

### An Investigation of Iranian EFL Teachers and Learners' Preferences in the Selection of Different Types of Direct and Indirect Oral Corrective Feedback

Mohammad Khatib<sup>1\*</sup>, Muhammad Nasser Vaezi<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Associate Professor, Allameh Tabataba'i University

<sup>2</sup> PhD Candidate, Allameh Tabataba'i University

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**Abstract:** This paper aimed at examining the Iranian EFL teachers and learners' preferences for two types of direct oral corrective feedback, including explicit correction and metalinguistic clues, and two types of indirect oral corrective feedback, including recast and repetition. The participants included 39 teachers and 84 EFL learners, selected through purposive sampling. A scenario-based questionnaire was constructed based on Lyster and Ranta's (1997) typology of corrective feedback (CF) for the purpose of collecting data on the teachers and learners' preferences for the type of CF. Feedback scenarios were extracted from the literature on CF. The questionnaire was distributed to the participants by one of the researchers. Semi-structured interviews were also conducted in order to triangulate the data gathered through the questionnaire. The results of the study indicated that the EFL teachers and learners preferred direct CF more than indirect CF. The results also revealed significant differences among EFL teachers with differing levels of teaching experience (i.e., low, moderate and high). The present study drew attention to the fact that direct types of CF were preferred over others in EFL context. This study has implications for EFL teachers, learners, and material developers.

**Keywords:** Corrective Feedback, Explicit Correction, Recast, Metalinguistic Clue, Repetition, Corrective Feedback Literacy.

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\* Corresponding Author.

Authors' Email Address:

<sup>1</sup> Mohammad Khatib (mkhatib27@yahoo.com), <sup>2</sup> Muhammad Nasser Vaezi (nasser.vaezi@atu.ac.ir),

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## **Introduction**

In the last few decades, error correction in language classroom settings has gained considerable attention in second language acquisition (SLA) research. According to Chaudron (1977, p. 31), “any reaction of the teacher which clearly transforms, disapprovingly refers to, or demands improvement of the learner utterance” provides feedback in a corrective way. Lightbown and Spada (1999) defined corrective feedback as “any indication to the learners that their use of the target language is incorrect” (p.171). To their views, such an indication includes various responses that the learners receive from their teacher. Li (2010) has recognized CF in second language classroom as the responses to a learner’s non-target-like L2 production. Moreover, Leeman’s (2007) defined feedback as a reaction to the utterance of the learner.

There have been several studies concerning the role of corrective feedback (CF) in SLA studies (Bitchener, Young, & Cameron, 2005; Burnett, 2002; Ellis, 2009; Ellis, Loewen, & Erlam, 2006; Han, 2002; Leeman, 2007; Li, 2010; Li & Li, 2012; Lightbown & Spada, 1999; Lyster, 1998a, 1998b; Lyster, 2004, Lyster, & Ranta, 1997; Mackey, 2012; Philp, 2003; Rassaei, 2013 a& b , 2015 a & b; Russell & Spada, 2006; Schachter, 1991; Suzuki, 2012, Zhang & Rahimi, 2014). Discussing the increased attention to CF studies, Ellis (2005) stated that the theoretical motivation for this interest lies in the claim that L2 learning (unlike L1 learning) requires negative evidence as well as positive evidence (i.e., learners need to be shown what is NOT correct as well as provided with examples of what IS correct). (pp. 19-20)

According to Diab (2006), CF will be more promising when both teachers and students share common ideas about the use of CF strategies. Moreover, Lyster, Saito, and Sato (2013) called upon the significance of doing research on language learners’ CF preferences. They opined that the knowledge about the learners’ preferences can lead to a more effective error correction on the part of language teachers. All the same, most studies have so far focused on the learners’ preferences for CF on specific language tasks (e.g., grammatical structures) in classroom settings to the neglect of teachers’ preferences for certain strategies for error correction (Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010; Diab, 2006; Halimi, 2008; Nassaji, 2012; Rassaei & Moinzadeh, 2014; Zhang & Rahimi, 2014). Hence, this study aimed to describe and compare the Iranian EFL teachers and learners’ preferences for the use of four types of CF strategy.

## Review of the Related Literature

In the past three decades, error correction has been extensively investigated (Burnett, 2002; Ellis, 2009; Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Philp, 2003). As Li (2010) stated, the growing bulk of research in error correction demands studies into the variables influencing its effectiveness. Some recent meta-analyses (Li, 2010; Lyster & Saito, 2010; Mackey & Goo, 2007; Russell & Spada, 2006) showed the positive role of CF in language teaching and learning. Beigi Rizi and Ketabi (2015) had a close look at six decades of corrective feedback wherein they examined changes in the way CF was viewed and practiced. They also reviewed its evolution through history from 1950s to 2000s in English language teaching. They tried to make researchers and practitioners get acquainted with different views about CF and change their methodological perspectives on CF.

Some studies have been done regarding the perception of different types of CF (e.g., Carpenter, Jeon, Mac Gregor, & Mackey, 2006; Egi, 2010; Kim & Han, 2007; Mackey, 2006; Rassaei, 2013a, 2013b). Following Schmidt's noticing hypothesis, most of these studies put forward noticeability and perception of corrective feedback as an effective factor, suggesting that the explicit types of CF outperform the implicit ones. Some of these studies (e.g., Gass & Lewis, 2007; Mackey, Gass & McDonough, 2000; Mackey, Al-Khalil, Atanassova, Hama, Logan-Terry, & Nakatsukasa, 2007) found that learners generally better understand their teachers' intentions when feedback is explicit. Moreover, several empirical studies demonstrated that more explicit types of corrective feedback (e.g., metalinguistic clues) are more effective than implicit CF types (e.g., recast) in developing a second language (e.g., Carroll & Swain, 1993; Ellis, 2007; Ellis, Loewen, & Erlam, 2006; Lyster, 2004; Sheen, 2007).

