LANGUAGE-LEARNER PREFERENCES FOR CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK

by

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Abstract

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Language-learner preferences for corrective feedback

Thesis directed by Maria Thomas-Ruzic

My thesis project reports on a six-week study focused on language-learner preferences for corrective feedback in the classroom. While various types of corrective feedback have been explored in other studies, this study explores learners' perspectives: how much corrective feedback learners may prefer in the classroom, their reported levels of satisfaction with the feedback, and language-specific elements most useful to them. The study was conducted in an Action Research framework, which is a practitioner-based form of research. The findings indicate that while most of the learners in the study were satisfied with the amount of corrective feedback provided to them in the classroom most of the time, others wanted more corrective feedback than supplied. Most useful language elements reported by learners range from grammar points to pronunciation. The implications for the classroom may be to raise both teacher and learner awareness of corrective feedback in the classroom.

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INTRODUCTION

This study focuses on language-learner preferences for the amount of corrective feedback (CF) received in the classroom, in addition to reported learner satisfaction and most helpful corrections. From a holistic perspective, I was interested in learning more about what learners want from their classroom experience in regards to corrective feedback. While I could examine various methods of CF from a theoretical perspective, I was more interested in learning more about personal preferences and what specific corrections were most helpful to my students. Instead of wondering what they wanted in terms of corrective feedback, or trying to predict their preferences, I could simply ask them. As people vary from day to day, from how they feel physically to what events have transpired in their personal lives, asking them their preference over a period of time aims to provide a more complete glimpse into their true preferences and satisfaction with the corrective feedback they were getting in my class. Through this discovery process, fueled by the principles of Action Research, I tried to create a positive classroom environment where the learners felt valued and knew that their input on their own learning process was valuable and relevant. As an instructor in this context, I needed to carefully balance a focus on grammar and accuracy with opportunities for communicative activities that could increase fluency. From the data collected, I could draw some conclusions and try and better serve the class.

While much has been written about corrective feedback, literature regarding student preferences for the amount of oral CF in the classroom remains to be extensively studied. In a learner-centered classroom, taking these preferences into consideration and understanding the possible degree of variability could help to increase student confidence, create a stronger teacher-student bond, and augment the speed of acquisition of language skills. Observing that students could have varied preferences for how they liked to be corrected, Orts and Salazar noted that

"differences in the learning styles of the students will affect the learning environment by either supporting or inhibiting their intentional cognition and active engagement" (p.109). Awareness of student preferences for CF is useful information for instructors in the classroom, as it can be used to help increase students' motivation, improve the learning process, and involve the student more directly in their own journey to language proficiency. Orts and Salazar's 2016 exploratory study considered student preferences regarding *written* CF, however student preference about the quantity of CF for *oral* accuracy-based activities remains to be explored in classroom-based research.

This study examines learner preferences about corrective feedback in the language classroom regarding oral accuracy-based classroom activities. Most of the activities included in the study focused on grammar, but also included other language elements such as vocabulary retention, and pronunciation (including suprasegmental aspects). A consideration of CF also means looking at learner uptake. Lightbown and Spada (2017) reference Lyster and Ranta's (1997) definition of uptake, which "refers to a learner's observable immediate response to corrective feedback on his/her utterances" (p. 224). The utterance that follows directly after the instructor provides the correction is the learner's response to that correction and can take the form of self-repair of the error. Thus, corrective feedback (CF) episodes can be seen as comprised of a trigger, the feedback move and (optionally) uptake. The segment below illustrates the pattern:

Teacher: When were you in school?

