

Research on Foreign Languages  
Journal of Faculty of  
Letters and Humanities  
Year 49 No. 200

## Teachers' Stated Beliefs about Corrective Feedback in Relation to Their Practices in EFL Classes\*

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### Abstract

This article reports a case study investigating the relationship between five teachers' stated beliefs and classroom practices with reference to teachers' correction of L2 learners' spoken errors of linguistic forms in EFL classes. Using classroom observation, the study attempted to investigate how teachers deal with their L2 learners' non-target-like forms. A questionnaire was also constructed to explore teachers' beliefs about different feedback types. Comparing the observational and self-report data showed some mismatches between the teachers' stated beliefs and classroom practices. It was found that there may be a cost for each decision about the effectiveness and appropriateness of feedback types, particularly in fluency contexts. The most highly effective feedback types may impede communication and slow down the conversation. Likewise, the most appropriate feedback types may not be so effective in terms of changing the students' production(s) of the target structure. The study concludes by arguing that basing the investigations of teachers' classroom practices on their beliefs and their stated reasons behind their beliefs might help us develop a better understanding of the practical considerations, situational demands and constraints which might account for the inconsistencies between their stated beliefs and classroom practices.

**Key words:** beliefs, feedback, error correction, context, uptake.

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تاریخ وصول: ۸۴/۱۰/۲۸ تأیید نهایی: ۸۶/۴/۲۰ \*

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## INTRODUCTION

The studies of error correction can be broadly classified into two types in terms of their objectives: (a) investigating the actual effectiveness of error correction on English as a foreign or second language (henceforth L2) learners' interlanguage development, and (b) exploring the conditions under which it may function effectively (Han, 2002). This study falls into the second category. It is about teachers' correction of students' spoken errors of linguistic forms in L2 classes, and is an investigation into L2 teachers' perceptions of different 'types of error correction'<sup>1</sup> in relation to their actual classroom performances. More specifically, this study explores teachers' beliefs<sup>2</sup> about the effectiveness and appropriateness of different types of feedback relative to different contexts to gain an understanding of how their perceptions relate to their actual classroom performances and to explore their stated reasons behind their perceptions. Investigating teachers' actual use of different strategies of error correction in relation to their perceptions of those strategies may offer an insight into why teachers deal with the students' non-target-like forms in the ways they do. What follows from this is that this work consists of two dimensions: (a) investigating actual use of different strategies of error correction in L2 classes, and (b) exploring teachers' perceptions of different feedback types. The reason for the inclusion of the first dimension is mainly descriptive, whereas the second dimension is essentially for exploratory purposes.

### Questionnaire surveys

Although one of the ultimate goals of studies on error correction is to identify which types of error correction are best in terms of promoting the learners' interlanguage, there have been some researchers who hold that human perceptions, attitudes, and preferences are a significant part of learning and teaching process. As a result, they focus on exploring what teachers and students perceive to be effective strategies of error correction. The focus of this subsection is on these types of studies.

One of the earliest survey studies of error correction was carried out by Cathcart and Olsen (1976), aiming to explore both teachers' and students' preferences for the correction of students' spoken errors of linguistic forms in the classroom. They distributed a questionnaire to 188 ESL students and 38 teachers at three community college centres and a university. They found that students wanted to be corrected more than teachers generally perceived to be necessary.

Conducting a survey study on the teachers' and students' most popular and least popular learning activities in the Australian Adult Migrant Education Programme, Nunan (1988:89-94) reported that teachers' preference for 'error correction' was 'low', whereas students' preference for it was 'very high'. In contrast, teachers' preference for 'student self-discovery of errors' was 'very high', whereas students' preference for it was 'low'. Sixty teachers took part in this survey, though the number of participating students has not been reported. Teachers wanted to avoid correcting the students' errors and wanted to involve the students in self-correction, whereas the students did not want to correct their own errors and wanted their teachers to do this. According to Nunan who observes that "in a learner-centred curriculum, methodology, as much as any other element in the curriculum, must be informed by the attitudes of the learners" (1988: 88), this represents a dramatic mismatch between teachers' and students' views of error correction.

Another study, which focused on comparing the L2 students' and teachers' attitudes towards explicit grammar instruction and error correction, is a large-scale survey carried out by Schulz (1996). A total of 824 students and 92 teachers took part in this survey. The same multiple-choice-type questionnaire was administered to both the teachers and students at a university in the U.S. Her results revealed that students hold generally favourable attitudes towards error correction in learning another language, confirming the findings reported by Cathcart and Olsen (1976), and Nunan (1988). However, the most striking finding of Schulz (1996) was the mismatches and discrepancies between students' and teachers' attitudes towards error correction in L2 classrooms. As with the findings in Nunan (1988), Schulz (1996) reported that students gave error correction a higher rating than did the teachers.

Although the above-mentioned survey studies have been useful in terms of exploring teachers' and students' perceptions of error correction in order to identify the potential conflicts and establish a fit between students' expectations and teachers' instructional practices, they seem to have the following three limitations.

First, all survey studies reviewed above have used self-report questionnaires as the only method of data collection. One criticism which could be levelled at these types of studies (and possibly all survey studies in general) is that teachers' professional thinking, beliefs and perceptions are embedded in their action and are not always directly accessible to them (Calderhead, 1988:3). In fact, verbal reports are only measures of respondents' conscious, stated knowledge rather than their tacit knowledge of the phenomenon in focus (Ericsson and Simon, 1985). Another related point is that attitudes, perceptions and beliefs do not always converge with behaviours and practices (Burns, 1992). However, the view that there is a link between teachers' pedagogical thinking and classroom behaviours, and teachers' beliefs and practices are fundamentally interrelated is now fairly well established in the literature (Borg, 1999, 2003; Breen, et al., 2001; Burns, 1992; Schulz, 1996, 2001). Nevertheless, the finding that teachers' perceptions and beliefs are not always translated into practices might be attributed to some situational demands and constraints, practical considerations, and the specific social relationships with students (e.g., see Breen, et al., 2001; Burns, 1992; Nunan, 1991). Based on this argument, it might be more promising to use self-report data in conjunction with actual performance data to check perceptions against practices and to spot the areas in which teachers' perceptions match or mismatch with their practices and to explore the possible explanations. This line of inquiry might cast further light on the phenomenon under investigation.

Second, all survey studies have focused on error correction in general, taking it as a monolithic whole. They have required the respondents to rate such a broad construct as 'error correction' in terms of the extent to which it is perceived as a significant or popular learning activity without distinguishing between different types of error correction or differentiating between different context types (e.g., accuracy or fluency contexts) relative to which respondents were asked to make their assessments.

Third, the self-report questionnaires in all these survey studies have adopted Likert scales (e.g., agree strongly, agree, undecided, disagree slightly, disagree strongly), asking the respondents to tick only one of the options to show their preferences. Responses to closed items might be adequate for identifying the overall patterns in the respondents' perceptions. However, none of the questionnaires used in these surveys included open-ended items or were complemented with other instruments to explore respondents' stated reasons and explanations behind their choices. In fact, they focused on identifying

the patterns and finding out whether teachers or students preferred error correction or not, rather than taking one further step forward to explore their reasons behind their perceptions, attitudes and views of error correction.

