



## EFL Teachers' L1 Backgrounds, Beliefs, and the Characteristics of Their Corrective Feedback

Yoko Asari

*Tokyo University of Science, Japan*

Considering the importance of teachers' performance in class as a variable which affects the efficacy of corrective feedback (CF), it has not necessarily received the attention it deserves in second language acquisition (SLA) research: While there are a number of studies that focus on the efficacy of CF strategies from *learners'* standpoint, research that focuses on the *provider* of CF, i.e., the foreign language (FL) teacher, has not yet been done as extensively. The present study was conducted to examine how native speaker (NS) and non-native speaker (NNS) teachers differ in their provision of CF and to investigate whether the two types of teachers' provision of CF is congruent with their perceptions and beliefs. The results show that the ability to match their beliefs with their actual CF provision seems to be affected by their L1 background. NS teachers tend not to provide abundant phonological CF due to their insensitivity to some phonological errors in learners' utterances. NNS teachers tend not to have the ability to provide CF in general due to their lack of language proficiency. Finding ways to overcome teachers' current weaknesses may be a prerequisite to enhancing the quality of education in Japan.

**Keywords:** belief, corrective feedback, native speaker teacher, non-native speaker teacher, perception

### Introduction

In the past couple of decades, a substantial amount of research has been conducted to examine the role of corrective feedback (CF) in learners' L2 development. The increasing interest in CF is largely due to the significance it carries for learners' L2 development: Research that has been exploring the link between CF and L2 development has shown that CF impacts learners positively. Considering the importance of teachers as a variable which affects the efficacy of CF, it has not necessarily received the attention it deserves in second language acquisition (SLA) research: While there are a number of studies that focus on the efficacy of CF strategies from *learners'* standpoint (e.g., Li, 2010; Mackey & Goo, 2007), research that has focused on the *provider* of CF, i.e., the FL teacher, has not yet been done extensively. Moreover, of the studies that have been conducted to investigate interlocutor effect, a majority have focused on native speaker (NS) teachers (e.g., Oliver, 1995). However, in countries such as Japan, where non-native speakers (NNSs) account for a large segment of the English as a foreign language (EFL) teacher population, it will be worthwhile to conduct research that examines how NNS and NS teachers provide CF and investigate whether the two types of teachers provide CF differently, and if so, what reasons there are for the differences.

## Literature Review

### Different Types of Corrective Feedback

CF is an umbrella term used to cover all reactions that explicitly or implicitly indicate to learners that what they have said is linguistically incorrect. The response can consist of (a) an indication that an error has been committed, (b) provision of the correct target language form or (c) metalinguistic information about the nature of the error, or any combination of these (R. Ellis, Loewen, & Erlam, 2006, p. 339). According to Lyster and Ranta (1997), CF strategies can be categorized into six types, and foreign language (FL) teachers can use them depending on whether (a) they want to provide learners with the correct L2 model (i.e., input-providing CF) or (b) they want learners to correct their own error (i.e., output-prompting CF). Recasts and explicit correction belong to the former category and elicitation, metalinguistic feedback, clarification requests, and repetitions belong to the latter category. The definition and examples of each CF type are provided below (Panova & Lyster, 2002, pp. 582-585, unless otherwise indicated).

**Explicit correction.** Explicit correction provides explicit signals to the student that there is an error in the previous utterance. Explicit correction “involves a clear indication to the student that an utterance was ill-formed and also provides the correct form” (Lyster & Panova, 1997, p. 46).

Example 1:

S: The day ... tomorrow. (lexical error)

T: Yes. No, the day before yesterday. (explicit correction)

**Elicitation.** Elicitation is a corrective technique that prompts the learner to self-correct. There are three ways of eliciting the correct form from the students. They are (a) when the teacher pauses and lets the student complete the utterance (Example 2), (b) when the teacher asks an open question (Example 3), and (c) when the teacher requests a reformulation of the ill-formed utterance.

Example 2:

S: New Ecosse (L1)

T: New Ecosse. I like that. I'm sure they'd love that. Nova ...?

S: Nova Scotia.

Example 3:

T: In a fast food restaurant, how much do you tip?

S: No money. (lexical error)

T: What's the word? (elicitation)

S: Five ... four ...

**Metalinguistic feedback.** Metalinguistic feedback refers to “comments, information, or questions related to the well-formedness of the student utterance, without explicitly providing the correct answer” (Lyster & Ranta, 1997, p. 46)

Example 4:

S: Nouvelle Ecosse ... (L1)

T: Oh, but that's in French. (metalinguistic feedback)

**Clarification requests.** The purpose of a clarification request is to elicit reformulation or repetition from the student with respect to the form of the student's ill-formed utterance.

Example 5:

S: I want practice, today. (grammatical)

T: I'm sorry? (clarification request)

**Recast.** A recast is an implicit corrective feedback move that reformulates or expands an ill-formed or incomplete utterance in an unobtrusive way.

Example 6:

S: Dangerous? (phonological error: /dange'rus)

T: Yeah, good. Dangerous. (recast) You remember? Safe and dangerous. If you walk in the streets, you . . .

**Repetition.** In a repetition, the teacher repeats the learner's ill-formed part of the student's utterance, usually with a change in intonation.

Example 7:

T: ... Here, when you do a paragraph, you start here, well, let's see, anyway, you write ... write, writ, write (pretends to be writing on a board), remember this is ... What is this called?

S: Comma. (lexical)

T: Comma? (repetition)

DifS: Period.

