors to be corrected by their teachers; they also believe that grammatical errors must be corrected, and they wish all their errors to be corrected. None of the students finds CF a negative method, but most of them strongly agree that it can improve their accuracy. Nearly all the students choose metalinguistic clues as the best type of CF; this can give them clear rules to be followed.

Keywords: corrective feedback, metalinguistic clue, effective method, English language learning.

1.1 Introduction

This study is an attempt to provide an accurate and comprehensive overview of central issues as determined by the most prominent scholars and researchers in the field of L2 learning. CF has the properties of informing, regulating, sustaining, strengthening, and error eliminating (Han, 2001, p.6). By using a questionnaire and some statistical methods, this research shows the effect of CF on English language learning. The questionnaire is answered by (40) selected students in the Department of English, College of Arts, University of Kufa. This research first presents a general introduction and an outline of the study. It includes the research questions and aims. The second section shows the literature review of CF; it also gives a brief explanation of the types of CF. Then, the work moves to shed light on the methodologies, indicating the research design, the participants, the results, and data analysis. Finally, the work summarizes the main results and findings.

1.2 Research Questions

- 1- What is the most prominent type of CF used by teachers?
- 2- Can CF provide students with much help to develop their accuracy in learning English Language?

1.3 Aims

- 1- Contributing to the understanding of the concept of CF nature by studying the most debated methods of CF.
- 2- Examining the effectiveness of CF on English language learning in the Department of English, College of Arts, University of Kufa.
- 3- Measuring the noticeable type of CF.

2.1 Literature Review

Corrective feedback is isolating the error and giving explicit information (Fanselow, 1977,: 23). The learner needs feedback on how well he or she is doing. (Ur, 1996: 243). Ur recognizes that there is certainly a place for correction. Harmer (1983: 44) argues that when students are engaged in a communicative activity, the teacher should not intervene by "telling students that they are making mistakes, insisting on accuracy and asking for repetition". Harmer's advice

has the merit of acknowledgement that CF needs to be viewed as a contextual rather than as a monolithic phenomenon.

Moreover, Vanpatten (2003) declares that CF is the form of negotiating for meaning can help learners notice their errors and create form –meaning connections, thus aiding acquisition.

The dilemma of error corrections has raised controversial issues in second language learning. Corder (1976) highlights that L2 students' errors are important in three different ways. Firstly, students' errors inform the teacher how far towards the language course objective the students have progressed, and consequently, how much is left for students to learn. Secondly, students' errors provide researchers with information as to how the L2 is and what strategies students employ in order to achieve proficiency in L2. Thirdly, errors are indispensable tools that students use in order to learn L2. While Krashan (1982: 74) calls errors correction "a serious mistake". He offers two main reasons for this view: The first view is that "error correction has the immediate effect of putting the students on the defensive"

(Krashan, 1982: 75) with the result that the learner seeks to eliminate mistakes by avoiding the use of complex constructions.

Second, an error correction only assists the development of "learner knowledge" and plays no role in "acquired knowledge".

Nevertheless, Lee (1998), along with Bailey and Celce-Murcia (1979), believes that error correction is an indispensable part of mastery in language learning.

Moreover, currently SLA researchers strongly believe in error correction and corrective feedback (Ellis, 2006).

Swain's (1985-1995) output hypothesis, shedding light on the significance of output opportunities in L2 development, argues that this can help learners to make and test hypotheses about linguistic correctness and to develop metalinguistic knowledge of how the L2 works (Kowail and Swain, 1994; as cited in Kim, 2004).

The proponents of noticing hypothesis (Schmidt, 1990, 1995, 2001) confirm the benefits of CF regarding the facilitative role it has in drawing learners' attention to form. In addition, the updated interaction hypothesis proposed by Long (1996) also lends to supporting to explicit error

correction. From this theoretical front, CF acts as stimulus, triggering learners to identify the gap between their erroneous utterance and the target form. According to Schachter (1991), corrective feedback, negative evidence, negative feedback are three terms used respectively in the fields of language teaching, language acquisition, and cognitive psychology. Long (1996: 78) offers more comprehensive view of feedback in general. He suggests that environmental input can be thought of in terms of two categories that are provided to the learners about the target language (TL): positive evidence and negative evidence. Long (1996: 83) defines positive evidence as providing the learners with models of what is grammatical and acceptable in the TL; negative evidences as providing the learners with direct or indirect information about what is unacceptable.

