EXPLICIT AND IMPLICIT TYPES OF CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK IN TURKISH PRIMARY EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Corrective feedback (CF) has become a significant notion in EFL learning as it is seen as a facilitator to enhance L2 learning. CF is basically refer to any feedback provided to learner containing evidence of learner error of language form (Russel & Spada, 2006), or an immediate response by teacher to learner utterances containing error explained which is also theoretically a complex phenomenon with several functions (Lyster, et.al., 2012). A distinction can be drawn whether CF types are being implicit or explicit that there is not a clear indication of error in implicit CF whereas there is in explicit CF types. This study investigates the explicit and implicit CF types used by teachers in EFL classrooms in primary levels aiming at to see whether there are quantitative differences in the preference of CF types being explicit/implicit. Data of the study gathered from EFL classroom teachers' course session observations at various levels of primary school. Methodology depends on frequency analysis of CF types employed by teachers during EFL course sessions. Results favored explicit CF types by teachers during EFL sessions.

Key Words: Corrective Feedback, Explicit Feedback, Implicit Corrective Feedback

1. INTRODUCTION

The notion of Corrective Feedback (CF) has become prominent in L2 learning and teaching due to its crucial and postulated facilitating role both in students' attention in L2 and teachers' perspective on the error treatment. CF is described by Russel & Spada (2006) as any feedback type used by teachers in response to learner utterance in the target language that contains an error. According to Chaudron, CF refers to "any reaction of the teacher which clearly transforms, disapprovingly refers to, or demands improvement of the learner utterance" (1977, p. 31). Immediate student response to teacher's corrective feedback is called student uptake which can result either with repair of the error or still in need of repair (Lyster & Ranta, 1997). CF is a genuine response from teacher to student error and indicates

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the effectiveness of their utterances, either in an explicit or in an implicit way. The importance of corrective feedback is explained by Zamel:

> "The teacher's output becomes the input for the students and determines future performance and the students' output becomes input for the teacher and determines the reaction to that performance (...) Teaching and learning are no longer exclusive roles; they become the provinces of both performers in the classroom; while the teacher instructs, the teacher learns about what must be done next, and while the learners learns, the student gives instruction about what information is lacking"(1981, p. 149).

In parallel with 'noticing hypothesis' of (Schmidt, 1990) and Long's 'interaction hypothesis' (1996), Russel and Spada (2006) state that the degree of explicitness in CF is important as it promotes the core theme 'noticing' target features in the input during interaction. Ellis, et. al. (2006) initially classifies CF types into two categories as implicit, and explicit CF. There is not a clear indication of error in implicit CF whereas there is in explicit type. Bitchener & Knoch (2009), on ther other hand, propose two types of CF as 'direct' corrective feedback which is the provision of the correct form of student error, and 'indirect' corrective feedback that indicates error without an explicit attention drawn. Another point about explicit/implicit corrective feedback is that their providing linguistic clue as positive evidence indicating what is possible in the target language represented by exposure through L2 input, and negative evidence that respects what is not possible in target language mostly provided through explanations or corrections (Gass, 1997). More explicit CF types contain both negative and positive evidence, so as some recasts types whereas implicit prompts provide only negative evidence (Lyster et.al., 2013).

Explicit CF types are didactic recasts, explicit correction (with metalinguistic explanation), metalinguistic clue, elicitation and paralinguistic signal, implicit ones are conversational recasts including reformulations and confirmation checks and repetitions such as prompts such as repetitions and clarification requests (Lyster, et.al., 2013). Ellis (2001) identifies a variety of CF types in a continuum between explicit and implicit feedback in which the most implicit one seems recast, 'reformulations of all or part of the learners deviant utterance' (Ellis, p.24). As suggested by their names, explicit correction requires giving the correct form expilictly as a reply to student error, and metalinguistic feedback involves providing the metalinguistic explanation of the underlying grammatical rule for the error made by student. That is, when an EFL learner says 'I do my homework yesterday', CF can be provided in an explicit way, as in 'It should be *I did my homework yesterday*' (explicit correction) or in an implicit way, as in 'Excuse me, can you repeat please?' (clarification request). Explicit CF simply points and/or identifies the error to make students aware of them while implicit CF is intended to elicit the correct response from students helping them correct their ill-formed utterances.