## Theoretical Issues

CF has been reported to facilitate learners L2 development for the following reasons. CF helps learners notice what is not acceptable in the target language (TL) that is acceptable in their first language (L1). Besides learners' noticing the discrepancy between their L1 and the L2, CF can also trigger learners' "noticing the gap" and "noticing a hole". The former type of noticing refers to learners' noticing of the discrepancy between their interlanguage (IL) and the TL. Input-providing CF, such as recasts, can encourage this type of noticing—the juxtaposition of the learners' error and the positive evidence in the recast can make them aware of the IL/TL gap. The latter type of noticing refers to learners' noticing of a deficiency in their IL. Output-prompting CF, such as clarification requests, can encourage this type of noticing. For example, learners may experience "noticing a hole" when they realize that they are not able to reformulate their errors subsequent to the CF due to the limitation in their proficiency. Taking into account Schmidt's (1990) Noticing Hypothesis—"learner must attend to and notice linguistic features of the input that they are exposed to if those forms are to become intake for learning" (Schmidt, 2010, p. 4)—it can be said that CF plays an essential role in learners' language acquisition process as it can help them focus their attention on the problematic forms.

The final benefit of CF is that it encourages learners to produce pushed output by soliciting uptake. In CF studies, the term *uptake* is used to refer to learners' immediate response following CF. This definition includes a wide range of learners' overt and covert immediate responses to CF; however, learners' production of repair, i.e., instances in which learners successfully revise or reformulate their error with the use of CF (Example 8), is said to contribute to learners' L2 development (e.g., R. Ellis & He, 1999; Izumi, 2002; Izumi, Bigelow, Fujiwara, & Fearnow, 1999; McDonough, 2005; Nobuyoshi & R. Ellis, 1993; Silver, 2000). According to Mackey (2012), learners' output in response to CF on their erroneous production may "indirectly serve to push learners to produce more accurate, appropriate, complex, and comprehensible language" (p. 17). Furthermore, a view that learners' production of repair is a step toward learning constitutes the theoretical basis of Swain's (2005) output hypothesis: The production of repair may strengthen existing knowledge representations and promote fluency and automaticity.

- Example 8 (Doughty and Varela, 1998, p. 124):
- Jose: I think that the worm will go under soil.
- Teacher: I think that the worm will go under soil?
- Jose: (no response)
- Teacher: I thought that the worm would go under the soil.
- Jose: I thought that the worm would go under the soil. (repair)

## Teachers' Beliefs about CF and Their Practice

Studies have shown that there is a strong correlation between teachers' stated beliefs and their instructional practice (e.g., Arva & Medgyes, 2000; Chavez, 2006; Gitsaki & Althobaiti, 2010; Gurznski-Weis, 2010). Basturkmen, Loewen, and R. Ellis (2004) defined the term *belief* as "statements teachers made about their ideas, thoughts, and knowledge that are expressed as evaluations of what should be done", 'should be the case', and 'is preferable'" (p. 244).

For example, a positive relationship between teachers' beliefs and their CF provision was found by Chavez's (2006). She conducted a semester-long study in which she interviewed three teachers of intermediate-level FL German at an American university about their teaching beliefs and videotaped their classes. The three teachers differed from each other in their beliefs and practice, and this manifested itself in the result of the study: each teacher's practice was consistent with his/her beliefs. One of the teachers was primarily concerned with teacher-controlled discipline and form-focused instruction, and this was reflected in her frequent provision of explicit error correction. Another teacher believed that making students feel comfortable about speaking in their L2 in class is more important than perfecting their L2, and she did indeed rarely correct errors. Finally, the third teacher shared some of the second teacher's beliefs and emphasized that learners' willingness to talk in L2 is more important than grammatical accuracy, and this was reflected in the frequency of his use of topic elaboration rather than explicit correction.

Another variable worth investigating is teachers' L1 background. Arva and Medgyes (2000) examined whether there are differences in native-speaker (NS) and non-native speaker (NNS) teachers' stated beliefs about their classroom habits and their actual practice. In order to answer this research question, they made a recording of ten hours of classroom lessons conducted by NS (N = 5) and NNS (N = 5) teachers. The results revealed that in terms of feedback, NSs were more tolerant of errors than NNSs and thus corrected fewer errors. Drawing from some of the comments provided by NNS teachers, the researchers concluded that NNS teachers felt a stronger responsibility for correcting learners' errors because they, as L2 learners themselves, knew which linguistic aspects learners are liable to have problems with. These results were in accord with an earlier dataset, taken from the belief questionnaires from Medgyes (1994).

The above studies indicate that the amount and the way in which FL teachers provide CF seem to depend on their instructional beliefs. To date, however, research that has been done on the relation between teachers' beliefs about CF and their practice is limited. Furthermore, research that has been done on that relation and teacher L1 backgrounds is scarce. Thus, in countries such as Japan, where NNSs account for a large segment of the EFL teacher population, it will be worthwhile to conduct research that examines how NNS and NS teachers provide CF and investigate whether the two types of teachers provide CF differently and, if so, what reasons there are for the differences. This is what the present study purports to do. The research questions are as follows:

1. How do NS and NNS teachers' beliefs/perception differ in terms of treating morphosyntactic, lexical, and phonological errors?
2. How do NS and NNS teachers give CF for morphosyntactic, lexical, and phonological errors?

## Methodology

The method (i.e., participants, procedures, and coding) of the present study is similar to that of the study reported in Asari (2014); however, for the sake of convenience, it will be explained briefly.

### Participants

12 NS and 12 NNS teachers who work in public/private elementary/middle/high schools participated in the study. Basic information about the teachers is provided in the tables below (Tables 1 & 2). With an exception to NS teachers 8 and 9, the NS teachers in this study had over eight years of teaching experience. On the other hand, with an exception to NNS teachers 6, 9, and 10, the NNS teachers in this study had less than five years of teaching experience. Since the amount of teaching experience may be a significant variable that may affect FL teachers' on-the-spot decision making of CF, and as both NS and NNS groups of participants consist of teachers with a wide range of lengths of teaching experience, drawing out any conclusions based on this variable would lack validity. Rather, the variable that this study focusses on, is that of how L1 background affect teachers' beliefs about how CF should be provided and their actual performance.