A problem arises when there is a mismatch between teachers' intentions and learner's perceptions regarding CF. This can unfortunately render corrective feedback in its impact as a tool for language learning (Han, 2001: 67; Roberts, 1995: 13). If students' and teachers' perceptions in

structural effectiveness do not correspond, it can lead to students' discontent, then learning can be impaired (Brown, 2009; Schulz, 2001).

Amrhein and Nassaji (2010: 101) state that students see CF as something that should be provided for them by the teacher. Therefore, teachers should take the roles of coach, facilitator, mentor, and guide instead of insisting only on the roles of examiner, critic, judge, proofreader, and copy editor. As a result, CF will be viewed as an ongoing conversation between the teachers and the students, which in turn would lead to the teachers equipping their students with a range of strategies.

Chaudron (1988) emphasizes that feedback that elicits self-correction is more likely to improve learners' ability to monitor their own utterances. Negotiation for meaning, and especially negotiation work that triggers interactional adjustment by the NS or more competent interlocutor "ease the process of language learning" since it "connects input, internal learner capacities" (Long, 1996: 451-452). Corrective feedback overlooks the fact that "learners' noticing of gaps is not a static phenomenon" (Kim, 2004: 19). This phenomenon has a

dynamic nature and is affected by some factors like the process of language learning, focused on the product, and learners' age. Lyster (1998a) concluded in his descriptive study, that young learners of a second language are sensitive to linguistic forms when they learn the second language.

2.2 Types of Corrective Feedback

The six different types of feedback that Lyster and Ranta (1997) identified are used to categorize teachers' feedback in the current study. Definitions of the six types of feedback in this study followed the ones in Lyster and Ranta's study. The following explains each feedback type, along with examples from the actual data collected in the present day.

2.2.1 Clarification requests

These are either in the form of questions such as Pardon? And I'm sorry? Or they attempt to reveal the intended form of the error with the rising tone. This type of CF is used when there are linguistic problems in the learners' turn, and also when the learners' utterance is not comprehensible. Clarification requests can refer to problems in comprehensibility (Lyster and Ranta, 1997: 47).

S: She will go Paris on May.
(Lexical error)

T: What? (Clarification request)

S: She will go to Paris in May. (Self-repair)

2.2.2 Elicitation

Lyster and Ranta (1997: 48)

illustrate that elicitation refers to techniques that teachers use to directly elicit the correct form from the student. One technique is that teachers elicit completion of their own utterances by strategically pausing to allow students to fill in the blank as it were. The other technique is that teachers use questions to elicit correct forms. Either way, teachers do not provide correct forms in their turn.

S: Me and my brother has two car.
(Multiple errors)

T: Is it right to say have two car.
(Elicitation)

S: No, two cars. (Partial –repair)

T: You should say have two cars.
(Explicit correction)

2.2.3 Recasts

These involve the teacher's reformulation of all or part of a student's utterance, minus the error. They are generally implicit in that they are not introduced by phrase such as you mean, and you should say. That is, the teacher would not indicate nor point out that the student made an error, but merely give a correction form (Lyster and Ranta, 1997: 46).

S: I went there two times.

(Grammatical error)

T: You've been. You've been there twice as a group. (Recast)

2.2.4 Explicit Correction

This refers to the explicit provision of the correct form. As the teacher provides the correct form, he or she clearly indicates that what the student had said was incorrect (No, what you said was wrong, or you don't say....). On occasion, the wrong form is identified along with providing a correct form in the teacher's turn (Rezaei et al., 2011: 23).