Learner: Yes. I stand in the first row? (trigger)

Teacher: You stood in the first row. (feedback) corrective move, by form of a recast

Learner: Yes, in the first row, and sit, ah, sat the first row. (uptake optional)

(adapted from Ellis and Sheen, 2006, p. 576)

This example illustrates a relatively simple interaction involving CF. Here, the teacher asks a learner a question about their time in school. The learner responds with a present tense verb, "stand", when a past tense form is required. The teacher provides the correction in the form of a recast; that is, he says the correct version of the sentence using "stood". The learner then acknowledges the correction, then utters the word "sit" and self-corrects immediately after to "sat". While the learner does not repair the original correction (stand/stood), it appears the learner meant "sit", which makes more sense when one considers classroom configurations. The learner then immediately self-repairs the tense, which indicates grasping of the tense correction provided in the recast in line 3. More complex interactions can involve multiple triggers and corrections. Uptake is seen as an important indicator of the development of accuracy in the L2 (Lyster and Ranta, 1997).

While the results of this small-scale study are specific to my learner and teacher context, the findings gleaned from this study can serve to further inform both educators and learners about the possible amount of variation in learners' preferences and their satisfaction with self-selected amounts of corrective feedback from their teacher in grammar-focused speaking activities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There has been debate in the field of SLA (Second Language Acquisition) about the place and effectiveness of (CF) in the classroom. Some scholars believe CF is necessary for adults in the language classroom and that errors in speaking require immediate correction (Brown, 2007; Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Others believe that CF can be helpful in enhancing learning if handled appropriately, and some see very little benefit to it at all. There are

scholars who even consider it harmful (Krashen, 1982, 1985; Truscott, 1999) and suggest that teachers consider not providing error correction focused on grammatical accuracy.

WHAT IS CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK?

CF is complex and multifaceted. The manner in which it is provided, its facilitative role in various contexts, and how efficacy is determined, have led to numerous studies on the topic. Althobait (2014) offers multiple perspectives on the topic, including the cognitive perspective and the socio-cultural perspective regarding oral CF specifically. Corrective feedback is a form of negative evidence and provides the learner with information about what is unacceptable in the target language. Long (2007) claims that corrective feedback promotes language acquisition. Corder (1967) distinguished between "errors" and "mistakes" and noted that an error is due to lack of knowledge or competence, and a mistake is a performance phenomenon. Even native speakers make mistakes when speaking, and so conceivably and practically, some mistakes would generally not be worth correcting with a learner, as the learner could very well know the correct language to use but make a mistake due to other factors. Affective elements, such as anxiety, or situational considerations, such as trying to speak very quickly to participate in a fast-moving conversation, can contribute to mistakes occurring, despite the speaker cognitively knowing the correct form. While this distinction between errors and mistakes seems clear, it is often hard to tell the difference between a student making an "error" versus a "mistake" in real-time classroom scenarios. The instructor is forced to choose whether to correct or not in that moment.

Studies have also been conducted that explore specific *types* of teachers' oral error correction in the language classroom, including recast, explicit correction, elicitation, clarification

request, metalinguistic cue, and repetition (Brown, 2014). In a 2014 study of type and linguistic foci of oral corrective feedback in the L2 classroom, Brown found that that recasts accounted for 57% of all corrective feedback, and identified various contextual and methodological factors that can influence CF choices, such as the amount of teacher experience, and classroom context. Research has revealed an instructor preference for recasts, which are a form of implicit feedback (Panova & Lyster, 2002). While explicit feedback provides a direct, obvious indication that an error was committed by the learner, implicit feedback does not. The most widely used form of implicit CF is the recast, which was the primary form of corrective feedback provided in this study. A recast, which restates the correct form that the learner incorrectly produced, does not require anything from the learner directly. They do not necessarily need to think about their error, or search for the correct form, themselves; instead, the correct answer is provided, embedded in the recast utterance. This implicit, input-providing form of CF may not be enough for the learner to repair the error in future utterances. However, one factor that can influence effectiveness according to Roberts (1995), is whether or not the learner is aware that they are being corrected.

Recasts have been chosen as a method of CF for this study partly due to the communicative nature of this classroom and the desire to not interrupt the flow of communication to a degree where it distracts or breaks down. As learners' awareness was heightened regarding correction due to explanation and execution of the study, it is possible that they were more in tune to potential corrections than they usually would be. As Shagoury and Power (2012) note, "Students will inevitably pay attention to whatever you're choosing to attend to" (p.33) when discussing the effect a research question will have on students.