TABLE 1  
*NS Teachers' Background*

Teacher	Sex	Length of stay in Japan
1	Male	8 years
2	Male	15 years
3	Male	8 years
4	Male	17 years
5	Male	17 years
6	Male	14 years 6 months
7	Male	17 years 9 months
8	Female	2 years
9	Male	2 years 10 months
10	Male	18 years
11	Male	15 years
12	Male	25 years

TABLE 2  
*NNS Teachers' Background*

Teacher	Sex	Amount of time spent abroad
1	Male	6 weeks (USA)
2	Male	5 years (Canada)
3	Female	3 weeks (Canada)
4	Female	3 years (India) & 10 months (USA)
5	Male	1 year (USA)
6	Female	10 months (UK)
7	Female	2 years (USA)
8	Male	2 months (UK)
9	Male	1 year 8 months (UK)
10	Male	1 year 3 months (UK)
11	Female	None
12	Male	3 weeks (UK) & 3 weeks (Canada)

### Procedure

The study consisted of three parts:

**Step 1.** The teachers completed a beliefs/perceptions questionnaire. It asked teachers about their perceptions on their use of CF in their day-to-day classwork. Specifically, there were two questions. The first question asked how often they think they correct their learners' morphosyntactic, lexical, and phonological errors, and the second question asked what percentage of those errors they think they correct in the form of implicit CF and what percentage in the form of explicit CF. They were also asked to provide reasons for their answers.

**Step 2.** The teachers were paired with the researcher, who played the role of an L2 speaking learner and in that capacity did a story retelling task. During this task, the researcher, in her role of the learner, uttered an even number of sentences in each of the four categories, namely, five sentences containing phonological errors, five containing lexical errors, five morphosyntactic errors, and five error-free sentences as distracters. Although this setting may have made some teachers reluctant to provide CF, the intention behind the researcher playing the role of an L2 learner was to make sure that the teachers would be exposed to the same errors in the same way. As there were 12 NS and 12 NNS teachers, and as each teacher was exposed to 15 errors planted in the learner's utterances, the total number of instances where there was an opportunity to provide CF was 180 (12 x 15) for either group of teachers. They were instructed to make any correction that they wanted to make other than explicit correction<sup>1</sup>, but were also given the choice of dismissing the errors if they decided that correction was unnecessary based on their beliefs.

**Step 3.** The teachers took part in a stimulated recall (SR) interview session. During the SR interview session, they were asked questions (Figure 1) which helped the researcher obtain information about reasons for their on-the-spot decision-making and about their beliefs/perceptions regarding their provision of CF.

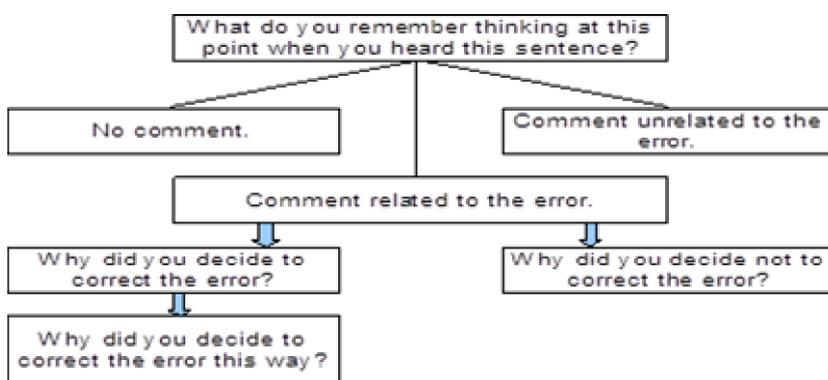


Figure 1. Stimulated recall interview questions.

## Coding

Using the comments provided in the SR interview, the teachers' reaction (or lack thereof) towards the errors were coded as follows:

<sup>1</sup> They were instructed to make any correction that they wanted to make in any way they chose but not in the form of explicit CF (e.g., metalinguistic clues, explicit correction). These instructions were given in order to investigate the specific ways in which implicit CF was given, which was the purpose of the study conducted for the dissertation (Asari, 2015). When, during the SR interview session (See Step 3), the teachers commented that they dismissed the learner's errors because they would be better treated with explicit correction, these instances labeled as "explicit" in Table 3.

- (a) Instances in which the teachers corrected or would have corrected the errors were coded as either “explicit CF” or “implicit CF”.
- (b) Instances in which the teachers dismissed the errors based on their instructional beliefs were coded as “intentional”. For example, a comment such as “I do not want to demotivate the learner by overcorrecting” was categorized as “intentional”.
- (c) Instances in which the teachers dismissed the errors because they were uncertain about the error (e.g., whether the utterance was incorrect or not) were coded as “uncertain”. For example, a comment such as “I don’t know if it is correct or incorrect, so I just let it go” was categorized as “uncertain”.
- (d) Instances in which the teachers dismissed the errors because they were not able to make a decision on how to correct them in a timely manner were coded as “undecided”. For example, a comment such as “I wasn’t able to make up mind on how to correct that error” was categorized as “undecided”.
- (e) Instances in which the teachers failed to correct the errors because they were not able to notice them were coded as “unnoticed”. A comment such as “There was nothing wrong with the sentence” was categorized as “unnoticed”.

## Errors

An example of morphosyntactic, lexical, and phonological errors are presented below. The errors are given in boldface. Refer to Appendix for all fifteen errors.

Example 9: Morphosyntactic errors

Minnie Mouse made a teddy bear as **present (as a present)**.

