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## ORAL CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK IN CHILDREN INTERACTION IN IMMERSION CLASS

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### Abstract

The present study investigates the occurrence of corrective feedback in the learning process and teachers' perspectives in giving the corrective feedback. The participants in the present study were two teachers and twelve children ranging from five to six years old. They were enrolled in Mondial School, an immersion school in Semarang, Indonesia. All of the children were Indonesians and some of which were Chinese descendants. This study applied a descriptive qualitative approach in the purpose of analyzing each utterance produced by teachers in classroom interaction and teachers' perspectives towards the corrective feedback used. As the basis of data analysis, Ranta&Lyster's Classification of corrective feedback was applied. The findings showed that 85% of teachers' utterances used didactic recasts in giving feedback to children's errors. These errors were mostly grammatical errors due to language transfer. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the teachers have a tendency to use corrective feedback expressed explicitly in correcting speech errors in children, rather than implicitly or indirectly. Meanwhile, the perception of teachers' tendency in giving corrective feedback through didactic recast was due to the effectiveness of didactic recast in encouraging children to correct errors in their speech. Teachers also added that giving corrective feedback was intended to encourage children to be aware of the structure of the language more precise without teaching grammar deductively, so the grammar was expected to be absorbed and understood by the children themselves.

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### INTRODUCTION

Immersion program which was first introduced in Canada in 1960s is a learning program focusing on the use of a second language or a target language as a medium to communicate in the teaching and learning process. This kind of learning was purposefully given to children who have a first language different to language of instruction. Johnson dan Swain (1997) stated that the immersion program in a formal education, the second language became medium of instruction. Thus, this program was hopefully able to create an atmosphere of

language exposure as a tool to communicate in classroom interaction. Though the second language was used at school, children were encouraged to maintain their mother tongue at home.

In the process of using two languages at the same time, transfer errors often occur due to different grammatical structure of the first language and the second language. Therefore, there might be a response towards these transfer errors done by teachers, which are commonly called by corrective feedback. As suggested by Hedge (2000), a teacher should

respond to learners' errors caused by lack of linguistic items knowledge.

Corrective feedback can be defined as the information given to the learners dealing with errors in utterances (Ellis, 2006; Loewen, 2012). Some studies regarding with corrective feedback have shown that oral corrective feedback can effectively facilitate children's second language development, yet the effects are still limited to contextual factors and different individuals (Lyster dan Saito, 2010). In other words, corrective feedback is considered important to error correction occurring when children are under the condition of bilingualism.

Many researchers have conducted studies in the effectiveness of any kinds of corrective feedback in relation to learner's proficiency (Amar and Spada, 2006), learner's prior knowledge (Ellis et.al, 2006), and language contexts (Han, 2002; Saito and Lyster, 2012). Although many research done in investigating corrective feedback, yet few studies have been conducted focusing on the use of corrective feedback in natural classroom interaction. In addition, many studies only focused on experimental studies of different classes instead of natural classroom interaction and did not accommodate teachers' perspectives in giving the corrective feedback. Therefore, the present study investigates the occurrence of corrective feedback in the learning process and teachers' perspectives in giving the corrective feedback.

## METHODOLOGY

The participants in the present study were two teachers and twelve children ranging from

five to six years old. They were enrolled in Mondial School, an immersion school in Semarang, Indonesia. All of the children were Indonesians and some of which were Chinese descendants. In addition, they came from middle to high-income families.

This study applied a descriptive qualitative approach in the purpose of analyzing each utterance produced by teachers in classroom interaction and teachers' perspectives towards the corrective feedback used. This qualitative study also applied naturalistic inquiry approach, in which it took up further analysis of certain phenomenon described in details (Lichtman, 2012). In this case, it described a phenomenon occurring in the teachers' utterances containing the corrective feedback and factors underlying the feedback in a natural setting.

In collecting data, video recording and interview have been done to obtain naturally occurring data and teachers' perspectives. The interview focused on certain questions: (1) Did you often find errors in children's utterances?; (2) Which errors stimulated you to provide them corrective feedback?; (3) What were your reasons in giving corrective feedback using recasts?; (4) How were the children's responses towards the feedback given? (5) Based on your observation, which type of corrective feedback was effective to fix the errors?; and (6) In your perspective, was corrective feedback important to give to children in noticing errors?