S: Ali do not like eating meat, He is a vegetarian. (Grammatical error)

T: You should say Ali does not like. (Explicit correction)

S: Ali does not like eating meat; he is vegetarian. (Repetition)

2.2.5 Repetition

This refers to the teacher's repetition, in isolation, of the student's erroneous utterance. In most cases, teachers adjust their intonation so as to highlight the error (Lyster and Ranta, 1997: 48).

T: When did you wake up yesterday?

S: I wake up at 7 o'clock yesterday. (Grammatical error)

T: I wake up? (Repetition)

S: I woke up at 7 o'clock yesterday. (Self-repair)

2.2.6 Metalinguistic Clues

This contains either comments, information, or questions related to the well-formed of the student's utterance, without explicitly providing the correct form. It points to the nature of error but attempts to elicit the information from the student. This kind of CF makes the learner analyze his\her utterance linguistically, not quite in a meaning-oriented manner (Lyster and Ranta, 1997: 47).

S: Lara may goes to buy some clothes tomorrow. (Grammatical error)

T: Sorry? (Clarification request)

S: What? (Hesitation)

T: Remember; always make the verb infinitive after the modal auxiliaries. (Metalinguistic feedback)

S: Lara may go to buy some clothes tomorrow. (Self-repair)

2.3 Methodology

The given data and statistical analysis are collected in December, 2018 from forty students after providing them with clear information about the nature of CF and all its types. For our purposes, we used tables, charts, and the Microsoft excel program to analyze the data that have been collected from students. Tables

and Charts show the frequency in students' answers depending on their gender and stage, while the Microsoft excel shows the variance of students' choices to each question.

2.3.1 Research Design

A survey (corrective feedback questionnaire) has been applied on 40 students. The nature of the questionnaire is who of the students preferred to be corrected by, how to be corrected, when to be corrected, and which type of CF was preferred by students.

2.3.2 Participants

The participants of the research are students in the English Department, College of Arts, University of Kufa (evening study). A number of 40 students (10 from each class, freshman, sophomore,

junior, and senior) has been subjected to the survey of the research. They are (20) females and (20) males. The range of their ages is between 20 to 32 years old, 20 females are between 22 to 31 years old and 20 males are between 20 to 32 years old. Most of them have a very good English level.

2.3.3 Results and Data analysis

The data collected from the questionnaire are converted to numbers and percentages as in (Table: 1). The data are divided according to students' age and gender, and then converted to percentages for each stage and gender. Analysis has been used to investigate the frequency and differences in answers.

1-Who the students preferred to be corrected by?

| Q.NO.1 | A | B | C | A (%) | B(%) | C(%) |
|------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| First year F | 5 | 0 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| First year M | 4 | 1 | 0 | 80 | 20 | 0 |
| Second year F | 4 | 1 | 0 | 80 | 20 | 0 |
| Second year M | 2 | 0 | 3 | 40 | 0 | 60 |
| Third year F | 5 | 0 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| Third year M | 5 | 0 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| Fourth year F | 5 | 0 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| Fourth year M | 4 | 0 | 1 | 80 | 0 | 20 |
| Total F (N-20) | 19 | 1 | 0 | 95 | 5 | 0 |
| Total M (N-20) | 15 | 1 | 4 | 75 | 5 | 20 |
| Total Students (N-40) | 34 | 2 | 4 | 85 | 5 | 10 |

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Statistical analysis has been applied on data to find the significance of differences. Among all the questionnaire's statements, the test shows a clear variance across all kinds of answers.

The given table illustrates who students would rather prefer to be corrected by. It is clear that students preferred to be corrected by their teachers, since they feel that the feedback they got from their

teachers is more accurate than given by their peers or by others. Most of the students (85%) chose their teachers, (95%) females from all stages prefer teachers, and 75% males preferred to be corrected by teachers. The embarrassment factor can also be an elements to why most of the students do not want to be corrected by their peers or others.