Example 10: Lexical errors

One night, Mickey **got (fell)** asleep and had a dream of Duffy.

Example 11: Phonological errors

When Minnie gave Mickey the **present (/plezənt/)** he opened it right away.

## Results and Discussion

### NS Teachers’ Beliefs/Perceptions for Morphosyntactic, Lexical, and Phonological Errors

The questionnaire responses indicated that only four teachers (NS teachers 1, 7, 9, and 10) think that they correct morphosyntactic errors frequently (i.e., over 50%) in their everyday classwork. Some of the beliefs shared amongst the NS teachers who said that they would rather let some errors go uncorrected were: (a) morphosyntactic errors do not require correction as long as what the learner is saying can be understood, (b) overcorrection may impede the flow of communication, and (c) correction runs the risk of damaging learners’ motivation and confidence (Example 12). These values were also expressed in their SR interviews (Example 13).

Example 12: NS Teacher 1’s beliefs/perceptions questionnaire comment

I’ll let it go unless it affects my understanding. Grammar takes the longest time to correct and can damage a student’s confidence if constantly corrected.

Example 13: NS Teacher 4's SR interview comment:

... if I go "No, no, no," then everything from then on is going to be judged to create more of a hindrance than producing language. I wanted you to build some confidence.

NS teachers' perceptions about how often they correct lexical errors were divided. While half of the teachers (NS teachers 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 11) said that they prefer to correct learners' lexical errors less than half of the time in their day-to-day classwork, the rest of them said the opposite. The latter believe that lexical errors affect comprehension and thus need to be treated to avoid misunderstanding. In contrast, the teachers who said that lexical errors do not need to be corrected frequently gave reasons similar to those for not correcting morphosyntactic errors. As regards how they would like to treat lexical errors, only four teachers (NS teachers 2, 3, 4, and 5) expressed a strong preference for the use of implicit CF. In the opinion of many of the NS teachers who advocate the use of explicit CF, lexical errors, unlike morphosyntactic errors, are usually committed because learners do not have adequate vocabulary. For this reason, many of the teachers believe that learners need to be explicitly provided with new words (Example 14).

Example 14: NS teacher 11's beliefs/perceptions questionnaire comment

Usually there is not much leeway in correct/incorrect vocabulary spelling. For actual vocabulary development, I occasionally take energy to expand on why a word choice would be better another way.

As in the case of lexical errors, NS teachers' perceptions about the frequency of CF provision toward learners' phonological errors in their day-to-day classwork were split. Six teachers (NS teachers 1, 2, 8, 9, 10, and 12) believe phonological errors should be treated frequently, while the other six argue otherwise. The discrepancy between the two types of teachers, namely those who believe in the importance of correcting phonological errors and those who do not, was rooted in the way the teachers perceive their responsibilities as NS teachers. As regards how they prefer to treat phonological errors, five teachers (NS teachers 1, 3, 9, 10, and 11) were for explicit correction. These teachers commented that the only way phonology can be taught is by explicitly telling them how to correct their mispronunciation (e.g., teaching tongue movements). This can be seen from the SR interview comment provided in the example below (Example 15). In contrast, the teachers who prefer implicit CF said that as long as their pronunciation is comprehensible it does not need to be treated overtly.

Example 15: NS Teacher 9's SR interview comment:

"Present" vs "plesent". I was debating whether to correct that or not but this would be one I would leave until the end. Pronunciation problems especially, it's a different skill. I think pronunciation errors are physical skill. If they are focusing on the physical part they will forget the next part. So for most of the pronunciation errors I collect them in my head and in the end I would say, "Can we focus on this pronunciation for a minute?" For explaining physical mouth positions, I would even use Japanese at this point. It's complicating sometimes so you have to use explanation of explicit correction for pronunciation errors.

## **NNS Teachers' Beliefs/Perceptions for Morphosyntactic, Lexical, and Phonological Errors**

As opposed to NS teachers, more NNS teachers (n = 7, NNS teachers 1, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12) said that they prefer to correct learners' morphosyntactic errors frequently with explicit CF (n = 6, NNS teachers 2, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 12). Many of these teachers believe that (a) learners are better able to understand the nature of their errors if they are corrected explicitly rather than implicitly because implicit correction is

unnoticeable for them and (b) strict correction for morphosyntactic errors is important as many of the classes they teach are form-focused (Example 16).

Example 16: NNS teacher 5's beliefs/perceptions questionnaire comment

Translation: I easily notice grammatical errors which are common among learners. I correct them in order to prepare learners for examinations.

NNS teachers' beliefs towards the necessity to correct learners' lexical errors was slightly less lenient when compared to morphosyntactic errors: Only five teachers (NNS teachers 1, 2, 10, 11, and 12) said they usually correct over 50% of the lexical errors in their day-to-day classwork. The main reason for correcting lexical errors was similar to that given by NS teachers: Those errors that may impact comprehension deserve correction (Example 23). As for their preference about their choice of CF, there were more teachers who said they favored explicit CF over implicit CF (n= 8, NNS teachers 1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, and 11).

As for phonological errors, five teachers (NNS teachers 2, 5, 7, 10, and 12) said that they correct them because they hold a strong belief that pronunciation plays an important role in communication (Example 17). The rest of the teachers, on the other hand, turned out to be of the opinion that phonological errors should be tolerated as long as the pronunciation is comprehensible and thus said that they do not correct them frequently. As regards how they perceive their day-to-day CF provision toward phonological errors, eight teachers (NNS teachers 1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, and 12) said that they prefer to correct them explicitly; the rest said they prefer the use of implicit CF. As in the case of lexical and morphosyntactic errors, teachers' preference for explicit CF is rooted in their belief that learners utilize explicit CF more efficiently than implicit CF (Example 18).