### **Research method: The need for a hybrid perspective**

Reviewing previous studies of error correction and assessing the research methods adopted in the studies reviewed, I came to realise that most of these studies focusing on error correction have taken a uni-directional approach with emphasis on either constructing taxonomies, exploring teachers' as opposed to their students' perceptions, investigating the effect of error correction on learners' interlanguage development, or exploring the links between different strategies of error correction and different types of context. Though these different veins of research have contributed to an understanding of error correction on their own, an approach that investigates the different dimensions of error correction may provide a more comprehensive view of this phenomenon. Hence, I felt a need to combine descriptive/observational and self-report questionnaire / survey methods to develop a 'hybrid perspective' (Ellis, 2001, 2003) in this study to go beyond description towards the exploration of the phenomenon under investigation. In terms of a general framework for inquiry, this work is a 'descriptive-survey' study motivated by my felt need to investigate both teachers' actual performances in the naturally-occurring data from their own classes, as well as to explore their subjective views including their perceptions of different strategies of error correction. I will attempt to explain why adopting such a hybrid perspective might be a more useful way of exploring error correction than using a single method for investigating such a multifaceted phenomenon.

Given the research questions addressed in this study, classroom observation and questionnaire will constitute the main procedures of data collection. Classroom observations are the instrument for developing data-driven taxonomies of feedback types used by teachers in dealing with the learners' non-target-like forms. The aim is to adopt an objective approach for investigating the frequencies of different feedback types and identifying the prominent patterns across the teachers. However, because an exclusively objective approach might not be adequate for a better understanding of pedagogical and linguistic events in classroom, a self-report subjective questionnaire was felt to be needed to interpret the learners' views of those events

(Blaikie, 1993; Denzin and Lincoln, 1998). Given that shortcomings of one method of data collection could be removed by the strengths of another method and vice versa, combining methods could lead to a deeper insight into the understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. Following this argument, in this research two different methods of data collection (that is, observations and self-report questionnaire) will be used to complement each other to enable the researcher to respond more adequately to the research questions.

As noted above, classroom observations can lead to an objective investigation of the frequencies of different feedback types, whereas the questionnaire can result in an exploration of the processes rather than simply products (Cohen and Manion, 1994). An integration of these two methods of data collection possibly provides the scope for accomplishing 'complementary cyclical development' (Johnson, 2002:150) – namely, moving back and forth in different sets of data generated for an understanding of a single phenomenon - through investigating the teachers' actual classroom performances in relation to their perceptions and their stated reasons behind their perceptions. The rationale behind this argument is that these two methods may offer more to the understanding of classroom error correction in combination than they do alone.

In the study reported below, teachers' stated beliefs about different types of error correction are explored and then compared with their classroom practices. More specifically, it is attempted to examine to what extent teachers' stated beliefs relate to their actual classroom performances.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions addressed in this study were as follows:

1. What are the teachers' stated beliefs about the effectiveness and appropriateness of feedback types relative to accuracy and fluency contexts?
2. How are the teachers' stated beliefs about the effectiveness of feedback types related to their classroom practices?
3. How are the teachers' stated beliefs about the appropriateness of feedback types related to their classroom practices?

## METHOD

### Teaching context and participants

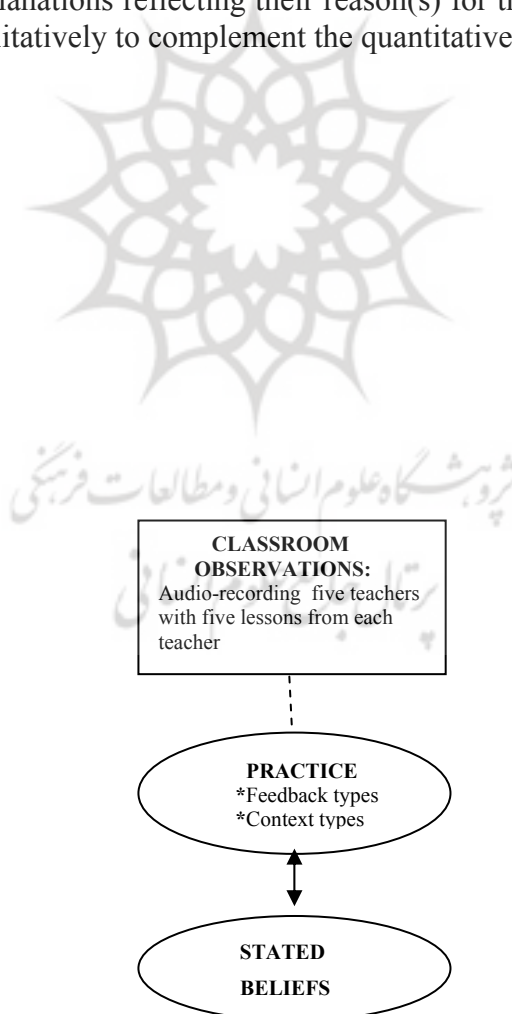
The site for carrying out the fieldwork for the present study was Tarbiat, a private English language teaching (ELT) in Tabriz, Iran. English is taught at six levels in this institute. These levels are as follows: English for the Beginners, Elementary, Pre-intermediate, Intermediate, Upper-intermediate, and Advanced English. The classes meet two times a week, with two consecutive 45-minute sessions each time. The classes of each level continue for approximately four months. The main instructional materials which are used in this institute are Headway books.

The participants in this study were five teachers, along with the students in their classes. One class was selected from each teacher, with the number of students ranging from 15 to 22 in these classes. A particular number was assigned to each of these teachers (that is, 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5), with the numbers used as pseudonyms for these teachers. These numbers will be used throughout this study for referring to them. The classes selected from these teachers were either pre-intermediate or intermediate, with the classes from teachers 1 and 3 at intermediate level and those from teachers 2, 4 and 5 at pre-intermediate level. All teachers participating in this study were male. Their ELT qualifications were either B.A. or M.A., with their experience in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) ranging from 6 to 15 years. Their ages were from 28 to 38 years.

### Design of the study

As shown in Figure 1, two methods of data collection were used to obtain data for this study: classroom observations and feedback questionnaire. These two methods of data collection led to two stages in the design of the study and two types of data respectively. The first stage was to investigate teachers' practices in terms of how they were dealing with the students' spoken errors in their classes, through audio-recording and transcribing the classroom interaction. This stage generated the classroom data. The focus was to investigate the connection between feedback types and context types in error correction exchanges.

The next stage in the design of the study was to explore the teachers' stated beliefs about different feedback types through administering a questionnaire. This stage generated the questionnaire data. The questionnaire had 5-point scales in the Likert format (e.g., Highly Effective, Somewhat Effective, I don't know, Somewhat Ineffective, Highly Ineffective) and the teachers were asked to mark their beliefs by ticking one of the five boxes in each elicitation question. The data emerging from ticking one of the 5-point scales were numerical. Hence, they were analysed quantitatively. However, following each elicitation question, the teachers were also asked to explain their reason(s) for their choices. The data emerging from the teachers' explanations reflecting their reason(s) for their choices were analysed qualitatively to complement the quantitative analysis.





