FEEDBACK THAT SPEAKS: UNCOVERING STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS TO CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK IN FORMAL SPEAKING CLASS

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Abstract: This study examines how students feel about receiving corrective feedback from lecturers in the Speaking for Formal Interaction course and how it helps them become more proficient speakers. English education students participated in the study, which used a case study design. After being gathered via focus groups and questionnaires, the data was subjected to a thematic analysis. According to the findings, students believe that corrective feedback is crucial, particularly in formal settings. Direct correction was preferred by 27.4% of the 95 respondents, followed by recast (26.3%) and metalinguistic feedback (21.1%), indicating a preference for clear, direct feedback. This is corroborated by the fact that 12 out of 20 FGD participants preferred Direct Correction due to its advantages for clarity and retention. Students of all proficiency levels emphasized its linguistic and affective benefits. According to the study, in order to improve speaking performance, lecturers should establish a supportive environment and balance the different kinds of feedback.

Keywords*: corrective feedback, speaking skill, student attitude*

INTRODUCTION

In classes that emphasize speaking and require students to produce language in real time, corrective feedback (CF) is especially important. CF is the term used to describe the instructional responses that teachers give to students in order to correct their linguistic errors and help them become more accurate and fluent (Cui, 2022). CF becomes even more crucial in formal speaking contexts, like academic discussions or structured role-plays, where students are expected to follow grammatical and contextual correctness rules in addition to communicating effectively (Ha & Murray, 2023).

Recent research has brought attention to the dual effects of CF on cognition and emotion. In terms of cognition, CF assists students in identifying their mistakes, editing their language output, and internalizing proper syntax (Gan et al., 2021). When properly administered, CF effectively increases students' self-esteem, drive, and involvement (Mahara & Hartono, 2024). However, students' perceptions and cultural backgrounds have a significant impact on how effective it is. For example, students

may react passively or anxiously to correction unless it is delivered in a supportive way in Indonesian classrooms, where teachers are frequently seen as authority figures (Maslucha et al., 2024).

There is still little research on students' attitudes toward CF in formal speaking contexts, particularly among beginner or intermediate EFL learners in Indonesia, despite the growing recognition of the importance of CF. The majority of current research focuses on advanced learners in casual settings or on written feedback (Tarigan et al., 2023). There is a knowledge gap regarding how CF performs in structured oral academic interactions, where performance and accuracy requirements are higher. Additionally, the cultural nuances influencing how feedback is received and processed by learners are still underexplored, particularly in Southeast Asian contexts (Altamimi & Masood, 2021).

Limited vocabulary, grammatical errors, and the fear of making mistakes in front of peers are some of the difficulties Indonesian students face when learning English, particularly those who are just starting out (Tang et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2021). These problems might prevent them from getting the most out of CF. Examining students' attitudes toward various CF strategies is crucial because they affect their motivation and learning outcomes (Gan et al., 2021). These strategies include elicitation, recasts, explicit correction, and clarification requests.

There is a knowledge gap regarding CF in formal speaking classes for beginning EFL students because the majority of prior research concentrated on investigating advanced learners or focusing on informal contexts (Tarigan et al., 2023). Research on CF in formal interaction settings, like that conducted by Ha and Murray (2023) on written assignments or Gharani et al. (2023) on advanced students, does not adequately address the particular requirements faced by novices in structured speaking settings. Furthermore, cultural factors affecting how CF is received in Indonesia have received little attention (Altamimi & Masood, 2021; Ahmad, 2023).

By investigating EFL students' perceptions of lecturers' corrective feedback in the Speaking for Formal Interaction course at Sriwijaya University, this study seeks to close the gap. Although corrective feedback in writing or among advanced learners has been the subject of recent studies (e.g., Gharani et al., 2023; Ha & Murray, 2023), little is known about how beginner to intermediate learners in formal speaking settings perceive various forms of feedback. Furthermore, little research has been done in Indonesia, particularly on how cultural norms affect students' acceptance of constructive criticism (Maslucha et al., 2024; Ahmad, 2023). In order to offer context-specific insights that can enhance feedback practices, this study focuses on a context that has received less attention: formal academic speaking in Indonesia. The following questions are developed from the research problems to direct this study:

1. What types of corrective feedback are commonly used by lecturers of English in the Speaking for Formal Interaction class?
2. What are the students' attitudes towards lecturers' corrective feedback that are commonly used in the Speaking for Formal Interaction class?
3. What significance does corrective feedback give in improving students' speaking skills in the Speaking for Formal Interaction class?