Several studies have been conducted on the use of explicit/implicit CF types in various settings (e.g., classroom or laboratory) in different forms such as oral and/ or written CF types. In general, Russel & Spada (2006) investigated overall efficacy of CF by looking at 56 research papers conducted on investigation of corrective feedback in general and concluded that CF is an effective and beneficial method in L2 learning. Lyster et. al. (2013) claim that although explicit CF types seem more likely to be noticed than implicit ones by learners, investigations suggest that effects of implicit CF might be more longer lasting than explicit ones which might be profound in short term (Ellis, et.al., 2006; Mackey & Goo, 2007; Li, 2010). Carrol & Swain (1993) inspected direct and indirect feedback by comparing a few groups of learners in an experimental study and found that the group receiving explicit feedback types most frequently performed significantly better than other groups. In a study on the effect of explicit and implicit CF types on grammatical accuracy of EFL learners, Campillo (2003) reported that combination of types as repetition of error and recast provided higher rates of success. Zohrani and Ehsani (2014) examined grammar accuracy and awareness of learners in explicit and implicit feedback groups. They concluded that grammar accuracy and awareness in both groups improved but explicit feedback group outperformed and more effective. In respect of teacher preference in higher eductaion, Hernández Méndez et.al. (2010) studied intructors' choices of corrective feedback types in English bachelor programme and found that they preffer to employ more implicit types of CF like repetition, recast, body language and metalinguistic feedback for advanced English learners. Xu (2012) conducted a detailed study on the provision of teachers' corrective feedback in Chinese EFL classrooms. Xu found that teachers tended to use more implicit/input providing CF types, hence explicit types were more useful in learner uptake whereas implicit CF types are more effevtive in students' self-correction.

This study attempts to investigate the use of explicit/implicit types of corrective feedback used by teachers in EFL classrooms at Turkish primary state schools. It primarily aims to see which explicit and implicit CF types are mostly preferred by teachers in response to students spoken errors in their attem to learn English as a foreign language.

2. METHOD

Classroom observation was selected as the main data collection method in the present study. The data was collected through a term project assigned to a group of 3rd year trainee students attending English Language Teaching Programme at Çukurova University. The students in concern were required to visit EFL classrooms (from 4th to 7th grades) at various state primary schools in Adana, Turkey. Table 1 presents the distribution of teachers whose classrooms were visited and the visiting students who participated in the study:

Grade	Teacher (n)	Trainee Student (n)
4th	8	8
5th	8	8
6th	10	10
7th	10	8

Table 1. Distribution of participants

The trainee students were specifically asked to note the cases where students commit spoken errors while making utterances in the target language, and to transcribe these cases in the form of dialogue between students and the teachers. The data was gathered in 8 groups during 8 weeks, which corresponds to a total number of 144 class hours. Subsequently, the above-mentioned CF types were identified in each case by the first researcher, and the types were double-checked by the second researcher. Finally, frequency of each type was calculated over the transcribed cases. The following section describes and outlines the findings of the study.

3. FINDINGS

As mentioned in the previous chapters, seven CF types proposed by Lyster et al. (2012) were searched across the cases whereby EFL teachers treat spoken errors of students attending various grades at state primary schools in Turkey. Table 2 displays the overall frequencies of the types in concern.

CF types	f	%
Explicit Correction	335	48.5
Recast	80	11.6
Clarification Request	79	11.4
Metalinguistic Feedback	69	10
Elicitation	66	9.6
Repetition	40	5.8
Paralinguistic Signal	22	3.2
Total	691	100

Table 2. CF types used by EFL teachers

As illustrated in Table 2, all types of CF were used at least once by EFL teachers in their attempt to correct students' ill-formed productions in English. Not surprisingly, explicit correction was the mot frequently used CF type by these teachers; namely, it was employed approximately in half of the cases. Recast and clarification request were the second and third most frequented CF types, respectively. They were followed by metalinguistic feedback (10%), elicitation (9.6%), repetition (5.8%) and paralinguistic signal (3.2%). Figure one shows the distribution of explicit and implicit types.
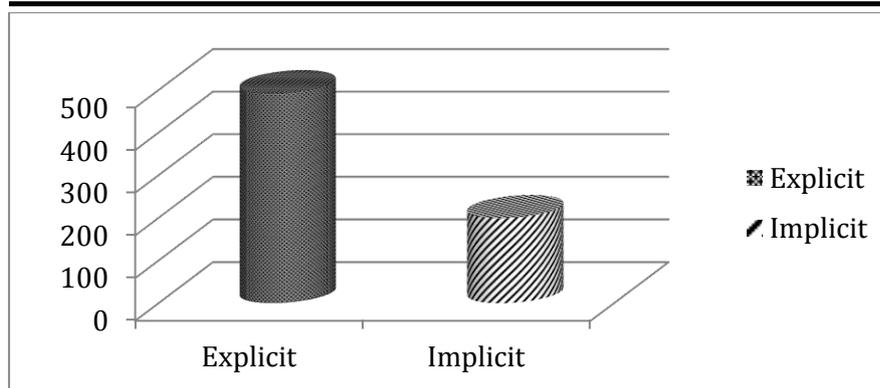
Fig. 1. Overall frequency of explicit and implicit CF types

