

Teachers' Perspectives and Actual Practices of OCF Types in English-speaking Classes

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Abstract: As the result of increasing students' independent learning and responsibility for their learning, oral corrective feedback (OCF) in teaching and learning a foreign language has received considerable attention in the past few decades. The study investigates teachers' perspectives and actual practices in a university in Vietnam regarding OCF strategies. Data were gathered from five initial interviews, stimulated recall interviews with five English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers, and classroom observations. The findings showed only a partial consistency between the OCF types the teachers perceived themselves to use and those they actually employed in their practices. Teachers should pay attention to Vietnamese cultural factors such as face-saving value to maintain students' learning motivation. They should also provide more explicit types of OCF to give students clearer hints and clues so that students can locate and notice their errors easily. Gestures, facial expressions, and body language are good tools to stimulate students' imagination and critical thinking to promote their oral ability and English proficiency.

Keywords: Perspectives, practices, OCF types, actual OCF practice, speaking classrooms.

Subject classification: Linguistics

1. Introduction

Recently, oral corrective feedback has been widely used in language education, especially in language classrooms. Corrective feedback or correction of students' oral errors plays a crucial role in improving students' language ability and oral proficiency. Consequently, OCF has caught the attention of several researchers over the past few decades (Ellis, 2009; Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Sheen & Ellis, 2011). Most of the studies examine teachers' and students' beliefs of OCF, or learners' perceptions towards OCF provision. This study investigates both teachers' perceptions and preferences as well as their actual practices of OCF strategies in English classrooms in a Vietnamese university context.

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To meet the demand of well-qualified workforce with good English proficiency, the Vietnamese Government approved a national education project for foreign language teaching and learning titled: “*Teaching and learning foreign languages in the national education system in the 2008-2020 period*”, with the aim of promoting the English ability of the workforce. More specifically, teaching strategies to improve student’s oral ability such as OCF has been paid more attention. Since communicative language teaching (CLT) has applied in language classrooms, learners may have opportunities to use English naturally and fluently. Students are likely to offer and receive OCF in EFL speaking classes. Therefore, it is very critical to explore teachers’ views of OCF, how OCF can be used in Vietnamese language classrooms, and the underlying reasons beyond OCF practices. However, little research on what teachers perceive OCF types and how they actually implement them in EFL classes, especially at tertiary level. This study seeks to fill this gap. To achieve this aim, the following research questions were formulated:

1. What are EFL teachers’ perspectives of OCF types in English speaking classrooms?
2. How do EFL teachers provide OCF types in English speaking classrooms?

2. Literature review

2.1. OCF types

Increasing attention is now paid to the perspectives of OCF in the CF literature, with the role of OCF in facilitating learners’ language development. OCF is regarded a strategy that teachers use to treat students’ ill-formed utterances in their oral performance (Lyster & Ranta, 1997). In order to gain a more profound understanding of the nature of OCF, language researchers tend to classify OCF types as either *input-providing* or *output-prompting* (Sheen & Ellis, 2011). Input-providing OCF provides learners with the right forms of language, while output-prompting OCF points out that an ill-formed utterance has been committed but does not provide the correct forms. OCF types have also been classified into explicit and implicit OCF (Sheen & Ellis, 2011).

Lyster and Ranta (1997) identified six different OCF types: recast, explicit correction, elicitation, repetition, clarification request, and metalinguistic feedback. Ellis’ (2009) model includes a non-linguistic OCF strategy. A combination of the two OCF taxonomies is shown in Table 1.

In this integrated taxonomy model, the OCF types under implicit feedback are recast, repetition and clarification request, and the OCF type under explicit feedback are explicit correction, elicitation, metalinguistic feedback, and paralinguistic signal. The OCF types under input-providing are recast and explicit correction, and under the out-prompting type are repetition, clarification, elicitation, metalinguistic feedback, and paralinguistic signal. Descriptions of OCF types are illustrated in Table 2.