METHODOLOGY

Students in the second semester of Sriwijaya University's Speaking for Formal Interaction course participated in this study. comprising 95 students. Since they were enrolled in Speaking for Formal Interaction at the time of the study, they were chosen through purposive sampling.

Table 1. The population and sample of the study

No	Class	Population/Sample	Survey Participant	FGD Participant
1.	Palembang	30 students	30 students	2 Groups (5 Students each)
2.	Indralaya	65 students	65 students	2 Groups (5 Students each)
Total		**95 students**	**95 students**	**4 Groups (5 students each)**

Design and Procedures

In order to give a more thorough understanding of how students perceive oral corrective feedback, this study used a mixed-methods design, combining quantitative and qualitative data (Ha, Murray, & Riazi, 2021). A closed-ended questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale was used in the quantitative phase. It was modified from recent research on corrective feedback and pilot tested to guarantee its reliability and clarity (Mawarni & Murtafi'ah, 2023). All participating students received the questionnaire, which they filled out anonymously to promote truthful answers.

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with chosen students from a range of academic backgrounds comprised the qualitative phase concurrently. In order to promote candid conversation about students' emotional responses and preferences regarding oral corrective feedback, these focus group discussions (FGDs) were held in small groups. In order to keep the discussions on track and give participants the freedom to express their opinions freely, a semi-structured protocol was used (Mahara & Hartono, 2022). In order to guarantee data relevance and comparability, data collection for both phases took place during the same academic semester. In order to reach thorough conclusions, the quantitative and qualitative data were first examined independently before being triangulated during interpretation (Prakoso, Munir, & Mustofa, 2024).

Data Collection and Data Analysis

Two primary tools were used in this study: a questionnaire and focus group discussions. All second-semester students enrolled in the Speaking for Formal Interaction course received the questionnaire, and in order to gain a deeper qualitative understanding of students' experiences with CF, FGDs were conducted with specific groups.

Descriptive statistics were utilized to analyze quantitative data from the questionnaire, which used a five-point Likert scale, to determine the common feedback types used by lecturers and gauge students' attitudes toward CF (Putra & Hapsari, 2022; Saputra & Darmawan, 2021). The frequency of different CF forms and trends in students' perceptions were both revealed by the statistical analysis.

The questionnaire was subjected to an initial statistical analysis in order to guarantee the validity and reliability of the instrument. In order to determine whether

the items significantly contributed to the construct being measured, each item was tested using a bivariate correlation with the students' overall perception scores. The statistical significance of each item's correlation with the overall perception construct is shown by the p-values in Table 2. Every item was deemed suitable for inclusion in the final analysis since they all displayed significant relationships ($p < 0.05$). The full test results are displayed in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Validity test results: questionnaire items and corresponding p-values

