



## TYPES AND TIMING OF ORAL CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK IN EFL CLASSROOMS: VOICES FROM STUDENTS

### İNGİLİZCE'NİN YABANCI DİL OLARAK ÖĞRETİLDİĞİ SINIFLARDA DÜZELTİCİ SÖZLÜ DÖNÜTLERİN TÜRLERİ VE ZAMANLAMASI ÜZERİNE ÖĞRENCİ GÖRÜŞLERİ

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**Abstract:** Oral corrective feedback in language classrooms has received considerable attention for the last few decades. However, most of the studies focus on teachers' practices, and how learners perceive these practices still needs investigation. Based on this, the current study examined the perceptions and preferences of EFL learners regarding the types and timings of oral corrective feedback (OCF). The data were collected through video-recorded observations, stimulated recall interviews and focus group interviews. Corrective feedback moves were identified based on a taxonomy and the data derived from the interviews were analyzed through qualitative content analysis. The results showed that students' perceptions varied considerably according to the types and timings of OCF provided by their teachers. They perceived recasts and clarification requests as ambiguous whereas they thought that meta-linguistic feedback was anxiety-provoking and difficult to comprehend. As for the timing, it was found that students did not feel comfortable when they were corrected with immediate feedback and the consecutive use of it by teachers discouraged students from speaking in a classroom atmosphere. In conclusion, the study put forward several suggestions for practitioners that could be taken into consideration while giving OCF to students.

**Keywords:** Oral corrective feedback, students' perceptions, EFL learners, timing of OCF

**Öz:** Dil sınıflarındaki düzeltici sözlü dönütler son yıllarda çalışmaların odaklandığı önemli bir araştırma alanı haline gelmiştir. Bu kapsamda yapılan çalışmalar, genel olarak öğretmenlerin uygulamalarına odaklanmış olduğu için öğrencilerin bu uygulamalara yönelik algı ve düşüncelerinin araştırılmasına ihtiyaç duyulmaktadır. Bu çalışma, İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak öğrenen öğrencilerin sözlü dönütlerin türü ve zamanlamasına yönelik algı ve tercihlerini irdelemektedir. Çalışmanın verileri kaydedilen sınıf gözlemleri, çağrışım tekniğine dayalı görüşmeler ve odak grup görüşmeleriyle toplanmıştır. Sözlü dönütlerin türleri Lyster ve Ranta (1997)'nin sınıflamasına göre belirlenmiş, görüşmelerden elde edilen nitel veriler ise nitel veri analizi ilkelerine bağlı kalınarak analiz edilmiştir. Sonuçlar, öğrencilerin algılarının sözlü dönütlerin türlerine ve zamanlamasına göre önemli ölçüde değişiklik gösterdiğini ortaya koymuştur. Öğrencilerin daha kolay ve anlaşılır buldukları için belirli dönüt türlerine karşı güçlü bir eğilim gösterdiği ve sözlerinin kesilerek yapılan düzeltmelerde pek rahat hissetmedikleri belirlenmiştir. Bu sonuçlar ışığında, öğretmenlere sözlü dönütlerin kullanımı üzerine bazı önerilerde bulunulmuştur.

**Anahtar sözcükler:** Sözlü düzeltici dönüt, öğrenci algıları, İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak öğrenen öğrenciler, sözlü dönütlerin zamanlaması

### 1. Introduction

With the emergence of error analysis in the early 1970s, errors that learners make have been the issue of many teachers and researchers (Allwright & Bailey, 1991). It is clear and natural that learners make errors, and Corder (1971) stated that these errors are crucial because the

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errors learners make provide insight into the acquisition of a language, and how learners make use of strategies while learning a language. However, as there has been a shift in attention from language forms to functional language within communicative context throughout the years, the focus of classroom interaction, including all kinds of errors and error treatments, has gone through certain changes as well (Brown, 2000). Since communicative functions of language have gained importance, the issue of error treatment and corrective feedback has undergone many changes, and oral corrective feedback (OCF) in communicative contexts has come to the floor.

Corrective feedback is a technique utilized by teachers to attract students' attention to erroneous parts so as to lead to modified output (Suzuki, 2004) and is defined as "responses to learner utterances containing an error" (Ellis, 2006, p. 28). According to Long (1997), CF is closely related to language improvement because it gives learners chances to see the difference between their input and output; learners get opportunities to compare their interlanguage forms and target-like forms, and it promotes language development. OCF has obtained considerable attention in SLA (Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Ellis, Loewen, & Erlam, 2006). Ellis (2009) summarized two types of feedback: immediate and delayed. According to Long (1997), delayed feedback is advantageous because it does not hinder communication. For Doughty (2001), effective feedback is immediate feedback. Though some other scholars stated (Allwright, 1975; Doughty, 2001; Yoshida, 2008; Lee, 2013) that they were also in favour of immediate feedback; however, there is no evidence showing the superiority of one type over the other. The framework developed by Lyster and Ranta (1997) has been the baseline of many studies in the literature, and numerous studies have been carried out to identify the uses of these types in a classroom atmosphere (Oliver, 1995; Lyster; 1998; Erlam, 2006; Ammar & Spada, 2006). In this model, there are six types of OCF: recast, explicit correction, clarification request, elicitation, repetition, and metalinguistic feedback. The table below provides an example and explanation for each OCF type (Lee, 2013, p. 218).

Table 1  
*Types of oral corrective feedback*

CF Types	Definition	Example
<b>Explicit Correction</b>	Indicates an error; identifies the error, and provides the correction.	S: On May. T: Not on May, in May. We say, "It will start in May."
<b>Recast</b>	Reformulates all or part of the incorrect word or phrase to show the correct form without explicitly identifying the error.	S: I have to find the answer on the book? T: In the book
<b>Clarification Request</b>	Indicates that the student's utterance was not understood and asks the student to reformulate it.	S: What do you spend with your wife? T: What? (Or, Sorry?)
<b>Meta-linguistic feedback</b>	Gives technical linguistic information about the error without explicitly providing the correct answer.	S: There are influence person who. T: Influence is a noun.
<b>Elicitation</b>	Prompts the student to self-correct by pausing, so the student can fill in the correct word or phrase.	S: This tea is very warm. T: It's very.? S: Hot.
<b>Repetition</b>	Repeats the student's error while highlighting the error or mistake by means of emphatic stress.	S: I will showed you. T: I will SHOWED you? S: I'll show you.