Table 1: The Study's OCF Types

OCF types	Implicit	Explicit
Input-providing (reformulations)	Recast (Lyster & Ranta, 1997)	Explicit correction (Lyster & Ranta, 1997)
Output-prompting (prompts)	Repetition (Lyster & Ranta, 1997) Clarification request (Lyster & Ranta, 1997)	Elicitation (Lyster & Ranta, 1997) Metalinguistic feedback (Lyster & Ranta, 1997) Paralinguistic signal (Ellis, 2009)

Source: Author.

Table 2: Descriptions of OCF Types

OCF types	Definition	Example
1. Recast	Recast refers to “Teacher’s reformulation of all or part of a student’s utterance, minus the error” (Lyster & Ranta, 1997, p.46)	S: I am got a big car. T: Oh, you’ve got a big car.
2. Repetition	Repetition refers to “the teacher’s repetition, in isolation, of a student’s erroneous utterance” (Lyster & Ranta, 1997, p.48)	S: That movie is excited. T: excited? S: That movie is exciting.
3. Clarification request	Clarification request refers to “problems in either comprehension or accuracy, or both”. (Lyster & Ranta, 1997, p.47).	S: Yesterday, I go to the supermarket. T: Could you say that again?
4. Explicit correction	Explicit correction refers to “the explicit provision of the correct form” (Lyster & Ranta, 1997, p.46)	S: Have you got a black shoes? T: No “a”, black shoes
5. Elicitation	Elicitation refers to “(1) teachers elicit completion of their utterance by strategically pausing to allow students to “fill in the blank”, (2) teachers use questions to elicit correct forms, (3) teachers occasionally ask students to reformulate their utterance” (Lyster & Ranta, 1997, p.48)	S: I’ll get wet if it will rain. T: I’ll get wet if it....?
6. Metalinguistic feedback	Metalinguistic feedback “contains either comments, information, or questions related to the well-formedness of the	S: My parents is doctors. T: Can you recognize your error?

OCF types	Definition	Example
	student's utterance, without explicitly providing the correct form" (Lyster & Ranta, 1997, p.47)	S: uhmmm T: "Parents" is a plural noun. S: oh, my parents are doctors.
7. Paralinguistic signal	This OCF type refers to the use of "a gesture or facial expression to indicate that the learner has made an error". (Ellis, 2009, p.9)	S: Yesterday she go to the library. T: (using a gesture with right forefinger over left shoulder as an indication of the past).

Source: Author.

2.2. Previous studies on teachers' perspectives and practices of OCF types

Several studies indicate the tendency for teachers to use implicit OCF types rather than explicit types in classroom settings (Agudo, 2014; Junqueira & Kim, 2013; Mendez & Cruz, 2012; Rahimi & Zhang, 2015). Implicit OCF types can help save time, avoid inhibiting and embarrassing the learners, and facilitate students to develop their autonomy (Yoshida, 2008). More importantly, implicit types can create a safe and supportive learning environment (Kamiya, 2014). Teachers' concerns about students' English proficiency were another reason for teachers' choice of OCF types (Ammar & Spada, 2006; Brown, 2009).

The literature shows that recast was most commonly employed by teachers in the language classrooms (Kamiya, 2014; Roothoof, 2014; Sepehrinia & Mehdizadeh, 2018). Reasons for this include the inconspicuous nature of recast in the flow of speech and its immediacy (Kamiya, 2014). Furthermore, providing correct forms to learners can avoid embarrassing them and reduce the pressure of time constraints (Yoshida, 2008). Interestingly, research also shows the limited use of paralinguistic signal in teachers' OCF provision (Centeno, 2016) and the more employment of implicit OCF types (Mendez & Cruz, 2012).

There have been many studies on OCF globally, but only recently have studies on OCF in Vietnam been conducted. However, Tran and Nguyen (2018) only examined strategies used by teachers and the students' uptake of them. Nguyen (2019) focused on teachers' beliefs and their practices of OCF in a blended learning environment at a university. Tran and Nguyen (2020) only investigated teachers' perceptions about OCF at colleges in a local province in Mekong Delta. Ha and Murray (2020) did an investigation on one side – teachers' beliefs and practices of OCF at primary level; and Luu (2020) mainly focused only the consistencies and inconsistencies between teachers' and students' preferences regarding OCF types. Therefore, there is a need for ongoing research to further develop our understandings of current OCF practices and the relationship between teachers' perceptions and practices and students' preferences and expectations. Such investigations

have the substantial potential to enhance Vietnamese students' English proficiency and oral ability.

