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Research Paper

Corrective Feedback Types Opted for by EFL Teachers in Face-to-Face and Online Classes: A Comparative Study across Levels of Proficiency

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Abstract

The current study aimed to investigate EFL teachers' use of different corrective feedback types in face-to-face and online classes across levels of proficiency, as well as their perceptions of the use of corrective feedback (CF) in their classrooms. To this end, six teachers (three face-to-face and three online) from two language schools were selected as the participants based on convenience sampling. It's worth noting that in terms of design, the current investigation qualifies as a case study. In an attempt to triangulate data collection, both observation and interview were used as the instruments for data collection. In so doing, each teacher's class was observed for two sessions, and the interaction between learners and each teacher was audio-recorded. Furthermore, structured interviews were conducted with the participants following observations. The study was guided by Lyster and Ranta's (1997) and Sheen's (2011) framework for CF types. As the findings revealed, recast was the most commonly used CF type in elementary and intermediate levels in both classroom modes, as well as the advanced face-to-face class, with the only exception being the advanced online class in which elicitation featured as the most preferred feedback type. Furthermore, the results of the interview data revealed that all teachers had positive perceptions of using CF in EFL classrooms. The findings offer some fruitful implications for EFL teachers who are engaged with face-to-face or online modes of instruction, particularly as they highlight the importance of offering more explicit CF types to bring about more noticing and uptake.

Keywords: Corrective feedback, EFL Teachers, Face-to-face Classes, Online Classes, Proficiency Levels

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Today, English has gained a lot of attention in different parts of the globe due to its international status as a lingua franca. Owing to its importance, it has been incorporated into educational systems in peripheral communities. EFL learners from such communities are believed to have a hard time dealing with different language-related issues, partly due to the fact that they do not get to use English in the community as they already have access to another language to communicate with their interlocutors (Kabir, 2012; Rydahl, 2006). As for addressing the problem in such communities, it can be stated that there are many techniques at work; however, corrective feedback (CF) has been found to be a highly influential technique in dealing with learners' language-related problems in EFL contexts. For this reason, EFL teachers are expected to provide the learners with the proper types of CF to help them overcome their learning difficulties so that they will be more enthusiastic about moving forward in their learning journey. As such, CF will be a striking tool in terms of helping the learners realize how to use grammatical and lexical items properly and providing them with enough information to use in a native-like manner (Gitsaki & Althobaiti, 2010).

In broad terms, feedback refers to information provided to improve performance and align with learning goals (Muste, 2020). As for the nature of CF itself, there have been many definitions in the literature. According to Wang (2023), CF refers to responding to errors made by learners in their production. Lyster and Ranta (1997) define CF as negative or positive evidence that teachers on learners' erroneous utterances provide. Ellis (2009a) states that CF is a kind of negative feedback. According to him, teachers could react to their learners' errors in different ways. For example, they could simply point out that an error has been made, provide the correct form by themselves, give metalinguistic explanations about the error, or combine all the ways mentioned. Therefore, based on the definitions mentioned above, it can be realized that CF should be considered highly crucial in EFL settings because in learning a new language, every learner is likely to make errors, and if they are not provided with CF, the process of learning will be hindered, leading to the continuous use of erroneous utterances (Aziz & Jayaputri, 2023).

Although CF is important, and its different definitions revolve around the same issue, there have been contentious attitudes toward its use in EFL classrooms. Behavioristic approaches consider learners' errors to be impediments to the process of learning, which

need to be corrected immediately by the teachers. However, naturalistic approaches to teaching lowered the status of behavioristic perspectives and devalued teaching grammar and providing learners with CF on their erroneous utterances (Russell, 2009). With the advent of the communicative approach, a balance between behavioristic and cognitive models was made, and error correction was considered a sign of learners' interlanguage development, not a lack of linguistic knowledge (Rezaei et al. 2011). Teachers did not correct learners' errors and avoided interrupting their flow of production in favor of fluency (Rezaei et al., 2011). In the 1990s, scholars stated that error correction played a key role in language acquisition if it focused on form (Ellis, 1993; Long, 1996; Schmidt, 1995). Long (1996), in his interaction hypothesis, expressed that CF, which arises from the negotiation of meaning, has a significant role in SLA. In humanistic methods, CF should be offered in a non-judgmental way to promote learners' positive self-image of themselves. In contrast, in skill learning theory, learners need to be corrected so they can learn how well they are doing (Ur, 1996). In the post-method era, although the necessity of offering CF is acknowledged, its potential damage to learners' affective domains is taken into account as well (Ellis & Sheen, 2011).

Though there have been some fuzzy perspectives towards CF, numerous scholars worldwide have looked on its bright side and conducted illuminating empirical studies (e.g., Ahangari & Amirzadeh, 2011; Demir & Özmen, 2017; Fakzali, 2018; Gholami, 2024; Irfani, 2023;

Javan Amani et al. 2024; Naderi Farsani et al. 2023; Naderi Farsani et al. 2024; Nurchalis et al., 2024; Öztürk, 2016; Phuong & Huan, 2018; Pratiwi et al., 2023; Rahman & Singh, 2023; Sawaludding & Tajuddin, 2017; Tran & Nguyen, 2020; Zhang & Zhang, 2023). However, Lyster and Ranta (1997) revealed that a series of empirical studies were mainly aimed at answering the questions posed by Hendrickson (1978) on CF, offered by teachers or peers to help them acquire the linguistic features of the target language. Other studies looked further at error types and techniques that teachers or peers scaffolded toward the appointed learners.

Concerning the points mentioned above, a plethora of studies have investigated CF in the literature. However, to date, no investigations, to the best of the current researchers' knowledge, have taken into consideration the comparison of face-to-face and online

classes in terms of what CF types are offered by EFL teachers across levels of proficiency. Therefore, the problem was investigated from a new and different perspective to shed more light on it. That is, it was aimed at EFL teachers' use of different CF types in two classroom modes (face-to-face and online) across levels of proficiency. Furthermore, in order to cater to triangulation, the study also investigated their perceptions regarding CF in EFL classes.