The studies conducted so far in OCF literature have generally focused on how teachers make use of these techniques while giving feedback to their students; however, there is a lack of research that examines the students' perspectives on this issue. Rassaei and Moinzadeh (2012) investigated the perceptions of EFL students regarding recast and metalinguistic feedback via stimulated recall (SR) interviews. The findings displayed that the learners produced more accurate utterances if they were corrected through metalinguistic feedback when compared to recasts. Hence, the learners in this study were in favour of receiving metalinguistic feedback rather than recasts. In a comparative study, Yoshida (2008), investigating teachers' choices and learners' preferences in OCF, indicated that the participant learners wanted to be allocated some time for self-correction when they produced an erroneous utterance, and they did not want their teachers to provide the answer immediately. In a similar study, Lee (2013) examined learners' and teachers' preferences for CF, and the results indicated that learners wanted to get explicit and immediate corrections while the conversation was being maintained. Solely focusing on students' perspectives, Zhang and Rahimi (2014) also investigated the perceptions of high-anxious and low-anxious students regarding OCF, and concluded that no matter how anxious they were, both groups wanted to get OCF from their teachers. Thus, the anxiety level was found not to have an effect on the choices of the learners. Finally, Rassaei (2013) investigated 68 Persian EFL students' perceptions of recasts and explicit correction through meaning-focused tasks. Their SR reports were analyzed in relation to their perception of these two types, and the findings demonstrated that learners perceived explicit correction more positively due to its appropriateness to their ability to notice the target forms.

As highlighted by the studies mentioned above, investigating the perceptions and preferences of learners with respect to OCF are as important as teachers' practices since learner preferences are influential in the learning process (Grotjahn, 1991), and as Nunan (1989) stated, if there happen to be certain discrepancies between teacher behaviours and learner perceptions of those behaviours, these discrepancies might affect the learning in a negative way. For this reason, a comprehensible study that focuses on learners' perceptions of OCF, with respect to the types and timings, and reveals their preferences is needed in SLA literature. For these reasons, this study aims to investigate the learners' perceptions and preferences regarding the timing and types of OCF and the underlying reasons for these perceptions and preferences. The following research questions will be addressed throughout the study:

1. What are the perceptions of Turkish EFL learners with regard to OCF types?
2. What are the perceptions of Turkish EFL learners with regard to timing of OCF?
3. What are their preferences with regard to types and timing of OCF?

## **2. Methodology**

### **2.1. Research Design**

The present study employed a classroom research design with qualitative data collection tools. Lightbown (2000, p. 438) stated that classroom research helps researchers "identify and better understand the roles of the different participants in classroom interaction, the impact that certain type of instruction may have on FL/SL learning, and the factors which promote or inhibit learning." With this in mind, the current study investigated the perceptions and preferences of the learners regarding types and timings of OCF in their classroom setting while they were interacting with their teacher, and a classroom research design with qualitative data collection tools was utilized in this study.

## **2.2. Participants**

According to Creswell (2012, p. 205), “In qualitative research, we identify our participants and sites on purposeful sampling, based on places and people that can best help us understand our central phenomenon.” According to this definition, purposeful sampling was used in this study, and only one class was selected from one of the researchers’ classes in the English preparatory program of a state university at the time of the study.

The participants included 12 elementary-level students in this class: seven of them were male, and five of them were female, and their ages ranged from 18 to 20. They all began the program as beginners, and they were in the preparatory program for about three-months at the time of the study. They were enrolled in different departments such as business administration, engineering and tourism.

Apart from the participants, the teacher, also one of the researchers of this study, was present in all class hours as the provider of the OCF. The teacher was 30 years old, with 9 years of teaching experience in the preparatory program. She was responsible for teaching 25 hours per week, and besides teaching, she also had certain responsibilities in the testing office of the program.

## **2.3. Data Collection**

The data collection process of this study included four video-recorded class hours, SR interviews held right after the courses with all of the participants, and a focus-group interview conducted in the final stage. Before that, the researchers informed the participants about the process and obtained their written consent, and all of them volunteered to participate in the study.

Video-recording is one of the most commonly used data collection instruments in classroom research. According to Dörnyei (2007, p.184), “Video-recoding provides distinct advantages for classroom researchers by uncovering the realities of classroom context and serves as a useful tool that can be an alternative to real-time coding in classroom research.” In this study, two video-recorded block sessions (equal to four class hours), primarily based on speaking activities, required the students to describe certain pictures in their course books, to discuss some reading passages, and to talk about themselves by referring to their past experiences and future plans. Before the video-recordings, the participants were not informed about the exact focus of the study, and they participated in the lesson as usual. During these video-recorded sessions, the teacher provided feedback moves whenever the participants made a mistake with special care in the fair distribution of OCF in terms of types and timings so as to obtain data regarding participants’ perception of each type and timing.

In addition to the video-recordings, SR interviews were used as the main data collection tools for this study. According to Mackey and Gass (2005, p. 203), “Stimulated recall can be used to provide the researchers with access to the learners’ interpretations of the events that were observed and can be a valuable source of information for researchers interested in viewing a finely detailed picture of the classroom.” For that reason, SR interviews were carried out with the participants right after the video-recorded courses so as to learn about their perceptions regarding the feedback moves they received. During the SR interviews, the participants and the teacher were seated in class, and they reflected on the video-recorded sessions on the screen through an over-head projector. They were warned in advance not to interrupt each other during the interviews.

While watching the recording, the teacher stopped the video at any moment when a participant made a mistake and was given feedback by the teacher. In those moments, the researchers asked the participant who was given OCF in the video to make comments on the situation in the video regarding;

- how s/he perceived that kind of feedback and the timing of the feedback,
- whether that kind of feedback was beneficial and the reasons for their answers,
- whether the timing of the feedback was useful for them and their underlying reasons,
- how s/he felt at that moment after the feedback of the teacher.