Other possible factors that can influence the value of the CF are the amount of individualized attention the learner receives (Nabei and Swain, 2002) and how familiar the task

at hand is to the learner (Révész and Han 2006). Regarding task familiarity, Révész and Han's 2006 study found that learners "who received recasts during tasks with familiar content displayed greater accuracy in subsequent L2 oral production" (Afitska, 2012, p.9). Mackey et al. (2007) found similar results in a study with younger ESL learners. The classroom where this study on learner preferences and CF took place was primarily a grammar class, and activities conducted in class focused both on fluency and accuracy; however, the traffic signal selection always took place during accuracy-focused oral activities, which inherently have a focus on form.

IS CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK EFFECTIVE?

One area of challenge for instructors is to deliver corrective feedback in the most effective way while teaching in a communicative language teaching (CLT) environment, and without disrupting the flow of communication that is so desired and valuable. The delivery of feedback also poses a challenge in a task-based learning environment, as the focus on achieving the task maybe be interrupted. Seedhouse (1997) found that a reactive focus on form could be effectively provided in the classroom though use of implicit corrective feedback. Implicit feedback, as opposed to explicit feedback, is less intrusive to the flow of communication or focus on the task. Research is divided on whether explicit or implicit delivery is more effective for language learners, however the focus of this study is learner preference for how much CF they are getting in the classroom and which specific corrections were most helpful to them.

Afitska (2015) gives an overview of the research on effectiveness of CF; various factors contribute to how or whether CF is effective for language learners. Such variables include: the degree of explicitness, the length of explanation, time variable, whether the learner is aware that

she/he is being corrected, learner developmental readiness, understanding the nature of correction, what type of feedback it is, how much individualized attention the learner receives, the content and/or procedure familiarity, and type of instructional context (Afitska, 2015). These elements influence how CF is perceived by the learner.

The value attributed to CF varies by whether one ascribes to audiolingualism (where correction can be perceived as punishment), humanistic methods, skill-learning theory, etc (Ellis, 2009). Ellis notes that in the post-method era, there is acknowledgement the "cognitive contribution it (CF) can make while also issuing warnings about the potential affective damage it can do" (Ellis, 2009, p.4). He goes on to note that SLA researchers, particularly those ascribing to the interactionist framework, view CF as "facilitative of language acquisition". One example Ellis notes is VanPatten's 2003 acknowledgement that "CF in the form of negotiating for meaning can help learners notice their errors and create form-meaning connections, thus aiding acquisition" (Ellis, 2009, p.6), which came after earlier views Van Patten held that were more in line with Krashen, that is that CF negligible or even harmful. Feedback given inappropriately may cause stress or negative emotions in learners, which could be considered harmful. However, more recent research offers evidence that CF can indeed assist in language learning and has instead focused on different types of CF.

In addition to receiving CF from the instructor, it is possible for language learners in a classroom to also receive CF from one another. In a situation, such as pair or small group work, one learner may correct another learner. Oliver (2000) found that learners are more likely to simply ignore this feedback when it comes from peers rather than an instructor. Affective factors may play a role in this dynamic, as whether there are positive or negative feelings about other classmates will influence how CF is perceived; a helpful comment may come across as

encouragement to one, and criticism to another (Morris and Tarone, 2003). So, while learners can benefit both from providing and receiving CF, whether there is always a benefit is not an assurance.