Review of the Literature

This section explores theoretical issues and empirical studies on CF based on pertinent literature. CF is founded on a number of seminal theoretical frameworks in SLA, the first one being Swains' (1995) output hypothesis, where she claimed that correction in the classroom discourse is a pedagogical tool that enhances the metalinguistic knowledge of learners and that learners can revise their output with the help of CF received through interaction, and this is a crucial part of the learning process (Swain, 2005).

Alternatively, as Long (1996) avers, CF, which arises from the negotiation of meaning, has a significant role in SLA. Communication breakdown in conversation requires modification on the part of L2 learners or their interlocutors, which leads to a higher level of proficiency (Bower & Kawaguchi, 2011). According to De Bot (1996), motivating learners to retrieve target language forms is more essential than getting them exposed to the form through input. Last but not least is Schmidt's noticing hypothesis. Schmidt (1990) maintains that it is important for adult learners to notice the linguistic forms. His assertion is based on his own experience of learning Portuguese and the analysis of his own language development with a native-speaker researcher (Schmidt & Frota, 1986). Therefore, Schmidt (1995) claims that in adults' L2 learning, CF has a crucial role in promoting 'noticing.'

Before anything else, it is worth mentioning that the word feedback came into existence in education through an author of developmental psychology, Elizabeth Hurlock, in 1925. She investigated how praise as positive feedback and reproof as negative feedback could impact mathematics students. Ever since, many researchers have opted for the term as a guiding principle in their studies.

A brief glance through the literature on CF reveals that the studies have mainly fallen within three major strands of research, with the first strand striving to investigate different CF types and their efficacy, the second probing the perceptions of different educational stakeholders, including teachers and learners, concerning the effectiveness of different CF types, and the third comparing face-to-face and online modes of feedback. Thus, in what follows, these three strands are dealt with under separate subheadings.

Studies on Different CF Types

As regards the first strand of research referred to above, different researchers, to date, have sought to gauge the efficacy of different CF types. One of the seminal studies on CF types was conducted by Lyster and Ranta (1997). In their leading research, they were concerned with pinpointing the most prominent CF types and their distribution in relation to learners' uptake. To this end, they observed six French immersion classes and found that recast was the most frequently used CF type in the classes. However, it was the least effective type of CF that led to uptake. They reported that it was because learners thought their teacher focused on the content, not the linguistic form. On the other hand, elicitation was the most successful CF type that led to uptake. In another study, Ahangari and Amirzadeh (2011) sought to investigate how teachers tend to offer CF in Iranian EFL classes across different levels of proficiency. They found that nine CF types were used in the classes. Surprisingly enough, recast was the most commonly used CF type at all levels of proficiency (i.e., elementary, intermediate, and advanced). However, the percentage of using recast was reduced as learners became more advanced, so the teachers tended to offer other self-correction techniques. Likewise, Demir and Özmen (2017), in their observational study, aimed to investigate native and non-native EFL teachers' use of CF types as well as the cross-cultural factors that influenced their use of such error correction types. They found that recast was the most frequently used CF type by both native and non-native teachers. However, it was also found that their use of CF types differed in terms of tolerance of error correction, preferred CF types, the amount of CF, and different types of CF offered for different errors. Furthermore, the results of their follow-up interviews indicated that there were some similar and different positions among them regarding different dimensions of corrective feedback.

In a later probe, Fakzali (2018) explored the use of different types of CF, error types, and their rate of uptake following the provided CF. In this case study, it was found that recast and grammatical errors were observed the most. Surprisingly enough, it was also found that all types of CF led to successful uptake. In the same year, Phuong and Huan (2018) investigated different CF types used by EFL teachers to deal with errors in learners' speaking and their rate of uptake. The results indicated that recast was the most frequently used CF type. Furthermore, it was found that the clarification request was the most successful one, and it led to a 100% uptake. In another study, Simhony and Chanyoo (2018) investigated the use of CF types by EFL teachers in international and EFL classes. The results revealed that teachers used six types of CF. In the international class, metalinguistic feedback was used the most, while in the EFL class, recast was the most frequently used one. Furthermore, in the interview data, although the teachers used different CF types, they were unaware of the definition of CF. Also concerned with identifying the most prominent CF types, Pratiwi et al. (2023) investigated corrective feedback strategies used by an English teacher in an Indonesian high school. The teacher used four different types of CF, namely elicitation, recast, explicit correction, and clarification request. According to the findings of both virtual and in-person observations and the teacher's interview, clarification request was used the least frequently (2%), while explicit correction was utilized the most frequently (52%).

The researchers' interest in pinpointing the diverse CF types utilized in varied learning contexts has continued to the present day, and traces of this interest can be found in the works of Nurchalis et al. (2024) and Gholami (2024). Nurchalis et al. investigated two pre-service EFL teachers' use of CF. The results of their observation revealed that the teachers used different CF types. One of the teachers used diversified CF strategies, whereas the other made use of limited types. Nevertheless, they both used elicitation most frequently. On the other hand, Gholami examined the relationships among formulaic versus non-formulaic errors, CF types, uptake, and the successful uptake rate in advanced EFL classes. It was found that formulaic errors were made more than non-formulaic ones, although the latter significantly received CF more. Formulaic errors were mostly corrected through recast, while non-formulaic errors were typically treated through elicitation. The uptake and successful uptake rates were significantly higher when CF was

offered for formulaic errors than non-formulaic ones. Furthermore, based on the formulaic and non-formulaic foci of erroneous utterances and types of CF, the rate of uptake and successful uptake were found to be variable.

Based on the available literature on the use of different CF types and their efficacy, some of which were reported in this section, it can be concluded that recast features as the most frequently utilized CF strategy. In the next section, the authors turn to the second major line of research on CF, i.e., perceptions regarding the use of CF.