The questions used in these observations had been piloted with two students in another class in order to identify whether the questions were clear or not for the participants, and they had any difficulties in understanding them. Both of these learners stated that all the questions were clear enough, and they had no problem comprehending the questions. All these SR interviews were conducted in the mother tongue of the participants so that they could provide their answers more easily and concentrate on their answers instead of trying to express themselves in English.

In the final stage, a focus-group interview which “can yield high-quality data as it can create a synergistic environment that results in a deep and insightful discussion” (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 144) was carried out with all the participants. There were two main reasons why a focus group interview was carried out as the final data collection tool in this process. The first one was, as Dörnyei (2007) pointed out, to triangulate the data collected through classroom observations and SR interviews and to increase the validity of the overall data. The second one was to benefit from its advantage as a data collection tool.

The participants in this study were classmates, and as Creswell (2012) stated, “Focus groups are advantageous when the interaction among interviewees will likely yield the best information and when interviewees are similar to and cooperative with each other” (p. 218). For these two reasons, the researchers believed that a focus group interview would be a good option for the participants to express their opinions in an interactive and cooperative atmosphere.

During the focus group, although the participants had been familiar with OCF due to the process of SR interviews, the teacher wrote examples on the board referring to each type and timing of OCF to help them remember and comment more consistently. During the interview, the participants were asked to express and elaborate on their preferences regarding the types and timings of OCF with the help of the prompts and guiding questions provided by the teacher.

#### **2.4. Data Analysis**

Like the one in data collection, a systematic process was followed during the data analysis. First of all, the video-recorded sessions were watched several times, and the teacher’s feedback moves were identified. After that, these feedback moves were classified under six subheadings based on Lyster and Ranta’s (1997) taxonomy. Each feedback move of the teacher was identified as recast, explicit correction, metalinguistic feedback, clarification request, elicitation, and repetition by the researchers. About 90% of the moves were agreed upon, and the others were determined through negotiation. The corrective feedback types over which the researchers were in conflict were watched again, and they were decided at the end of a discussion period on a mutual ground. In terms of the timing of OCF, there is still a controversy in its classification. For this reason, the study defined its own constructs referring

to certain elements in the literature, and the timing was divided into three: immediate, delayed and post delayed.

*Immediate feedback:* Providing feedback immediately after students' erroneous utterance (Ellis, 2009) by interrupting them.

*Delayed feedback:* Waiting till the students finish their sentences and providing feedback at the end of it without interruption.

*Post-delayed:* Not giving feedback just after the students' errors, but delayed later (the teacher took notes about students' errors and told them in a later session)

In the second stage of the data analysis process, all the data derived from SR interviews, and the focus-group interviews were transcribed and translated into English by the researchers. The translation of transcriptions was also checked by two experts in the field, one native speaker of English and one native speaker of Turkish, in terms of the orthography and the meanings of students' utterances. After that process, qualitative content analysis was used to analyze the data derived from the SR interviews.

The data were then coded and analyzed based on the content analysis scheme of Creswell (2009), which included the stages of transcribing, preparing for analysis, reading through the data, and coding. At the end of the coding process, conducted by the researchers cross-checking the data to increase the reliability, emerging themes related with each feedback type and timing were presented. In the last stage, the same procedure was also used in the analysis of the focus-group interview the findings regarding participants' preferences on the types and timings of OCF were analyzed through the content analysis.

### 3. Results

#### 3.1. Perceptions of EFL learners regarding the feedback type

The first research question of the study aimed to investigate the perceptions of students regarding the types of OCF. The results revealed that the participants perceived each feedback type quite differently, and each feedback type had positive and negative effects on their perceptions. The findings regarding participants' perceptions of feedback types are presented in the table below with their frequencies during the recorded class hours, and each feedback type's emerging themes are explained with sample extracts in the following sections.

Table 2

*Students' perceptions of OCF types*

Feedback Type	f	Emerging themes regarding students' perceptions
Recasts	28	Quick, but not effective Just a repetition by the teacher Not leading to uptake
Explicit Correction	18	Clear and explanatory
Clarification Request	16	Ambiguous Effective in pronunciation errors
Meta-linguistic feedback	16	Terminological confusion Anxiety provoking
Repetition	14	Alerting the error
Elicitation	11	Very effective Easy error detection Output prompting

### *Recasts*

During the recorded class hours, recasts were found to be the most widely used feedback type by the teacher, and participants received this feedback type for various kinds of errors. The findings derived from the SR interviews showed that a recast was generally perceived as an ineffective type of feedback move. While some of them (4 participants) believed that recasts were quick but not effective, others (8 participants) thought that a recast was just a repetition by the teacher, and sometimes it did not indicate to them what their error was, and they pretended as if they had understood the error.

In the first class hour, while the participant students were describing a picture in a speaking activity, student 11 (S11) made an error by saying “There are a lot of home and apartment,” and the teacher corrected his error with a recast uttering “There are a lot of houses and apartments.” During the SR interview after this class hour, S11 stated that the feedback was not beneficial for him:

You corrected my error as soon as you heard it, but it was not good for me. I mean, it was just for that moment; you gave the correct form; I did nothing, and we went on. In fact, I did not like the way you corrected me.

In another instance, while students were talking about their weekend, student 2 (S2) uttered that “My roommate’s phone rang until 9 p.m.,” mispronouncing the word ‘until.’ Immediately, the teacher corrected his error with a recast, and the student said “Yes.” The dialogue shown below between the teacher and S2 during the SR interview revealed that the student perceived his teacher’s feedback just like a wrap-up repetition, but not as feedback:

*Teacher:* Here, why did I say your sentence again? Do you have an idea?

*S2:* To wrap up my sentence.

*Teacher:* Let’s watch it again..... Do you hear anything different?

*S2:* No, you repeat my sentence.

*Teacher:* You say until /*unti:l*/, but I correct it as /*ən'tɪl*/. Weren’t you aware of it?

*S2:* Oh no. I see it right now.