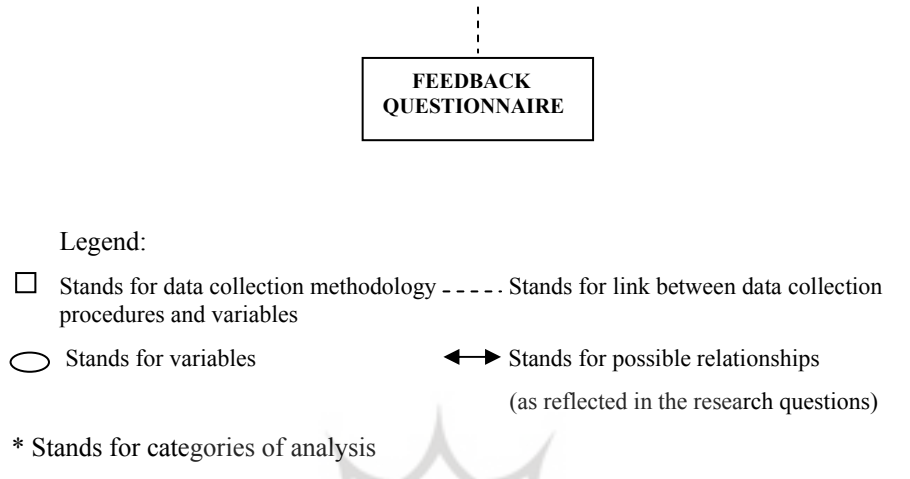


Figure 1: Design of the study

The final stage involved comparing the two sets of data generated in the first and second stages of the design to investigate how teachers' beliefs were related to what they actually did in their classes. The aim was to develop a better understanding of feedback types through exploring teachers' stated reasons for using different feedback types in different context types.


### **Classroom data collection**

Prior to observing the lessons, I informed the teachers of the general aim of the study which was broadly to investigate the patterns of interaction between teachers and students in ELT classes. However, I postponed providing them with the precise and specific objectives of the study until the completion of my observations. To collect the classroom data, I took part as a non-participant observer in the communicative lessons of these five teachers. I made audio-recordings of five lessons from each teacher. I also used a wire-less, clip-on microphone attached to the teacher in each class both to make sure of high quality of the teachers' voice and to capture teacher interaction with individuals and small groups. This led to the collection of 31 hours of naturally occurring classroom data from the five teachers participating in this study (five lessons from each teacher). After completion of my audio-recordings from all five teachers, I distributed the questionnaire to the teachers. This stage of data collection is described below.


### **Self-report data collection**

The feedback questionnaire constructed for the purposes of this study was a self-report questionnaire which consisted of nine situations, with five elicitation questions in each situation. Three situations were designed to explore how teachers and students perceive each of the feedback types of explicit correction, recasts, and negotiated feedback, with each situation indicating the use of each specific feedback type in dealing with one of the three error types of grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation.

Teacher



Student



He **breaked\*** his leg.

Breaked? What is the past tense of 'break'?

Broke. He broke his leg.

1. Please tick only one box to indicate what type of error has been corrected in this situation:
 

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Grammar	Vocabulary	Pronunciation
2. How **effective** do you think this type of error correction is for improving the student's production(s) of this structure during the same lesson?
 

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Highly effective	Somewhat effective	I do not know	Somewhat ineffective	Highly ineffective

-Please explain your reason(s) for your choice:
3. How **effective** do you think this type of error correction is for improving the student's production(s) of this structure in the subsequent lessons?
 

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Highly effective	Somewhat effective	I do not know	Somewhat ineffective	Highly ineffective

-Please explain your reason(s) for your choice:
4. If the focus of the classroom activity is on the student to be more **accurate**, how appropriate do you think this type of error correction is?
 

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Highly appropriate	Somewhat appropriate	I do not know	Somewhat inappropriate	Highly inappropriate

-Please explain your reason(s) for your choice:
5. If the focus of the classroom activity is on the student to be more **fluent**, how appropriate do you think this type of error correction is?
 

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Highly appropriate	Somewhat appropriate	I do not know	Somewhat inappropriate	Highly inappropriate

-Please explain your reason(s) for your choice:

Figure 2: An example of situations in the feedback questionnaire

Elicitation questions in each situation were presented with an illustrative example, and the teachers were asked to answer in the context related to each specific example. One of the situations is given in Figure 2 as an example. The first elicitation question requires the teachers to indicate what type of error has been corrected in each situation. This question aims to ground the respondents' perceptions of the interaction between error types and feedback types on what they assume to be the type of error corrected in each situation. Another reason for including the first elicitation question is that requiring the respondents to specify error type entails them to take a serious account of the first turn of each situation, which might not otherwise receive due attention. The second and third elicitation questions require the respondents to indicate their perceptions of the immediate and long-term effectiveness of feedback type in each situation. The fourth and fifth elicitation questions ask the respondents to mark their perceptions of the appropriateness of the feedback types in accuracy and fluency contexts respectively. It should be noted that the questionnaire had 5-point scales in the Likert format (e.g., Highly Effective, Somewhat Effective, I don't know, Somewhat Ineffective, Highly Ineffective) and the respondents were asked to mark their perceptions by ticking one of the five boxes in each elicitation question. Following each question, the respondents were asked to explain their reason(s) for their choices.

#### DATA ANALYSIS

To analyse the classroom data, I first transcribed the data and identified the 'error correction exchanges' in them. Error correction exchange served as the basic unit of analysing the classroom data. An error correction exchange was a short discourse event in which the teacher corrected a linguistic error made by a student. A linguistic error could be an error in pronunciation, grammar, or vocabulary. The next step was to develop the categories of analysis for coding the strategies of error correction and context types to explore the interactions between them. Different categories of analysis are defined and illustrated as follows:

### Feedback types

Different types of error correction identified in the database of this study were coded into one of the following feedback types: (a) explicit correction, (b) recast, and (c) negotiated feedback (see also Panova & Lyster, 2002; Seedhouse, 1999). These feedback types are defined and illustrated below:

- Explicit correction:

This is a type of correction in which the teacher clearly indicates that what the student has said is incorrect and supplies the correct form. The teacher's direct treatment of the students' non-target-like form(s) is realised through providing them with explicit information in the form of explanations, definitions, examples, and negative evaluations (e.g., 'no...', 'it's not correct...', 'incorrect ...'). Direct treatment of the students' non-target-like form(s) makes the correction the focus of the talk while the non-target-like forms are being dealt with. The example below illustrates explicit correction.

Extract 1:

- 1 T: what are the advantages of TV?
- 2 S: one of the disadvantages is that it takes too many time\*
- 3 T: 'time' is uncountable noun, you should say 'too much time',  
not too many time,
- 4 ok what else?

- Recast:

Recast is a teacher's implicit corrective reformulation of a student's non-target-like production while preserving the meaning of the student's utterance. The example below illustrates this type of corrective feedback. All extracts cited throughout this article have been taken from the database of the present study.

Extract 2:

- 1 T: how does he spend the money?
- 2 S: he spend\* the money for constructing factories
- 3 T: yes, that's right, he spends the money for constructing  
factories

- Negotiated feedback:

Negotiated feedback is a type of error correction in which the teacher provides the students with signals to facilitate peer- and self-correction, rather than immediately correcting the non-target-like form(s) in their utterances. In negotiated feedback, the teacher

provides the students with at least one chance at self-correction (and sometimes with more chances if the first chance fails to result in successful self-correction).

Negotiated feedback consists of the following constituents: (a) student makes a linguistic error, (b) teacher prompts the student to self-correct, (c) if the student supplies the correct form, negotiation is complete. However, if the student's response to the teacher's prompt is not correct, the teacher might continue the negotiation by providing further clues/prompts and waiting for the student's correct response to emerge during the collaborative negotiation. Otherwise, the teacher might decide to terminate the negotiation by supplying the student with the correct form after one or more unsuccessful attempts by the student at self-correction. The example below illustrates negotiated feedback.