Perceptions regarding the Use of CF

As regards the second primary avenue of research within CF, i.e. the realm of perceptions, a few studies have been conducted, two of which are briefed in this section. As a case in point, Alkhammash and Gulnaz (2019) investigated EFL teachers' beliefs and actual practices regarding the use of CF types and their effectiveness. Concerning their beliefs about CF, the statement "a teacher should correct learners' spoken errors or get them corrected by their peers" was chosen the most. As for their actual use of CF types, it was found that elicitation was the most frequently used one. In a similar manner, Tran and Nguyen (2020) investigated college professors' perceptions of different CF types offered to learners' errors. They found that college professors had positive perceptions of CF in general. However, some of them were of the opinion that when it comes to being concerned with learners' uptake following CF, error correction should be optional. Furthermore, it was found that elicitation was regarded as the most preferred type of CF. Based on the findings of both these studies, teachers are found to reveal a proclivity toward using the elicitation technique as the most preferred CF type.

Perceptions regarding the Use of CF

Finally, as to the last research domain concerning CF, a number of researchers have opted to compare the CF behavior of teachers in face-to-face and online settings. As an instance in this regard, Ferdian and Purnawan (2020) tapped into the perceptions and preferences of 50 college students enrolled in an ESP course. To implement the investigation, they used questionnaires and focus group discussions as the main means of data collection. The findings of their study pointed toward a greater amount of penchant

on the part of students for face-to-face rather than online feedback. In another probe more pertinent to the focus of the current study, Rayeji and Tabandeh (2023) strove to address the differential effects of screencast and face-to-face CF on EFL learners' oral proficiency enhancement. To conduct the study, 70 Iranian upper-intermediate EFL learners from a private institute context were selected and assigned to three groups (two experimental and one control). Their findings indicated that though both experimental groups outperformed the control group in terms of oral proficiency betterment, the screencast group had a comparatively better performance than the other two groups on immediate and delayed posttests.

The review of literature presented in this section helps reveal the dearth of research on the effects of online feedback; moreover, the lack of comparative studies regarding the alternative effects of online and face-to-face feedback is another issue that necessitates further research in this area. More importantly, the disparate modes of corrective feedback provision across various proficiency levels is another underresearched domain that is in need of scrutiny. Therefore, informed by the afore-said gaps in the literature and in accordance with the research objectives, the following research questions were formulated:

1) What types of CF are used by EFL teachers in face-to-face classes across levels of proficiency?
2) How frequently are CF types used by EFL teachers in face-to-face classes across levels of proficiency?
3) What types of CF are used by EFL teachers in online classes across levels of proficiency?
4) How frequently are CF types used by EFL teachers in online classes across levels of proficiency?
5) Is there a significant difference between the frequency of different CF types used in face-to-face and online classes?
6) What are EFL teachers' perceptions of CF in face-to-face and online classes?

Method

Design and Setting

In order to investigate EFL teachers' use of CF types in face-to-face and online classes across levels of proficiency and their perceptions of CF, the researchers decided to opt for a case study. The study was conducted in three face-to-face and three online classes at a reputed language institute. This language institute offers several foreign language courses, especially English, for different age groups. At this institute, each term lasts almost three months, and classes are held twice a week. Concerning their central aim, the priority is to help learners become communicatively competent enough to use the language efficiently. Finally, it is worth mentioning that the setting for collecting online data was the platform called Adobe Connect.

Participants

Six EFL teachers (three males and three females), aged between 24 and 41 years, were selected through convenience sampling. In addition, it is worth mentioning that three of the teachers held BA, and three others held MA degrees in TEFL. As for their teaching experiences, most of them had been teaching English for less than 10 years, except for one teacher who had been teaching for 12 years. Finally, they were native speakers of Turkish except for one of them, whose mother tongue was Kurdish. The detailed and tabular version of their biodata information is presented below.

Table 1

Details of the Teachers Involved as the Research Participants

Participants	Gender	Age	Nationality	Native language	Educational level	Teaching experience	Level of teaching	Classroom mode
T1	Male	41	Iranian	Kurdish	MA degree	6 years	Elementary	Face-to-face
T2	Male	38	Iranian	Turkish	BA degree	12 years	Intermediate	Face-to-face
T3	Female	24	Iranian	Turkish	BA degree	5 years	Advanced	Face-to-face
T4	Male	25	Iranian	Turkish	BA degree	5 years	Elementary	Online
T5	Female	26	Iranian	Turkish	MA degree	4 years	Intermediate	Online
T6	Female	34	Iranian	Turkish	MA degree	3 years	Advanced	Online

Instruments

For the purpose of the study, two data collection instruments were consulted. First, in order to investigate face-to-face and online EFL teachers' use of CF types across levels of proficiency, non-participant observation was chosen. After weighing observation techniques up, this one was preferred to save observer time, ensure objectivity, and avoid meddling in with the flow of the classes. It's worth noting that the classes used in the study were intact, and hence, the proficiency levels were already determined on the basis of the placement tests held by the institute where the current research was conducted. Second, in order to cater for triangulation and increase the dependability of the findings, a structured interview was also employed regarding the participants' perceptions of CF. This type of interview was chosen since it was desired to have less interviewer bias and faster interview conduction. The interview protocol was composed of two sections. The first section was devoted to six questions about the participants' biodata information, and the second was allotted to 13 fixed-ordered questions about their perceptions of CF. As for the expert validation, a competent associate professor in Applied Linguistics went through the questions and confirmed their validity.

Procedure

To begin with, six EFL classes (three face-to-face and three online) were selected based on availability. The classes were chosen in a way that included two classes from each level of proficiency (elementary, intermediate, and online). Prior to collecting data, the pertinent teachers from each class were asked to fill in an informed consent form to cater to ethical issues. In order to increase the credibility of the study, they were not informed about the central aim of the study. In the next phase, the first researcher went about collecting data. Concerning face-to-face classes, he participated in each class in person and sat at the back of the class in order not to disturb the flow of the classes. As for online classes, the same steps were taken, with the only difference being that the researcher did not participate in the classes in person. Instead, he did so through an online platform called Adobe Connect. During participation in both classroom modes (face-to-face and online), two sessions of each class (each lasting for 90 minutes) from all levels of proficiency were audio-recorded, totaling 18 hours of recording (nine hours for face-

to-face classes and nine for online classes). It's worth mentioning that the same materials were used for both face-to-face and online classes, and the institute claimed the teaching method used to be eclectic.