Data obtained from video recording were then transcribed and then elicited only on the utterances containing corrective feedback. After data elicitation, data were then categorized, sorted, and then analyzed based on the following table.

*Table 1.*  
*Classification of corrective feedback (adopted from Ranta&Lyster, 2007*  
*in Lyster et. al., 2013, p. 4)*

	<b>Implicit</b>	<b>Explicit</b>
<b>Reformulations</b>	<p><b>Conversational recasts</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a reformulation of a student utterance in an attempt to resolve a communication breakdown</li> <li>• often take the form of confirmation checks</li> </ul>	<p><b>Didactic recasts</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a reformulation of a student utterance in the absence of a communication problem</li> </ul> <p><b>Explicit correction</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a reformulation of a student utterance plus a clear indication of an error</li> </ul> <p><b>Explicit correction with metalinguistic explanation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• in addition to signaling an error and providing the correct form, there is also a metalinguistic comment</li> </ul>
<b>Prompts</b>	<p><b>Repetition</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a verbatim repetition of a student utterance, often with adjusted intonation to highlight the error</li> </ul> <p><b>Clarification request</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a phrase such as ‘Pardon?’ and ‘I don’t understand’ following a student utterance to indirectly signal an error</li> </ul>	<p><b>Metalinguistic clue</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a brief metalinguistic statement aimed at eliciting a self-correction from the student</li> </ul> <p><b>Elicitation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• directly elicits a self-correction from the student, often in the form of a wh-question</li> </ul> <p>Paralinguistic signal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an attempt to non-verbally elicit the correct form from the learner</li> </ul>

Data from interview were first transcribed, and then analyzed deeply to know what factors cause the use of corrective feedback by teachers.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### The use of oral corrective feedback during the learning process

As previously described, the present study investigated teachers’ utterances containing corrective feedback in response to children’s errors. In order to know the frequency of occurrence in each type of corrective feedback, the following table was provided.

Table 2.  
Frequency of occurrence on corrective feedback

Types of corrective feedback	Percentage of occurrence (%)
<b>Explicit</b>	
Didactic Recasts	84,8
Explicit correction	3,03
Explicit correction with metalinguistic explanation	0
Metalinguistic clue	0
Elicitation	0
<b>Implicit</b>	
Conversational recasts	3,03
Repetition	0
Clarification Request	9,09

According to Table 2, it indicated that the explicit corrective feedbacks were more often used by teachers rather than implicit corrective feedbacks. In explicit corrective feedbacks, didactic recasts (84.8%) also appeared as the most frequently occurring feedback compared to other types of corrective feedback, such as explicit correction (3.03%), explicit correction with metalinguistic clue (0%), metalinguistic clue (0%) and elicitation (0%). Meanwhile, in the implicit corrective feedbacks, clarification requests (9.09%) were the most common feedback used than conversational request (3.03%) and repetition (0%).

This shows that the teachers tended to use recasts than other types of feedback. This finding revealed the study conducted by Lyster and Ranta (1997) in the comparative use of six types of corrective feedback on the four immersion class at primary school level grades 4 and 5. The study showed that teachers tended to use recasts (reformulating the students' speech) rather than the other types.

In addition, in this study, children speech errors often appeared were errors due to

language transfer, in which these errors were errors committed by children because of the influence of the structure of the Indonesian language as their native language or mother tongue. Since the grammatical structure of Indonesian and English are very different, the increasing number of opportunities relating to language transfer occurred, for example, children said "juice strawberry" instead of "strawberry juice" as the correct structure in English. In Indonesian, head noun comes before a descriptive word. For example, in the Indonesian language, the phrase structure becomes into **jus strawberry**. This noun phrase structure is contrast to English which has the reverse structure from the Indonesian language. In English, that descriptive word emerges earlier than the head noun. In addition, the example of speech errors and children's response to the feedback provided by the teacher could be seen in the following excerpts of the conversation (when children are playing the role of buying and selling food).