Extract 3:

- 1 S: she likes study\* hard
- 2 T: she likes study?
- 3 S: she likes studying hard

**Context types**

'Context' is defined as focus of the talk or the pedagogical purpose of each specific discourse event (see also Seedhouse, 1999; Sheen, 2004). Different types of context identified in the database of this study have been classified into (a) accuracy context, and (b) fluency context. These types of context have been defined and illustrated as follows:

• *Accuracy context:*

Discourse event in which the focus is on the accurate use of 'language forms' (that is, grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation) or to provide the students with accuracy practice. The example below illustrates the accuracy context:

Extract 4:

*In this extract, the teacher is teaching comparative adjectives.*

- 1 T: all right ok. can you give an example for 'more'?

- 2 S1: New York is more dirty\* than Tokyo  
 3 T: New York is more dirty?  
 4 S2: dirtier  
 5 T: ok. New York is dirtier yes, and for the 'most'? ...

- *Fluency context:*

Discourse event in which the teacher engages the students in talking about the propositional/thematic content of a given text, or expressing their personal meanings. The example below illustrates the fluency context:

Extract 5:

- 1 T: who is your favourite person? may be in your family, may be anywhere else?  
 2 S: my father is the best person for me because he is a logic\* man  
 3 T: logical, yeah  
 4 S: logical man and very comfortable ...

## RESULTS

The results have been reported in three sections. First, the teachers' classroom practices are described. Second, the stated beliefs of each teacher, as reflected in the self-report questionnaire data, are reported both quantitatively and qualitatively. Finally, the teachers' stated beliefs are compared with their classroom practices, pointing out both matches and mismatches.

### The teachers' classroom practices

This section deals with exploring the interactions between feedback types and context types first across the group profile and second across individual teachers in the classroom data.

- *Group profile*

Analysing the interactions between feedback types and context types in the whole group enables us to identify the salient general patterns. Table 1 presents the results. It should be noted that in Table 1 percentages are in terms of total error correction in each particular column.

**Table 1:** Interactions between feedback types and context types across group profile

#### Context Types

Feedback Types	Accuracy	Fluency	Row Total
Explicit correction	21.3% (67)*	14.8% (65)	132
Recast	63.1% (198)	72.8% (319)	517
Negotiated Feedback	15.6% (49)	12.3% (54)	103
Column Totals	100% (314)	100% (438)	Grand Total: 752

\*Numbers in parentheses show the raw frequencies.

The overall pattern, which emerges from Table 1, is that in both accuracy and fluency contexts, recast is the most frequently used feedback type. It is massively more frequent than any other feedback type. It appears that explicit correction and negotiated feedback, which might be the most disruptive types of feedback (that is, disruptive of the flow of talk), tend to have higher proportional amounts, though slightly higher, in accuracy contexts where form – not the meaning – is the focus, whereas recast, which might be the least disruptive feedback type, is used with higher proportional amount in fluency contexts where expressing meanings – not form – is the focus. Furthermore, a higher proportional amount of recast in fluency contexts might be another indication that less disruptive feedback types are more commonly used in fluency contexts than in accuracy contexts. It should be noted that the above analysis of Table 1 has been made according to proportional figures (that is, percentages in each column), rather than raw frequencies.

- *Individual teachers*

This sub-section is concerned with finding out the patterns of interactions between feedback types and context types for each individual teacher, and exploring the extent to which each teacher varies the use of feedback types according to whether the focus is on accuracy or fluency. Table 2 presents the results.

**Table 2:** Interactions between feedback types and context types by teacher

Teachers	Feedback Types	Context Types		Row Total
		Accuracy	Fluency	
Teacher 1	Explicit Correction	20% (3)	26.2% (44)	47
	Recast	80% (12)	65.5% (110)	122
	Negotiated Feedback	0	8.3% (14)	14
	Column Totals	100% (15)	100% (168)	183



<b>Teacher 2</b>	<b>Explicit Correction</b>	9.8% (4)	9.1% (7)	11
	<b>Recast</b>	41.5% (17)	63.6% (49)	66
	<b>Negotiated Feedback</b>	48.8% (20)	27.3% (21)	41
	Column Totals	100% (41)	100% (77)	118
<b>Teacher 3</b>	<b>Explicit Correction</b>	29.3% (24)	7.4% (5)	29
	<b>Recast</b>	58.5% (48)	76.5% (52)	100
	<b>Negotiated Feedback</b>	12.2% (10)	16.2% (11)	21
	Column Totals	100% (82)	100% (68)	150
<b>Teacher 4</b>	<b>Explicit Correction</b>	17.9% (14)	7.9% (6)	20
	<b>Recast</b>	73.1% (57)	89.5% (68)	125
	<b>Negotiated Feedback</b>	9% (7)	2.6% (2)	9
	Column Totals	100% (78)	100% (76)	154
<b>Teacher 5</b>	<b>Explicit Correction</b>	22.4% (22)	6.1% (3)	25
	<b>Recast</b>	65.3% (64)	81.6% (40)	104
	<b>Negotiated Feedback</b>	12.2% (12)	12.2% (6)	18
	Column Totals	100% (98)	100% (49)	147

Grand Total: 752

The general pattern identified in Table 2 is that to deal with students' errors in both accuracy and fluency contexts, recast is overall used with massively more frequency than any other feedback type across all teachers (except accuracy context in teacher 2). Furthermore, Table 2 indicates that there are considerable contrasts between the individual teachers in terms of the feedback types they are choosing to use in different context types.

### The teachers' stated beliefs

This section is concerned with exploring the teachers' stated beliefs about the effectiveness and appropriateness of different types of feedback in accuracy and fluency contexts. I explore the teachers' stated beliefs, first about the effectiveness and then about the appropriateness of the three feedback types of explicit correction, recast, and negotiated feedback.

- *Teachers' stated beliefs about the effectiveness of feedback types*

This sub-section deals with the questionnaire results of teachers' stated beliefs about the effectiveness of feedback types. Effectiveness is defined in the questionnaire as the impact of the teacher's correction on changing the student's production(s) of the target structure. The questionnaire addressed two types of effectiveness, namely, short-term (ST), and long-term (LT), with short-term effectiveness defined in the questionnaire as the impact of the teacher's correction during the same lesson, and long-term effectiveness defined as the impact of

the teacher's correction in the subsequent lessons. Teachers' stated beliefs about the effectiveness of feedback types are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3:** Teachers' beliefs about the effectiveness of feedback types  
**Feedback Types**

Perceived Effectiveness	Explicit Correction						Recast						Negotiated Feedback					
	HE	SE	SI	HI	NK	NR	HE	SE	SI	HI	NK	NR	HE	SE	SI	HI	NK	NR
Short-term	26.7* (4)	53.3 (8)	6.7 (1)	0	13.3 (2)	0	33.3 (5)	33.3 (5)	13.3 (2)	0	20 (3)	0	20 (3)	73.3 (11)	0	0	6.7 (1)	0
Long-term	33.3 (5)	46.7 (7)	0	0	20 (3)	0	33.3 (5)	33.3 (5)	20 (3)	0	13.3 (2)	0	33.3 (5)	53.3 (8)	0	0	13.3 (2)	0
Column Totals	30 (9)	50 (15)	3.3 (1)	0	16.7 (5)	0	33.3 (10)	33.3 (10)	16.7 (5)	0	16.7 (5)	0	26.7 (8)	63.3 (19)	0	0	10 (3)	0

\*The first figure shows %, and the figure in parentheses indicates the frequency of response.