3. Research methods

3.1. Research setting and participants

This study was conducted in a public university in Vietnam. Research participants were five EFL teachers at Faculty of Foreign Languages. All these five teachers have a related Master's degrees in education areas such as Applied Linguistics or Methodology of English teaching. Their English teaching experiences varied from five to 15 years. All had taken part in several professional development programmes, training workshops or seminar on English teaching methodology. However, they had not attended any training courses on feedback generally or OCF in particular. Data were obtained through semi-structured interviews, stimulated recall interviews with teachers, and classroom observations.

3.2. Semi-structured interviews with teachers

Semi-structured interviews allow the researcher to investigate views, attitudes, experiences of individuals regarding specific issues (Creswell, 2014). In this study, this interview type provided teacher participants the opportunity to express their opinions, attitudes, explain answers, give examples of their OCF practices, and describe their experiences related to OCF strategies. In this study, an interview guide including open-ended questions was used in the semi-structured interviews with all teacher participants. The interview guide included two parts: background information, and the interview questions. Background information included questions related to teachers' backgrounds such as highest degrees, motivation to become teachers of English, and experience in teaching English. The interview questions focused on the teacher participants' perspectives related to OCF strategies. A semi-structured interview was conducted with each participating teacher before the classroom observations. Each interview lasted approximately 30 to 45 minutes.

3.3. Classroom observations

Observation is considered as one of the strongest tools for understanding a phenomenon in a specific context and obtaining a comprehensive picture of the research site. Using video observations in classrooms allow the researchers to capture non-verbal signals as well as interactions between teachers and students, and among students, for example facial

expressions, eye contact (Simons, 2009). Classroom observation was adopted in this research because it would allow the researcher to use methods such as observation note-taking, and audio and video recording. Observation notes can help the researcher keep track of what was happening in the classrooms, which is necessary for data interpretation and analysis.

In this study, classroom observations were conducted with video recorders to enable the researcher to explore how OCF timing was provided in the classrooms. Each speaking class was observed for four 60-minute lessons. All observations were video recorded (20 hours in total) for transcription and analysis.

3.4. Stimulated recall interviews

Stimulated recall is one introspective method which demonstrates ways of generating data about thought processes engaged in accomplishing an activity or a task (Gass & Mackey, 2000). As “an information processing approach whereby the use of and access to short-term memory is enhanced, if not guaranteed, by a prompt that aids in the recall of information” (Gass & Mackey, 2000, p. 17), stimulated recall interviews are often employed as a means of triangulation. Stimulated recall interviews should be carried out within 24 hours after the classroom observations to minimise the potential for memory decay (Gass & Mackey, 2000).

Following the recorded classroom sessions, specific questions based on selected episodes of OCF instances were prepared before the stimulated recall interviews started. In this study, two stimulated recall interviews were audio recorded and conducted with each EFL teachers (after the second and the third observation). The researcher shared with teachers the selected episodes and asked questions that helped to understand the teachers’ views about OCF and their OCF practices in real classrooms. The two stimulated recall interviews with each teacher participant were conducted within 24 hours after the observations. Interestingly, every teacher could remember all their thoughts, actions, decisions, and performances in the observed lessons.