However, in comparison to the studies on the role of CF in SLA, and the perception of different types of CF, there has been a few studies on preferences for different CF types with mixed findings (Kaivanpanah, Alavi, & Sepehrinia, 2012; Lee, 2013; Oladejo, 1993; Zhu, 2010). Oladejo (1993) realized that the learners preferred those CFs enjoying the feature of presenting comments, guidance, or clues (e.g., metalinguistic clues) which consequently provided them with the chance of self-correction, or those CF types which pointed them the error especially if the CF provided them with the correct answer. Kaivanpanah et al. (2012) found that learners had strong preferences for metalinguistic clues and recasts. They presumed that such a preference is largely due to the Iranian teachers' authority in their classrooms. In another study by Lee (2013), metalinguistic clues gained a weak preference

since learners considered it beyond their proficiency level. The participants of this study confessed that disagreements about CF may bring about discouragement and embarrassment in language classroom which might affect their conversational practices in future. Although Lee (2013) found strong preferences for explicit or direct feedback, other studies (e.g., Yoshida, 2008; Zhu, 2010) showed the learners' preferences for CF types with self-correction opportunities over the mere provision of correct form of erroneous utterances.

Moreover, recast proved to be the most frequently used CF in language classrooms (Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Lee, 2013; Yoshida, 2010). Some researchers found that recasts were not preferred for such reasons as low degree of noticeability or comprehensibility (Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Mackey et al., 2000). In other words, the preferences were pertinent to learners' level of perception about CF at the time of feedback provision. However, as Yoshida (2010) stated, recasts were preferred strongly by the EFL teachers over other types since they were introduced as easy, short, and implicit, and thus less unapproachable, causing no negative emotions, anxiety, nor embarrassment. The mixed research findings on preferences for CF types and the role of CF in language learning have pushed the researchers to discuss the issue more deeply.

This study aimed to investigate EFL teachers and learners' preferences for different types of CF. Accordingly, for the purpose of this study, a typology for oral corrective feedback (OCF) was needed to recognize different CF types and assess the levels of preferences. Chaudron (1977) presented an inclusive model on the basis of the data collected from his immersion classrooms. Chaudron's (1977) model was an important endeavor in identifying a number of corrective techniques and also a significant step toward exploring the relationship between error types, feedback types, and repairs of the learners. He found that the teachers' most commonly used feedback type was the one in which the learner's utterances are reformulated, and this reformulation is accompanied by several features (e.g., emphasis, reduction, and negation, expansion and unaltered repetition.

Moreover, in a typology presented by Lyster and Ranta (1997), a six-type taxonomy was provided that can be claimed as one of the most influential typologies of CF. Lyster and Ranta (1997) identified and categorized different types of CF as follows: a) explicit correction (viz., The teacher provides the student with the correct form and noticeably shows that what the student had said was incorrect); b) recast (viz., Without directly indicating that the student's utterance was incorrect, the teacher implicitly reformulates all or part of the student's error, or provides the correction); c) elicitation (viz., Teacher directly elicits a

reformulation from student (making the student produce correct form) by asking questions or by pausing to allow the student to complete teacher's utterance, or by asking him/her to reformulate his/her utterance); d) metalinguistic clues (viz., Teacher provides a metalinguistic comment, that is providing comments, information, or questions related to the well-formedness of the student's utterance, without explicitly providing the correct form); e) clarification request (viz., By taking advantages of using some phrases like "Pardon?", "Excuse me?" or "I don't understand," the teacher indicates that the message has not been understood or that the student's utterance has been ill-formed and so a repetition or a reformulation is required); f) repetition (viz., the teacher repeats the student's erroneous utterance, adjusting intonation to highlight the error). For the purpose of this study, Lyster and Ranta's (1997) CF typology was utilized because it has frequently been used in the literature (i.e., Ellis, 2009; Smith, 2004), and it has remained the most credited to the present. Hence, the study was an attempt to answer the following questions:

Are there any statistically significant differences among the low-, moderately-, and high-experienced EFL teachers' preferences for indirect corrective feedback (i.e., recast and repetition) and direct corrective feedback (i.e., metalinguistic clues and explicit correction)?

Are there any differences among Iranian teachers and learners' preferences for indirect corrective feedback (i.e., recast and repetition) and direct corrective feedback (i.e., metalinguistic clues and explicit correction)?

## Method

For the purpose of this mixed-method study, a sequential design (Hashemi & Babaii, 2013) was used. Data was collected both quantitatively and qualitatively to triangulate the data with a confirmation purpose. For the quantitative data collection phase, CF preference questionnaire, and bio-data questionnaire was used. The interview was used to collect the qualitative data.

## Participants

Multilevel sampling design (Hashemi & Babaii, 2013) was used to select the participants of the study. Hence, two samples from different populations (i.e., EFL teachers and learners in private institutes in the capital city of an Iranian province) were selected through purposive sampling. However, because it was impossible to balance the two groups ( $n_{\text{teachers}}=39$ ,  $n_{\text{learners}}=84$ ), it was decided to match the groups in such way that the variances of the groups



were equal (Dörnyei, 2007). Moreover, in order to control the extraneous variable of gender, it was decided to select both subsamples from one gender (i.e., male). The age of EFL teachers ranged from 22 to 25, and the age range of EFL learners was from 16 to 18. In terms of academic degree, all of the participating EFL teachers held a BA in English, and the participants of the second subsample (i.e., EFL learners) were high school students, who were identified as intermediate level learners as measured by the Quick Oxford Placement Test. Furthermore, Persian was the first language of the participants of both subsamples. However, the EFL teachers were heterogamous in terms of the years of experience in teaching English as a foreign language. Following Tajeddin and Khodaverdi (2011), they were therefore assigned into three groups in terms of years of teaching experience, namely, low ( $3 <$  years), moderate (3-5 years), and high ( $5 >$  years).