2. When the students preferred to be corrected?

| Q.NO.2 | A | B | C | A% | B% | C% |
|-----------------------|----|----|----|----|------|------|
| First year F | 2 | 2 | 1 | 40 | 40 | 20 |
| First year M | 2 | 3 | 0 | 40 | 60 | 0 |
| Second year F | 2 | 2 | 1 | 40 | 40 | 20 |
| Second year M | 2 | 2 | 1 | 40 | 40 | 20 |
| Third year F | 2 | 0 | 3 | 40 | 0 | 60 |
| Third year M | 2 | 2 | 1 | 40 | 40 | 20 |
| Fourth year F | 2 | 1 | 2 | 40 | 20 | 40 |
| Fourth year M | 0 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 20 | 80 |
| Total F (N-20) | 8 | 5 | 7 | 40 | 25 | 35 |
| Total M (N-20) | 6 | 8 | 6 | 30 | 40 | 30 |
| Total Students (N-40) | 14 | 13 | 13 | 35 | 32.5 | 32.5 |

The presented table shows which time the students prefer to be corrected. In general, the test indicates that most answers came approximately equivalent, except for the first choice in which there is a slight difference. Some of the students preferred to be corrected

with A and B in which males showed a little higher preference than females. Conversely in the second choice, females showed more preference than males towards correcting the errors that make the sentence difficult to understand.

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| Q.NO.3 | A | B | C | A% | B% | C% |
|-----------------------|----|----|---|------|----|------|
| First year F | 2 | 3 | 0 | 40 | 60 | 0 |
| First year M | 4 | 0 | 1 | 80 | 0 | 20 |
| Second year F | 3 | 1 | 1 | 60 | 20 | 20 |
| Second year M | 1 | 2 | 2 | 20 | 40 | 40 |
| Third year F | 4 | 1 | 0 | 80 | 20 | 0 |
| Third year M | 2 | 1 | 2 | 40 | 20 | 40 |
| Fourth year F | 4 | 0 | 1 | 80 | 0 | 20 |
| Fourth year M | 3 | 2 | 0 | 60 | 40 | 0 |
| Total F (N-20) | 13 | 5 | 2 | 65 | 25 | 10 |
| Total M (N-20) | 10 | 5 | 5 | 50 | 25 | 25 |
| Total Students (N-40) | 23 | 10 | 7 | 57.5 | 25 | 17.5 |

3. What type of errors did the students prefer to be corrected?

It can be seen that there is a high tendency towards preferring the grammatical errors to be corrected over the other options provided. Overall students wish to gain more control over their use of grammar in the target language. There are 60% females from

the first year choose phonological errors; this is an indicator that learners need an improvement in their pronunciation.

4. I think corrective feedback can provide much help in developing student's English language.

| Q.NO.4 | A | B | C | D | A% | B% | C% | D% |
|-----------------------|----|----|---|---|-----------|----|-----|----|
| First year F | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 40 60 | | 0 0 | |
| First year M | 1 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 20 80 | | 0 0 | |
| Second year F | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 40 60 | | 0 0 | |
| Second year M | 1 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 20 80 | | 0 0 | |
| Third year F | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 40 60 | | 0 0 | |
| Third year M | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 40 60 | | 0 0 | |
| Fourth year F | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 60 40 | | 0 0 | |
| Fourth year M | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 100 | | 0 0 | |
| Total F (N-20) | 9 | 11 | 0 | 0 | 45 55 | | 0 0 | |
| Total M (N-20) | 4 | 16 | 0 | 0 | 20 80 | | 0 0 | |
| Total Students (N-40) | 13 | 17 | 0 | 0 | 32.5 67.5 | | 0 0 | |

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clear that there is no doubt about CF usefulness in their process of learning and they considered it as an essential method for their development in the English language.