3.5. Number of feedback moves of OCF types

The researcher identified and coded the OCF feedback moves observed in the classrooms based on the OCF taxonomy adapted (Ellis, 2009; Lyster & Ranta, 1997) (see Table 1). Each feedback move was determined as recast, explicit correction, metalinguistic feedback, clarification request, elicitation, repetition, and paralinguistic signal (see Table 2). With this classification of OCF types, the researcher initially coded the OCF moves in accordance with each type. The percentage of each OCF type was counted by dividing the number of OCF moves for each OCF type by the total of number of OCF moves and multiplying it by 100. The percentage of particular OCF type was

determined by the first of the following two equations (the frequency of the usage of recast is also included as an example in the second equation). Measurement of other OCF types was determined similarly.

$$\text{Particular OCF type} = \frac{\text{Number of OCF moves using each OCF type}}{\text{Total number of OCF moves}} \times 100$$

$$\text{Recast} = \frac{\text{Number of OCF moves using recast}}{\text{Total number of OCF moves}} \times 100$$

4. Research findings

The teacher participants indicated which OCF type they most preferred and least preferred on a scale of 1 to 7 (see Tables 3). The results and average ranking of their general preferences for OCF types is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Teachers' Preferences for OCF Types

OCF types \ Teachers	Recast	Repetition	Clarification request	Explicit correction	Metalinguistic feedback	Elicitation	Paralinguistic signal
T1	3	2	1	7	4	5	6
T2	3	1	2	5	7	6	4
T3	5	3	1	6	4	2	7
T4	3	2	1	7	4	5	6
T5	1	3	4	7	2	5	6
Average	3	2.2	1.8	6.4	4.2	4.6	5.8

Notes: 1= the most favoured, 7= the least favoured.

Source: Author.

The teachers' most favoured OCF types were clarification request (average 1.8) and repetition (2.2). They had neutral views on recast (3), metalinguistic feedback (4.2) and elicitation (4.6). Their least favoured OCF types were paralinguistic signals (5.8) and explicit correction (6.4). Among the implicit OCF types, the teachers favoured clarification request, followed by repetition and recast.

4.1. Teachers' perspectives of OCF types

4.1.1. Implicit OCF types

All five teachers reported that they tended to use the technique of clarification request in their OCF provision. The following excerpt illustrates T3's reasons for this:

Well, I love to give students the chance to self-correct in the indirect way. Requesting clarification is a good choice when students make mistakes. It helps to signal students that there is something wrong with their oral utterances. Questions like: "Pardon me?" and "Could you say that again?" can make students realise their errors and think of the right forms of language. (Interview with Teacher 3)

The teachers all agreed that this technique which offered students the chance to self-correct would be an effective method for correcting students' oral errors, and was beneficial for students, as it indirectly highlighted when there was something wrong with their speaking and would therefore be less likely to make students feel confused or embarrassed.

Repetition was the second most favoured strategy of the teachers. Their positive views on repetition are reflected in the following excerpt:

To be honest, I preferred repeating the wrong utterances when students make errors in their speaking. This technique not only signals to the students that they are making mistakes implicitly, but also offers them the chance to self-correct. For me, it allows the students to easily locate their errors because the wrong parts are possibly stressed with raising intonation. (Interview with Teacher 2)

In this excerpt, Teacher 2 highlighted how the implicitness of repetition could make students feel more comfortable in speaking classes, and hence lead to more confidence and motivation in their learning. The repetition of the wrong parts of utterances was also useful for error recognition. Interestingly, some teachers said these implicit techniques were beneficial and appropriate for students as they did not directly point out their errors, which could raise their anxiety, yet they offered opportunities for them to foster their English ability.

"English-majored students are required to master English in a higher level than students in other majors; therefore, it is ideal to encourage them to work on their errors implicitly" (Interview with Teacher 5).

When being asked about recast, all teachers agreed that this strategy was efficient as it saved time and provided students with the right utterances indirectly. Providing the correct form by reformulating all or parts of the students' utterances is helpful: *"Recast is useful too. It gives the right answers indirectly and saves time" (Interview with Teacher 1).* However, they admitted that this technique did not offer students a chance to correct their errors on their own. Therefore, the overall effectiveness of this technique is somewhat

concerned. *“Recast is time-efficient, but if I have more time, I will apply other OCF strategies in my error treatment”* (Interview with Teacher 4). Teacher 3 also said they preferred a more dynamic learning environment because recast could make students passive in their learning: *“To be honest, I dislike recasting, and so I rarely use it in my lessons. Occasionally, my students fail to realise that I am correcting their errors. Receiving right forms of utterances makes them less active in their learning”* (Interview with Teacher 3). In general, the teachers considered recast to be effective, but it was not as favoured as much as clarification request and repetition.