THE LEARNER-CENTERED CLASSROOM

A learner-centered classroom involves a focus on relationships. This type of classroom is not limited to language learning contexts, but certainly makes sense within it. Campos (2014) outlines the four primary relationships that will allow for more meaningful learning to occur. These include: (1) the learner-to-instructor relationship, (2) the learner-to-content relationship, (3) learner-to-learner relationship, and (4) learner-to-self relationship. Note that the learner has a role in every relationship dynamic, whereas the instructor is only featured in one. Though only filling one position in these relationship dynamics, the instructor has a key role in facilitating the other relationships, such as learner-to-learner. Campos employs the principles of design thinking in the classroom. As she states below:

> Design thinking is inherently human centered; and empathy is at the core of human-centered design. Looking at the classroom from the learners' perspective and empathizing with how they experience the learning event is a practical and meaningful way for instructors to prepare their course. While it might seem nuanced, or too slight a difference to matter, putting the learner— rather than the instructor—at the center of the instructional experience makes all kinds of new relationships possible and expands the framework from which the instruction is designed. (p.1)

By placing the learner at the center of the classroom, the learner has increased involvement in their own learning process. While a learner-centered orientation in a language classroom is often interpreted as increased opportunities for pair and group work, Anton looks at this from another angle and shows that teachers, through dialogue, can direct students to becoming more highly involved in negotiation of meaning and linguistic forms (1999, p. 314). I offer an additional perspective, and that is that learners' involvement in corrective feedback, by way of selecting a preference, not only offers the learners an opportunity to think about how they prefer to learn, but the opportunity to shape their own classroom experience through that selection. Traditionally, the teacher has been viewed as the leader of the classroom, but the learners themselves have much to offer.

INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES AND PREFERENCES

Individual differences in second language learning have been explored from various angles, such as variation in learner IQ, different learning styles, personality, motivation, and attitude. Affective elements like learner anxiety have also been explored. What these areas have in common is that they can vary widely by individual. Taking these individual variations into consideration can lead to a better understanding of learners and how they learn. Having a deeper understanding of learner beliefs and preferences is important for both the learner and the instructor; "knowing what learners think about CF will help teachers to plan for and present information about learners' phonological, grammatical, or lexical accuracy that is in line with their contextually specific expectations and needs" (Kartchava, 2016, p. 20). The beliefs that learners hold, according to Wenden (1999), can be defined as learners' metacognitive knowledge of learning. These beliefs, which influence their preferences about many things in the classroom,

including how much corrective feedback is most desirable, can also influence the way learners go about learning (Horwitz, 1999; Mori, 1999). It is through a better understanding of instructional practices and how they affect learner beliefs that teachers can help enable students to become more "thoughtful, independent, strategic language learners" (Mori, 1999, p. 410). While some beliefs are common among learners, teachers, and age groups, these beliefs are highly dynamic because they can change depending on one's situation, emotional state, and company (Barcelos & Kalaja, 2011).

Horwitz has conducted research into learner beliefs using the BALLI instrument (Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory), starting in the late 1980s. The original BALLI is made up of 34 discrete items, ranging from beliefs like "Learning a foreign language is different than learning other academic subjects" to "The most important part of learning a foreign language is learning the grammar". This tool has been used in numerous other studies since then. In a 1999 paper, she compared a selected group of studies that used the BALLI tool in order to represent a range of cultural groups and language learning contexts. One specific point of interest relevant to accuracy and errors in language learning is that while most students understand that making errors is part of the language-learning process, most respondents agreed with the statement "If beginning students are permitted to make errors in a foreign language, it will be difficult for them to speak correctly later on" (Horwitz, 1999, p. 567).

While efficacy and delivery of CF has been widely studied, the exploration into student preferences for the amount of oral CF has received less attention. Observing that students could have varied preferences for how they liked to be corrected, Orts and Salazar (2016) noted that "differences in the learning styles of the students will affect the learning environment by either supporting or inhibiting their intentional cognition and active engagement" (p.109) Awareness of

student preferences for CF is conceivably useful information for instructors in the classroom, as it can be used to help increase motivation, improve the learning process, and involve the student more directly in their own journey to language proficiency. Orts and Salazar's 2016 exploratory study considered student preferences regarding *written* CF, however I have not found anything in the literature about the amount of oral CF provided in the classroom with specific regard to student preference. Considerable attention has been given to *written* corrective feedback, including learner preferences for the amount and type of feedback. This could be due to many factors, such as the relatively straight-forward data collection process that could involve student work and analyzing feedback. To capture oral feedback in real-time requires audio or video equipment, which has become relatively simple to set up these days, but may be countered with privacy issues. This study focused on what learners selected as their desired preference for amount of oral CF provided, as well as their satisfaction levels.