The findings regarding recasts also demonstrated that this feedback type might not lead to uptake among the participants. For instance, while they were describing a picture during class hours, S7 said that “He is married, and he has a girlfriend.” The teacher provided a recast by saying that “He is married, but he has a girlfriend” with an intonation focus on ‘but,’ and the student said “Yes.” In the SR interview, it was understood that participants sometimes did not understand their errors when corrected by recasts, and they even pretended as if they had understood it. The extract below illustrates this finding better:

*S7:* I still do not understand why you used *but* here. You used it, and I listened to you. I just thought that you did not want me to do anything, so I pretended as if I had understood and did not react.

*Teacher:* But you said “Yes.”

*S7:* I said “Yes,” but I still have not understood it. (The teacher explained it here, and he understood the error.)

The examples above revealed that recasts, in general, had negative connotations in participants’ perceptions. Although these feedback moves were perceived as quick and immediate ones, the participants thought that they were not effective enough as a feedback type since they were perceived as a wrap-up repetition, and they were not clear enough to help them understand their errors.

### *Explicit correction*

Throughout the recorded sessions, the teacher used explicit correction in her 18 feedback moves. For all these moves, the participants expressed during the SR interviews that they were very clear as feedback, and explicit correction helped them be aware of and understand the error they had made thanks to the explanations given after.

In one of the instances, while the participant students were describing a picture, S11 uttered, “There is a ladder,” instead of saying, “There are stairs.” The teacher corrected his error with explicit correction, by drawing a picture on the board showing the difference between a ladder and stairs, and said, “Use stairs here, not ladder, okay.” During the SR interview, the student was asked how he felt about this feedback, and his thoughts were quite positive:

It was very useful for me because I did not know the correct usage. In fact, I was very sure about my sentence at the beginning, but when you explained their difference, I understood my error and learnt the correct usage.

Another explanation was made by a student upon the short feedback move provided below in the second session during a picture description:

S8: She is his mothers.

Teacher: Mother.

S8: Yes, mothers.

Teacher: But not mothers, mother, only one mother.

S8: Okay.

The sentences uttered by S8 during the SR interview showed how explicit correction helped her see and understand the error she had made:

At first, I did not understand what you meant. I just thought that you just repeated my sentence. Then, you attracted my attention to the erroneous part and explained the reason for it. It was quite beneficial for me at that moment.

It is seen that participants perceive explicit correction very positively. Their utterances showed that explicit correction, as a feedback type, not only attracted their attention to the erroneous part, but also provided an explanation which helped them understand the problem and learn from their errors.

### *Clarification request*

The findings regarding participants’ perceptions of clarification request as an output-prompting feedback type put forward that clarification requests were ambiguous and not clear enough for them to detect their own errors and correct them. On the other hand, it was found that this feedback type was effective in providing feedback for short utterances having pronunciation errors.

In the first recorded session, while the participants were talking about their rooms at the dorm, S6 uttered the sentence, “There are piece of paper on my desk.” The teacher provided a clarification request by saying “again, please.” The student understood that he had made an error and said “piece of papers” to correct it. Finally, the teacher provided the correct form herself by saying “not piece of paper, you should say pieces of paper.” Subsequently, S6 made a comment in the SR interview revealing the fact that the initial feedback in this instance was ambiguous:

When you said “again, please,” I understood that I had made an error, but I did not know whether it was grammatical or pronunciation nor where the error was. Then I



thought that the problem might be the ‘piece of paper,’ and I corrected it as “piece of papers.” My guess was correct, but my correction was not.

In another feedback move which was also perceived as ambiguous, S2 said, “There are a lot of people in street” while talking about a picture in the book. Immediately, the teacher asked, “Can you say it again?” with a clarification request. S2 hesitated to repeat for a very short time and then uttered, “There are a lot of people in the street” and corrected his error. His statements during the SR interview illustrated that the reason of his hesitation was the ambiguity:

I thought that if my teacher intervened and asked me to say the sentence again, it meant I had made an error. However, at first, I could not find what the error was, and I thought a little. It was a short time, but I checked the pronunciation and grammar in my mind. Finally, I thought that, but I was not sure, I had to say ‘the’ before street, and I said it.

On the contrary to this ambiguity caused by clarification request, it was also found that this feedback type was beneficial for the students when they are not sure about the pronunciation of a word and mispronounce it in a very short utterance. In the first and second sessions, the same student, S4, gave two short answers to the questions asked by his teacher, both of which had pronunciation problems, and the student received a clarification request from the teacher. According to him, these feedback moves were quite beneficial for him:

It is the same thing that we experienced in the other lesson. Again, I was not sure about the pronunciation of the word ‘cupboard’. When you said “again please,” I understood my pronunciation was wrong, and I eventually found it after some trials. It was beneficial for me, and I have learnt that the word is pronounced as cupboard /kʌbə(r)d/.

The extracts above clearly show that participants had different ideas regarding the effectiveness of clarification requests. They thought that clarification requests were perceived as ambiguous when they were provided for the errors in longer sentences. On the other hand, these feedback moves were found to be perceived as beneficial when provided for the pronunciation errors in short utterances.

### *Meta-linguistic feedback*

During the recorded classes, the teacher used meta-linguistic feedback 16 times and encouraged participants to correct the errors on their own by providing linguistic tips that would help them to do so. The findings derived from the SR interviews demonstrated that the participants sometimes felt confused due to the terminological words used by the teacher while giving meta-linguistic feedback, and that the feedback type was an anxiety-provoking one for them.

While talking about a picture in the second session, S7 said, “The boy and the girl talking.” Upon this, the teacher provided a meta-linguistic feedback by saying “You should use an auxiliary verb here, it is present continuous.” After waiting for a while, the student corrected his error on his own, but he stated during the SR interview that such feedback was not effective enough for him:

Well, here, I did not understand the word you said as feedback, I mean the terminological word. That’s why I waited so long to correct my sentence. At the end, I corrected my sentence, but not thanks to your feedback because I had not understood you.

In another instance during the second session, S8 uttered that “There is not any computer in class” while talking about the objects in their classroom. The teacher immediately provided a meta-linguistic feedback and said that “We do not use ‘any’ with singular nouns, so you should make it plural or use a/an.” The student said “Yes,” but he could not correct the error, and the teacher provided the correct form. In the SR interview, the student explained why he could not correct the error on his own:

To be honest, I got confused after the feedback you had given. I could not understand what to do because I started to think what plural or singular was. While I was thinking about them, everything got more confusing, and I could not correct the sentence.