4.1.2. Explicit OCF types

The data shows that among explicit OCF types, teachers generally had neutral views on metalinguistic feedback. However, they all regarded it as a useful OCF strategy because it offered a reminder to students of their linguistic knowledge and of accurate language use. The following excerpt from Teacher 2 reflects this shared perspective:

I think metalinguistic feedback provides students with clues and hints from teachers that the students have to think about. This technique is especially appropriate for the correction of grammatical and lexical errors. For example, I constantly try to explain the grammatical items to students to facilitate them to figure out the correct answers. This also helps students revise linguistic knowledge. (Interview with Teacher 2).

The teachers preferred this OCF technique for their clarity with clues and hints, and because the teachers’ explanations could remind students of the linguistic rules. They all thought that this output-prompting technique was effective, as it could guide students in locating the errors and finding the right forms of their utterances. However, they also expressed their concern about the students’ unfamiliarity with the terminology. They thought this technique might be more appropriate for advanced students:

“The use of terminology may cause students with low English level [to be] confused” (Interview with Teacher 5).

Elicitation was another OCF type that the teachers gave a mid-rank. Most of them perceived that this OCF type was good because it offered students the opportunities to remember their linguistic knowledge. However, as with metalinguistic feedback, they were concerned about the success of this technique for low-level English language students. For example, Teacher 3 said:

I think it is quite hard. When teachers use this technique in their error correction, it means that students are required to give the correct answers by completing the sentences, filling in the blanks, for example. This technique is helpful, but it may be more appropriate for advanced students than students with low English proficiency (Interview with Teacher 3).

All five teachers agreed that elicitation was not always appropriate for students with low English proficiency because “if the students do not have enough linguistic knowledge,

it is impossible to find the right versions of the erroneous parts themselves” (Interview with Teacher 1). The language barrier might hinder students from figuring out the correct answers themselves. Therefore, the teachers regarded elicitation as ineffective for inexperienced students such as these first-year student participants.

All teachers regarded paralinguistic signal as an interesting technique. However, it was a challenge for both the students and themselves and complicated to use.

“Sometimes, it is impossible to think of how to describe the errors using non-verbal signals. Furthermore, sometimes, students cannot guess what teachers’ gestures and body languages mean. Therefore, this strategy is not my first choice” (Interview with Teacher 5). One possible explanation for this is that most of the teachers did not always know how to implement such paralinguistic signals in their error treatment. More importantly, they doubted the success of employing this technique if their students could not guess what their non-verbal signals meant. Consequently, they tended to disfavour this strategy. Even so, Teacher 2 said they would try to use this technique when appropriate because they liked to create lively classrooms: “I always love to create an exciting and inspiring learning environment for students; therefore, I will apply this technique whenever possible” (Interview with Teacher 2).

Explicit correction was the least favoured by the teachers because they seemed to believe its directness had the potential to cause embarrassment to students. This comment by Teacher 4 illustrates the negative view they shared:

With explicit correction, when I say: “No, it is not, it should be...”, students can understand their wrong parts quickly and how to use the language forms in a more correct way. However, this is a direct technique, and occasionally, it makes students embarrassed. Yes, it will really hurt students if teachers indicate clearly that students are making mistakes and point out their mistakes in front of the whole class (Interview with Teacher 4).

In this excerpt, Teacher 4 shared the teachers’ common view that this technique with clear signals and clues could help students quickly notice their errors and acknowledge their ill-formed utterances. The teacher went on to stress that this technique may be especially helpful for students with low English proficiency. However, it might embarrass the students since it shows their wrong utterances directly. Therefore, students’ anxiety and confidence level concerned the teachers when employing this technique. As a result, most teachers tended not to use explicit correction.

4.2. Teachers’ practices of OCF types

The resulting 321 feedback moves using all seven types recorded in the five participating teachers’ classes are displayed in Table 4. The total number of particular OCF types used by all teachers is also presented in Figure 1 below.