Example 17: NNS teacher 4's beliefs/perceptions questionnaire comment

Translation: Pronunciation is a skill necessary for conducting conversations in English. Pronunciation errors are easy to correct because they are fairly predictable.

Example 18: NNS teacher 5's beliefs/perceptions questionnaire comment

Translation: Learners can work on their pronunciation better if the teacher demonstrates the actual movements of the tongue for the production of sounds.

## **NS Teachers' Actual Treatment of Morphosyntactic, Lexical, and Phonological Errors**

Contrary to their beliefs and perceptions about how often they correct learners' morphosyntactic errors, the NS teachers in the study were actually less tolerant of morphosyntactic errors. During the didactic interaction, all of the teachers corrected three to five (out of five) of them. As regards how they correct morphosyntactic errors, most of the teachers were able to execute their beliefs; as for only two teachers (NS teachers 7 and 10), the number of instances in which they would have preferred to use explicit CF was greater than that of instances in which they provided implicit CF (Example 19).

Example 19: NS teacher 2's provision of explicit CF

Researcher: When Mickey woke up in the morning, he find a letter in his hand.

NS 2: Find – could you change that to found please? Please say it again

As for lexical errors, during the didactic interaction, all of the teachers except for NS 4 corrected the learner's errors frequently (three or more errors out of five). As in the case for morphosyntactic errors, NS teachers seem to correct more errors than they think they do. As regard the consistency in teachers'

performance and perceptions/beliefs about how they correct lexical errors, only NS teachers 7 and 11 would have used explicit CF more than implicit CF during the didactic interaction.

In the case of phonological errors, on the one hand, some teachers were able to put their belief into practice (i.e., NS teachers 1, 3, 6, 8, 11, and 12). On other hand, the remaining teachers were not able to do so because they could not notice the errors. In fact, the SR interview revealed that almost 40% of the errors went unnoticed. A possible explanation for this outcome will be provided later.

### **NNS Teachers' Performance for Morphosyntactic, Lexical, and Phonological Errors**

The degree to which NNS teachers were able to put their beliefs into practice depended on individual teachers. Of those teachers who said they prefer to correct learners' morphosyntactic errors frequently (over 50% of the time), only four teachers (NNS teachers 7, 9, 11, and 12) provided frequent CF; and of those teachers who said they prefer the use of explicit correction, only one teacher (NNS 10) would have preferred to use explicit CF more frequently than they used implicit CF. The remaining teachers opted for implicit CF (Example 20).

Example 20: NNS teacher 4's provision of implicit CF

Researcher: Minnie Mouse made a teddy bear as present

NNS 4: As a present?

Despite NNS teachers' belief in the importance of providing frequent CF for lexical errors, during the didactic interaction, only four errors were corrected (one by NNS teacher 2, two by NNS teacher 8, and one by NNS teacher 10). Besides the two errors that were intentionally dismissed, the errors were not treated because the teachers were either uncertain whether the errors were really incorrect or they were not able to simply notice the errors.

A similar pattern was found for phonological errors. Although NNS teachers have a concrete idea of how and how much phonological errors should be corrected, given that over 90% of the phonological errors went unnoticed, it can be said that their inability to notice learner errors, once again, held them back from putting their beliefs into practice.

All in all, the comments provided during the SR interview, or lack thereof, revealed that one apparent factor that prevented all of the NNS teachers from materializing their beliefs was limitation in their proficiency: NNS teachers were sometimes not able to correct the learner's errors because they (a) could not notice them, (b) could not decide how to correct them, and (c) were uncertain of whether the learner utterances were erroneous or not. This is a point which we will discuss in more detail later.

### **NS and NNS Teachers' Uncorrected Errors**

The table below is a summary of NS and NNS teachers' reaction to the learner's erroneous utterance. NS teachers tend to provide CF quite frequently (approximately 72%), and they prefer to use implicit CF than explicit CF. As for NNS teachers, they do not correct learners' errors frequently not because of their instructional belief but because of their linguistic limitation. In total, the number of morphosyntactic, lexical, and phonological errors that were unintentionally left untreated (i.e., cases of undecided, uncertain, and unnoticed) were (a) 3, 5, and 24 respectively by NS teachers and (b) 27, 53, and 51 respectively by NNS teachers. This outcome will be discussed in the next section.

TABLE 3  
*Breakdown of NS and NNS Teachers' Reaction*

		NS		NNS	
		N	%	n	%
Total	Implicit CF	96	53.33	33	18.33
	Explicit CF	33	18.33	9	5
	Intentional	19	10.56	6	3.33
	Undecided	4	2.22	3	1.67
	Uncertain	0	0.00	10	5.56
	Unnoticed	28	15.56	119	66.11
	Total	180	100.00	180	100.00
Morphosyntactic	Implicit CF	38	63.33	24	40.00
	Explicit CF	16	26.67	5	8.33
	Intentional	3	5.00	4	6.67
	Undecided	0	0.00	2	3.33
	Uncertain	0	0.00	0	0.00
	Unnoticed	3	5.00	25	41.67
	Total	60	100.00	60	100.00
Lexical	Implicit CF	41	68.33	3	5.00
	Explicit CF	10	16.67	3	5.00
	Intentional	4	6.67	1	1.67
	Undecided	3	5.00	0	0.00
	Uncertain	0	0.00	9	15.00
	Unnoticed	2	3.33	44	73.33
	Total	60	100.00	60	100.00
Phonological	Implicit CF	17	28.33	6	10.00
	Explicit CF	7	11.67	1	1.67
	Intentional	12	20.00	1	1.67
	Undecided	1	1.67	1	1.67
	Uncertain	0	0.00	1	1.67
	Unnoticed	23	38.33	50	83.33
	Total	60	100.00	60	100.00

### NS and NNS Teachers' Beliefs/Perceptions about CF and Their Actual Performance

The analysis of the performance, SR interview comments, and the beliefs/perceptions questionnaire responses showed that both NS and NNS teachers agree that error correction is necessary for learners' L2 development to some extent. At the same time, however, teachers of both types agree that overcorrection may damage learners' confidence, resulting in their demotivation and unwillingness to speak in class. Moreover, valuing the communicative flow was another factor that they said would be a reason they avoid overcorrection in their classwork.