While it would be impossible in a larger classroom setting for an instructor to personally cater to every individual exactly as they would prefer, a rigid adherence to one approach will naturally deprive some students of learning opportunities (Lightbown & Spada, 2017). Simply having an increased sense of awareness about how individuals may vary in their preference for quantity of CF could be helpful in the classroom, to both learners and educators. Also, by asking learners to express their preferences regarding teacher CF, the teacher engages learners in awareness raising and decision-making. In addition to preference for amount of CF, this study also highlights some errors, and their corrections, that students retained and commented on in the post-activity questionnaire, along with some more general feedback about experience with corrective feedback in the classroom and its importance in the language learning process.

ACTION RESEARCH

Teacher Action Research in the classroom served as a framework for this project. Due to this, it seems most appropriate to include an overview of Action Research here as its own section. Action research can be succinctly defined as a practitioner-based form of research (Phillips & Carr, 2014). A more elaborate definition of action research is "any systematic inquiry conducted by teacher researchers, principals, school counselors, or other stakeholders in the teaching/learning environment to gather information about how their particular schools operate, how they teach, and how well their students learn" (Mills, 2014, p.8). The main goals of this type of research are to improve pedagogy and student learning.

Phillips and Carr use the term "teacher-researcher" to described the person conducting real-world classroom research. They note the paradigm shift required to create an image in our minds of a "teacher-researcher", as culturally these two professions are often seen in opposition. The former is practical, the latter theoretical. Phillips and Carr elicited drawings of a "good teacher" and a "good researcher" involving both images and words. Some of the descriptions of a good teacher included *experience, passion for learning, organized, appreciates diversity, purposeful,* and *creative*; "good researchers" were described as *curious, observant, detail oriented, passionate, organized,* and *communicator*. Through deconstructing the images (represented here in words), one can see that the opportunities for overlap when comparing teachers and researchers is considerable. I planned and executed the study described here, as well as taught the class, so I found myself in this "teacher-researcher" role. Combining the skills, qualities and intentions of being both a good teacher and good researcher was both a challenge and an opportunity. It also felt natural though, as in many ways I was conducting my class as I usually would, but with documentation of the process and more direct input from learners.

Instead of wondering or assuming what they thought, I asked them in a thoughtful way, valuing their opinions even if they differed from mine. The process of collecting data and formulating research questions made this teaching experience more challenging, as it required more thought about every activity and every piece of corrective feedback provided.

In many ways, all good teachers are conducting action research in the classroom, through identifying challenges and issues, implementing changes, assessing learners, and analyzing results. More formally documenting this process allows for colleagues and other professionals in the field to learn from valuable qualitative data gathered in other classrooms. Data gleaned from the classroom is a valuable tool to better understand learners as well as develop a deeper sense of self-reflection about one's own teaching practices. Phillips and Carr reflected on the relevance of thoughtful data collection: "Deliberate data collection is the extended eyes, ears, and soul of the teacher; it is the way we come to know our students, change our practice, and grow our teaching identity" (2014, p. 69). In addition to the student questionnaires and corrective feedback surveys conducted in this study, I also kept a reflection journal. I updated the journal with notes after each class session, noting what seemed to work in the lesson from my perspective, if any issues arose, and the outward reaction of learners. The data collection comprised the three broad methods of Action Research, which include observation (reflection journal), questionnaires (here in the form of entrance and exit questionnaires), and documenting (tracking student satisfaction and most helpful corrections over a six-week period). Through analysis of these areas, I have a better understanding of this group of learners and how much correction they would like, their level of satisfaction with the corrections provided, and what specific corrections were most helpful.