In the next phase, the researchers transcribed the recorded data and then went about identifying different CF types used by the participants using Lyster and Ranta's (1997) framework. Afterward, the identified CF types were categorized deductively based on Lyster and Ranta's taxonomy of CF types. It is noteworthy that since a different type of CF (explicit correction with metalinguistic feedback) was identified in the transcriptions, the researcher decided to categorize them separately based on Sheen's (2011) taxonomy as well. As for inter-rater reliability, a Ph.D. candidate in TEFL was asked to categorize the data. Finally, a simple percentage agreement measure was run, and it was noticed that there was 97.16% agreement between the researchers and the rater.

After observing the classes, another data collection tool (structured interview) was employed to cater for triangulation and increase the dependability of the study. Prior to interviewing the participants, the researchers went through the literature and posed 13 questions on CF consulting empirical studies like Lennane (2007), Fungula (2013), Kirgoz and Agcam (2015), and Demir and Özmen (2017). As for expert validation, a competent associate professor of TEFL went through the questions and confirmed their validity. Thus, on the day of interviewing each participant, they were first informed about the purpose of the interview and were walked through different types of CF blow-by-blow. Then, the actual interview began. First, six biodata questions were asked. Next, 13 fixed-ordered questions were posed about their perceptions of CF and its dimensions. During each interview turn, their responses were audio-recorded to be transcribed by the researchers. Afterward, the data were coded inductively based on the transcriptions, and a competent associate professor of TEFL was asked to crosscheck the data in order to ensure inter-rater reliability. A simple percentage agreement measure was run, and it was noticed that there was 97.2% agreement between the researchers' and the rater's coding. Finally, both observation and interview data were prepared and analyzed by the researchers.

Data Analysis

In order to answer research questions one to four, the data derived from classroom observations were transcribed, and then CF types were identified based on Lyster and Rata's (1997) and Sheen's (2011) taxonomies. Next, the categorized CF types were analyzed via descriptive statistical measures like frequencies and percentages. Concerning research question five, a Chi-square of independence was run on SPSS to see if there was a significant difference between the frequency of different CF types used in face-to-face and online classes.

Finally, regarding the sixth and last research question, the interview data were analyzed based on qualitative content analysis. First, the recorded data were transcribed by the researchers. Next, the transcripts were reviewed, and the familiar and coherent parts were coded and placed into categories. Finally, the researchers logged the occurrences of the salient themes. This process was also crosschecked by a competent Ph.D. holder in TEFL to ensure the reliability of the findings.

Lyster and Ranta's six CF types (recast, clarification request, metalinguistic feedback, elicitation, repetition, and explicit correction), as well as one more type (explicit correction with metalinguistic feedback) from Sheen's taxonomy, were consulted to categorize the teachers' used CF types. Table 2 provides examples of each CF type from the gathered data.

Table 2.

Coded Examples of CF Types

CF Excerpts	***CF Types***
L: He found out save a picture. T: Yes, he found out how to save a picture.	Recast
L: I was absent because of proprate. T: What?	Clarification Request
S: She is determined from her childhood. T: Well, the present tense cannot talk about the duration. For duration, we use present perfect.	Metalinguistic Feedback
L: Thousands of peoples lived together. T: PEOPLES?	Repetition
L: China people lifestyle changed. T: No, it's not correct. You should say Chinese people's lifestyle changed.	Explicit Correction

CF Excerpts	*CF Types*
L: I visit my grandparents yesterday. T: I…?	Elicitation
L: The face of Sue was very hot. T: Sue is a human not an object. Of is used for objects. So, you should say Sue's face was hot, not the face of Sue was hot.	Explicit Correction with Metalinguistic Feedback

Results and Discussion

Reviewing research questions one to four, it can be realized that these questions are concerned with CF types and their frequencies in face-to-face and online classes across levels of proficiency. Table 3 presents the findings from the observed classes.

Table 3.

Frequency and Percentage of CF Types Used by EFL Teachers in Face-to-Face and Online Classes across Levels of Proficiency

	Recast	Elicitation	Explicit correction	Clarification request	Metalinguistic feedback	Repetition	Explicit correction with metalinguistic feedback	Total
T1	22 (53.7%)	12 (29.3%)	3 (7.3%)	2 (4.9%)	1 (2.4%)	1 (2.4%)	0 (0%)	41 (100%)
T2	27 (55.1%)	11 (22.4%)	1 (2%)	3 (6.1%)	5 (10.2%)	2 (4.1%)	0 (0%)	49 (100%)
T3	19 (38.8%)	11 (22.4%)	4 (8.2%)	0 (0%)	6 (12.2%)	7 (14.3%)	2 (4.1%)	49 (100%)
T4	30 (51.7%)	9 (15.5%)	13 (22.4%)	1 (1.7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	5 (8.6%)	58 (100%)
T5	15 (34.9%)	6 (14%)	13 (30.2%)	1 (2.3%)	6 (14%)	0 (0%)	2 (4.7%)	43 (100%)
T6	18 (42.9%)	22 (52.4%)	0 (0%)	2 (4.8%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	42 (100%)