*Abbreviations:* HE stands for Highly Effective, SE for Somewhat Effective, SI for Somewhat Ineffective, HI for Highly Ineffective, NK for 'I don't know', and NR for 'No Response'.

Table 3 shows teachers' stated beliefs about the short-term and long-term effectiveness of feedback types. It should be noted that the total frequencies of each variable (that is, short-term and long-term effectiveness) across each particular feedback type is 15. As each feedback type is explored by 3 examples of error correction in the questionnaire, multiplying 3 by the number of teachers (that is, 5) gives the number of 15. Unless otherwise mentioned, this will be the procedure for all the tables in this section. Having provided a brief account of its layout, let us explore the patterns in Table 3.

As can be seen, there is a general positive assessment of all feedback types for both short-term and long-term effectiveness. According to column totals, teachers perceive all feedback types to be effective, with negotiated feedback and explicit correction seen as more effective than recasts overall.

Looking at the figures in the 'Highly Effective' (HE) and 'Somewhat Effective' (SE) categories of each individual feedback type, we can see that the figures for the short-term and long-term effectiveness are the same in recast and very close in explicit

correction, though slightly different in negotiated feedback. This might suggest that teachers do not make much distinction between these two types of effectiveness overall. Furthermore, the frequencies of 'I don't know' category are low on the whole. This might signify a higher degree of confidence, and might imply that teachers respond decisively and have more firmly held perceptions of the effectiveness of feedback types.

We now turn to the qualitative data of the questionnaire related to the effectiveness of different types of feedback. As noted before, the teachers were required to explain their reasons for their responses in the comment boxes under each elicitation question. This constituted the qualitative data of the questionnaire. I translated the respondents' comments from Farsi into English and had them checked by two other competent bilingual translators. Some extracts from the translated comments were included in the analysis. As just mentioned, negotiated feedback and explicit correction were perceived by teachers to be more effective than recast overall. In this part of the analysis, some extracts are given to provide samples of teachers' stated reasons for their lower ratings of recast than negotiated feedback and explicit correction.

In his assessment of the short-term effectiveness of recast, teacher 4 says

This way of correction can be effective. However, if the teacher explains why 'don't' is incorrect but 'aren't' is correct in this sentence, it will be more effective. (T4, Situation 2)

This illustrates that, according to teacher 4, providing the students with some metalinguistic comments and some explanations of the incorrect forms might be more useful in terms of their learning of the corrected elements.

In assessing the long-term effectiveness of recast, he further says

Because no explanation has been provided regarding why 'don't' is not correct, this way of correction might not be so effective. (T4, Situation 2)

This suggests that the teacher's correction might not have long-term effectiveness unless it is accompanied by further metalinguistic comments and explanations.

However, in his assessment of the effectiveness of negotiated feedback, teacher 3 says

This way of correction takes much time by involving the student in self-correction. However, because it provides the student with an opportunity to correct his own error and activates his knowledge, it might have a more lasting effect on learning. (Teacher 3, Situation 2)

Teacher 3 is acknowledging that although negotiated feedback is more time-consuming, it could have longer lasting effects on the students' learning of the target structures due to its potential for activating the students' own interlanguage through providing them with chances at self-correction.

Along the same lines and in approving of the high ratings of the effectiveness of negotiated feedback, teacher 4 says

If the student corrects his own error, learning will be more effective. Providing the student with an opportunity to self-correct is an effective way of encouraging him to think about his own error and correct it himself. This will activate his own knowledge, increase his self-confidence and enable him to use the target structure correctly both in the same session and in the subsequent sessions. (T4, Situation 2)

As with teacher 3, teacher 4 is suggesting that providing the students with some opportunities at self-correction and providing them with more time to think about their own errors might have long-lasting effects on their learning.

Explicit correction is also rated high in terms of effectiveness, although some caveats are suggested in using it. For instance, teacher 3 says

Although this way of correction is effective for learning, we should take more account of the individual differences between the students and use it more carefully with those who might get anxious, frustrated and disappointed when corrected with this type of correction. (T3, Situation 4)

This suggests that the students' personality types should be taken into account while using explicit correction. Its impact on learning

might be negatively affected if it is used with students whose affective filter might be raised when corrected explicitly.

• Teachers' stated beliefs about the appropriateness of feedback types

This sub-section deals with the questionnaire results of teachers' stated beliefs about the appropriateness of feedback types.

Appropriateness is defined in the questionnaire as the suitability of a type of correction for promoting accuracy and fluency, with accuracy defined as correct grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary, and fluency defined as communicating meaning smoothly and at normal speed. Teachers' stated beliefs about the appropriateness of feedback types are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4:** Teachers' beliefs about the appropriateness of feedback types

Perceived Appropriateness	Explicit Correction						Recast						Negotiated Feedback					
	HA	SA	SI	HI	NK	NR	HA	SA	SI	HI	NK	NR	HA	SA	SI	HI	NK	NR
<b>Accuracy</b>	20* (3)	46.7 (7)	20 (3)	0	13.3 (2)	0	46.7 (7)	33.3 (5)	13.3 (2)	0	6.7 (1)	0	53.3 (8)	33.3 (5)	6.7 (1)	0	6.7 (1)	0
<b>Fluency</b>	6.7 (1)	13.3 (2)	46.7 (7)	20 (3)	13.3 (2)	0	13.3 (2)	46.7 (7)	26.7 (4)	0	13.3 (2)	0	6.7 (1)	6.7 (1)	46.7 (7)	26.7 (4)	13.3 (2)	0
<i>Column Totals</i>	13.3 (4)	30 (9)	33.3 (10)	10 (3)	13.3 (4)	0	30 (9)	40 (12)	20 (6)	0	10 (3)	0	30 (9)	20 (6)	26.7 (8)	13.3 (4)	10 (3)	0

\*The first figure shows %, and the figure in parentheses indicates the frequency of response.

*Abbreviations:* HA stands for Highly Appropriate, SA for Somewhat Appropriate, SI for Somewhat Inappropriate, HI for Highly Inappropriate, NK for ‘I don’t know’, and NR for ‘No Response’.

Table 4 shows teachers’ stated beliefs about the appropriateness of various feedback types in accuracy and fluency contexts. Overall (see the column totals), they perceived recasts to be more appropriate than the other two feedback types. As can be seen, teachers tend to distinguish between appropriateness of feedback types for accuracy and fluency. In accuracy contexts, teachers perceive all three feedback types as appropriate overall, with negotiated feedback and recast perceived to be more appropriate than explicit correction. Furthermore, contrary to explicit correction, both negotiated feedback and recast are perceived to be more ‘Highly Appropriate’ than ‘Somewhat Appropriate’ in accuracy contexts. This might also suggest that negotiated feedback and recast are perceived to be more appropriate than explicit correction in accuracy contexts. Nonetheless, in fluency contexts recast is the only feedback type which is seen as appropriate, with explicit correction and negotiated feedback perceived to be inappropriate. This may be because in fluency contexts explicit correction and negotiated feedback are more likely to slow down the conversation and bring about interruption in the ongoing flow of talk. In contrast with explicit correction and negotiated feedback which are perceived by teachers to be appropriate only in accuracy contexts, recast is perceived to be appropriate in both accuracy and fluency contexts. This may be because recasts are fast, indirect, less time-consuming and less face-threatening. We will treat these issues at greater length in the discussion part.