In his 1998 book on teacher research, Freeman explores the complexity of teaching and being in the classroom, and how research up to that point had been studied by those not actually involved in the profession of teaching. He notes that "people are naturally drawn to what they *can* see, not necessarily what there is *to* see" (1998, p.19). He goes on to explain the nuances of observations taking place from certain perspectives: "Observations about the world depend on where you look and who you are" (1998, p.19). I think Freeman's introduction to the chapter on framing of the teacher-research cycle captures the inherent messiness and complexity of doing research in the classroom. Each classroom is unique to that point in time, and with the people who are present; even the same classroom participants a few years further into their language journey (and teaching journey), could yield very different results and overall observations of classroom behavior. An inquiry into a classroom is in many ways a snapshot in time, the same exact scenario never to be repeated or replicated in the same way. While this could be discouraging or overwhelming, the nature of inquiry in the classroom and action research is a valid undertaking. Why is this? Aside from observations and inquiry leading to, hopefully, improvements in the classroom experience for everyone involved, the process itself helps to polish the process of inquiry in the teacher/researcher. Making observations, eliciting student feedback, and analyzing both qualitative and quantitative data, could lead to many positive developments both in teaching methods and overall classroom experience. Mills notes that the ultimate payoff for sticking to the process of action research in classroom is "the belief and knowledge that the real beneficiaries of your work are the students in your care" (2014, p 176). By committing to the process and seeing it through, there can also be gains in professional confidence and the ability to serve students in the best way possible.

Shagoury and Power explore the notion of involving learners as partners in research, which was a vital element of the study I conducted.

> A natural by-product of conducting research in our classrooms is the shift in dynamics that occurs as students see the research process unfolding around them. Because their work itself, their insights and their reflections, are integral parts of the inquiry, they are no longer separate from the curriculum and classroom decision making. They can also become partners in the research process (1999, p.266).

While learners in this study participated in typical research elements, like questionnaires, the open-ended nature of some of the questions and the nature of the inquiry into their preferences and satisfaction, served to involve them in the process. This study spanned six weeks, and so corrective feedback in general was highlighted. The learners were very aware of the project taking place and my position as both a researcher and a teacher, and also a student of language myself. The rapport in the classroom, I felt, was very positive. Learners bonded well, talking before and after class, and even planning lunches together and a baby shower for one expecting student. It is possible that rapport may have been influenced by their joint position in the research project.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study focuses on learner preference for quantity of CF in the classroom and its possible variability over the short-term and across individual learners. As noted, the corrective feedback offered in the study was form-focused by way of recasts, that is the corrections will draw a learner's attention to various linguistic elements as they come up in classroom activities

that are focused on overall communication and relaying meaning. This is different from "focus on form**s**", which is concerned primarily with teaching and learning of the linguistic forms themselves (Afitska, 2015).

The "traffic light signal" method employed in this study has been adapted from the method described by British educator, Budden. In this study, the three traffic signal color options (green, yellow, red) were displayed on a piece of paper and the learner placed an "X" through their color selection. The signal marker "red" indicates that the learner would not like any corrections at all. Students may have varied reasons for this, such as simply being tired or not having prepared for the class adequately and do not want to be called out on this. The signal marker "yellow" indicates to correct what is very important or relates to the particular lesson. The "green" signal marker, which the learner selects if they want all types of correction, will include not only focus-on-form corrective feedback, but also include elements of the lexicon the learner may have confused or misused, as well as issues of pronunciation, which include suprasegmental features such as word or sentence stress.

In the present study, the research questions are as follows:

(1) What preferences for amount of correction did individual learners select when given choices?

(2) Does this preference change over the short-term (6 weeks)?

(3) Do learners report satisfaction with the corrective feedback they receive, when they have selected a specific amount?

(4) What corrections did learners report as being the most helpful?

(5) What else can I/the learners notice when learners are consulted on a weekly basis regarding their CF preferences?