As can be seen, explicit CF types were preferred by the teachers much more frequently than the implicit types. Namely, those falling to the former category were employed in over 71% of the cases while the ones falling into the latter were used in less than 30% of the cases. Figure 2 demonstrates the distrbiution of these categories across the grades they were used.
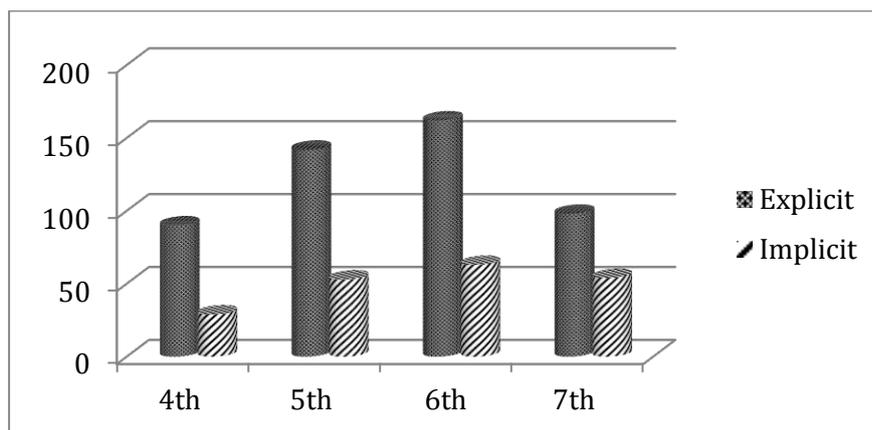

Fig. 2. Explicit and implicit CF types across grades

Explicit CF types seem to have been used at higher proportions in all grades as expected, though teachers of 5th and 6th graders prefer to use them far more frequently than those of the other two groups. The case in the 4th grades might be attributed to the fact that the teachers might have wanted to ignore some errors of the students considering that they were just beginners. The use of CF types seems to increase as the grade of the students grows except for 7th grade. Although explicit and implicit types differ in terms of observed freqency, the rising tendency in accordance with the proficiency level looks similar for all grades.

4. CONCLUSION

Findings of the present study have indicated that explicit CF types (e.g., explicit correction, metalinguistic feedback and elicitation) are used by EFL teachers teachers teaching 4th to 7th graders at state primary schools in Turkey more frequently and effectively than the implicit ones (e.g., clarification request and recasts), which confirms the findings of the previous research conducted on CF types (i.e., Carrol & Swain, 1993, Lyster et. al. 2013, Zohrani & Ehsani, 2014). This corresponds to the fact that the teachers have a stronger tendency to employ correction methods that are not cognitively challenging for the students; that is, they are more inclined to provide them with explicit responses or clues, which might stem from teachers' desire to save time. Namely, they are supposed to teach particular subject matters during a semester, which is stated in the official curriculum not prepared by these teachers. Students attending primary state schools in Turkey are generally required to take one or a couple of test at the end of each academic year whereby they are posed an average number of 100 mutiple choice items. The test(s) comprise various school subjects including English; so, the teachers need to teach all subjects identified in EFL curriculum within a limited period of time. For this very reason, they might not prefer implicit CF types, which are likely to take more time to produce intended results in students' utterances when compared to the explicit CF types. Keeping this in mind, those who are officially in charge with preparing the curricula in concern might be offered to revise them taking these particular outcomes of our study into consideration and highlighting the significance of implicit correction methods of which long-term effectiveness were suggested by the past research (Ellis, et. al. 2006, Mackey & Goo, 2007; Li, 2010, Xu, 2012) in foreign language learning.

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