The table above shows that nearly all the students from different stages believe that corrective feedback can provide them with much help and can improve their accuracy (67%5). It is

| Q.NO.5 | T1 | T2 | T3 | T4 | T5 | T6 | T1 (%) | T2 (%) | T3 (%) | T4 (%) | T5 (%) | T6 (%) |
|-----------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| First year F | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 20 | 20 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 60 |
| First year M | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 40 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 60 |
| Second year F | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 20 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 40 | 40 |
| Second year M | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 20 | 0 | 20 | 0 | 60 |
| Third year F | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 20 | 0 | 80 |
| Third year M | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 100 |
| Fourth year F | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 100 |
| Fourth year M | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 100 |
| Total F (N-20) | 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 14 | 10 | 5 | 0 | 5 | 10 | 70 |
| Total M (N-20) | 0 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 16 | 0 | 15 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 80 |
| Total Students (N-40) | 2 | 4 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 30 | 5 | 10 | 0 | 5 | 5 | 75 |

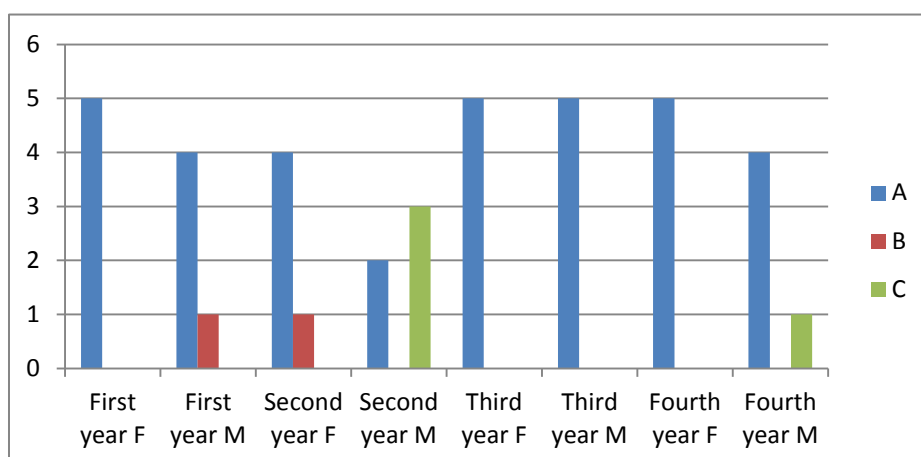
best type of CF. (80%) of females and (100%) of males from the third year have preferred metalinguistic clues. However, the lowest percentage is for recast (0%); this may be due to that students need a clear indication toward their errors, and not merely correction. Thus, most of students preferred to be provided with obvious evidence for their errors in order to develop their proficiency.

5-Which types of corrective feedback are preferred by the students?

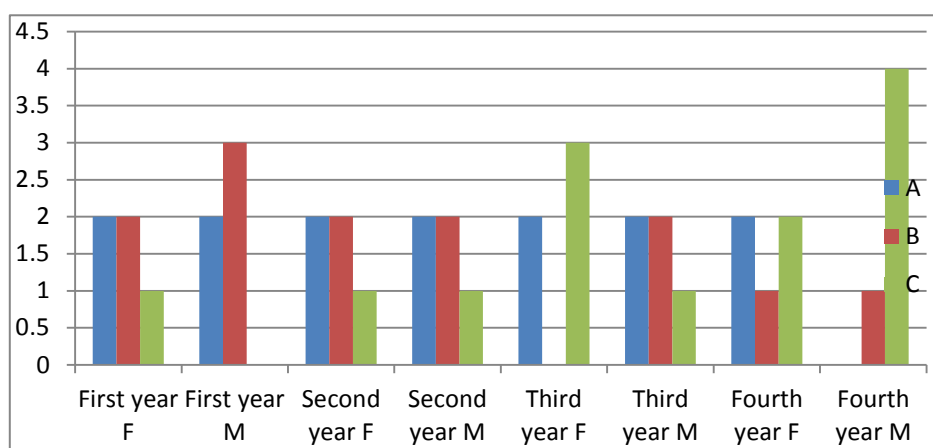
The presented table provides an evidence of the type of feedback that is preferred by the students. (75%) of students have chosen metalinguistic cues as the best method in which they can get better correction from their teachers. (100%) of males and (100%) of females from the fourth year have believed that metalinguistic clues is the