STUDY AND METHODS

PARTICIPANTS

This study includes 9 adult participants from Entryways[1], a volunteer-led international English language school in Boulder, Colorado. The subject population is entirely female, due to the population enrolled at this school. The age range is from 25-45. Generally, at this school the ethnic distribution varies by class proficiency level and year of intake; and may include adults from all over the world. The women participating in the study have various background experiences with learning English. Education levels among students at Entranceways overall could vary from basic L1 literacy to graduate level studies completed in their home countries. All the participants in this study have reached the intermediate level of English or higher, as defined by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages as the B level.

According to the CEF, overall the learners in this course could be classified as Level B2, which is an Independent User of the language that can be described on a global scale as have the following L2 capabilities:

> Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and Independent disadvantages of various options. (CEF, 2001, p. 24)

[1] A pseudonym

The typical background at this school is in the U.S for a period of years while a spouse completes graduate education. While some students intend to make a life in the U.S., they are the exception. Their goals tend to focus on survival skills, such as making friends, conducting daily life, passing driving exams, and conversing with members of the school system (a child's teacher, for example).

Social events are built into the program, such as a communal tea break in the mid-morning between the two lesson segments (lessons are from 9:25-10:20 a.m., followed by a twenty-minute social break, then 10:40-11:25 a.m.). Lessons are offered on Wednesday and Friday mornings during the school year, and many of the learners are also parents. The school provides nursery care for under school age children, which provides mothers with the opportunity to learn English and create a social network in a new culture. Each classroom has two volunteer teachers; one teacher instructs on Wednesday mornings and the other on Friday mornings. Images of the classroom can be found in Appendix A.

As detailed in the table below, the cultural backgrounds of the 9 learners in this study included Chinese, Japanese, Iranian, Mexican, and Ukrainian, with more than half the participants hailing from Asian countries.

Table 1

Language-Learner Information

Pseudonym[2]	**Country of Origin**	**L1**
Li Jing	China	Chinese
Zhang Li	China	Chinese
Wang Yan	China	Chinese
Hong	China	Chinese
Niko	Japan	Japanese

[2] Pseudonyms are used to protect the privacy of participants. All names listed are pseudonyms.

Diya	India	Hindi
Valentina	Mexico	Spanish
Anahita	Iran	Farsi
Oleksandra	Ukraine	Russian

Every classroom has a unique dynamic, created by the individuals and where they are in their life and their language-learning journey. Taking into account cultural backgrounds and beliefs is important in establishing a meaningful understanding of the learners in the classroom, as well as how those cultures may interact with each other. While cultures may differ in regards to the importance placed on accuracy, my study is focused on the nine individual learners' preferences for error correction options offered to them in the language classroom.

LEARNER MOTIVATIONS AND GOALS

At the end of the fourth weekly data collection, the class discussed their motivations for learning English. Everyone agreed that living in the U.S. was a main motivator, as daily life needs to be conducted in English. Most participants had lived in the US for between one and three years as of fall 2018, the time of this study. Aside from gaining language skills for daily life (survival skills), other motivations were offered; these are outlined briefly below:

Diya said that once her visa was processed, she would like to get a job. In addition to professional goals, she would also like to improve her pronunciation so others can understand her better in general. This individual would probably be best served by a pronunciation class rather than a grammar class, as she has suprasegmental issues with her pronunciation that impede others' understanding, but an excellent grasp of the grammatical elements.

Zhang Li, one of the Chinese students, wants to express herself more clearly. Oleksandra is very focused on grammatical accuracy, and accuracy in general, and has many goals for herself; these goals include increased fluency and rate of speech, along with a better understanding of humor in the United States. ("You all laugh too easily") so she can feel more a part of conversations here. Anahita, from Iran, has a six-year-old daughter and has been in the U.S. for three years. Since her daughter is growing up here, she wants to be able to relate to her. Already her daughter is pointing out her mother's English mistakes, which seems to cause Anahita stress. She is anxious about her daughter being a teenager one day and not being able to understand slang. Niko, from Japan, also offered understanding sarcasm as motivation for improving her English.