No.	Questionnaire Item	p-value
1	I consider my current English proficiency level as:	0.003
2	I use English outside the classroom:	0.003
3	I speak English in the classroom:	0.002
4	I enjoy classroom interactions more in the form of:	0.003
5	I find it difficult to speak English:	0.003
6	Making speaking mistakes makes me doubt my English skills:	0.002
7	My lecturer often corrects my mistakes when I speak:	0.005
8	I think corrective feedback is very important for improving my speaking skills:	0.002
9	I feel comfortable receiving corrections from my lecturer in front of my classmates:	0.004
10	I feel nervous or anxious when receiving corrective feedback from my lecturer:	0.004
11	I prefer my lecturer to give corrections directly (explicit) rather than indirectly (implicit):	0.004
12	I prefer my mistakes to be corrected through:	0.003
13	I prefer to receive corrections immediately while speaking rather than after finishing my speech:	0.005
14	I feel more motivated to speak English in class when I receive corrections from my lecturer:	0.004
15	I often apply the corrections I receive in future conversations:	0.005
16	I feel that corrective feedback helps improve my speaking accuracy and fluency:	0.001
17	I find it difficult to understand corrective feedback from my lecturer:	0.001
18	I prefer to receive more corrections while speaking in class:	0.002
19	I feel frustrated or embarrassed if I am corrected too often by my lecturer:	0.005
20	I prefer my mistakes to be corrected through:	0.003
21	The type of corrective feedback that helps me the most is:	0.005
22	I feel more confident speaking after receiving corrective feedback from my lecturer:	0.005
23	I believe corrective feedback from my lecturer has significantly improved my speaking ability:	0.002

24	I feel that receiving too much corrective feedback may discourage me from speaking to avoid making mistakes:	0.004

The FGDs' qualitative data were verbatim transcribed and subjected to reflexive thematic analysis by accordance with Braun and Clarke's updated guidelines (2022), which comprised six steps: (3) axial coding to group related codes and identify patterns; (4) theme review to ensure coherence and relevance to the research objectives; (5) defining and naming themes to clearly capture their essence; (6) report writing with supporting participant quotes; (5) data familiarization through repeated reading of transcripts; and (4) open coding to label meaningful segments. This approach made it possible to identify important themes like motivational responses to corrective feedback (CF), preferences, and emotional reactions.

A series of semi-structured questions was created to help direct the Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and investigate students' knowledge, experiences, and preferences with regard to oral corrective feedback (CF) in speaking classes. Table 3 below displays the list of FGD questions.

Table 3. FGD questions

No	FGD Question
1	How do you define oral corrective feedback in speaking classes?
2	What do you think the main goal when receiving oral corrective feedback in a speaking class? How do you determine whether this goal has been achieved?
3	How important do you think oral corrective feedback is in improving speaking skills in a formal interaction class? Why?
4	In your opinion, what are the characteristics of effective oral corrective feedback in a speaking class?
5	What type of oral corrective feedback do you most frequently receive from your instructor? Does the way your instructor gives feedback vary depending on the situation or the individual?
6	Do you feel that oral corrective feedback has significantly impacted your speaking skills? If so, how?
7	Are there any types of oral feedback that you think should be avoided? Why?
8	What type of oral corrective feedback helps you remember and apply the learning more effectively? Why?
9	How important is body language (gestures, eye contact, facial expressions) in oral corrective feedback? In your opinion, how should body language be used when providing feedback in a speaking class?

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
Findings

The findings are based on both qualitative information from focus group discussions (FGDs) and quantitative data gathered via questionnaires. These results collectively offer a thorough understanding of the preferences, attitudes, and perceived effects of corrective feedback among students enrolled in the Speaking for Formal Interaction course.

What types of corrective feedback are commonly used by lecturers of English in the Speaking for Formal Interaction class?

Focus group discussions (FGDs) and student questionnaires were used to collect data in order to investigate this aspect.

Questionnaire Results

Students' preferences for different forms of feedback in enhancing their speaking performance are revealed by the analysis of the questionnaire item "The type of corrective feedback that helps me the most is:." Direct Correction was selected by the largest percentage of students (27.4%) out of 95 respondents, closely followed by Recast (26.3%) and Metalinguistic Feedback (21.1%). Clarification Request (2.1%), Elicitation (7.4%), and Repetition (15.8%) were the other feedback types chosen. The figure below displays the questionnaire's results.
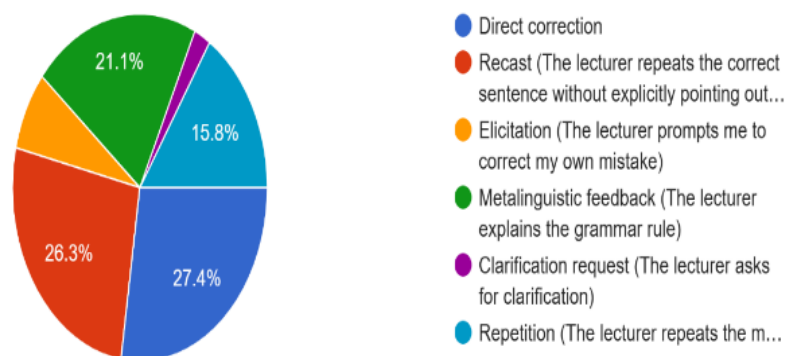