Table 4: Practices of OCF Types by Teachers

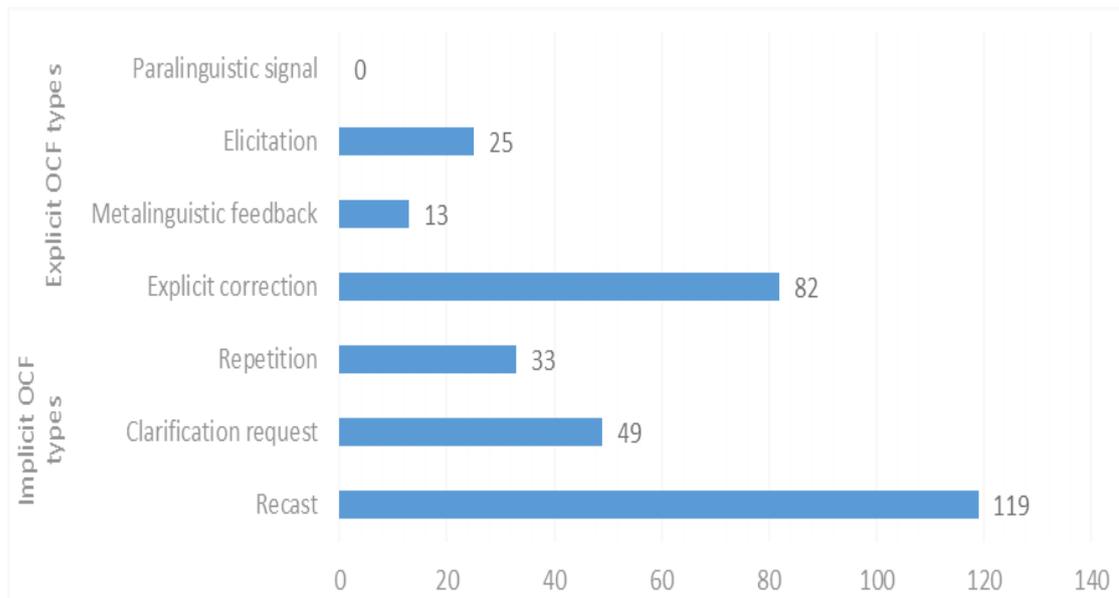
Practices Teacher	Implicit OCF types			Explicit OCF types				Total of OCF moves
	Recast	Clarification request	Repetition	Explicit correction	Metalinguistic feedback	Elicitation	Paralinguistic signal	
T1	19 (37.3%)	9 (17.6%)	8 (15.7%)	11 (21.6%)	0 (0%)	4 (7.8%)	0 (0%)	51
T2	18 (35.3%)	6 (11.8%)	4 (7.8%)	17 (33.3%)	2 (3.9%)	4 (7.8%)	0 (0%)	51
T3	15 (25.0%)	10 (16.7%)	8 (13.3%)	17 (28.3%)	4 (6.7%)	6 (10.0%)	0 (0%)	60
T4	47 (46.5%)	17 (16.8%)	6 (5.9%)	24 (23.8%)	2 (2.0%)	5 (5.0%)	0 (0%)	101
T5	20 (34.5%)	7 (12.1%)	7 (12.1%)	13 (22.4%)	5 (8.6%)	6 (10.3%)	0 (0%)	58
Total	119 (37.1%)	49 (15.3%)	33 (10.3%)	82 (25.5%)	13 (4.0%)	25 (7.8%)	0%	
Total of implicit/ explicit		201 (62.7%)			120 (37.3%)			321

Source: Author.