In this study, however, there were not many cases in which the errors were dismissed intentionally and there seems to be a tendency for teachers to correct more errors than they think (at least for NS teachers). One possible explanation for the inconsistency between the teachers' beliefs and their practice is that they drew on their theoretical knowledge when asked to provide their beliefs about CF but, when asked to engage in an actual interaction with a learner and provide reasons for their performance, they considered practical factors such as efficiency in following the teaching plan and avoiding remarks damaging for affective aspects of learners' psychology. For example, NS teacher 2 possessed a teaching philosophy that providing correction for phonological errors is one of his main roles as an assistant language teacher (ALT)<sup>2</sup> and this was specifically notified in the beliefs/perceptions questionnaire. Yet, when confronted

<sup>2</sup> Assistant language teachers are NS teachers who do not have a teacher's license but assist a Japanese teacher of English in class at junior and senior high schools. They are also involved in the preparation of teaching materials and in English-related extracurricular activities.

with phonological errors during the interaction, the same teacher dismissed several of them. When asked, during the SR interview, for reasons that he chose not to correct some of the phonological errors, he stated that it is better to leave some phonological errors uncorrected as correction would damage learners' confidence. This inconsistency is also found among the teachers in Basturkmen et al.'s (2004) study. They note that, with more teaching experience, some teachers "will be able to proceduralize their technical knowledge, thus making it more accessible" (Basturkmen et al., 2004, p. 267), and the inconsistencies will disappear over time.

Even if their technical knowledge is proceduralized as Basturkmen et al. argue, however, there will still be situations where teachers need to be flexible. For instance, teachers face situations where they must act against their beliefs because what may be theoretically profitable for some learners may not necessarily be beneficial for others. Furthermore, a teacher who holds a strong belief that a learner's errors need to be treated immediately and consistently may need to refrain from doing so in front of his or her peers so as not to demotivate this learner from speaking L2. Still another example may be a situation in which a teacher teaching under time pressure needs to avoid time-consuming activities in class in violation of his or her beliefs. FL teachers may also be advised to make many other realistic choices in handling errors. And this flexibility may be an important and necessary skill for FL teachers.

Given the importance of the flexibility discussed above, there seems to be a condition that must be met if teachers are to be as flexible as they need to be. The condition in question is the L2 proficiency which seems to be an asset that teachers need to have for displaying flexibility. Some teachers, especially NNS teachers, may lack the skills necessary to implement the different kinds of feedback spontaneously.

It has been reported that the ability to notice IL/TL gap may depend on the one's language proficiency (Ammar, 2008; Ammar & Spada, 2006; Philp, 2003). While SLA literature generally focuses on the usefulness of CF from learners' standpoint, there is a need to pay attention to its usefulness from teachers' point of view: There may be problems that teachers face when providing CF. In fact, it is not difficult to imagine that, when NNS teachers, who are themselves L2 speakers, encounter unpredictable errors during ongoing communication, limitations to their language proficiency can be a hindrance to their ability to provide CF. If we perceive the production of uptake or reformulation to be a goal for *learners* in utilizing CF, theoretically this cannot be achieved unless learners are able to notice the negative and/or positive evidence in the CF. Similarly, if we perceive the production of CF to be a goal for *teachers*, this cannot be achieved unless teachers are able to notice learners' error and at the same time compare it with the corresponding TL form. In other words, both teachers and learners need to have the ability to notice and the ability to compare if they are to successfully go through their respective processes. However, because NNS teachers only have limited proficiency in the TL, they turn out to have precisely the same challenges as the learners as far as noticing and comparison are concerned. This challenge that NNS teachers face is a factor that is often overlooked.

NNS teachers are not the only ones with the limitation. It should be remembered that nearly 40% of the cases in which NS teachers did not correct phonological errors were coded as *Unnoticed*. However, it is hard to imagine that NS teachers are not able to notice phonological errors made in this study. In such case, it can be assumed that some phonological errors are tolerated or desensitized by NS teachers.

When the transcriptions of the feedback session were examined, a certain pattern emerged about the way in which some errors were corrected while some were not. A detailed explanation on this pattern is provided in Asari (2014), but it will be discussed briefly here. The errors which were almost uniformly noticed were clothes (/ˈkloʊðɪz/, 12 of 12 NSs), very (/ˈberi/, 11 of 12 NSs), and present (/ˈplezənt/, 10 of 12 NSs). In contrast, happy (/ˈhæpi/) was noticed only by two teachers; then (/ˈzen/) only by three. The difference between two linguistic forms may be categorized as either continuous difference (or gradience, as the concept is sometimes called; see Crystal, 2003, p. 207) or discrete difference. Discrete difference is such that the two forms in question belong to distinct categories and cannot be neutralized into a third form. The former three forms belong to this category. Continuous difference, in contrast, is such that an unbroken continuum exists between the two forms in question, an infinite number of intervening forms in it being conceivable. The latter two forms belong to this category. It may be the case that if there is

discrete difference between IL and TL forms, the IL form is likely to be perceived clearly as an error. By contrast, teachers show less sensitivity to continuous difference between the two forms, possibly due to the blurred level of acceptability of the IL form.