It was also found out that meta-linguistic feedback was an anxiety-provoking feedback type, and participants got really anxious when they were asked to correct their own errors through meta-linguistic feedback. During the first session, the teacher gave meta-linguistic feedback to S1 while she was talking about a picture. However, she was not able to correct her error, and the teacher corrected it with a recast. In the SR interviews, S1 stated that she was too anxious at that moment to correct her error:

I understood that I had made an error, but I could not understand your feedback. I mean, what you said was too confusing for me at that moment. I was trying to figure out your feedback, but all my classmates and you were waiting for me. I got really stressed, and I could not do it.

The results above revealed that meta-linguistic feedback, as an output prompting type, made students feel anxious and was perceived as confusing due to its terminological components. Although the teacher tried to encourage students to find and correct the errors on their own through meta-linguistic feedback, it was seen that that feedback type was perceived negatively by them.

### *Repetition*

The data on the perceptions of participants regarding repetition as a feedback yielded a single theme which showed that repetition considerably helped them detect the error they had made and partly helped them correct it. For example, during the first session, the students were describing the picture of a garden, and S8 uttered that “It is a flower.” Then, the teacher immediately repeated her utterance with a rising tone of voice, and the student corrected her sentence as “There is a flower.” The sentences uttered by S8 during the SR interview showed that the feedback was effective for her:

Your tone of voice here clearly showed me I had done something wrong. Then, I remembered that I should have used ‘there is,’ but not ‘it is,’ and I corrected it. I can say that it was very effective for me.

In another instance, S10 was talking about what she did on Saturday, and she uttered that “I went to shopping in the afternoon.” The teacher provided a repetition and said her sentence again. Then she said that “I went to the shopping,” but that was not true, and the teacher provided the correct form. During the SR interview, S10 stated very similar ideas like the ones above:

Due to your intonation, I understood here that something was problematic. I thought that I forgot to say ‘the’ here, but that was not the case. I could not find the correct form, but the feedback was useful for me to find the problematic part. As the finding showed, participants’ perceptions regarding repetition as a feedback type was quite similar. They thought that it helped them find the erroneous part, but they were not always able to correct it.

### *Elicitation*

The least preferred feedback type during the session was found to be elicitation, and the teacher used it 11 times during the recorded sessions. However, the results showed that elicitation was the most positively perceived feedback type by the participants, and it was demonstrated that elicitation helped them find their errors easily and led to more output-prompting, so they perceived it as an effective feedback type.

During the second session, while participants were talking about likes and dislikes, S7 made a sentence about his friend and uttered that “He never watch TV series.” The teacher immediately provided an elicitation and said that “he never....?” After a very short time, the student understood his error and corrected it. His comments on this feedback type were quite positive and showed the effectiveness of it during the SR interviews:

If you ask us to repeat the sentence, I am trying to find what my error is, and I sometimes get confused if the sentence is long. However, when you correct us in that way, you limit the sentence, show the erroneous part and provide us with the opportunity to correct it on our own.

Very similar points were expressed by S1 who was also corrected through elicitation (next to....?) during the first session upon her utterance as ‘The butcher is next to cinema.’ She stated during the interviews that the feedback was very useful for her to find and correct the error:

Normally, it is difficult for me to understand the error, but when you say it in that way and stop just before the erroneous part, I find it more easily. I clearly see that the part you did not repeat was problematic, and it becomes easier to correct the error.

In another instance during the first session, S2 said that “The woman is buying an espresso because she likes drink coffee” while describing a picture. The teacher, through an elicitation, provided feedback for that student and said “she likes.....?” The student immediately corrected the error himself. Later, the student expressed that he was very happy about correcting his own error in that instance:

I immediately understood the error thanks to your feedback because, in that way, you clearly show the erroneous part. Moreover, you provide a very good opportunity for us to correct the error on our own. That made me very happy at that moment.

Based on the participant students’ opinions, it was found out that elicitation, as an OCF type, was perceived quite positively by them. They stated that elicitation clearly showed the erroneous part in their utterances and provided a good opportunity for them to correct their own errors. That made elicitation a very useful feedback type for the participants.

### **3.2. Timing of OCF**

The data regarding the timing of OCF moves provided by the teacher were analyzed based on the categorization as immediate, delayed and post-delayed given in the data analysis section. The findings on the perceptions of the participant students regarding the timing of OCF yielded significant results with the emerging themes shown in Table 3.

Table 3  
*Students' perceptions regarding the timing of OCF*

Timing of OCF	Emerging Themes
Immediate Feedback: Interrupting students	Anxiety provoking Discouraging when used consecutively
Delayed Feedback: Waiting till the students finish their utterance	Useful Decreasing anxiety
Post-delayed feedback: Recording Students' errors and telling them later	Not effective Negative model

*Immediate feedback: Interrupting students*

During the recorded sessions, the teacher provided immediate OCF by interrupting students as soon as she heard the erroneous utterance. The findings derived from SR interviews conducted with the participants who had received immediate feedback revealed that such feedback moves generally made students feel anxious and even discouraged them from participating if they were used consecutively.

During the first session, S11 wanted to talk about a picture and began to say that “he asks some questions...,” but his sentence was interrupted by the teacher. She gave meta-linguistic feedback by saying that “You must use present continuous here because we are describing a picture.” In a short time, the student corrected his error, but his comments in the SR interview showed he was not happy with the timing of feedback:

In fact, I was not happy with your interruption at that moment. It was a little bit sharp for me, and I began to feel a bit stressed. It would have been better if you had waited till I finished my sentence.

In another instance, S2 began to describe a picture, and it was seen that he was going to say more than one sentence. However, in his first sentence, he uttered that “There are a lot of people in street,” and the teacher immediately provided a clarification request without waiting for him to finish his sentence. Though he was able to correct his error after a short hesitation, he did not continue his description. The reason for that was found to be the immediate feedback of the teacher:

Your interruption made me see that I had made an error, but when you intervened, I began to think about my error, and I got a little bit stressed. I corrected my error at the end, but I forgot what I was going to say.