Overall, the teachers' implementation of OCF types indicates preferences for implicit OCF types rather than explicit OCF (see Table 4 and Figure 1). Implicit OCF types (62.7%) were used almost twice as frequently as explicit ones (37.3%). Within the implicit category, the number of recasts (119) was roughly twice as many as clarification requests (49) and three times as many as repetitions (33). Of the four types of explicit OCF types, explicit correction was the most commonly used, with 82 feedback moves, followed by elicitation (25) and metalinguistic feedback (13). No paralinguistic signals were observed. In terms of each OCF type, recast was the most frequently used (119, 37.1%), followed by explicit correction (82, 25.5%), clarification request (49, 15.3%), repetition (33, 10.3%),

elicitation (25, 7.8%), and metalinguistic feedback (13, 4%). Again, the researcher observed no paralinguistic signals in any of the speaking lessons.

Figure 1: Teachers' Practices of OCF Types



Source: Author.

4.3. Relationship between teachers' perceptions and their practices

The observational data shows only a partial consistency between the OCF types the teachers perceived themselves to use and those they actually used in their practices. More specifically, the highly frequent usages of clarification request and repetition matched their favoured OCF strategies, as stated in their initial interviews. Their usages of metalinguistic feedback, elicitation, and paralinguistic signal were also consistent with their perceptions. However, the very frequent rate of recast and explicit correction in their OCF practices was inconsistent with their stated dislike for these two OCF types.

The teachers' practices also differed from the students' preferences and expectations in four ways. First, while the teachers employed recast more frequently than other techniques, it was not the students' favoured strategy. Second, although more than half of the students considered paralinguistic signal an interesting and inspiring technique, this strategy was not used in any OCF provision. Third, while the students expected to be corrected by metalinguistic feedback and elicitation because they thought these techniques provided hints, clues, and signals for them to figure out the answers for their erroneous utterances,

there were just a few of these types of feedback moves in all the teachers' practices. Fourth, clarification request was employed frequently in the teachers' OCF provision; however, this strategy is one of the least preferred by the students. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that the more frequent use of explicit correction matched the students' positive views on this technique.

In general, the teachers' perceptions were largely harmonising with their OCF provision, except for the more frequent usages of recast and explicit correction. Data from the stimulated recall interviews indicates that the teachers were concerned about their students' emotions when choosing the appropriate and effective OCF types for each situation. For example, Teacher 4 explained their more frequent use of implicit types, rather than explicit types, in the following way:

Both implicit and explicit types are beneficial; however, I am always aware of what students feel in the classrooms, especially in their speaking performances. I feel reluctant to give them the overt signals during their speaking process. Instead, I may repeat the wrong pronunciation with the raising intonation to indicate that there is something wrong with their utterances. In this way, students may not feel confused (Stimulated recall interview 2 with Teacher 4).

The teachers agreed that using implicit OCF types could possibly prevent students from experiencing embarrassment and demotivation. They stated that these techniques did not overtly signal the students' errors, and would therefore not cause any inhibition to students: "*Implicit OCF types can raise students' confidence and motivation when this method is face-saving*" (Stimulated recall interview 1 with Teacher 1). They were confident that this technique would encourage teachers generally to make relevant decisions in their OCF provision, which would lead to more effective error treatments and enhance their teaching of speaking pedagogy. Moreover, "*the tendency of using this type of OCF reflects the desire of creating a supportive and comfortable environment for students*" (Stimulated recall interview 2 with Teacher 4). Hence, implicit feedback could both encourage students in their English learning experience and improve their speaking outcomes.

The student's English proficiency level was also taken into consideration when the teachers provided feedback in their classes. This concern was illustrated in one of T5's stimulated recall interviews, when metalinguistic feedback was applied to correct a grammatical error committed by an advanced student:

*Student: The movie **shows** at 7pm yesterday evening.*

Teacher: You should use the verb in passive voice. (METALINGUISTIC FEEDBACK)

Student: uhmm, the movie was shown.

Teacher: that's right. (Observation 3 of Teacher 5)

In the semi-structured interview, Teacher 5 indicated to dislike using metalinguistic feedback. However, in practice, the teacher used this technique more than other teachers:

Well, I hardly ever use this OCF type because students may get confused with terminology. However, this student was quite good at English, and he is a confident one; therefore, I opted for this strategy to make it a bit more challenging for him. I believed that he could give the correct answer, and I was right (Stimulated recall interview 2 with Teacher 5)

This excerpt displays Teacher 5's concern for students' English levels in her OCF practice. The teacher knew the student's English proficiency level quite well and used metalinguistic feedback to elicit the correct answer.