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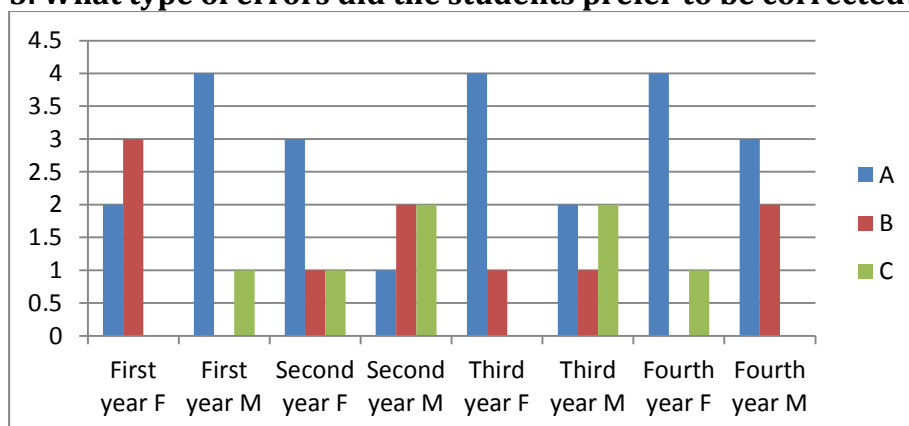
1-Who did the students prefer to be corrected by?