Figure 1. Types of corrective feedback commonly used by English lecturers in the *Speaking for Formal Interaction* class, based on student questionnaire responses.

FGD Results

According to the results of the Focus Group Discussion (FGD), 12 out of 20 students indicated that they preferred direct correction as their preferred form of feedback because they appreciated its clarity, immediacy, and ease of remembering and implementing corrections. Although they were not as commonly mentioned in the FGD, recasts and other feedback types such as elicitation, metalinguistic feedback, clarification, and repetition were acknowledged for promoting introspection and self-correction. When taken as a whole, these results show that students strongly prefer lecturers to give them direct, concise feedback on how to improve their speaking abilities. To provide a clearer overview of the student responses, the following table summarizes the number of students who favored each type of corrective feedback, along with their assigned student codes.

Table 4. Summary of FGD results on students' preferred types of corrective feedback

No.	Type of Corrective Feedback	Number of Students	Student Codes
1	Direct Correction	12 students	CE, AF, RD, SR, NM, AN, KK, LN, RA, SHM, AA, RR
2	Recast	2 students	SR, SM

| 3	Elicitation	1 student	AU
4	Metalinguistic Feedback	1 student	EF
5	Clarification Request	1 student	EE
6	Repetition	2 students	RR, RC

What are the students' attitudes towards lecturers' corrective feedback that are commonly used in the Speaking for Formal Interaction class?

Based only on questionnaire responses, the results of the Speaking for Formal Interaction class show that students generally have a positive opinion of the lecturers' corrective criticism. Corrective feedback was acknowledged by the vast majority of students as a crucial component of their speaking development. Specifically, 87% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "Corrective feedback is very important for improving my speaking skills," resulting in a mean score of 4.47, which falls into the positive category according to Sugiyono's (2019) Likert scale.
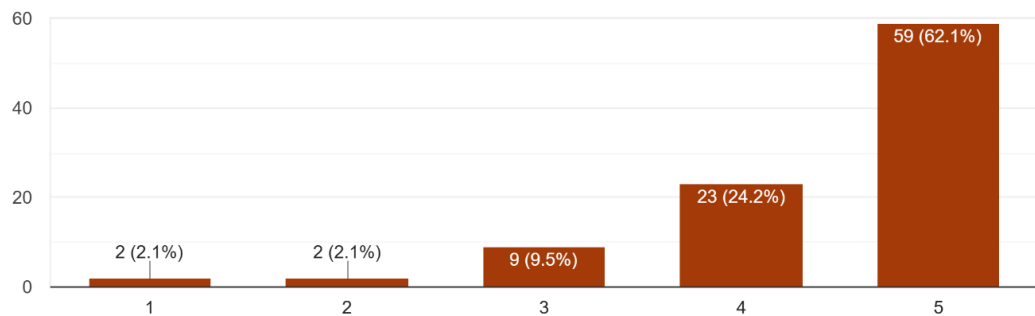
Figure 2. The presentation of students' perception regarding the importance of corrective feedback in improving speaking skills