As shown in the column totals, the proportions of ‘I don’t know’ (NK) are low. This might suggest that the teachers are sensitive to the appropriateness of feedback types and have a higher degree of confidence in assessing the appropriateness of feedback types in different contexts and when asked, they could mark their perceptions without much difficulty.

We now turn to explore teachers’ stated reasons for their assessments of the appropriateness of feedback types in accuracy and fluency contexts. As noted above, in accuracy contexts all three feedback types are perceived to be appropriate overall, with negotiated

feedback and recast perceived to be more appropriate than explicit correction. In contrast, in fluency contexts recast is the only feedback type which is seen as appropriate, with explicit correction and negotiated feedback perceived to be inappropriate. In this part of the analysis, some extracts are given to provide samples of teachers' explanations of (a) high ratings of recasts in both accuracy and fluency contexts, (b) low ratings of explicit correction in fluency contexts, (c) high ratings of negotiated feedback in accuracy contexts, and (d) low ratings of negotiated feedback in fluency contexts.

*(a) High ratings of recasts in both accuracy and fluency contexts*

Providing his reasons for high ratings of recasts in both context types, teacher 3 notes

This type of correction is a proper way of saving time in dealing with students' errors, without making big issues out of them or over-emphasising the correction of errors. (T3, Situation 2)

According to this teacher, saving time is one of the significant criteria for the appropriateness of feedback types in general.

He further comments on high ratings of recasts in fluency contexts by saying that "this way of correction does not take much time and is not much disruptive" (T3, Situation 8). This suggests that, according to teacher 3, causing less disruption to talk is another criterion for the appropriateness of feedback types, particularly in fluency contexts.

Along the same lines and in approving of the appropriateness of recasts in fluency contexts, teacher 4 notes "because it is associated with only shorter disruptions in the student's talk, it could be appropriate" (T4, Situation 2). He further observes

Because the teacher has corrected the error very quickly and immediately after the error, it does not seem to be much harmful for the fluent talk. (T4, Situation 5)

This teacher suggests that quick and short correction causes less harm, that is, less interruption, to the student's talk. Hence, it is suggested that recasts, which have more of these features, be used in fluency contexts.

In spite of the general positive assessment of recasts in all contexts, there are also some comments about the disapproval of recasts in accuracy contexts. For instance, teacher 1 says

Explanation seems to be necessary for developing accuracy. However, it depends on some factors such as the linguistic level of students. Explanation might be necessary for one student but not for another. Overall, we can say that short explanations could be appropriate if they are not boring. (T1, Situation 2)

This view of teacher 1 suggests that recasts are not always perceived to be appropriate ways of dealing with students' erroneous utterances. According to teacher 1, there might be occasions when short and quick strategies of correction are not sufficient, and there is need for providing the students with at least short explanations, particularly in accuracy contexts in which the focus of talk is on correctness of the students' linguistic productions.

*(b) Low ratings of explicit correction in fluency contexts*

Accounting for his low rating of explicit correction in fluency contexts, teacher 4 notes

Frequent interruptions by the teacher to explain how a student should use a particular structure correctly might cause the student to lose thread of what he is saying and might halt the conversation seriously. Hence, in order to enable the student to talk fluently and at normal speed, it is better for us to avoid longer interruptions in the student's talk. (T4, Situation 1)



As can be seen, teacher 4 is acknowledging that longer interruptions to explain a particular linguistic structure might be harmful in the sense that they are likely to slow down or impede the flow of talk.

Although explicit correction is perceived overall to be inappropriate in fluency contexts, it is suggested to be useful if the ongoing flow of talk is threatened by misunderstanding (or non-comprehension) between speakers. For instance, teacher 5 observes “this way of correction is inappropriate for fluency if the meaning is comprehensible” (T5, Situation 1). However, the same teacher perceives explicit correction to be appropriate even in fluency contexts if the communication is threatened by misunderstanding. In another situation, he comments favourably on the use of this feedback type in fluency contexts and says

Along the same lines, teacher 5 says

If the meaning is comprehensible, this way of correction is not appropriate for fluency. (T5, Situation 3)

As with teacher 4, teacher 5 perceives negotiated feedback not to be an appropriate way of dealing with the students' erroneous utterances in fluency contexts, particularly when the communication of meaning is established and the intended message is comprehensible.

It is worth noting that the analysis is not intended to simplistically imply that there is one single answer to any of these questions. As the analysis of the teachers' comments on each of these topics indicates there is a cost for each decision about the appropriateness of feedback types relative to accuracy and fluency contexts. In fact, it appears that these decisions involve some sort of trade-off: the more we get of something, the more we lose of something else. For instance, although explicit correction and negotiated feedback typically deal with the students' erroneous utterances at greater length, there is a possible risk that they may impede communication, particularly in fluency contexts. Likewise, although recasts which are short, quick, and less time-consuming, might be most fitting to the ongoing dynamics of the fluency contexts, there is a possible danger that they might not be so effective in terms of changing the students' production(s) of the target structures. Another point, which is in line with this argument, is that the analysis attempts to highlight the key patterns in both the quantitative and the qualitative data, rather than suggesting a single recipe and a single answer to any of these topics. In other words, these patterns reflect the perceptions of the majority of the respondents rather than reflecting the views of the whole participants. For instance, when we say that 'recasts are perceived to be appropriate by teachers in fluency contexts', we are highlighting the views of the majority of the teachers (that is, 60%). There are still 26.7% of the teachers whose views are not congruent with this pattern, and another 13.3% who do not have any views regarding this topic. All these imply that there is diversity of views among the respondents. As a result, it might be concluded that there could be no one single answer to any of these questions and that a variety of factors might affect teachers' decisions of how to react to students' erroneous utterances in different context types. However, a study of this nature might be useful in terms of

developing our understanding of the factors which might affect teachers' choice and use of different strategies of error correction in different types of context.

### **Comparing teachers' classroom practices with their stated beliefs**

This section deals with the extent to which teachers' stated beliefs about the effectiveness and appropriateness of feedback types match their classroom practices. We explore teachers' stated beliefs in relation to their classroom practices across the group profile and individual teachers. The basis for such a comparison is simply to see the extent to which assessments of effectiveness and appropriateness are reflected in classroom practices, rather than implying that beliefs should necessarily match classroom practices.

It needs to be acknowledged at the outset that frequency of actual use need not correlate with stated beliefs about effectiveness and appropriateness. In other words, perceived as effective or appropriate if needed does not need to reflect frequency of actual use. One can hold that a type of correction is effective or appropriate but not do it because it happens not to be needed. However, exploring teachers' assessments of different types of feedback in relation to their actual performances might enable us to develop a better understanding of feedback types.