Another important finding on immediate feedback was that the participants were discouraged from speaking or participating when they were corrected immediately and consecutively. This situation was quite clear in the opinions of some students, but the most visible one was experienced by S7. While he was describing a picture in the second session, he made an error in his first sentence by saying “the woman sitting in...,” and his sentence was immediately interrupted by the teacher with an elicitation as “the woman...?” S7 corrected his error and went on saying “the woman is sitting in café.” At this time, he was corrected with a recast as “in a café.” The student said, “Okay” and went on speaking. Just one sentence later, he made another error saying that “She is waiting for boyfriend.” Again the teacher provided an immediate feedback through an explicit correction. After that feedback, the student did not want to go on; he finished his description, and he did not even say a word in the rest of the session. In the SR interview, his comments on this situation were really striking:

I did not understand why you behaved in that way. You corrected almost whatever I said. Honestly speaking, I was really annoyed and discouraged. For the first time, I got nervous while speaking in class. You might have waited till the end of my description and then told me my errors, but you interrupted me too much.....Let the feedback aside, I felt quite disappointed and shocked.

As participants' utterances regarding the moments when they received immediate feedback revealed, they perceived immediate feedback as anxiety provoking and even sometimes discouraging if it is used consecutively. They thought that immediate feedback helped them see their errors, but interrupting their sentences made them feel negative about this feedback timing.

*Delayed Feedback: Waiting till the students finish their utterances*

During the SR interviews, participants, in general, agreed on the usefulness of delayed feedback. Based on their perceptions, delayed feedback moves, which meant providing feedback when they finished their sentences, were quite positive. They thought that delayed feedback was more useful compared to other types, and it made them feel less anxious while speaking.

S4 was talking about his weekend activities when he made an error while saying that "In the afternoon, I went to shopping with my friends, and we drank coffee in Starbucks." The teacher waited until he finished his sentence and then provided feedback through an explicit correction. In the SR interview, it was seen that S4 was very happy with that feedback timing:

I remember you sometimes give feedback as soon as you hear our errors. But, I think this is better because you waited till the end of my sentence and listened to me. Thus, I did not get stressed. Then you explained what my error was, and it was quite helpful for me.

Similarly, while S8 was talking about the hotel, she went on her last summer holiday, she said, "There was a swimming pool, but there wasn't any waterslide in the hotel, so it wasn't enjoy." After she finished her sentence, the teacher gave the first feedback through elicitation saying "there wasn't.....?" and S8 completed it as "a waterslide in the hotel." Then, the teacher went on and said "so it wasn't enjoyable" correcting the second error with a recast. S8 expressed her opinions that were similar to S4's in the SR interviews:

I liked it because you waited till the end of my sentence and did not interrupt it. I am normally a stressed person, and I am sure I would have felt very bad if you had interrupted both errors. Now, I understand them, so it was very useful for me.

Agreeing on the sentences above, most of the participants thought that delayed feedback which was provided by the teacher after students finished their sentences was very useful for them since it did not make them feel anxious and clearly showed their errors.

*Post-delayed feedback: Recording the errors and telling later*

The last timing type was post-delayed feedback in which the teacher recorded or took notes and told students' their errors later. For this study, the teacher recorded a small part of another session (independent from the main recordings) in which she did not provide any feedback, but she took notes on the errors students made in this part and told them about these errors at the beginning of the second session. The results derived from students' comments on this feedback showed that post-delayed feedback was not useful for them, and they did not even remember their errors when the teacher told them

At the beginning of the second session, the teacher first told the errors one by one and asked if they remembered who made them. Only 3 of the 20 errors were remembered. Then the teacher told students one by one about their errors, showed the erroneous parts and justified what they must have said. In the SR interviews, the teacher asked students about their ideas on this feedback timing, recording and telling later, and the ideas expressed by students below showed post-delayed feedback was not an effective strategy:

It was not useful for me. I mean, it did not make any sense because I could not remember how I formed the sentence or what the picture was. When you gave the feedback here, I felt as if it was not me who had made the error (S11).

I remember that lesson. You did not give any feedback, and we felt all our sentences were perfect. Moreover, I formed some sentences based on my friends', and you did not say anything at that moment. Now, I learn that they were erroneous. For that reason, I think giving feedback later is not a good idea because we might perceive some errors as correct (S2).

It is seen that post-delayed feedback was perceived negatively by the students since they thought that taking notes about their errors and telling them later did not make any sense. Moreover, since they did not receive feedback at the time of speaking, the erroneous utterances might serve as a negative model for them. Thus, it was clear that the students were not in favour of post-delayed feedback in terms of the timing of OCF.

### **3.3. Students' preferences regarding the timing and type of OCF**

The last research question of the study investigated the preferences of students regarding the type and timing of OCF. The data obtained from the focus-group interview, which students were made familiar with all the elements and asked to comment on their preferences, yielded significant results on student preferences. In general, it was revealed that the participants were strongly in favour of elicitation as the type of OCF and delayed feedback for the timing. There were also some students who preferred explicit correction as a feedback type.

During the interviews, students expressed their ideas on each feedback type and timing, and they commented on both negative and positive aspects of these elements of OCF and mentioned that some of them were useful. However, as the results above have demonstrated, the participants showed a strong tendency towards some of them. It was found that almost all students' first preference was elicitation as the type of OCF because they thought that it was very clear, showed the erroneous part to-the-point, did not cause anxiety and provided an opportunity for them to correct the error themselves. The sentences uttered by S8 provided a good illustration of why she preferred elicitation as an OCF type:

Because it gives me an opportunity to correct the error myself, helps me think and focus on the error. Thanks to it, I work out my sentence and learn at the same time. That is why I find it really useful.

In addition to this, another student, S10, expressed that elicitation would be the best type for him, but explicit correction, in the case of not being able to self-correct, could also be a good alternative:

I think that elicitation is the most useful one because when you give feedback with elicitation, you not only show the erroneous part clearly, but also help us correct the error on our own. However, we sometimes cannot correct it, and for these moments,

explicit correction is a good alternative since you clearly explain what the error is, and what we should say instead of it.