Students' emotional reactions to feedback differed. When corrected in front of others, Question 11's mean score of 3.29 indicated a moderate level of anxiety. The slightly higher mean of 3.43 for Question 10 indicates that many students are either neutral or reasonably comfortable receiving corrections in public. According to these findings, students' emotional responses vary; some are anxious, particularly when the error is small, while others are more receptive to public correction, depending on how it is given.
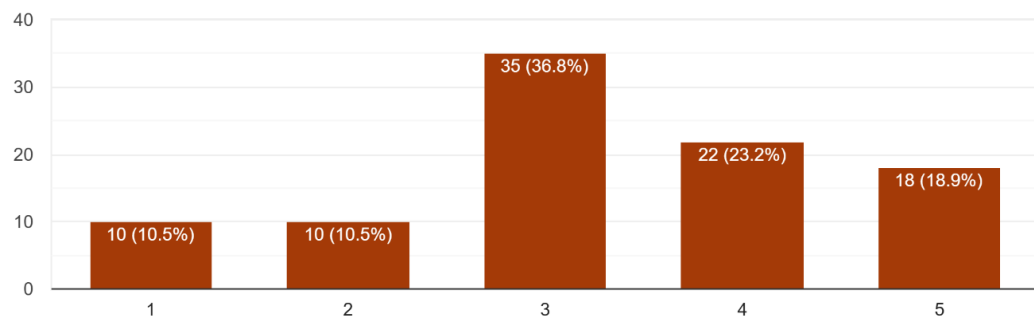
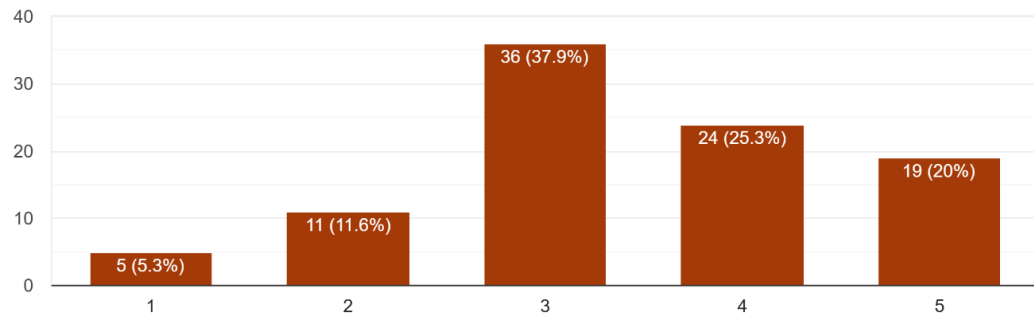*Figure* 3. The presentation of students' anxiety when corrected in front of others (Question 11)

Figure 4. The presentation of students' responses to public correction (Question 10)

Feedback was also found to influence motivation positively. Question 15 recorded a mean score of 3.54, categorized as low yet still reflecting a positive trend—with more than half of the students reporting increased motivation to speak English in class after receiving feedback. On the other hand, confidence remains a sensitive issue. Question 7, "Making mistakes makes me doubt my English skills," had a mean score of 3.07, indicating that some students experience self-doubt after being corrected.
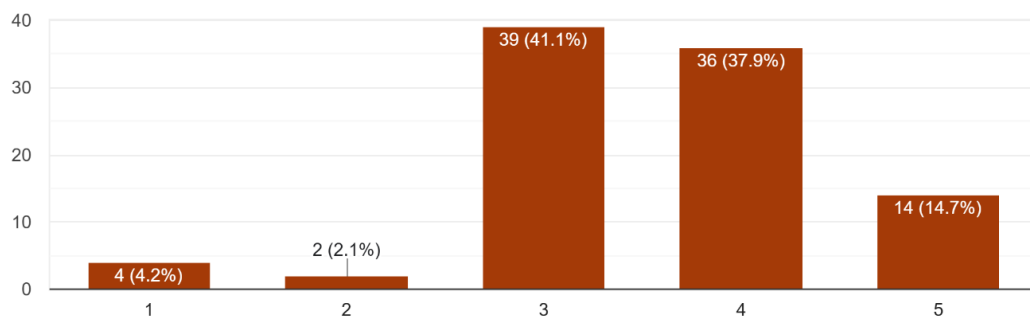