Overall profile of teachers' stated beliefs and classroom practices are presented in Table 5. However, it might be necessary to clarify the layout of Table 5 before starting to explore it. Table 5 is analysed in

terms of three variables: effectiveness of feedback types, appropriateness of feedback types in accuracy contexts, and appropriateness of feedback types in fluency contexts. Percentages for stated beliefs are based on the total figure of responses to the rating scale of each particular feedback type. Owing to the roughly identical figures for short-term and long-term effectiveness, signifying that teachers do not make much distinction between these two types, percentages for beliefs in effectiveness variable were calculated in terms of total figures for combination of short-term and long-term effectiveness of each specific feedback type. Percentages for beliefs in appropriateness variable were calculated in terms of total figure of responses in each particular context type. The figures for classroom practices in effectiveness variable reflect the frequencies with which each feedback type has taken place in the classroom data. Percentages for classroom practices in appropriateness variable are in terms of total occurrence of each particular feedback type in each specific context type. It should be noted that the total frequencies of effectiveness variable across each particular feedback type is 30. As each feedback type is explored by 3 examples of error correction in the questionnaire, multiplying 3 by the number of teachers (that is, 5) gives the number of 15. However, the total frequencies of short-term and long-term effectiveness (that is, 15 for each) were conflated, producing the number of 30 which is the result of adding up ST and LT. The total frequencies for each of the contexts, namely, accuracy contexts and fluency contexts, is 15. Having provided a brief account of its layout, let us now look at Table 5 which is presented below.

**Table 5:** Overall profile of teachers' stated beliefs and classroom practices

Feedback Types	Effectiveness					Classroom practices	Appropriateness (Accuracy contexts)					Classroom practices	Appropriateness (Fluency contexts)					Classroom practices
	Stated beliefs						Stated beliefs						Stated beliefs					
	H E	S E	S I	H I	N K		H A	S A	S I	H I	N K		H A	S A	S I	H I	N K	
<b>Explicit Correction</b>	30 (9)	50 (15)	3.3 (1)	0	16.7 (5)	17.6 (132)	20 (3)	46.7 (7)	20 (3)	0	13.3 (2)	21.3 (67)	6.7 (1)	13.3 (2)	46.7 (7)	20 (3)	13.3 (2)	14.9 (65)
<b>Recast</b>	33.3 (10)	33.3 (10)	16.7 (5)	0	16.7 (5)	68.8 (517)	46.7 (7)	33.3 (5)	13.3 (2)	0	6.7 (1)	63.1 (198)	13.3 (2)	46.7 (7)	26.7 (4)	0	13.3 (2)	73.3 (319)
<b>Negotiated Feedback</b>	26.7 (8)	63.3 (19)	0	0	10 (3)	13.7 (103)	53.3 (8)	33.3 (5)	6.7 (1)	0	6.7 (1)	15.6 (49)	6.7 (1)	6.7 (1)	46.7 (7)	26.7 (4)	13.3 (2)	12.4 (54)
<i>Column Totals</i>						100 (752)	<i>Column Totals</i>					100 (314)	<i>Column Totals</i>					100 (438)

\*The first figure shows %, and the figure in parentheses indicates the frequency.

*Abbreviations:* HE stands for Highly Effective, SE for Somewhat Effective, SI for Somewhat Ineffective, NK for 'I don't know', HA for Highly Appropriate, SA for Somewhat Appropriate, SI for Somewhat Inappropriate, HI for Highly Inappropriate.

In analysing Table 5, we start off by comparing teachers' assessments and actual performances across feedback types. Let us

first look at the effectiveness variable. Comparing teachers' stated beliefs and classroom practices in explicit correction and negotiated feedback, we can see that there is a mismatch between what they perceive and what they actually do in these two feedback types. There is an inverse relationship between teachers' stated beliefs and classroom practices in this respect. That is, negotiated feedback and explicit correction with the highest percentages of perceived effectiveness have the lowest percentages of occurrence in actual performance. In contrast, as can be seen, proportion of the actual use of recasts correlate on the whole with the levels of perceived effectiveness, signifying that there is a converging pattern and a higher degree of match in recasts in this respect.

Having looked at the patterns of effectiveness, let us also explore the patterns in the other two variables. According to the figures in the appropriateness of feedback types in accuracy contexts, percentages of explicit correction and negotiated feedback are overall rather different from those of actual performance, signifying that there is a lower degree of convergence between what teachers perceive and what they actually do in this respect. However, as can be seen, on the whole there are rather similar percentages for perceived appropriateness of recasts and teachers' actual performance in accuracy contexts, signifying that there is a rather converging pattern and a higher degree of match in recasts in this respect.

Let us now turn to the comparison of perceived appropriateness and actual performance in fluency contexts. Overall, teachers' stated beliefs match their classroom practices across all feedback types in fluency contexts. That is, the higher the ratings of appropriateness, the higher the frequencies of actual use and vice versa. In negotiated feedback and explicit correction, low ratings match low frequencies of actual use. Nonetheless, in recasts the converging pattern is between high assessments and high frequencies of actual use. These patterns signify that teachers' beliefs correlate overall with their classroom practices across all feedback types in fluency contexts. It might be concluded that teachers tend to take more account of appropriateness than effectiveness in the use of feedback types in their classes.

Comparing teachers' assessments and actual use of feedback types across different variables of effectiveness, appropriateness in accuracy contexts, and appropriateness in fluency contexts indicates a pattern which is common between all variables. The common pattern is that recasts are the only feedback types in which both the assessments and the frequencies of actual use are always high overall. This pattern tends to indicate a pervasive phenomenon independent of other variables such as effectiveness or appropriateness in different contexts. Recasts are the only feedback types which are perceived to be both effective and appropriate irrespective of whether context type is accuracy or fluency. Likewise, they are the only feedback types which are used with high frequencies in both contexts. In contrast, explicit correction and negotiated feedback are the feedback types which are used with low frequencies in both accuracy and fluency contexts, although they are rated high in terms of effectiveness and appropriateness in accuracy contexts.

Differences between feedback types might be due to some specific features in each particular feedback type. As noted before, probably because recasts are fast, indirect, less time-consuming and less face-threatening, teachers assess and use them with high frequencies in all contexts. However, explicit correction and negotiated feedback are used with 'low' frequencies in all contexts, though they are rated 'high' in terms of effectiveness and appropriateness in accuracy contexts. These patterns show that although teachers have favourable perceptions of explicit correction and negotiated feedback in terms of their effectiveness and appropriateness in accuracy contexts, they do not use them much in actual practice. As noted before, it may be because explicit correction and negotiated feedback are more likely to slow down the conversation and bring about interruption in the flow of talk, especially in fluency contexts.

As noted above, Table 5 presents teachers' perceptions in relation to their actual performances across the group profile. A detailed breakdown is given in Table 6 to provide the reader with the data to cross-check the individual teachers and see how the data appears to be individually.

On the whole, although the individual teachers perceive all feedback types to be effective, without any big differences between their assessments of effectiveness, there are larger fluctuations in their actual performances.





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## DISCUSSION

As noted before, the basis of comparing teachers' beliefs with their classroom practices is simply to see the extent to which their perceptions of the effectiveness and appropriateness of feedback types are reflected in their actual performances, rather than implying that teachers' beliefs should necessarily match their classroom practices. Although there might not be a one-to-one correspondence between perceptions and actual performances, the view that teachers' beliefs and practices are fundamentally interrelated is now fairly well established in the literature (e.g., see Breen et al., 2001; Burns, 1992; Schulz 1996, 2001). Inspired by this view, the present study has attempted to explore the links between teachers' beliefs and classroom practices in order to capture some of the relationships between teachers' actual performances in the classroom and the beliefs which motivate such practices. The aim has been to develop a better understanding of feedback types through exploring teachers' actual performances and their stated reasons for their perceptions. It might be difficult to achieve such an objective if we merely investigate teachers' classroom behaviours, without exploring their practices in relation to their personalized theories (Burns, 1992) or stated beliefs motivating their instructional behaviours. As noted by Burns (1992), "the teachers' verbalizations reflect something of the interplay between belief and decision-making constantly operating beneath the surface of more observable classroom language and behaviour" (p.63). Hence, this section attempts to discuss the factors which might affect their decision-making and classroom practices and might account for the matches or mismatches between their perceptions and actual performances.