## **Instruments**

### **CF Preference Questionnaire**

For the purpose of collecting data on the teachers and the learners' overall preferences for the type of CF to give and receive respectively, a 10-point Likert-scale scenario-based questionnaire was constructed based on the CF typology by Lyster and Ranta (1997) (Appendices A and B). Out of the six types of CF, recast, repetition, metalinguistic clues, and explicit correction were selected. Recast as an input-providing CF type and repetition as an output-prompting CF type represented indirect oral corrective feedback (IOCF), while metalinguistic clue as an output-prompting CF type and explicit correction as an input-providing CF type were representative of direct oral corrective feedback (DOCF). Hence, elicitation and clarification request were excluded on a random decision because they characterized the features of metalinguistic clues and explicit correction as output-prompting and input-providing CF types, respectively (Ellis, 2009).

Moreover, it should be noted that a larger Likert scale (i.e., 10-point) will offer more variance than a smaller Likert scale (e.g., 7-point or 5-point Likert scales), higher degree of measurement precision, and better opportunity in detecting changes (Hassan & Ghazali, 2012). The feedback scenarios were extracted from the literature on CF. The scenarios in the questionnaire were similar to situations wherein the EFL teachers and learners might have already faced in their EFL classes. To ensure the content validity of the questionnaire, it was expert-judged by four university professors who had experience in conducting research in CF. The instrument was then revised based on the comments given by the experts. Yet, out of

the six items only four items (recast, repetition, metalinguistic clues, and explicit correction) were taken into consideration for later data analyses, and elicitation and clarification request were excluded because they necessitated the EFL learners' immediate reaction to their teachers' feedback. The participants of both subsamples were required to rate the scenario-based items of the questionnaire based on their preferences, ranging from 0 (*weak preference*) to 9 (*strong preference*). The questionnaire showed acceptable internal consistency reliability ( $\alpha=.83$ ). Moreover, four demographic items were included in the instrument to control gender, age, first language and academic degree of the participant of the study as the intervening variables.

### **Semi-Structured Interview**

In order to confirm the quantitative data, semi-structured interviews were also conducted and audio-taped in order to triangulate the data gathered through the questionnaire. Each interview was conducted in three sessions of fifteen minutes. For the purpose of the qualitative data collection through interview, an interview protocol, containing 4 questions and 4 probes, was developed. 10 out of 84 EFL learners, and 9 out of 39 EFL teachers voluntarily took part in interviews.

### **Procedures**

Initially, a subsample of both EFL teachers and learners were selected through purposive sampling. Then, the teachers were divided into three groups based on their years of teaching experience, labeled as low-experienced (LEG), moderately-experienced (MEG), and highly-experienced (HEG). Afterward, a researcher-made questionnaire was constructed based on the literature on CF. The instrument was distributed to the participating teachers in a one-to-one fashion by one of the researchers since they were not available in one single institute. However, the questionnaire was given to EFL learners collectively in their classes by the same researcher. Finally, the quantitative data collected through questionnaire were subjected to descriptive and inferential statistics, and then the interview data were analyzed and compared with the quantitative data to triangulate and confirm the results.

## Results

### Results for the First Research Question

Table 1 shows the teachers' overall preferences for different types of OCF, regardless of their levels of experience from the best preferred to the least preferred.

**Table 1.** Descriptive Statistics for Teachers' OCF Preferences

Teacher's OCF	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound			
Repetition	high	13	8.23	.926	.257	7.67	8.79	6.00	9.00
	moderate	13	6.92	1.552	.430	5.98	7.86	4.00	9.00
	low	13	5.69	3.010	.835	3.87	7.51	.00	9.00
	Total	39	6.94	2.235	.357	6.22	7.67	.00	9.00
Recast	high	13	6.92	1.320	.366	6.12	7.72	5.00	9.00
	moderate	13	6.30	2.719	.754	4.66	7.95	1.00	9.00
	low	13	5.46	3.125	.866	3.57	7.35	1.00	9.00
	Total	39	6.23	2.517	.403	5.41	7.04	1.00	9.00
Metalinguistic clues	high	13	3.07	1.605	.445	2.10	4.04	.00	6.00
	moderate	13	5.53	1.613	.447	4.56	6.51	3.00	9.00
	low	13	5.69	3.119	.865	3.80	7.57	1.00	9.00
	Total	39	4.76	2.486	.398	3.96	5.57	.00	9.00
Explicit correction	high	13	1.92	1.187	.329	1.20	2.64	.00	4.00
	moderate	13	2.53	2.106	.584	1.26	3.81	.00	8.00
	low	13	3.76	2.773	.769	2.09	5.44	.00	9.00
	Total	39	2.74	2.209	.353	2.02	3.45	.00	9.00