As Table 3 indicates, seven types of CF, namely, recast, elicitation, metalinguistic feedback, repetition, explicit correction, clarification request, and explicit correction with metalinguistic feedback, were used in face-to-face classes. This finding is in line with Sheen (2004), who found seven types of CF in his study. However, it runs contrary to the findings of Ahangari and Amirzadeh (2011), Öztürk (2016), and Phuong and Huan (2018). The attainment of different and, at times, opposing results can be justified on account of the disparities in terms of contextual factors, as well as the teachers' degree of

preoccupation with offering different CF strategies. On the other hand, it was found that six types of CF, namely, recast, elicitation, metalinguistic feedback, explicit correction, clarification request, and explicit correction with metalinguistic feedback, were used in online classes. The finding is in keeping with Öztürk (2016), Phuong and Huan (2018), and Fakzali (2018). However, it is not consistent with the findings of Sheen (2004) and Ahangari and Amirzadeh (2011). Regarding the use of CF types, both sets of findings lend support to Smhony and Chanyoo (2018), who claimed that EFL teachers make use of a variety of CF that suit their learners' errors. It can be discussed that the use of various CF types in EFL instruction is a comprehensive and varied approach. These CF types are designed to address language learners' errors and cater to the unique learning styles and needs of individual students. The use of multiple CF types also reflects a pedagogical commitment to fostering a supportive and responsive language learning environment. The inclusion of multiple CF types in face-to-face and online classes suggests a recognition of the diverse nature of language learning and the need for adaptable pedagogical approaches. By utilizing a range of feedback techniques, educators can effectively address errors while promoting a positive and constructive approach to language acquisition. This aligns with contemporary research (Lyster, 2023) emphasizing the multifaceted nature of error correction and its significance in language learning. By and large, the use of various CF types in face-to-face and online classes demonstrates a holistic and student-centered approach to error correction, fostering an inclusive and responsive learning environment for EFL students.

Concerning the frequency of the CF types, the first set of findings was found regarding face-to-face classes. As Table 3 indicated, in the elementary class, 53.7% of CF types were recast, 29.3% elicitation, 7.3% explicit correction, 4.9% clarification requests, and 2.4% metalinguistic feedback and repetition. In the intermediate class, 55.1% of CF types were recast, 22.4% elicitation, 10.2% metalinguistic feedback, 6.1% clarification request, 4.1% repetition, and 2% explicit correction. In the advanced class, 38.8% of CF types were recast, 22.4% elicitation, 14.3% repetition, 12.2% metalinguistic feedback, 8.2% explicit correction, and 4.1% explicit correction with metalinguistic feedback. On the other hand, as for online classes, it was found that in the elementary class, 51.7% of CF types were recast, 22.4% explicit correction, 15.5 % elicitation, 8.6%

explicit correction with metalinguistic feedback, and 1.7% clarification request. In the intermediate class, 34.9% of CF types were recast, 30.2% explicit correction, 14% both elicitation and metalinguistic feedback, 4.7% explicit correction with metalinguistic feedback, and 2.3% clarification request. Finally, in the advanced class, 52.4% of CF types were elicitation, 42.9% recast, and 43.8% were clarification requests.

Based on the above-mentioned findings, it can be concluded that recast was the most commonly used CF type in the elementary and intermediate levels in both classroom modes, as well as the advanced face-to-face classroom. The results indicate that the frequent use of recasting as the most common CF type in an EFL classroom reflects a pedagogical approach that prioritizes implicit correction and error awareness, positive learning environments, language input enhancement, and scaffolded support, particularly for learners who do not have high proficiency levels. This feedback strategy underscores the importance of corrective measures in maintaining a supportive and communicative language learning environment. Concerning its use across elementary, intermediate, and advanced classrooms, the results suggest the adaptability and ongoing nature of recasting, which remains a valuable component of a multifaceted error correction repertoire, catering to the diverse needs of learners at different stages of language learning and proficiency. Accordingly, there are a number of possible speculations for using recast as the most frequent type of CF in face-to-face and online classes. One possible speculation is that recast is offered naturally, in a quick manner, and in an indirect way. This is corroborated by Rydahl (2005), who stated that recast comes out naturally, is not time-consuming, and the way it is offered is unobtrusive and indirect. Another possible reason is that it is face-saving and provides the opportunity for the conversation not to be interrupted. This is supported by Park (2010) who stated that recast is not face-threatening and does not interrupt the flow of conversation. Another possible speculation is that recast appears to be by far the most commonly used CF type by EFL teachers, which has affected the participants of the study. In other words, as the literature indicates, the ubiquitous nature of recasting, compared to other CF types, has been proved by a myriad of scholars globally (e.g., Ellis & Sheen, 2006). This also lends support to Lyster and Ranta (1997), who stated that recast is the most repetitive CF type among EFL teachers. Thus, it can be speculated that the omnipresent nature of recasting might have affected EFL teachers

globally, who employ it most frequently, not to mention the teachers who participated in this study. Moreover, the use of recast over other output-prompting techniques in lower-level face-to-face and online classes seems to be due to the fact that EFL teachers think such learners are not linguistically competent enough to take on the responsibility of self-correcting. This is supported by Yoshida (2010), who claimed that teachers use recast in lower-level classes because such learners cannot self-correct on their own. However, the comparatively lower use of recast in the face-to-face and online advanced classes seems to be due to Panova and Lyster's (2002) claim that recast is likely to be noticed as negative evidence by advanced learners, while that may not be the case with lower-level learners.

On the other hand, although recast was the most commonly used CF type in the elementary and intermediate levels in both classroom modes, as well as the advanced face-to-face classroom, the only discrepancy was found in the online advanced classroom, in which elicitation was the most commonly used one. This finding resonates with the findings of the two studies by Alkhammash and Gulnaz (2019) and Tran and Nguyen (2020), which were mentioned in the literature review section. Their findings also pointed to the teachers' inclination toward using elicitation as a more preferred technique.

Again, there are some possible reasons for using elicitation as the most frequent CF type in the online advanced class. It may be due to the fact that advanced learners are supposed to be linguistically competent enough to spot and correct their errors by themselves. This is supported by Kennedy (2010), who found that advanced learners were provided with more self-correction techniques because they were competent enough to self-correct. Another possible reason is that elicitation is more likely to lead to successful uptake. This is supported by Lyster and Ranta (1997), who claimed that output-prompting techniques are more likely to lead to successful uptake. Finally, elicitation is more likely to make learners become self-regulated. This is supported by Hernández Méndez and Reyes Cruz (2012), who stated that self-correction techniques help learners become autonomous in the process of learning.