*L 1 : Come here! Oh, sit sit sit! Oh, not sit here, sit over there!*

- L 2 : *Ohh.*  
L 1 : *Strawberry or orange? Who want juice strawberry?*  
Teacher : *Who want strawberry juice? (giving feedback in the form of recast)*  
L 1 : *Who want strawberry juice?*

From the conversation, it could be seen that when a child produced errors in her utterances, the teacher directly gave the correction, which recasts appeared in the excerpts. In response to the feedback given by the teacher, the child seemed to directly respond well to repeat the feedback given by the teacher.

In this case, these kind of grammatical errors were considered necessary for the teacher to provide corrective feedback. Because the current research focused on the interaction and communication naturally, errors made by children had higher possibility to occur, so that teachers felt the need to give corrective feedback. It is also stated by Gurzynski-Weiss and Baralt (2014) in his study which indicated that the opportunity of children to follow up the feedback given depended on the interaction in the classroom environment and the type of error was addressed. A similar study conducted by Storch and Wigglesworth (2010), concluded that the children's responses to corrective feedback were strongly influenced by linguistic and affective factors, such as the type of error that was produced, and the most important was the attitude and confidence of the children. Regarding with it, it could be concluded that the number of interactions in a learning was the main indicator in providing corrective feedback. In other words, the more interaction, the more opportunity the teachers have to correct the children's speech.

Based on further analysis, most of the children responded the recasts given by the teachers. This finding showed that recasts were very effective in correcting speech errors for children, particularly in early childhood, which in these ages; they were still in the very early stages of learning English. The results also proved the research that has been done Ellis et.al (2001, on Lightbown and Spada, 2006) which also showed that the majority of teachers used recasts and children responded quickly the recasts provided by the teachers in correcting the errors. However, differences in the effectiveness of certain types of corrective feedback might be influenced by the type of error produced by the children. In addition, the response was very dependent on children's errors stimulating the teachers to provide feedback, such as research done previously.

### **Teachers' perspectives in giving oral corrective feedback**

Based on the interviews result with the teachers, the use of oral corrective feedback during the learning process was motivated by the errors of speech in English produced by most children. The errors were mostly grammatical errors that might be affected by the differences in grammar of their native language. Responding to error on utterances appeared, teachers tended to provide the correct sentences directly in order to encourage them to realize that these were the correct one

Giving corrective feedback was done though grammar was not too focused, but they were trying to make the children understand that this was the correct word structure. When the structure of the language was not introduced earlier, it would be a big challenge for teachers if the children went on the next level of education. Although the

provision of corrective feedback has not shown significant results, but the provision of feedback was very important to the children's success in the future as a long term effect.

In addition, they argued that it absolutely took time for the children to really understand the structure of English. Thus, the provision of feedback in the form of didactic recast was expected to encourage children to be aware that this was the correct structure. In this case, the grammar was not taught explicitly because the concept of children's learning was that they were not afraid to speak in English. By giving corrective feedback through didactic recast, the teacher made them more aware without forcing them to memorize the correct structure.

In response to the provision of corrective feedback by teachers, most children were motivated to repeat the right words and sentences provided by the teacher orally, although in some children, they did not directly fix the errors. When recasts were not responded by the children, the teachers were motivated to give in other ways, for example, "You mean like this?". By giving this feedback which was more directly explained, children were expected to be more aware to correct their errors.

Based on the observations made by the teachers, recasts were very effective for children to respond and correct errors because basically children really wanted to be corrected. This proved the research conducted by Schulz (2001) that all children actually have a desire to correct their errors. It could

be concluded that the importance of corrective feedback was just to bring awareness to children in the grammatical errors in their speech, and not to force them to memorize the correct English grammar. Thus, the children became accustomed to English grammar correctly by applying it directly in interaction and communication in the learning process. In other words, grammar was absorbed and understood directly by the children themselves.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and the discussion that have been described previously, it can be concluded that the teachers have a tendency to use corrective feedback expressed explicitly in correcting speech errors in children, rather than implicitly or indirectly. In this case, the teachers also tended to frequently use didactic recast in correcting errors, which the teacher directly reformulated all or part of speech of children with the correct form.

Meanwhile, the perception of teachers' tendency in giving corrective feedback through didactic recast was due to the effectiveness of didactic recast in encouraging children to correct errors in their speech. Teachers also added that giving corrective feedback was intended to encourage children to be aware of the structure of the language more precise without teaching grammar deductively, so the grammar was expected to be absorbed and understood by the children themselves.

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