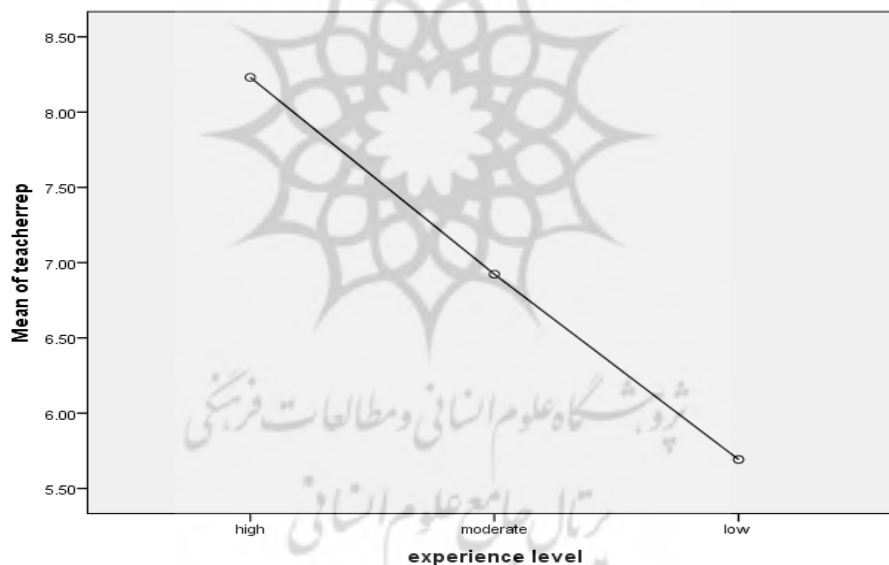
As shown in Table 1, the overall preferences of the Iranian EFL teachers on the types of feedback from the most preferred one to the least were repetition, recast, metalinguistic and explicit feedback, respectively ( $M_{Rep}= 6.94 > M_{Rec}= 6.23 > M_{Met}= 4.76 > M_{Exp}= 2.74$ ). Moreover, according to the results, teachers were more inclined toward repetition and recast than metalinguistic clues and explicit correction. In other words, the teachers preferred IOCF over DOCF. According to Table 2, the results of ANOVA demonstrated that there was a significant difference among three groups of teachers' preference for repetition as an IOCF,  $F(2,36)=5.09, p < .05$ ). Moreover, the results showed that there was a significant difference among the three groups of teachers' preference for metalinguistic clues as a DOCF,  $F(2,36)=5.63, p < .05$ ). However, the results of ANOVA showed no significantly statistical differences among the three groups of teachers' preference for recast and explicit correction (Table 2).



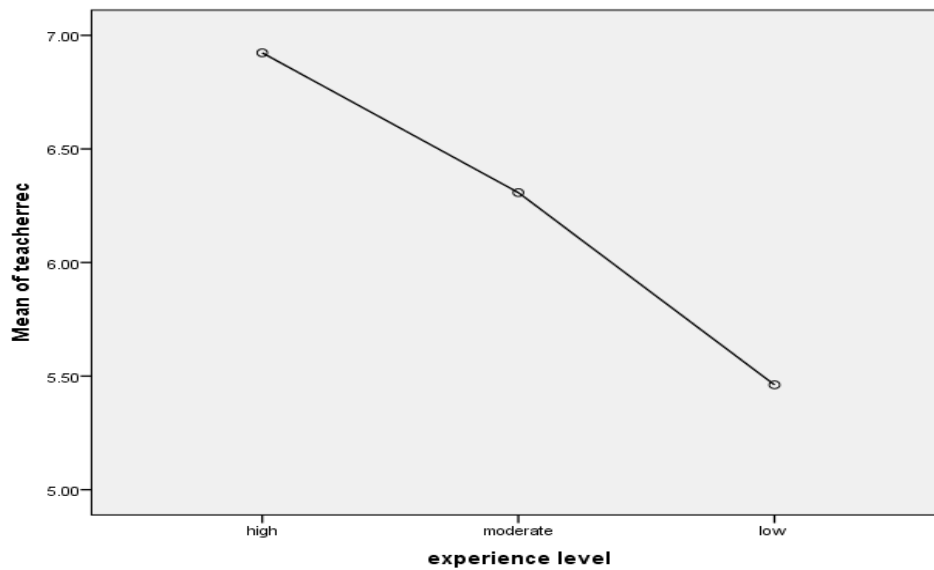
**Table 2.** One-way ANOVA among three groups of teachers' preferences for different types of OCFs

Teacher's OCF		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Repetition	Between Groups	41.89	2	20.94	5.09	<b>.011*</b>
	Within Groups	148.00	36	4.11		
	Total	189.89	38			
Recast	Between Groups	14.00	2	7.00	1.11	.340
	Within Groups	226.92	36	6.30		
	Total	240.92	38			
Metalinguistic clues	Between Groups	56.00	2	28.00	5.63	<b>.007*</b>
	Within Groups	178.92	36	4.97		
	Total	234.92	38			
Explicit correction	Between Groups	22.97	2	11.48	2.54	.092
	Within Groups	162.46	36	4.51		
	Total	185.43	38			

The meanplot for each CF group displays the association of the CF type's preferences and the teachers' levels of experiences.