As for the use of the other CF types in face-to-face and online classes, Figure 1 indicates that explicit correction with metalinguistic feedback did not occur in the face-to-face elementary class, but it did in the online elementary class. Furthermore, metalinguistic feedback and repetition were used in the face-to-face elementary class, while this was not the case in the online elementary class. As for the face-to-face and online intermediate classes, explicit correction with metalinguistic feedback did not occur

in the face-to-face intermediate class, but it did in the online intermediate class. Moreover, repetition was used in the face-to-face intermediate class, but that was not the case in the online intermediate class. Finally, regarding the face-to-face and online advanced classes, clarification requests were not used in the face-to-face advanced class at all, but they were employed in the online advanced class. Metalinguistic feedback, explicit correction, repetition, and explicit correction with metalinguistic feedback were all used in the face-to-face advanced class, but they were not utilized in the online advanced class whatsoever. One possible reason for the variation in the use of different CF types in face-to-face and online classes may be that when it comes to error correction, face-to-face, and online teachers take into account the conduciveness of the environment and the condition. This is supported by Lier (1988, cited in Rydahl, 2006), who claimed that teachers' error correction is influenced by the situation and atmosphere of the class. It must also be noted that teachers' opting for different corrective feedback techniques may also be influenced by their individual characteristics and teaching styles. This is supported by Qadir and Aziz (2024), who stated that EFL instructors' use of CF types is influenced by teaching styles and individual characteristics.

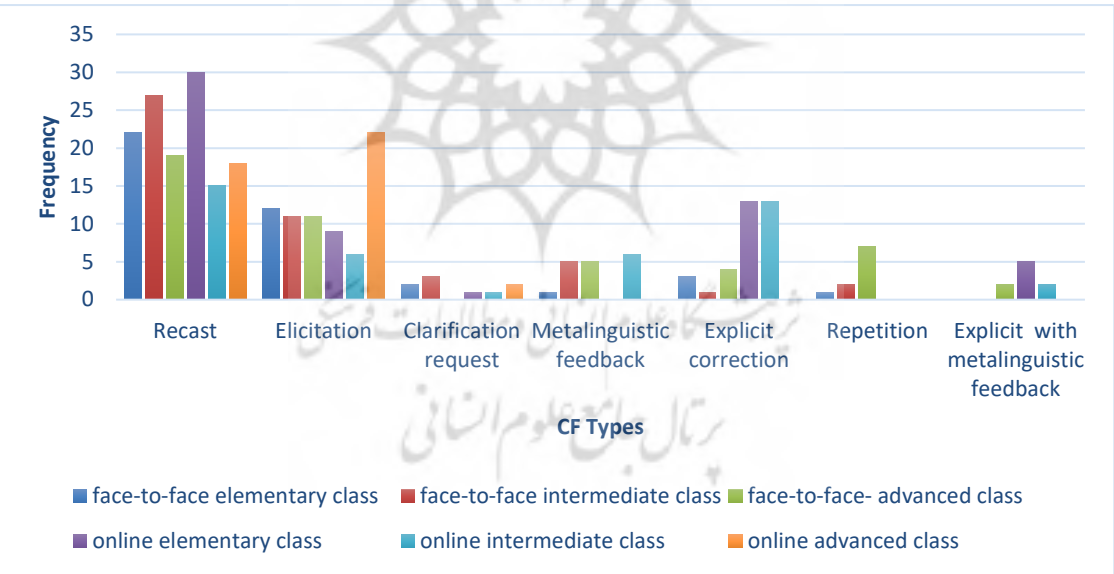

Figure 1. *CF Types Other than the Ones Used the Most in Face-to-Face and Online Classes across Levels of Proficiency*

As for the fifth research question, the *chi-square test of independence* was run to examine the differences between the frequencies of the CF types in face-to-face and online classes across levels of proficiency. Regarding the elementary level, Table 4 indicates that the observed *p*-value is .00, which is smaller than the alpha level, namely, .05. Thus, there is a significant difference between the frequencies of the CF types in the face-to-face and online elementary-level classes.

Table 4.
Chi-Square Test of the Differences between the Frequencies of the CF Types in Face-to-Face and Online Elementary-Level Classes

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	28.93	6	.00
Likelihood Ratio	34.97	6	.00
Linear-by-Linear Association	22.78	1	.00
N of Valid Cases	42		

Moreover, regarding the intermediate level, Table 5 indicates that the observed *p*-value equals .00, which is smaller than the alpha level, namely, .05. Thus, there is a significant difference between the frequencies of the CF types in the face-to-face and online intermediate-level classes.

Table 5.
Chi-Square Test of the Differences between the Frequencies of the CF Types in the Face-to-Face and Online Intermediate-Level Classes

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	83.33	18	.00
Likelihood Ratio	68.72	18	.00
Linear-by-Linear Association	36.15	1	.00
N of Valid Cases	44		

Additionally, regarding the advanced level, Table 6 indicates that the observed *p*-value is .00, which is smaller than the alpha level set at .05. Thus, there is a significant difference between the frequencies of the CF types in the face-to-face and online intermediate-level classes.

Table 6.

Chi-Square Test of the Differences between the Frequencies of the CF Types in the Face-to-Face and Online Advanced-Level Classes

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	52.49	6	.00
Likelihood Ratio	56.56	6	.00
Linear-by-Linear Association	19.01	1	.00
N of Valid Cases	42		

Furthermore, the interview data from the face-to-face and online teachers revealed that both groups (face-to-face and online teachers) had positive perceptions of CF, which is in line with the findings of Tran and Nguyen (2020). However, they had some different and similar standpoints regarding the dimensions of CF, which is consistent with the findings of Demir and Özmen (2017). As such, in order to have a better understanding of the whole picture of the interview findings, in what follows, the most salient findings from each category are reported and discussed individually, along with the possible interpretations for their occurrence:

Category 1: The effectiveness of error correction in terms of improving Learners' English abilities

Both face-to-face and online teachers had positive perceptions regarding the effectiveness of error correction in EFL classes. Nevertheless, getting rid of making errors over and over and not experiencing fossilization were the most salient findings concerning the effectiveness of CF. One possible reason for this might be that if errors keep happening, learners will not be able to gain proficiency in the target language. This is supported by Herron (1981), who suggested that "it appears that correcting oral errors improves second language learners' proficiency more than if their errors remain uncorrected" (p. 7). Regarding fossilization, they were of the opinion that error correction stops the process of learning from being ceased. This is compliant with Brown (2014), who mentions that learners' errors should be corrected, or else the process of learning will be stopped.