## Conclusion

### Pedagogical Implications

From this study, we have found that FL teachers' error treatment is limited for a number of reasons. This is problematic as the poverty of CF can cause a disadvantage for learners: they may interpret the absence of correction subsequent to an error as an indication that their message was accurately produced, and misjudgment of this sort could lead to fossilization of errors. Vigil and Oller (1976) point out:

Unless learners receive appropriate sorts of cognitive feedback concerning errors, those errors can be expected to fossilize... As long as some non-excessive corrective feedback is available to prod the learner to continue to modify attempts to express himself in the target language, it is predictable that the learner's grammatical system will continue to develop. If the corrective feedback (whether self-generated or provided by the learner's interlocutors) drops below some minimal level or disappears altogether, the grammar, or the rules no longer attended by corrective feedback, will tend to fossilize. (pp. 284-295)

Furthermore, there are studies that report that (a) learners realize the importance of CF for their L2 development, (b) learners feel that they learn more when their teachers correct their errors, (c) they do not feel resentment when teachers correct their errors, and (d) they would like their teachers to correct their frequent errors (Lee, 2013). Thus, there may be a sense in which failure to provide sufficient CF and to satisfy learners' needs mentioned above is in fact more demotivating for them. Given (a) the positive impact that CF is empirically proven to bring about on learners' L2, (b) the risk of fossilization that the lack of CF can cause, and (c) the counterproductiveness of constantly aiming at protecting learners' motivation, it might be better to provide learners with as much CF as possible (Park, 2010).

EFL teaching in Japan happens to be conducted in a situation in which NNS teachers far outnumber their NS counterparts; therefore, there is an urgent need to improve language proficiency development programs for NNS teachers. One of the NNS teachers' weaknesses is their inability to notice unpredictable errors and react to them. Finding ways to overcome teachers' current weaknesses is prerequisite to enhancing the quality of language education in Japan. For example, developing an EFL learners' corpus and identifying some of the frequent errors may help prospective teachers to prepare themselves for such errors occurring in the classroom when they actually face their learners. Measures such as this will help teachers to materialize what they believe should be done in their everyday classroom activities.

On the other hand, there should be a way to train NS teachers so that their sensitivity to learners' interlanguage phonology is heightened and maintained. In this area, too, a corpus consisting of typical learners' problems may provide NS teachers with valuable information, and it may in turn improve their ability to react to phonological errors in the classroom. There is a danger that the aforementioned sensitivity of NS teachers is weakened over time through their contact with the community of NNS learners. This means that not only initial training at the beginning of NS teachers' careers but also in-service training for experienced teachers will be needed.

As conducting the above-suggested training and obtaining fruit from it may be a lengthy process, methods should be worked out in each EFL situation whereby NS and NNS teachers, with their respective strengths and weaknesses, can provide each other with support so that they can each compensate for the limitations to their skills.

## Limitations

This study is not without limitations. First, having the researcher play the role of a learner may have skewed the teachers' perception of what is being said by their learner. While the data were collected from a dyadic interaction in this study, the teachers who provided those data normally deal with 30-40 learners in their everyday teaching situations. Furthermore, they teach English mainly to learners of ages 13-17. The artificial environment in which the data were collected may not be a true reflection of the teachers' performance at their respective schools. Other major limitations include the limited number of teachers and the limited number of errors targeted. As the data only consist of 12 NS and 12 NNS teachers, it is difficult to guarantee true comparison between NS and NNS teachers. In fact, it is possible that the data are a reflection of the NS and NNS teachers' idiosyncrasies more than it is a reflection of tendencies found among teachers in general. Moreover, teachers' individual factors other than their L1 were not taken into consideration in the design of this study. Factors such as their age, their gender, the linguistic communities in which they grew up, the extent to which they received academic training in TEFL or TESOL, and the amount of experience they have had on the job were placed outside the scope of the present study. Given the limitations to the present study, its results should be interpreted with caution.

Nevertheless, as teachers are a very important group of stakeholders in language teaching, data about them are crucial in any attempt to analyze the effect of any program for teaching foreign languages. Even though the present study is only one of a small scale, the findings obtained from it may at least provide a hint for improving the overall quality of language teaching.

## Acknowledgement

The present paper is an abridged version of Chapter 6 of my doctoral dissertation, "Investigation of the Effect of Recasts from Multiple Perspectives: The method, the teacher, and the learner," submitted to Waseda University in 2015. The Introduction is partly from other parts of the dissertation as well.

## The Author

Yoko Asari is Junior Associate Professor at Tokyo University of Science, Tokyo, Japan. She specializes in second language acquisition (SLA). Her primary research interests include oral and written corrective feedback, SLA process, and instructed SLA.

Department of Liberal Arts  
Faculty of Science (Division 1)  
Tokyo University of Science  
Tokyo, 162-8601, Japan  
Tel +81 352287343  
Email: asari.y@rs.tus.ac.jp

## References

- Ammar, A. (2008). Prompts and recasts: Differential effects on second language morphosyntax. *Language Teaching Research*, 12(2), 183-210.
- Ammar, A., & Spada, N. (2006). One size fits all? Recasts, prompts and L2 learning. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 28, 543-574.
- Árva, V., & Medgyes, P. (2000). Native and non-native teachers in the classroom. *System*, 28, 355-372.