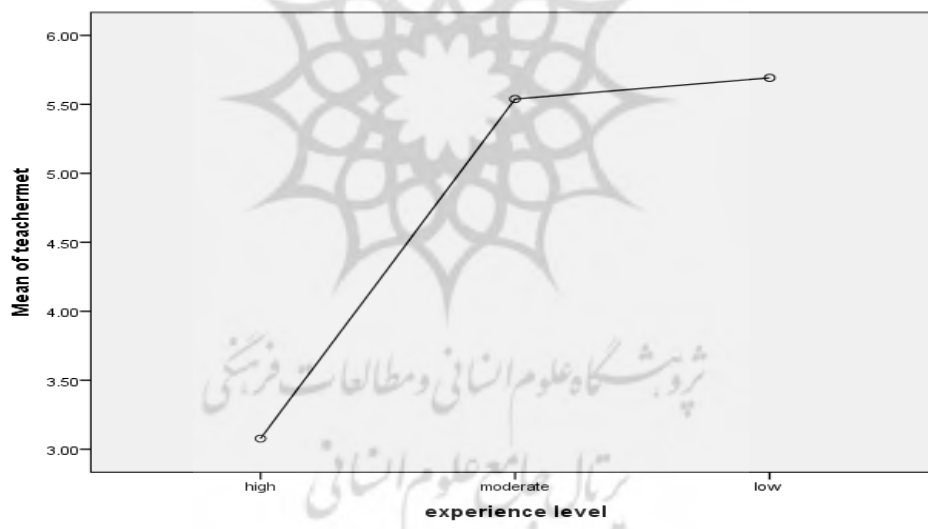
**Figure 1.** Meanplot for repetition

As Figure1 shows, the low-experienced teachers showed the least average score in preferences for repetition, the high-experienced teachers showed the highest average score. The moderately-experienced ones took a rather moderate view of repetition preferences as their average scores suggested that. This suggests that the more experienced a teacher is, the more s/he is interested in repetition as an IOCF.



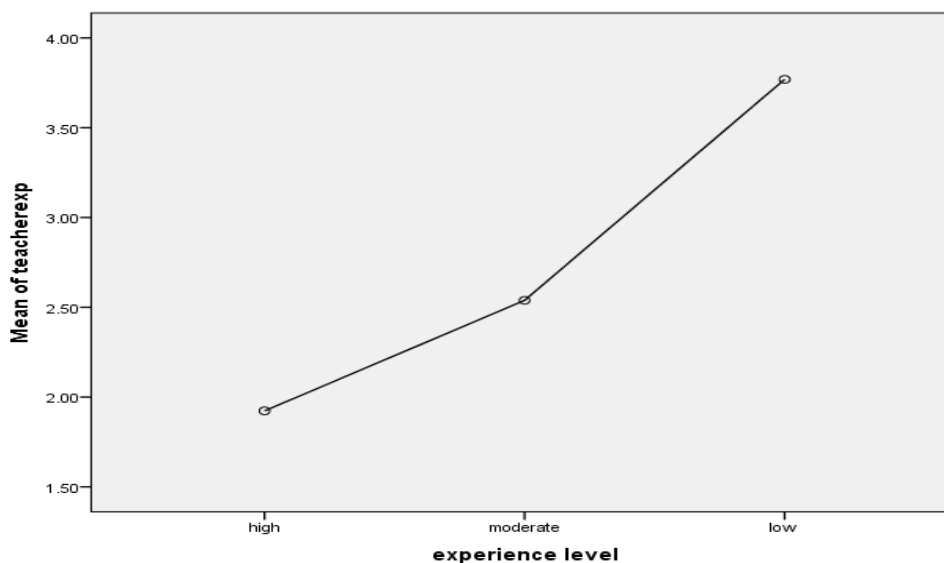
**Figure 2.** Meanplot for recast

Moreover, as shown in Figure 2, the high experienced teachers preferred recasts more than the moderately experienced and low experienced teachers.



**Figure 3.** Meanplot for metalinguistic clues

As Figure 3 suggests, the average preference score for metalinguistic clues was the highest among the low experienced teachers, and the lowest among the high experienced teachers. Meanwhile, the moderately experienced teachers also showed a tendency toward explicit correction, which was notably higher than that of the high experienced teachers but lower than that of the low experienced teachers (Figure 3).



**Figure 4.** Meanplot for Explicit correction

As shown in Figure 4, high experienced teachers had the lowest preference for explicit correction, whereas the low experienced ones showed the highest preference for it. This means that as the level of EFL teaching experience increases among the teachers, the EFL teachers' preference for explicit correction decreases.

Furthermore, the results of qualitative data analysis via interviews with the teachers confirmed the results of the teachers' preferences. The analysis of the three teachers' interviews extracts (Appendix C) showed that all three high experienced teachers preferred or used IOCF while only one of them preferred or used DOCF, too. Even, they preferred IOCF in the first place, and then preferred or used IOCF as well. Therefore, the interview data demonstrated that high experienced teachers preferred IOCF over DOCF, and such a result was in line with the teachers' overall preferences for different types of OCF as shown by the questionnaire data, which showed low preference for DOCF. Moreover, the findings of the interview corresponded with the mean differences of HEG teachers' OCF preferences (Table 1). This demonstrated that the results of both the questionnaire and interview data indicated that IOCF was more preferred.

The moderately experienced teachers' interview data indicated that although they preferred all types of CF regardless of its directness or indirectness, they emphasized IOCF more than DOCF. However, the preference for IOCF was not as strong as the one existing among highly-experienced teachers. The interview data from low-experienced teachers displayed that they preferred the DOCF more, and even almost no preference for IOCF. Such findings were in complete harmony with the mean differences of LEG teachers' preferences

(Table 1). This demonstrates that the results of both the questionnaire and interview indicates that DOCF was more preferred by the teachers from LEG.

Moreover, it was found that all teachers knew about the differences between students' errors and their mistakes; as a result, they had never corrected a student's erroneous utterance for the first time since it could have been a mistake due to stress or fatigue. Thus, they recognized an erroneous utterance as an error it was repeated for the second time.

### Results for the Second Research Question

To answer the second research question, the data from students' preferences for different types of OCF were subjected to descriptive statistics (Table 3).