Category 2: The necessity of correcting learners' spoken errors

Regarding this category, there was a consensus among all of the participants. This is probably because face-to-face and online teachers believe that CF is essential as it helps learners master the target language and achieve their goals in the learning process. These are supported by Gitsaki and Althobaiti (2010) and Hattie and Timperley (2007), who stated that in many cases, teachers make use of CF to help learners master the target aspects of the language and influence their achievement positively. Regarding the participants' further points, it was found that the inappropriateness of offering CF while learners are engaged in fluency-based activities was the most salient finding. This is supported by Harmer (2015), who suggested that on-the-spot CF is good, but interrupting them while engaged in a communicative activity is not appealing.

Category 3: The appropriate action regarding the timing of error correction (immediate or delayed feedback)

In this regard, half of the participants believed that it depends on the aim of the activity. In fluency-based activities, delayed CF should be offered in order not to interrupt the flow of communication. On the other hand, immediate CF should be offered if learners are involved in accuracy-based activities. Again, this is consistent with Harmer (2015), who claimed that many teachers distinguish accuracy work from fluency work. He holds that when learners are involved in accuracy work, they focus on specific linguistic points. However, when they are involved in fluency work, they focus on the meaning in order to communicate meaningfully. On the other hand, the other half of the participants were in favor of off-the-spot CF. They believed that interrupting learners in fluency-based activities can interrupt the flow of communication. This is supported by Tomczyk (2013), who found that secondary-level teachers favored off-the-spot CF because it does not interrupt the flow of communication.

Category 4: The foci of error correction (vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, etc.)

Regarding this category, there was a consensus among all of the participants that all errors should be corrected. It is because they are all in favor of unfocused CF, in which the foci of error correction are not narrowed down. Instead, many errors are taken into

account while offering CF. This is in line with Ellis (2009b), who claimed that unfocused CF is advantageous in terms of consulting a great range of errors.

Category 5: Ways/manners of error correction

Concerning this category, self-correction was the most salient answer given by the participants. The results suggest that participants strongly preferred self-correction over other error-correction strategies, demonstrating a desire for students to accept responsibility for their errors. This preference might have its roots in the idea that self-correction encourages a more thorough understanding and retention of the language that has been corrected. The idea that encouraging learners to self-correct can increase the likelihood of successful uptake and internalization of the corrected language is supported by reference to Havranek and Censik's (2001) study.

Category 6: The participants in error correction

Most of the participants believed that when it comes to error correction, the priority should be the learners themselves. If they cannot self-correct, teachers should intervene and do the correction. This is probably because they are in favor of gradual CF, which emphasizes the social, interactive, and cooperative nature of feedback. This lends support to Aljaafreh and Lantolf (1994), who maintained that "in this framework, error correction is considered as a social activity involving joint participation and meaningful transactions between the learners and the teacher" (cited in Nassaji & Swain, 2000, p. 35). Thus, the participants seem to be in favor of a CF type that starts with the most implicit help where learners are at the self-regulation stage and then proceeds to the most explicit one where learners are other-regulated.

Category 7: Teacher training: their influences on the EFL teachers' error correction manners

The results indicated that the majority of participants found Teacher Training Courses (TTCs) beneficial, particularly in increasing their awareness of CF types in EFL classes. The emphasis on learning about different CF types during these courses suggests that trainers recognize the complexity of error correction, encompassing various factors

such as classroom atmosphere, learner preferences, teaching styles, and specific learner needs. The reference to Postareff et al. (2007) highlights the role of educational training in enhancing teachers' awareness of their instructional methods, and the mention of Kim (2015) supports the idea that multiple contextual and individual factors influence teachers' use of CF types. This result underscores the importance of professional development in equipping EFL teachers with the knowledge and skills necessary for effective error correction in diverse classroom settings.

Category 8: The most preferred type of CF and their reason for believing in its effectiveness

Regarding this category, it was found that elicitation was the most favorite and effective CF type for all the participants. However, it was surprising to find out that, except for T6, the other participants' preferences did not match their actual practice of offering CF in their classes. One possible reason may be that they are all aware of the advantages of output-prompting CF types, but they are not aware of the CF types they actually offer in their classes, so they probably just offer them spontaneously. This is supported by Gómez Argüelles et al. (2019), who reported that teachers offered a particular CF type randomly without taking into account its effectiveness. Regarding their reason for believing in its effectiveness, the most salient answer was that it is because elicitation helps learners think and self-correct on their own. This is probably because they believe that if elicitation is offered, learners will be able to foster their thinking skills and reach successful uptake in the end. However, this interpretation should be taken with caution owing to Kennedy's (2010) claim regarding her findings that lower-level learners did not manage to correct their errors on their own.

Category 9: Changing or not changing the manner of error correction depending on different levels of proficiency

With respect to this category, most of the participants said that they try to change their error correction manners based on the proficiency level of different learners. They said they used input-providing CF types for lower-level learners and output-prompting ones for higher-level learners. It seems to be due to the fact that lower-level learners are

not competent enough to self-correct, while higher-level learners are more knowledgeable about doing that by themselves. These are supported by Yoshida (2010), who claimed that lower-level learners cannot self-correct on their own, and Kennedy (2010), who found that higher-level learners were provided with more self-correction techniques because they were competent enough to self-correct.