As for the timing of OCF, it was striking that immediate feedback and post-delayed feedback was preferred by none of the students participating in the study. The findings showed that all students were in favour of delayed feedback due to its degree of usefulness, lack of interruption and level of comfort for the students. According to S2, for instance, delayed feedback was the best in terms of timing, and she always preferred to be corrected in that way:

First you listen to me and do not interrupt my sentence, so I never get stressed. Secondly, I can say all my ideas comfortably, and I am not confused due to an interruption. It would be very useful for me if you always gave feedback in that way.

During the focus-group interview, S1 touched upon another point which made her prefer delayed feedback in terms of the timing of OCF:

For me, the most important reason is that I can concentrate on the error I have made more easily, because in this way, I finish what I want to say, and I just focus on the error. On the other hand, when you interrupt, I cannot think about my sentences and concentrate on the error at the same time. It just makes me confused and nothing else.

As it is seen, although students were familiar with various alternatives in terms of both the types and timings of OCF, they showed strong tendencies towards certain ones. In general, they were in favour of elicitation as the type of OCF since they believed that it was the most useful one for them. As for the timing, they preferred delayed feedback which made them feel more comfortable and helped them focus on the error correction better.

## **4. Discussion**

### **4.1. EFL Learners' Perceptions regarding the Type of OCF**

By investigating how the participant students perceive OCF types, this study yielded significant results regarding students' perceptions of each feedback type according to Lyster and Ranta (1997)'s taxonomy. First of all, the findings derived from participants' responses in SR interviews show that recasts are not perceived as useful feedback. They sometimes think that a recast provided by the teacher as a feedback is a simple repetition of their utterance and not alerting enough that they have made a mistake. Since they do not understand that they have made a mistake, students might pretend as if they understood the feedback. For this reason, most of the students do not find recasts as an effective feedback strategy. In the literature, recasts are found to be the most widely used feedback strategy in language classrooms (Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Oliver, 1995; Sheen, 2004), and there are several studies which reveal students' tendency and preference to recasts (Nassaji, 2010; Katayama, 2007) or put forward the relative effectiveness of it (Long, 2006), but the current study demonstrates that its impact on students' perception is not positive enough due to the features mentioned above. In that sense, this finding shows parallelism with the studies conducted by Lyster (1998a; 2004) who demonstrated recasts might be ambiguous, and students might not comprehend the erroneous parts in their utterances. Moreover, Lyster (1998b) also claimed that recasts are sometimes not understood as corrections by learners, but rather, as confirmation of the meaning, which is also directly supported by the findings of the current study. For that reason, it can be concluded that although recasts are the most preferred feedback type by teachers, which is also the case in this study, they are potentially ambiguous because, as Rassaei (2013, p. 481) emphasizes, "Learners may not be sure whether the recast is just echoing their utterance for message confirmation or is intended to correct them."

Secondly, the results show that students perceive explicit correction quite positively, and they think that explicit correction, as a feedback strategy provided by the teacher, not only shows the erroneous parts clearly, but also presents a good explanation regarding the error. This finding is in line with many studies in the literature. In general, Ellis, Loewen, and Erlam (2006) maintain that explicit forms of error correction lead to more effective results. Moreover, examining learners' and teachers' feedback preferences, Lee (2013) finds that learners want to get explicit feedback while the conversation is maintained. Similarly, Rassaei (2013), in his task-based study, which focuses on students' perceptions regarding recasts and explicit correction, concluded that students' perceptions of explicit correction were quite positive due to its appropriateness to notice the target forms. Supporting all these studies, this study also demonstrates that students perceive explicit correction positively due to its distinctive features: clarity and error explanation.

The findings of this study on clarification request are also important. It is revealed that clarification requests, provided by the teacher as OCF, are mostly ambiguous and students have difficulty in comprehending the erroneous part in their utterances when they are provided a clarification request. The only point in which this feedback type is perceived positive and useful is when it is provided for pronunciation errors in very short utterances because students can easily understand that they have made a mistake at this moment. Contrary to students' negative perceptions regarding clarification request, studies in the literature yielded positive results on that feedback type. For instance, Panova and Lyster (2002) demonstrate that one of the highest rates of learner uptake of the feedback occurs with clarification request. Besides, Ammar and Spada (2006) conclude that clarification request is more influential than input-providing types like recasts and explicit correction because it gives the learner an opportunity for self-correction. As it is seen, clarification request might have positive aspects in terms of its effectiveness, but unlike the positive aspects of clarification request stated in the literature, this study concludes, based on the perceptions of students, that this feedback might be ambiguous for students in comprehending the erroneous part especially in long utterances. For that reason, using clarification request for pronunciation errors in short utterances, as the findings reveal, might be a good OCF strategy.

The usage and the effectiveness of meta-linguistic feedback has been the research matter of many studies, and they generally yield positive results. For instance, the findings of the study conducted by Rassaei and Moinzadeh (2012) on students' perceptions of recasts and meta-linguistics feedback display that students' accurate sentence production is quite high when they are corrected through meta-linguistic feedback, and they prefer receiving it rather than recasts. In addition to this, some other studies (Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Panova & Lyster; 2002; Sheen, 2004) show that meta-linguistic feedback enables learners to work on the erroneous part and leads to negotiation of meaning. However, the current study reveals a different aspect of meta-linguistic feedback. It is found that learners get confused due to the terminological words used by the teacher while giving meta-linguistic prompts, and this situation in a classroom atmosphere makes them feel anxious at the time of speaking. This finding, in fact, is touched upon by Rassaei (2013, p. 475) as "The problem with meta-linguistic corrective feedback is that learners' ability to benefit from such a feedback may be confounded by the type and complexity of the meta-language involved," but further research is needed to amplify students' perceptions of meta-linguistic feedback as an OCF move.

The current study yields a single important finding on the perceptions of students regarding repetition. It is highlighted by the participant students during SR interviews that repetition by



the teacher alerts them to the error they make while speaking. In that way, repetition helps them considerably to comprehend their erroneous utterance. Its effectiveness in that sense is also demonstrated by Büyükbay and Dabaghi (2010) who conclude as a result of their experimental study that repetition serves as an effective feedback strategy in terms of uptake and acquisition. Besides, Ammar and Spada (2006) also identify repetition as a useful feedback type since it provides opportunities in which learners can self-repair their errors. Along with these findings in the literature, this study also posits that repetition is perceived quite positively by students due to its feature of alerting students to the erroneous part of their utterances.