**Table 3.** Descriptive Statistics for Student's OCF Preferences

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis	Std. Error	Std. Error
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic
totattrecast	23	7.00	33.00	535.00	<b>23.26</b>	6.76366	-1.026	.481	.638	.935
Totattrep	23	6.00	31.00	502.00	<b>21.82</b>	6.36505	-1.030	.481	.734	.935
Totattmeta	23	2.00	33.00	480.00	<b>20.86</b>	7.60565	-.844	.481	.612	.935
Totattexplicit	23	2.00	24.00	271.00	<b>11.78</b>	6.52238	.123	.481	-1.006	.935
Valid N (listwise)	23									

As shown in Table 3, students preferred recast the most, and explicit correction the least ( $M_{Rec} = 23.26 > M_{Rep} = 21.82 > M_{Met} = 20.86 > M_{Exp} = 11.78$ ). Compared to the results from the mean scores of teachers' OCF preferences (Table 1), the same results were true for the students. That is, they preferred IOCF over DOCF. The only difference between the teachers' preference for CF types and that of the students was the order of the OCF types. In other word, the students preferred recast over repetition. Table 4 summarizes the results of the students' interviews obtained from the extracts from the students' interview (Appendix D).

**Table 4.** Summary for the 10 students' interviews

No.	Students (Ss)	IOCF preference		DOCF preference	
		recast	repetition	metalinguistic	explicit
1	S1	*	*		
2	S2	*		*	
3	S3		*	*	
4	S4	*	*		
5	S5	*		*	*
6	S6	*		*	
7	S7	*	*		
8	S8	*			*
9	S9	*	*	*	
10	S10	*	*		

As displayed in Table 4, IOCF was more frequently preferred by the interviewees ( $n=15/22$ ), than DOCF ( $n=7/22$ ). Moreover, according to the results of the interview data, the most preferred was recast, and explicit correction was the least preferred ( $n_{\text{recast}(\text{IOCF})}=9 > n_{\text{rep}(\text{IOCF})}=6 > n_{\text{met}(\text{DOCF})}=5 > n_{\text{exp}(\text{DOCF})}=2$ ).

As it can be seen, the analysis of the students' interview showed that IOCF was more preferred than DOCF by the students, and this was in line with the teachers' preferences in the interviews. Moreover, the mean differences of student's overall OCF preferences showed the same results as compared to the teachers' overall OCF preferences, that is, IOCF showed to be more preferred than DOCF.

## Discussion

The present study explored Iranian EFL teachers and learners' preferences for four types of CF (i.e., recasts and repetition as IOCF, and metalinguistic clues and explicit correction as DOCF). The participating EFL teachers and learners' preference for CF types were tapped on using a research-made questionnaire based on Lyster and Ranta's (1997) CF typology. Moreover, semi-structured interview was used to triangulate the data with a confirmation purpose (Hashemi & Babaii, 2013).

Concerning the first research question, the results of ANOVA showed that teaching experience may play a key role in determining the choice of CF type which EFL teachers prefer. Accordingly, the choice of CF strategies based on directness/indirectness dichotomy (Ellis, 2009) is influenced by EFL teachers' teaching experience level. Based on the means plots of EFL teachers' preferences, it can be argued that the more experience EFL teachers gain, the less they prefer explicit or direct CF types. This finding contradicts with those studies which called for direct CF types (e.g., Carroll & Swain, 1993; Ellis, 2007; Ellis, Loewen, & Erlam, 2006; Lyster, 2004; Sheen, 2007). The results of the quantitative and qualitative data analyses suggest that implicit types of CF are preferred over the explicit ones, a finding which was true about both EFL teachers and learners.

As to the second research question, the results revealed that Iranian EFL teachers and learners preferred IOCF (i.e., repetition and recasts) over DOCF (i.e., metalinguistic clues and explicit correction). This result is in contrast with the studies reviewed earlier, which argued for the higher efficacy of the explicit types of feedback in language instruction (e.g., Carroll & Swain, 1993; Ellis, 2007; Ellis, Loewen, & Erlam, 2006; Lyster, 2004; Sheen, 2007). This finding may be due to the nonthreatening nature of IOCF, which is



psychologically counted as a passive error correction strategy (Yoshida, 2010). Hence, the experienced teachers preferred this CF type more as compared to the less experienced teachers. This finding can also justify EFL learners' higher preferences for IOCF, who may have felt more secure and unstressed when receiving CF in its indirect form. Although this finding is in line with Diab's (2006) opinion that both teachers and students should share common ideas regarding CF strategies if more promising results expected, this preference for IOCF might negatively affect L2 development in Iranian EFL learners because there are numerous studies emphasizing the explicit OCF types (e.g., Gass & Lewis, 2007; Mackey, Gass & McDonough, 2000; Mackey, Al-Khalil, Atanassova, Hama, Logan-Terry, & Nakatsukasa, 2007).

At the same time, while previous studies (e.g., Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Lee, 2013; Yoshida, 2010) have shown that recasts are the most frequently used type of IOCF, the results of this study disclosed that there was a mismatch between EFL teachers and learners' preference the two types of IOCF as the former group preferred repetition over recast and the latter group preferred recasts over repetition. This finding may be justified on the ground that the EFL teachers, especially the high-experienced ones, think of repetition as output-prompting (Ellis, 2009) because it provides learners with more chances to self-correct themselves. Moreover, the teachers preferred not to provide their learners with correct forms since repetition is a non-provisional (Ellis, 2009) type of feedback. Moreover, the EFL learners' preference for input-providing IOCF may be due to both psychological reasons such as security (Yoshida, 2010), if not linguistic reasons.