Category 10: The appropriateness of giving the correct form of errors on the spot or getting learners involved in thinking and spotting the errors by themselves

Concerning this category, all the participants stated that learners should think and spot their errors by themselves. However, there was no consensus about their reasons for believing so. This result suggests a unanimous agreement among participants that learners should take on the responsibility of identifying and rectifying their own errors. However, the lack of accord regarding the reasons behind this belief indicates a potential diversity of views and rationales among the participants. This result suggests the importance of exploring the underlying motivations and perspectives that drive the preference for learner self-correction, highlighting the complexity of attitudes toward learner autonomy and self-directed error correction in language learning contexts. A possible reason for the variation among their reasons is that different teachers have different plans for helping their learners develop in the process of learning a new language.

Category 11: The most preferred CF type on the part of learners

Most of the participants stated that EFL learners prefer explicit correction the most. The most salient reason is that in most EFL classes, teachers are authorities, so learners are just passive receivers of knowledge. These are in line with Mohabbatsafa and Hüttner's (2015) claim that when it comes to taking part in classroom activities, foreign language learners have a passive role in classes and do not get to interact communicatively. This result draws attention to the power dynamics in the educational system, where students might look to their teachers for direct guidance, which could result in a preference for explicit correction. This finding emphasizes how the expectations and behaviors of both teachers and students in EFL classrooms are shaped by educational structures.

Category 12: The occasions when EFL teachers choose not to correct their learners' errors

The participants stated that there are times when they choose not to give CF, with many choosing to stay out of the way during fluency-based tasks in order to preserve the flow of conversation. The participants' unwillingness to stop students in the middle of fluency-focused tasks supports the notion that fluency should come first in language instruction, as Harmer (2015) and Rezaei et al. (2011) have pointed out. These scholars stress the significance of striking a balance between accuracy and fluency, noting that giving too much feedback when engaging in fluency exercises might impair language development and communication. This finding emphasizes how teachers carefully assess pedagogical issues and the objectives of the language learning exercise when determining when and whether to offer CF.

Category 13: Having difficulty in terms of hurting learners' feelings by correcting their errors

Concerning the last category, it was found that most of the participants were hesitant to provide CF due to concerns about hurting their learners' emotions and raising their affective filter. This reluctance is based on Krashen's (1982) affective filter hypothesis, which suggests that heightened affective filters can cause anxiety and emotional distress. This finding suggests the importance of teachers being mindful of affective factors influencing language acquisition and balancing constructive feedback with avoiding situations that may impede students' learning due to emotional barriers.

Conclusion

The contribution of the current study to the existing literature is its investigation of EFL teachers' use of CF types in face-to-face and online classes across levels of proficiency, as well as their perceptions of CF in their classes. Based on the results of the investigation, it was found that recast was the most commonly used CF type in the elementary and intermediate levels in both classroom modes, as well as the advanced face-to-face classroom. However, the only discrepancy was found in the online advanced classroom, in which elicitation was the most commonly used one. This discrepancy, as stated earlier, might be ascribed to differences among the teachers in terms of their

individual characteristics and teaching styles, among other factors. Furthermore, it was found that both face-to-face and online teachers had positive perceptions of the use of CF in EFL classes.

In view of the limitations influencing the current study, further research is needed to gather additional evidence from both face-to-face and online classes in relation to CF to help increase the dependability and generalizability of the findings. First, this study mainly focused on CF types used in face-to-face and online classes across levels of proficiency. However, in addition to CF types in these classroom modes, prospective researchers can also investigate the timing of CF, learners' uptake in relation to CF types, or the foci of error correction (e.g., lexical errors, grammatical errors, and phonological errors). Second, future studies can also investigate the role of gender as a moderator variable in relation to face-to-face and online teachers' use of CF types. Third, forthcoming research can replicate this study with more teachers and observation sessions in order to obtain richer findings and make interpretations and generalizations based on more robust axioms. Among the other limitations in the current study, mention can be made of the low number of participants, which adversely affects the generalizability of the findings. Hence, future researchers are recommended to use a larger sample size to get around the issue. Also, in the current study, the individual differences among the participants were not taken into account, although they may have influenced the results. Therefore, it is recommended that further research into this domain consider the potential role of individual differences in relation to CF provision. Finally, due to time limitations, each class was observed for two sessions. If there had been more sessions, richer data would have been collected in order to indicate the whole picture of error correction by face-to-face and online teachers.

Nevertheless, the findings of the study led the researchers to draw a number of implications for practice. It was found that, except for the online advanced class, recast was used the most in the other classes. In this regard, a practical implication can be drawn for both face-to-face and online teachers. As with many similar studies, recast seems to be the most commonly used CF type in error correction. Therefore, face-to-face and online EFL teachers can offer this CF type in their classes by reformulating learners' erroneous utterances partially or fully. This is because recast is offered unobtrusively,

quickly, and indirectly. However, EFL teachers should take this precaution cautiously in both classroom modes (i.e., face-to-face and online). That is, since the nature of recast is implicit, learners may think that when their error is reformulated, their teacher is approving of what they have said. Thus, EFL teachers need to offer explicit CF types in both classroom modes mainly to make learners notice that they have made an error. Furthermore, sticking to this CF type may deprive learners of the ability to produce successful uptakes using self-correction techniques. Thus, it is recommended that face-to-face and online teachers also encourage learners to take on the responsibility of error correction by themselves every now and then. By the same token, resorting to this type of CF frequently might deprive learners of being corrected based on their different needs. Therefore, face-to-face and online teachers should note that effective provision of CF types happens when appropriate types are taken into account to meet the needs of learners best.

Finally, there are some implications for teacher trainers as well. In the current study, it was observed that both face-to-face and online teachers had positive perceptions of CF in general, but except for the teacher of the online advanced class, the other teachers' preferences for using a CF type the most frequently did not match their actual use. This is probably due to the fact that both face-to-face and online teachers are not aware of the different purposes of CF types that best suit their learners' needs at the time of error correction. Therefore, it is recommended that apart from being familiar with different CF types, EFL teachers need to become more familiar with the purposes of offering each CF type to best meet their learners' needs, and this can be achieved through participating in further TTCs or workshops.

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