5. Discussion

That the teachers in this study chose more implicit types of feedback in their actual practices corroborates the findings of Mendez and Cruz (2012) and Rahimi and Zhang (2015), which indicated that recast and clarification request were the most commonly used OCF types by teachers. The high use of recast by all five EFL teachers mirrors the trend seen in recent research (Centeno, 2016; Kamiya, 2014; Roothoof, 2014; Sepehrinia & Mehdizadeh, 2018; Yoshida, 2008) but it does not match the teachers' own self-perceptions; it was their third choice of favoured OCF strategies. This inconsistency between teachers' perceptions and practices matches those observed in the study by Sepehrinia and Mehdizadeh (2018), in which the high use of explicit correction seemed to be inconsistent with teachers' perceptions of this explicit OCF type. Similarly, Sepehrinia and Mehdizadeh (2018) found that teachers used explicit correction even though they did not state this was their preferred technique.

It is worth mentioning that no paralinguistic signal moves were observed in any of the classes. This reflects the teachers' doubts about the implementation of this strategy in their OCF provision. Similarly, no teachers in T. H. Nguyen's (2019) study used paralinguistic signals, and just 4% of teachers in Centeno's (2016) study use it, and the teachers in Luu's (2020) study had used paralinguistic signals only once throughout their practices.

The data analysis reveals several reasons for the teachers' employment of particular OCF types in their OCF provision. Proficiency level was one consideration (Ammar & Spada, 2006; Brown, 2009). Brown (2009) indicated that second-year students who were at a higher level of language competency preferred their errors to be corrected indirectly, while first-year students preferred more explicit OCF types for their error corrections. Another influence on teachers' choice of OCF practices is their knowledge of individual students. This supports Han's (2001) view that if a teacher had some knowledge of a student's language development, it might be easier for the teacher to

make decisions about which errors should be corrected. In other words, teachers might “fine-tune” their OCFs to both the language levels and the correction preferences of their students.

Students’ emotions or other affective factors were also potential reasons for teachers applying more implicit types than explicit types in their OCF practices. The teachers wanted to create a comfortable and relaxing environment for their students, which was considered a useful tool for promoting students’ confidence and for reducing their anxiety and demotivation in their English learning. This finding is in line with those of Kamiya (2014) and Yoshida (2008). The importance of maintaining a safe and supportive teaching and learning environment for students to promote English communicative skills was confirmed by Kamiya (2014). Similarly, the teachers in Yoshida’s (2008) study wanted to create a comfortable learning environment and avoid intimidating their students when they used more implicit than explicit OCF types. The teachers were also mindful of how explicit OCF may cause confusion and anxiety to students. They agreed that in the process of providing feedback, it was essential to be sensitive to their students’ emotional states and personal traits to maintain and enhance their learning motivation and hence their effective learning outcomes.

6. Conclusion

While the teachers valued implicit OCF types and employed these types more often in their practices, the stimulated recall interviews show that although the teachers’ practices were largely harmonising with their tendencies to use OCF types, there were some changes in their actual practices due to students’ English levels or emotional states. Therefore, teachers should pay attention to Vietnamese cultural factors such as face-saving value to maintain students’ learning motivation. Vietnamese education is influenced by the country’s Confucian heritage, which encourages respect for teachers and for harmony, cooperation, knowledge, and face-saving. Because saving face is also an important part of this culture, concerns about students’ losing face affected how teachers chose OCF strategies and how students received and responded to them. Understanding the cultural context of language learning is likely enhancing students’ learning ability and gives them more confidence to achieve their learning goals. Besides, teachers should also consider providing more explicit types of OCF, such as elicitation and metalinguistic feedback, to give students clearer hints and clues so that students can locate and notice their errors easily. Furthermore, teachers should consider using gestures, facial expressions, and body language to stimulate their students’ imagination and critical thinking, hence, promote their oral ability and English proficiency.

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