- Asari, Y. (2014). The beliefs and performance of native speaker and non-native speaker teachers of English: A study of corrective feedback provision for phonological errors. *The English Phonetic Society of Japan, 19*, 199-211.
- Asari, Y. (2015). *Investigation of the effect of recasts from multiple perspectives: The method, the teacher, and the learner* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Waseda University, Tokyo.
- Basturkmen, H., Loewen, S., & Ellis, R. (2004). Teachers' stated beliefs about incidental focus on form and their classroom practices. *Applied Linguistics, 25*, 243-272.
- Chavez, M. (2006). Classroom-language use in teacher-led instruction and teachers' self perceived roles. *International Review of Applied Linguistics, 44*, 49-102.
- Crystal, D. (2003). *A dictionary of linguistics and phonetics* (5th ed.). Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Doughty, C., & Varela, E. (1998). Communicative focus on form. In C. Doughty & J. Williams (Eds.), *Focus on form in classroom second language acquisition* (pp. 114-138). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ellis, R., & He, X. (1999). The roles of modified input and output in incidental acquisition of word meanings. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 21*, 285-301.
- Ellis, R., Loewen, S., & Erlam, R. (2006). Implicit and explicit corrective feedback and the acquisition of L2 grammar. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 28*, 339-368.
- Gitsaki, C., & Althobaiti, N. (2010). ESL teachers' use of corrective feedback and its effect on learners' uptake. *The Journal of Asia TEFL, 7*(1), 197-219.
- Gurzynski-Weiss, L. (2010). *Factors influencing oral corrective feedback provision in the Spanish foreign language classroom: Investigating instructor native/nonnative speaker status, SLA education, and teaching experience* (Doctoral dissertation). Georgetown University, Washington D.C.
- Izumi, S. (2002). Output, input enhancement, and the noticing hypothesis: An experimental study of ESL relativization. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 24*, 541-577.
- Izumi, S., Bigelow, M., Fujiwara, M., & Fearnow, S. (1999). Testing the output hypothesis: Effects of output on noticing and second language acquisition. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 21*, 421-452.
- Lee, E. J. (2013). Corrective feedback preferences and learner repair among advanced ESL students. *System, 41*, 217-230.
- Li, S. (2010). The effectiveness of corrective feedback in SLA: A meta-analysis. *Language Learning, 60*(2), 309-365.
- Lyster, R., & Ranta, L. (1997). Corrective feedback and learner uptake: Negotiation of form in communicative classrooms. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 20*, 37-66.
- Mackey, A. (2012). *Input, interaction, and corrective feedback in L2 learning*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Mackey, A. & Goo, J. (2007). Interaction research in SLA: A meta-analysis and research synthesis. In A. Mackey (Ed.), *Conversation interaction and second language acquisition* (pp. 407-452). New York: Oxford Press.
- Oliver, R. (1995). Negative feedback in child NS/NNS conversation. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 18*, 459-481.
- McDonough, K. (2005). Identifying the impact of negative feedback and learners' responses on ESL question development. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 27*, 79-103.
- Medgyes, P. (1994). *The non-native teacher*. London: Macmillan.
- Nobuyoshi, J., & Ellis, R. (1993). Focused communication tasks and second language acquisition. *English Language Teaching, 47*, 203-210.
- Panova, I., & Lyster, R. (2002). Patterns of corrective feedback and uptake in an adult ESL classroom. *TESOL Quarterly, 36*, 573-595.
- Park, G. (2010). Preference of corrective feedback approaches perceived by native English teachers and students. *The Journal of Asia TEFL, 7*(4), 29-52.

- Philp, J. (2003). Constraints on “noticing the gap”: Nonnative speakers’ noticing of recasts in NS-NNS interaction. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 25, 99-126.
- Schmidt, R. (1990). The role of consciousness in second language learning. *Applied Linguistics*, 11, 129-158.
- Schmidt, R. (2010). Attention, awareness, and individual differences in language learning. In W. M. Chan, S. Chi, K. N. Cin, J. Istanto, M. Nagami, J. W. Sew, T. Suthiwan, & I. Walker (Eds.), *Proceedings of CLaSIC 2010, Singapore, December 2-4* (pp. 721-737). Singapore: National University of Singapore, Centre for Language Studies.
- Silver, R. (2000). Input, output, and negotiation: Conditions for second language development. In B. Swierzbin, F. Morris, M. Anderson, C. Klee, & E. Tarone (Eds.), *Social and cognitive factors in second language acquisition: Selected proceedings of the 1999 Second Language Research Forum* (pp. 325-371). Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Press.
- Swain, M. (2005). The output hypothesis: theory and research. In E. Hinkel (Ed.), *Handbook on research in second language learning and teaching* (pp. 471-484). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Vigil, N. A., & Oller, J. W. (1976). Rule fossilization: A tentative model. *Language Learning*, 26, 281-295.
- White, L. (1991). Adverb placement in second language acquisition: Some effects of positive and negative evidence in the classroom. *Second Language Research*, 7, 133-161.

## Appendix

### Morphosyntactic errors

Minnie Mouse made a teddy bear as **present (as a present)**.  
She **putted (put)** a letter for Mickey in a bottle.  
When Mickey woke up in the morning, he **find (found)** the letter in his hand.  
When their friends overheard the story, they were very **exciting (excited)**.  
Everyone **were (was)** happy to spend time with Duffy.

### Lexical errors

One night, Mickey **got (fell)** asleep and had a dream of Duffy.  
But there were so many orders, and she could not **catch in (up)**.  
Her friends then **presented (offered)** to help her make the special teddy bear.  
Today, there is a rumor that Duffy is occasionally **making (taking)** a walk at the harbor.  
Hopefully, one day, you will be able to run **in (into)** Duffy and for sure he will bring you happiness.

### Phonological errors

When Minnie gave Mickey the **present (/ˈplezənt/)** he opened it right away.  
He was very **happy (/ˈhapi/)** and named the teddy bear Duffy.  
Mickey was also very surprised to see Duffy wearing **clothes (/ˈkloʊðɪz/)**.  
They thought Duffy must be a **very (/ˈberi/)** special teddy bear.  
**Then (/ˈzen/)** everyone in town wanted to have their own Duffy.