Figure 5. The presentation of students' motivation after receiving corrective feedback (Question 15)
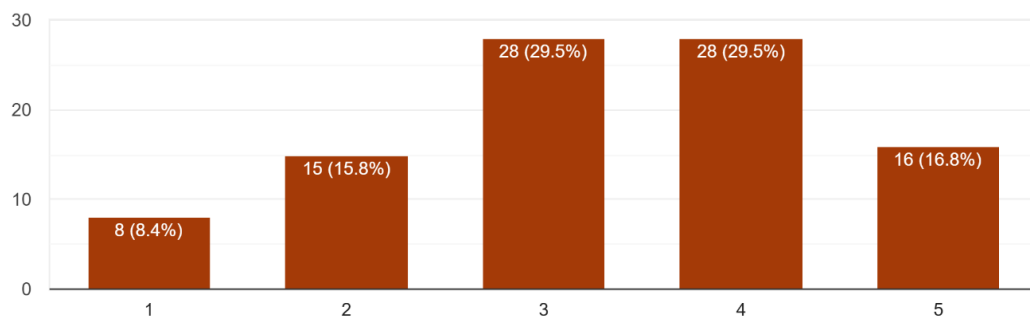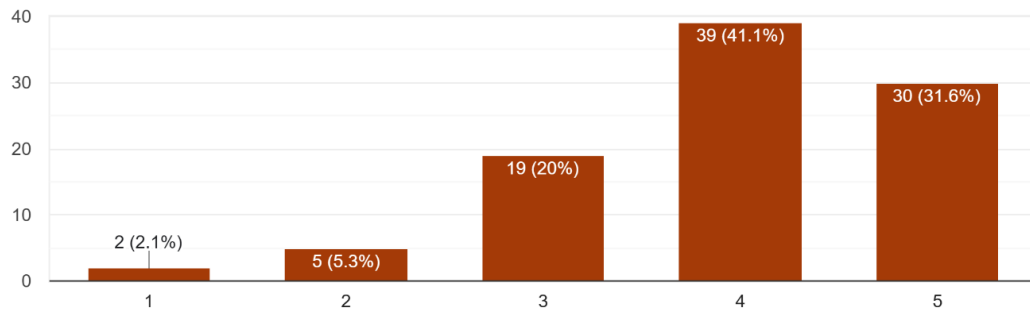

Figure 6. The presentation of students' self-doubt after making mistakes (Question 7)

Students' application of feedback in future conversations also reflected a positive attitude. The data from Question 16 shows that the majority of students had a positive attitude toward applying corrective feedback in future speaking tasks. A total of 72.6% selected "Strongly Agree" or "Agree," while only 7.4% disagreed. With a mean score of 3.95, categorized as positive according to Sugiyono's (2019) Likert scale, these results indicate that most students not only accept feedback but also actively use it to improve their speaking performance.

Figure 7. The presentation of students' tendency to apply feedback in future speaking tasks (Question 16)

Finally, data related to language use and interaction preference showed that 46.3% of students agreed or strongly agreed that they speak English during class, with a mean score of 3.38—borderline positive. However, a larger percentage (67.4%) indicated a preference for peer interaction over interaction with the lecturer, as reflected in Question 5. This suggests that students may feel less pressure and more confident when speaking with peers, which is an important consideration for lecturers when giving feedback to enhance student participation.
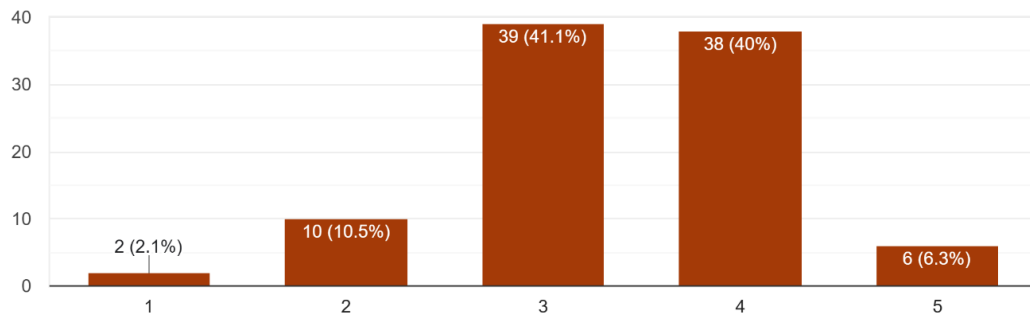
Figure 8. The presentation of students' use of English during class (Question 4)
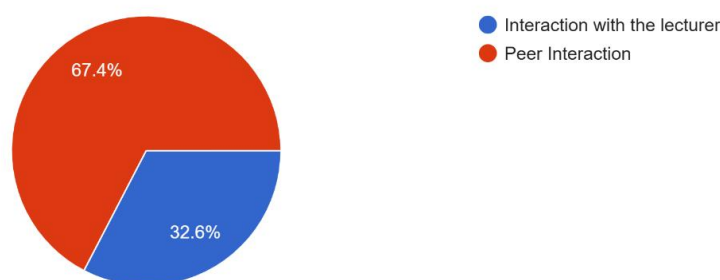
Figure 9. The presentation of students' preference for peer interaction over lecturer interaction (Question 5)