Exploring teachers' perceptions in relation to their actual performances has indicated that their stated beliefs do not always match what they actually do. This finding is broadly in line with those of other studies. For example, Tse (2000:82) observed that studies in different areas of education have found that what teachers perceive does not always match what they actually do in the classroom. As shown before (see Table 5), exploring the degree of convergence between teachers' assessments and actual use of feedback types across different variables of effectiveness, appropriateness in accuracy contexts, and appropriateness in fluency contexts indicates a pattern which is common between all variables. The common pattern is that recasts are the only feedback types in which both the assessments and the frequencies of actual use are always high overall. This pattern tends to indicate a pervasive phenomenon independent of other variables such as the effectiveness or appropriateness in different

context types. Recasts are the only feedback types which are perceived to be both effective and appropriate irrespective of whether context type is accuracy or fluency. Likewise, they are the only feedback types which are used with high frequencies in both contexts. In contrast, explicit correction and negotiated feedback are the feedback types which are used with low frequencies in both accuracy and fluency contexts, although they are rated high in terms of effectiveness and appropriateness in accuracy contexts.

Differences between feedback types might be due to some specific features in each particular feedback type. As noted earlier, possibly because recasts are fast, indirect, less time-consuming and less face-threatening, they are rated high and used with high frequencies in all context types. However, explicit correction and negotiated feedback are used with 'low' frequencies in all contexts, though they are rated 'high' in terms of the effectiveness and appropriateness in accuracy contexts. These findings suggest that although teachers give a high rating to explicit correction and negotiated feedback in terms of their effectiveness and appropriateness in accuracy contexts, they do not use them much in actual practice. The finding that in fluency contexts explicit correction and negotiated feedback are both rated low and used with their lowest frequencies in actual practice is a further support for the suggestion that in fluency contexts in which focus is on communication of meaning at normal speed, explicit correction and negotiated feedback might not be as appropriate in the teachers' views as recasts which are less likely to bring the ongoing flow of talk to a standstill. When meaning – not the form – is the focus, teachers perceive recasts to be appropriate. As argued earlier, the reason for this may well be that recasts are less disruptive of the flow of communication than explicit correction and negotiated feedback which are the detailed and extensive ways of error treatment and typically slow down the conversation and put the flow of talk on hold while the problem is dealt with (Panova and Lyster, 2002; Walsh, 2002). It should be noted that all types of error correction necessarily involve shift of focus from meaning to form. However, it is the degree of shift which distinguishes feedback types from each other. In other words, feedback types are different in terms of the degree to which they interrupt the flow of communication in meaning-focused contexts. Recasts as dual focus strategies involve a slight shift of focus to form, without losing focus on meaning or seriously damaging the flow of talk. However, in fluency contexts, explicit correction and negotiated feedback typically involve higher degrees of shift of focus to form, interrupting the flow of communication and changing the correction into the main concern of the immediate interaction. Hence, considerations such as brief intervention and less interruption in the

flow of communication might have incited the teachers to use massively higher frequencies of recasts than the other feedback types in all context types, particularly in fluency contexts. These features might increase the practicality and applicability of the recasts, making them easier to be used by teachers, regardless of what the context type is.

An interesting point which needs to be highlighted here is that teachers' beliefs about the effectiveness of feedback types were found not to be congruent with their beliefs about the appropriateness of feedback types in fluency contexts (see Table 5). Negotiated feedback and explicit correction which are more detailed types of feedback and involve more extensive treatment of the errors, were perceived by teachers to be the most effective types of feedback. Recasts which are the shortest and quickest ways of dealing with students' errors were found to be perceived by teachers as the least effective feedback types. In contrast, they perceived only recasts to be appropriate in fluency contexts, whereas they perceived negotiated feedback and explicit correction to be inappropriate in these contexts.

These findings show a dramatic mismatch between teachers' beliefs about the effectiveness of feedback types and their beliefs about the appropriateness of feedback types in fluency contexts. These findings suggest that in fluency contexts the more effective the teachers perceive feedback types to be, the less appropriate they perceive them to be. This situation seems to produce an interesting irony in fluency contexts. Recasts, which are the least effective feedback types according to teachers' assessments, are perceived to be most appropriate in fluency contexts. In contrast, negotiated feedback and explicit correction, which are the most effective feedback types according to teachers' ratings, are perceived to be inappropriate in fluency contexts. This finding suggests that making assessments about the effectiveness or appropriateness of feedback types in fluency contexts is not so straightforward. In fact, there may be a cost for each decision about the effectiveness and appropriateness of feedback types in fluency contexts. As noted before, there is a possible risk that the most highly effective feedback types according to teachers, that is, negotiated feedback and explicit correction, may impede communication and slow down the conversation. Likewise, there is a possible danger that the most appropriate feedback types in fluency contexts, namely, recasts, may not be so effective in terms of changing the students' production(s) of the target structure. Hence, each decision may have a knock-on effect on other decisions. This complexity which arises simply by exploring the role of context types gets even more complicated if we take account of other factors which

might also affect teachers' decisions about the effectiveness and appropriateness of feedback types in fluency contexts. Some other stated reasons such as affective variables and linguistic level of students, might make the picture even more complex, probably signifying why teachers' beliefs do not always match what they actually do.

## CONCLUSION

This study has attempted to indicate that it might be more promising to use self-report data in conjunction with actual performance data to check beliefs against practices, to spot the areas in which teachers' stated beliefs mismatch their practices, and to explore the situational demands, contextual constraints, and practical considerations which might be preventive of teachers' perceptions to be always translated into practices. Based on its findings, the present study tends to suggest that there is a cost to be paid for each decision about the effectiveness and appropriateness of feedback types. For instance, explicit correction and negotiated feedback typically deal with the students' erroneous utterances at greater length and are the most highly effective feedback types according to teachers. However, there is a possible risk that they may impede communication and slow down the conversation, particularly in fluency contexts. Likewise, although recasts which are the most appropriate feedback types in fluency contexts according to teachers because they are short, quick, less time-consuming, and less face-threatening, there is a possible danger that they might not be so effective in terms of changing the students' production(s) of the target structures. In fact, each decision may have a knock-on effect on the other decision, and tends to involve some sort of trade-off: the more we get of something, the more we lose of something else. Based on this argument, it might be concluded that these findings are interesting in terms of developing an understanding of the teachers' use of different types of feedback, although there might be no one single answer or no one single recipe to any of the issues related to error correction. Teachers' on-the-spot decisions of how to deal with the students' non-target-like forms in different context types might depend on a variety of factors interacting at the same time and affecting each other in a number of ways.

#### NOTES

- 1 I have used 'error correction' and 'corrective feedback', and correspondingly 'types of error correction' and 'feedback types' interchangeably in this study.
- 2 'Beliefs' and 'perceptions' have also been used interchangeably in this paper.



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