Finally, the results put forward by this study regarding elicitation, as an output prompting type, are really important. Students think that elicitation clearly shows the error they made in their utterances and provides an opportunity for them to correct the error themselves. Due to these features, elicitation is not only perceived quite positively, but also preferred as the best feedback move by all participant students. They think that being corrected with elicitation is very useful for them in both comprehending and repairing the erroneous utterance. In one sense, these findings might be the reason for high uptake and repair rates of elicitation provided by other studies (Choi & Li, 2012, Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Panova & Lyster, 2002). Now that students perceive elicitation quite positively, they tend to work out correct answers themselves (Yoshida, 2008), and their success in noticing and repairing the erroneous utterance becomes higher. Combined with these findings in the literature, this study concludes that elicitation is a very effective OCF strategy because it is perceived positively, and learners are lead to uptake and repair at a maximum level.

#### **4.2. EFL Learners' Perceptions regarding the Timing of OCF**

The timing of OCF has been a controversial topic in the literature, and different approaches have been put forward by different scholars. For instance, Long (1997) argues that teachers should give delayed feedback not to hinder the flow of communication whereas Doughty (2001) maintains that teachers should provide feedback immediately so that learners can have the opportunity to compare the erroneous form with the correct one. However, such studies do not focus on this topic from the perspective of learners to identify their tendencies in terms of timing.

Based on the classification as immediate, delayed and post-delayed, the study examines students' perceptions in terms of the timing of OCF. First of all, the results show that students perceive immediate feedback negatively since they are, in general, disturbed by the teacher's interruption. Moreover, it is found that consecutive usage of immediate feedback might demotivate students and even discourage them from participating in further activities. Unlike the findings of the study conducted by Lee (2013), who concludes that learners want to get immediate feedback while the communication is maintained, the findings of the current study posit that immediate feedback might lead to negative feelings in students because of the interruption of their sentences and should not be used consecutively by teachers.

The second timing strategy investigated by this study is post-delayed feedback in which the teacher takes notes on the erroneous utterances of students and tells them later by focusing how they should correct them. Supporting the study of Zhang and Rahimi (2014), in which the participant learners show the least tendency for delaying the feedback to a later time, the results demonstrate that post-delayed feedback is an ineffective strategy in terms of the timing of feedback in students' perceptions. They think that post-delayed feedback does not make any sense for them since they do not even remember how and under what conditions they

formed the sentence. For that reason, none of the students preferred post-delayed feedback as the timing of OCF in the focus group interviews.

As for the timing of OCF, the students in this study are found to show a very strong preference to delayed feedback in which teachers waited until students finish their utterance and then provide feedback. All the students believe that not being interrupted while speaking and feeling more comfortable when they finish sentence makes delayed feedback a distinctively positive feedback strategy in terms of timing. These are also the underlying reasons why they prefer it as the best timing for feedback in this study. This finding shows parallelism with Zhang and Rahimi's (2014) which showed that learners highly prefer receiving feedback when they finish their utterances. Based on this study and the perceptions of students revealed in this study, it can be said that waiting until students finish their sentences and then providing the right corrective feedback move seems to be the ideal strategy in terms of the timing of OCF.

## **5. Conclusion and Suggestions**

This study aimed to investigate the types and timings of OCF from the perspective of students within a classroom research design. The data were collected through video-recordings, SR and focus-group interviews and were analyzed through qualitative content analysis. The findings revealed that students' perceptions considerably varied regarding the types and timing strategies of OCF utilized by teachers. They perceived recasts and clarification request as ambiguous whereas they thought that meta-linguistic feedback was anxiety-provoking and difficult to comprehend. Among repetition, elicitation and explicit correction, which they perceived positively, they preferred elicitation as the best feedback move due to its being both clear and output-prompting. As for the timing, the results showed that students did not feel comfortable when they were corrected with immediate feedback, and using it consecutively discouraged students from speaking in classroom atmosphere. They also thought that post-delayed feedback was not useful at all since they were not able to remember how and under what conditions they formed the erroneous utterance. In terms of timing, delayed feedback, in which the teacher waited until the students finished their sentences and gave feedback at the end, was found to be the most positively perceived one since the students felt very comfortable and focused on the erroneous part better.

This study has several limitations. First of all, the data were obtained from a small number of participants, and it is based on a limited number of classroom observations. For this reason, it might not be generalized in other contexts. Secondly, the students taking part in this study were all elementary in terms of their proficiency levels. Studying learners from different levels would definitely yield different results on OCF. However, since all this study is based on real classroom data focusing on students' perceptions and draws on students' narrations regarding the feedback moves, it makes a significant contribution to SLA literature in terms of the types and timing of OCF.

Lee (2013) and Zhiang and Rahimi (2014) highlight that more research based on L2 classrooms should be conducted using observations, interviews and verbal protocols to explore learners' perceptions on OCF. Responding to this need for research, this study also recommends that examining learners' perceptions regarding OCF in various educational and cultural settings will contribute to the understanding of scholars and practitioners in the field. Additionally, based on the findings derived from students' narrations, the study also puts forward the suggestions below that would guide teachers or help teachers re-consider their implications while providing oral feedback in their classroom interaction:

- Students perceive elicitation, as an OCF type, quite positively. Thus, teachers should utilize this feedback type more in their classes.
- Teacher should be careful about the terms while providing meta-linguistic feedback and try to choose simpler ones to make the feedback more comprehensible.
- Since clarification requests might be perceived as ambiguous when the erroneous utterance is long, teacher should make use of this type for giving feedback to short erroneous utterances.
- Teachers should avoid using immediate feedback consecutively since it might discourage students from participating in the lesson.
- It is very possible that students might perceive a recast as a simple repetition. For this reason, teachers should make a recast very clear while using it as feedback type.
- In terms of the timing of oral feedback, teachers should make use of delayed feedback by listening to the students until they finish their sentences and then providing feedback.

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