What significance does corrective feedback give in improving students' speaking skills in the Speaking for Formal Interaction class

The findings from the FGDs revealed that both high- and low-proficiency students benefited from oral corrective feedback in terms of linguistic development and affective support. High-achieving students perceived corrective feedback as highly effective in enhancing their speaking accuracy and linguistic awareness. They recognized that its main purpose was to correct errors to avoid repetition. As AA stated and RA emphasized,

> *"The goal is to help us speak more correctly. I know it's achieved when I no longer repeat the same mistake,"* (FGD transcript)

> *"The main purpose is accuracy"* (FGD transcript).

Meanwhile, low-achieving students also acknowledged the linguistic benefits of feedback, particularly in helping them better understand sentence structure and pronunciation. As NL shared,

> "*It helps me to use the correct structure or pronunciation. I can see my improvement when I apply the feedback"* (FGD transcript).

In addition to cognitive gains, low-proficiency students emphasized the importance of the emotional delivery of feedback. For instance, SR noted and AU added,

> "*Feedback should motivate, not embarrass,"* (FGD transcript)
> *"Eye contact and a smile can make feedback feel supportive"* (FGD transcript).

These responses indicate that empathetic and supportive feedback delivery plays a crucial role in building learners' confidence and comfort in speaking. Table 5 below summarizes the key themes of corrective feedback's impact on students' speaking skills based on their proficiency levels.

Table 5. Key themes of corrective feedback impact by proficiency group

Proficiency Group	Themes	Categories
High Speaking Proficiency	**Linguistic Development**	- Helps improve accuracy (correctness, understanding mistakes, remembering corrections)
		- Promotes immediate learning and correction
		- Essential for formal speaking contexts (formal skills, appropriateness, accuracy)
		- Fluency and clarity development
		- Encourages error awareness, self-monitoring, and mistake prevention
	Affective and Strategic Support	- Enhances confidence (clarity, speaking success, reduced grammar mistakes)
		- Builds motivation when feedback is supportive (gestures, encouragement, positive body language)
		- Risk of negative impact if feedback is harsh or public
Low Speaking Proficiency	**Linguistic Development**	- Enhancing accuracy (structure, pronunciation, fewer repeated errors)
		- Increasing fluency and naturalness
		- Immediate learning and correction
		- Preventing repetition of mistakes
		- Improving formal speaking performance
		- Increasing awareness of grammar and pronunciation
	Affective and Strategic Support	- Building confidence in speaking
		- Motivation to improve
		- Creating a comfortable and supportive feedback environment

Discussion

The findings of this study revealed a strong preference among students in the Speaking for Formal Interaction class for explicit, lecturer-provided CF. This aligns with You (2022), who argued that explicit corrective feedback—especially in the form of direct correction—can lead to better noticing of errors and facilitate more immediate language repair. Students' preference for clear, immediate, and understandable feedback supports the notion that CF plays a central role in developing interlanguage and promoting speaking accuracy.