2. When did the students prefer to be corrected?

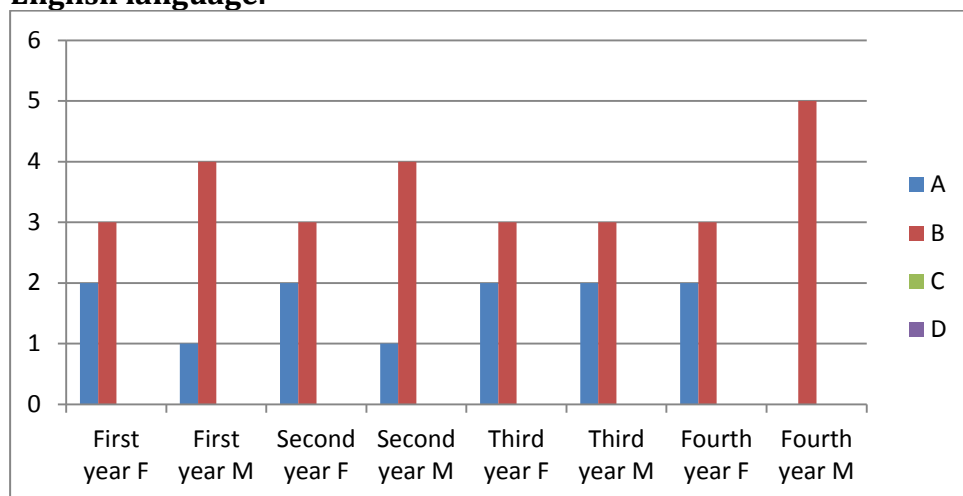


3. What type of errors did the students prefer to be corrected?

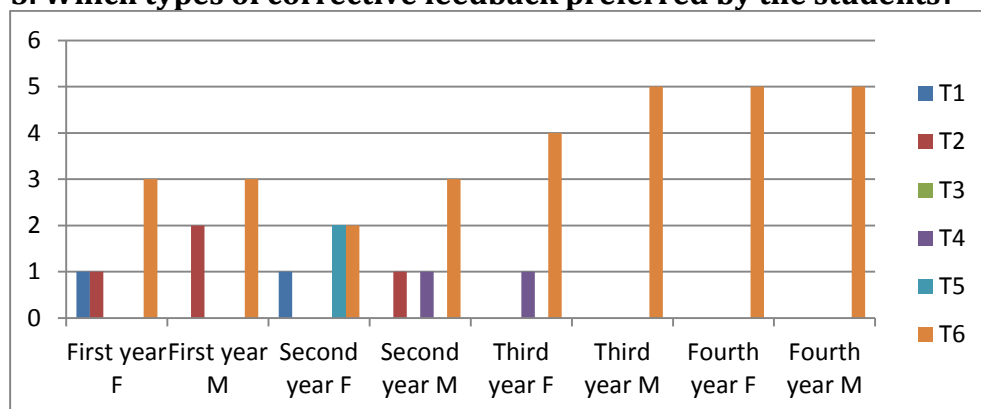


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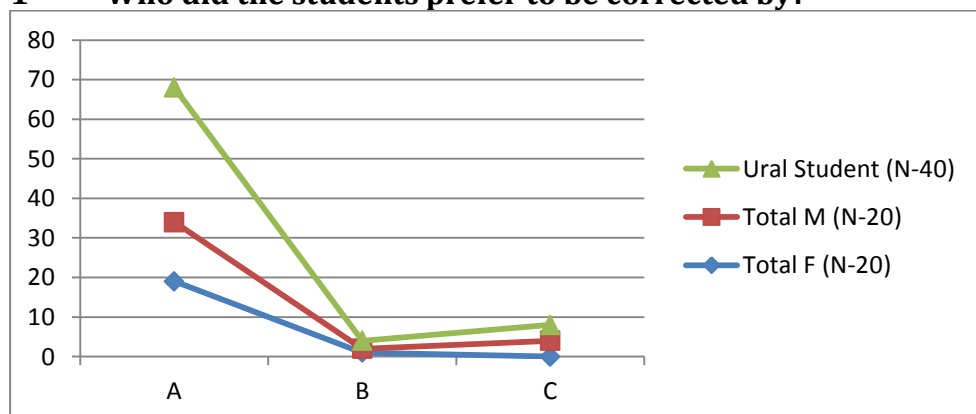
4. I think corrective feedback can provide much help in developing student's English language.



5. Which types of corrective feedback preferred by the students?

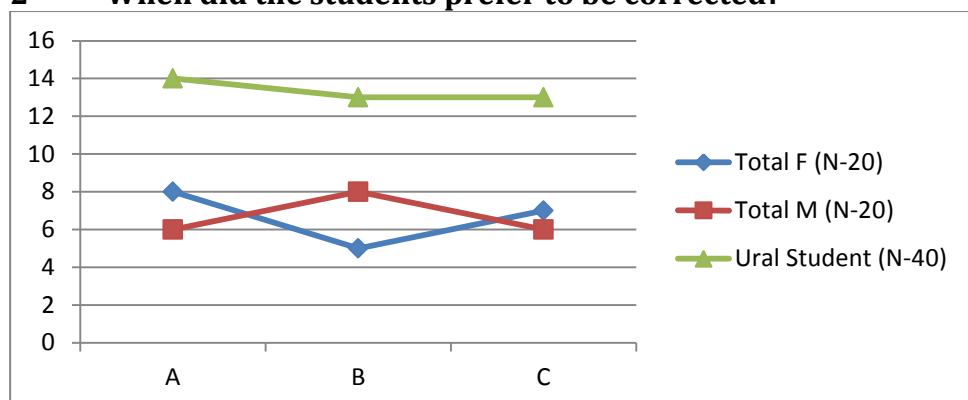


1- Who did the students prefer to be corrected by?