Future studies can be conducted with a larger sample of EFL learners at other levels of English proficiency or from high school or university settings. Moreover, further studies can be done to investigate the EFL teachers and learners' preferences for elicitation and clarification request as other output-prompting and input-providing CF types. Moreover, future studies should investigate the effect of other factors that may influence EFL teachers and learners' CF preferences, such as psychological and linguistics factors. Furthermore, replication of this study will help the generalizability of the findings. It is also suggested that future studies investigate EFL teachers and learners' preferences in the context of experimental studies.

### **Conclusions and Implications**

This study aimed at exploring Iranian EFL teachers and learners' preferences for OCF and the differences among OCF preferences of EFL teachers with differing levels of teaching

experience. Based on the quantitative and qualitative results, it can be concluded that IOCF types are preferred over DOCF by both Iranian EFL teachers and learners. Based on the results, this conclusion can be drawn that the EFL teachers' preference for IOCF results from the level of their teaching experience and the non-threatening nature of IOCF. According to the results, it can also be concluded that EFL teachers and learners' preferences for OCF types are more bound to indirectness of the OCF. Based on the results of both quantitative and qualitative data, a final conclusion may be drawn that there is a match between the EFL teachers and learners' preferences for IOCF.

The findings of this study may have implications for various groups. In the light of insights from the results of the recent studies, OCF has turned to an important constituent of foreign language instruction. Moreover, students errors are not viewed failures but as mediums that contribute to second language acquisition. The results of this study may provide EFL teachers with the evidence that the more experienced the EFL teachers are, the less mismatch exists between their preferences for CF and those of their learners. Hence, language teachers must take their learners' expectations and preferences into consideration and take advantages of them in their classes. This study offers insights to assist students to clarify their misconceptions about their teacher's CF strategies, and to decrease the mismatch between their teachers' CF strategies and their expectations. In the long run, this will lead to more efficient language development on the part of EFL learners. This study may also persuade material developers to include OCF instructions in their teacher manuals. Regarding the potentials of the OCF discussed in this study, textbook writers are recommended to prepare the instructional guides in accordance with the preferences and the teaching experience level of EFL teachers.

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**Appendix A**

Dear colleague!

This scenario-based questionnaire is designed to help us gain a better understanding of the preferences of the EFL teachers regarding different types of corrective feedback in their language school activities. Please indicate **Your** opinion about each of the statements below. Your answers are confidential. Many Thanks!

Name: .....

Gender:  Male  Female

Age: .....

Academic degree: .....

First language: .....

Years of teaching experience: .....

**Feedback Scenarios:**

**Instruction: Please read each scenario which is similar to what you usually face in your classes. Please rate each of them according to your preferences of using them in your own class.**

**1) Elicitation**

Learner: I'll come if it will not rain.

Teacher: I'll come if it..?

<b>0</b>		<b>1</b>		<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>I do not prefer it</b>		<b>I prefer it least</b>									<b>I prefer it best</b>

**2) Recast**

L: I went there two times.

T: You've been there twice?

<b>0</b>		<b>1</b>		<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>I do not prefer it</b>		<b>I prefer it least</b>									<b>I prefer it best</b>

**3) Metalinguistic feedback**

L: He like hot dogs.

T: Third person singular... remember... add's'...

L: He likes hot dogs.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
I do not prefer it	I prefer it least								I prefer it best

**4) Explicit correction**

L: On May.

T: Not on May, In May. We say, "It will start in May."

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
I do not prefer it	I prefer it least								I prefer it best

**5) Repetition**

L: I will showed you.

T: I will SHOWED you (?)...

L: I will show you.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
I do not prefer it	I prefer it least								I prefer it best

**6) Clarification request**

L: What do you spend with your wife?

T: What?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
I do not prefer it	I prefer it least								I prefer it best

## Appendix B

Dear student!

This scenario-based questionnaire is designed to help us gain a better understanding of the preferences of the EFL students regarding different types of corrective feedback which are given to them by their teachers in language school activities. Please indicate **Your** opinion about each of the statements below. Your answers are confidential. Many Thanks!

Name: .....

Gender:  Male  Female

Age: .....

Academic degree: .....

First language: .....

**Instruction: Please read each scenario which is similar to what you may face in EFL classes. Please rate each of them according to your preferences. In other word, which one do you like most to be used by your teacher when you make an error and which one do you like least. Please signify your score for each type below in the chart.**

### 1) Elicitation

Learner: I'll come if it will not rain.

Teacher: I'll come if it..?

<b>0</b>		<b>1</b>		<b>2</b>		<b>3</b>		<b>4</b>		<b>5</b>		<b>6</b>		<b>7</b>		<b>8</b>		<b>9</b>
I do not prefer it		I prefer it least																I prefer it best

### 2) Recast

L: I went there two times.

T: You've been there twice?

<b>0</b>		<b>1</b>		<b>2</b>		<b>3</b>		<b>4</b>		<b>5</b>		<b>6</b>		<b>7</b>		<b>8</b>		<b>9</b>
I do not prefer it		I prefer it least																I prefer it best

**3) Metalinguistic feedback**

L: He like hot dogs.

T: Third person singular... remember... add's'...

L: He likes hot dogs.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
I do not prefer it	I prefer it least								I prefer it best

**4) Explicit correction**

L: On May.

T: Not on May, In May. We say, "It will start in May."

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
I do not prefer it	I prefer it least								I prefer it best

**5) Repetition**

L: I will showed you.

T: I will SHOWED you (?)...

L: I will show you.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
I do not prefer it	I prefer it least								I prefer it best

**6) Clarification request**

L: What do you spend with your wife?