More importantly, students perceived this type of CF as directly contributing to their speaking improvement, especially in formal contexts. Many stated that being corrected explicitly helped them avoid repeating the same mistakes and become more

self-aware of their language use. This perception supports Napitupulu et al. (2024) claim that effective CF promotes self-monitoring, an essential component in second language oral development.

The result that students favor direct correction over recasts is consistent with Napitupulu et al. (2024), who found that intensive, explicit feedback was more effective than implicit recasts for learners' oral development. Also, peer vs. teacher feedback research shows that learners tend to trust teacher feedback more in formal learning environments, perceiving it as authoritative and reliable—echoed in this study, where students valued lecturer-led CF over peer suggestions

Furthermore, the finding that students trust lecturer feedback more than peer correction echoes what Sato and Lyster (2021) observed: learners perceive teacher feedback as more authoritative and reliable, particularly in high-stakes, formal contexts. Students in this study viewed peer feedback as potentially useful, but were cautious due to the possibility of adopting incorrect usage. This reveals that students associate accurate and beneficial CF with knowledgeable and trusted sources, which in most classroom settings are the lecturers.

When comparing these findings to previous research, several similarities emerge. Mahara and Hartoni (2022) also found that students in EFL contexts preferred explicit correction and considered it essential for improving oral performance. The present study reinforces this view by showing how direct correction helps learners self-monitor, avoid fossilization of errors, and ultimately feel more confident in their speaking ability.

Additionally, the emotional and motivational impact of CF noted in this study parallels the findings of Liu and Feng (2023), who emphasized that corrective feedback—when delivered supportively—can enhance students' affective engagement. Students in this study reported that receiving feedback with a positive tone made them feel supported rather than criticized, boosting their motivation to speak more and improve.

Interestingly, while studies such as Mahara and Hartono (2022) have emphasized that some learners experience anxiety when corrected in front of peers, most participants in this study accepted public feedback with minimal discomfort—especially when delivered positively and constructively. This contrast may reflect specific cultural and classroom dynamics in the current context, where students are accustomed to being corrected openly and view it as part of the learning process.

In addition to aiding accuracy, the findings also point to CF as supporting fluency and self-awareness. According to Sato and Lyster (2021), feedback during interaction helps learners notice gaps and modify their output. Consistently, several students in this study reported that they could speak more smoothly and confidently after receiving CF, suggesting that the benefits extend beyond error correction into greater communicative competence.

Accordingly, the results show that students can improve their speaking performance with the help of corrective feedback, particularly when it is given by a lecturer and is timely and explicit. In addition to preferring this type of feedback, students believe it helps them improve their oral communication skills. These views are in line with empirical results from earlier studies and are supported by well-established CF theories. Where differences do occur, they provide information about the impact of contextual and cultural factors. In order to improve learners' confidence,

engagement, and motivation in addition to their linguistic accuracy, lecturers should give special attention to providing clear and constructive corrective feedback.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

In conclusion, the majority of the students in the "Speaking for Formal Interaction" class favor direct, explicit feedback from their lecturers that emphasizes prompt, understandable correction. By increasing their confidence and motivation, this kind of feedback not only enhances their speaking accuracy, fluency, and general language development, but it also provides crucial affective and strategic support. Although some students find public corrections uncomfortable, feedback generally has a positive effect since it makes students more conscious of how they use language and promotes active engagement. The way that corrective feedback is given has a significant impact on its efficacy; students prefer constructive, encouraging approaches that promote learning without making them anxious.

According to the results, English teachers are urged to strike a balance between explicit and implicit feedback methods in order to meet the needs of various students while preserving a smooth flow of conversation. Fostering growth requires establishing a nurturing atmosphere where students feel comfortable making errors and getting feedback. In order to create a supportive and cooperative learning environment, students should be receptive to criticism from peers and instructors. Future studies could look into the psychological effects of corrective feedback, such as anxiety levels, on students' speaking performance, as well as digital tools that offer immediate, personalized feedback. By improving feedback practices and making them more learner-centered and emotionally supportive, these recommendations seek to improve speaking instruction.

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