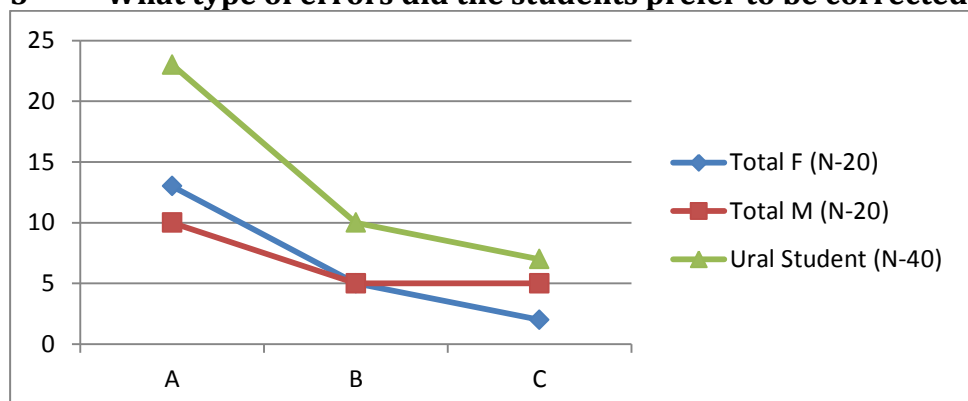


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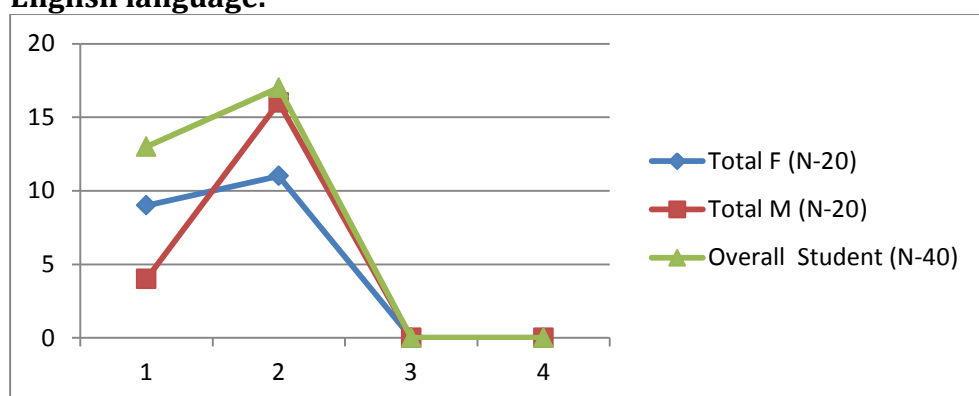
2- When did the students prefer to be corrected?



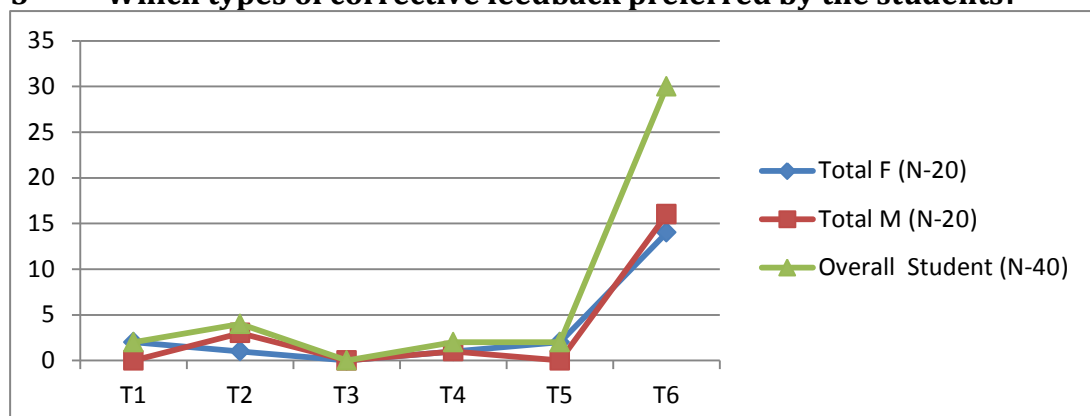
3- What type of errors did the students prefer to be corrected?



4- I think corrective feedback can provide much help in developing students' English language.



5- Which types of corrective feedback preferred by the students?



Concluding Remarks

CF is a complex phenomenon. This complexity is reflected in the controversies that surround such issues as whether to correct, what to correct, how to correct, and when to correct. It is clearly a topic of importance in teachers' education programs. In summary, the research results found out that firstly students prefer to be corrected by their teachers and not by their peers or by others. Secondly, they would prefer that all of their errors need to be corrected. Thirdly, all the students believe CF can give them much help in developing their English language. Fourthly, the most important finding of this study is that students' preferred method of correction is metalinguistic clues since it provides them with a clear indication about their errors, and gives them a specific rule in order not to repeat their errors. Finally,

corrective feedback can effectively help in developing language learning if it is given in a clear and more understandable way.

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