T: What?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
I do not prefer it	I prefer it least								I prefer it best



## Appendix C

### Extracts from teachers' interviews (N=9)

#### High experienced group (HEG):

T1: "I would like to avoid any sort of error correction as far as it is possible. But since you mention which one do I choose, I should say that the ones which are indirect, especially repetition, since I suppose there is a more emphasis on the learner's error, and for it implicitly indicates the error, it does not create interruption or nervousness on the way of communication, and I think at the same time it gives him/her the opportunity to correct himself or herself. Also, I like recast strategy and try to use it more than other corrective feedback strategies, if I use any".

T2: "I did not know about some of the correction feedback you said, but I personally like to do repetition in my classes, yet I also think that in my classes, sometimes I give explicit correction".

T3: "I certainly correct my students' errors, but it depends. When students make a grammatical error which is a very important one, and it may turn to a bad habit structure in their minds, I give them some feedback. When it is not very important or it happens during their speech, so that if I correct them they get nervous or forget what to say, I ignore their errors. About the type of corrective feedback, I usually use repetition, and I like it more cause it is a soft way of correcting error. It depends. Sometimes the student make an error that can be ignored, but sometimes I see that for example an error that is not tolerable or ignorable and harms the communication. Personally, I like to use repetition and recast. I like them because I think they are positive and don't make the learners nervous, nor do they interrupt the flow of communication".

#### Moderately experienced group (MEG):

T4: "I think as teachers, we should give opportunity to students to correct themselves. So I try not to give explicit correction because a teacher should not always spoon-feed the students. I love and use recast and repetition most of the time, but I also love and use metalinguistic clue because I think sometimes it really helps since it provides the input for the students, but I use it less since I believe it may block students' thinking and creativity and they do not trouble themselves to think about their errors if they are guided directly toward the correct form".

T5: "I myself try to practice all of them. It will be very difficult, but one can easily get used to it and it will be fun. In my opinion, all types of feedback whether direct or indirect help learning and each has its own advantages. But I love repetition more. Of course, in some situations I don't care if students make errors if for me fluency or communication is more important than accuracy, and I let the student talk without interrupting him".

T6: "In fact, I might have used some of these corrective feedbacks, but I just learned about them, and I had not focused on their possible importance. Anyway, answering your question, I should say, now that I see them, I think all of them are nice, and I think if I use all of them, my class will be more active, and students don't get bored".

**Low experienced group (LEG):**

T7: "I do correction. And I always give the correct form [explicit correction]. I am sure that most of the time, the students can't correct themselves, and they need a guide. I think we should not let the students make an error and if they did we must immediately correct them. They should learn to avoid making errors. Actually, I think other types are not interesting".

T8: I often correct my students' errors. I use mostly explicit correction, and try to force them learn the correct form on the spot and from the very beginning. I also believe that giving the true structure or rule is the most important thing in a class. If they know the correct structure or the rule, they do less number of errors. So, I utilize metalinguistic clue to emphasize on the rule or structure and to force them learn to memorize the rule. This is also good because the student will have the chance to correct himself. I seldom use recast, and I don't think I have ever used repetition, or I don't remember if I have used any.

T9: I had no idea of such a classification of error correction, and it is very interesting for me. I think I like explicit correction because it directly makes the students aware of his/her errors, and it helps the student on the spot to understand correct form. Metalinguistic clues seems to be also preferable, because it derives students directly to the grammar rule they have forgotten, and increase their accuracy.

**Summary for different groups of teachers' interview****H.E.G.**

T1: repetition+ recast (2 IOCF)

T2: repetition+ explicit correction (1 IOCF+ 1 DOCF)

T3: repetition+ recast (2 IOCF)

**M.E.G.**

T4: recast+ metalinguistic clue + repetition (2 IOCF+ 1 DOCF)

T5: All types of OCF: But repetition more than others+ sometimes no correction for fluency (IOCF [stressed] +DOCF+ no OCF)

T6: All types of OCF can be helpful (IOCF+DOCF)

**L.E.G.**

T7: explicit correction only (or immediate correction) (1 DOCF)

T8: metalinguistic clue+ explicit correction (2 DOCF)

T9: explicit correction+ metalinguistic (2 DOCF)

## Appendix D

### Extracts from students' interviews (N=5)

Student1: "I prefer recast more because it makes me understand my errors and give me the correct form so I try to memorize true form. I also like repetition, because it gives me chance for correcting myself. But it is a bit frustrating, so I like recast more".

Student 2: "Recast was an interesting way of correction for me. I liked it. Some teachers I remember used metalinguistic clues. I think that one is interesting, too".

Student 3: "I don't know why I don't like explicit correction, but I like metalinguistic and repetition. About, recast may be I am not so clever. I may not pay attention to the correct form the teacher provides, or it is possible that I don't understand my error".

Student 4: "All of them are interesting, but I think recast is the best. I think it is [a] very good way and it is polite. Repetition can also be good and more polite than metalinguistic and explicit feedback. So, I like and prefer recast and repetition more".

Student 5: "I like teacher immediately correct me. I like metalinguistic and explicit correction because I think I can immediately understand about my error, but if I have to choose another one I think recast is better than repetition because the teacher again tries to give me the correct form of my error".

### Summary of interviews with students (N=10)

A: recast+ repetition

B: recast+ metalinguistic clue

C: metalinguistic + repetition

D: recast+ repetition

E: metalinguistic+ explicit correction+ recast

F: recast+ metalinguistic

G: repetition+ recast

H: explicit correction+ recast

I: repetition+ recast+ metalinguistic

J: recast+ repetition

Total: 10 Students:

Out of 22 OCF: Rec: 9 (IOCF) rep: 6 (IOCF) met: 5 (DOCF) exp: 2 (DOCF)