As with every language class, there is a range of abilities; a couple of the students seem not as proficient or easily understandable as the others in speaking. One student, Anahita, was very advanced, having completed her undergraduate studies as an English major in Tehran. Overall, I would consider most of the participants comparable in terms of English language proficiency level. Their motivations have moved beyond the daily operations of life, such as going to the grocery store, and into more dynamic and complex social and cultural interactions. At lower levels, students may be more conscious of errors occurring in almost every utterance, and only prefer to focus on errors relating to the language element in focus. It would be an interesting comparative study to see if results vary by language proficiency level.

RESEARCH DESIGN

This study took place over the span of six weeks in a Level 5 English language course. The study offers a glimpse at a group of learners in one classroom in the short-term. Also, this

specific Level 5 course was advertised as being a primarily grammar-focused course. The students could have chosen a level down or up if they did not wish to have a considerable focus on grammar. It possible that this group of students chose this course due to a preference or believed need for increased accuracy in their English skills, versus a focus on meaning, content, or survival skills for their time in the U.S.

The study was conducted during Friday morning class sessions in October and November 2018, for a total of 6 sessions. First, learners completed an Entrance questionnaire, which asked about their experience with corrective feedback in the classroom[3]. In each class, after a lesson that focused on a grammar item and related vocabulary, students were asked to take part in an oral task using the target language, e.g., a role play, interviews, sentence creation games, or partner dialog. The traffic signal selection always took place during accuracy-focused oral activities, which inherently have a focus on form. As learners were instructed to use the language elements in focus for that lesson, they were aware of the focus on accuracy.

The students were given a blank "traffic signal" selection form before the oral task portion of the lesson began and their selections were noted.[4] During the accuracy-focused oral task, I, as the instructor, provided the requested amount of feedback to each student – to the best of my ability. Brief summaries of all the activities that were part of the study are shown in Table 2 on the following page:

[3] The entrance questionnaire can be found in Appendix B.

[4] The traffic signal selection materials and the learners' task of selecting a preference for CF had been introduced earlier, at the start of the study.

Table 2

Brief Activity Summaries

Activity 1: After a grammar lesson on conjunctions and a discussion about the school system and parent-teacher conferences in the U.S, learners watched a short YouTube video of a parent- teacher conference. Then the class was divided into pairs and given role play situation cards. Learners took turns being the parent and the teacher, and with various student profiles to discuss.
Activity 2: After an introduction to a chapter on adverbs, including the point that many adverbs end in *–ly*, but not all (i.e., even, seldom, well) students were put in groups of four at separate tables. Each group was given adverbs on slips of paper face down. Their task was to pick one, clarify meaning with the group if needed, and make a sentence using the adverb. If it was a correct sentence, they got to keep the slip of paper. At the end, they saw how many correct sentences they could make. Most learners had 8 or 9 cards at the end. Plenary discussion after.
Activity 3: As preparation, the class elicited a word web on the white board with Common Cold symptoms and medicines. For pronunciation practice, learners took turns reading aloud from a text about the Common Cold. After, students used the vocabulary they learned from the reading to provide dialog responses to questions about the Common Cold (resources from the Azar Grammar teacher site online). Entire session conducted in plenary.
Activity 4: After a lesson on adverb clauses of time, some grammar exercises, and a listening task, students each got a list of interview questions and were paired with a new partner. They asked their partners the questions and answered using an adverb clause/subordinating conjunction.
Activity 5: The first half of class was devoted to adverb clauses of cause and effect. The topic for this class session was “Nature vs Nurture”. The class made a word web on the board and discussed twin studies (one student is the mother of six-year-old boy/girl twins) and elements of nature vs nurture. Students were split into three groups for discussion and given the question “Is nature or nurture more influential in determining a person’s characteristics?”, then came together to share their opinions in a debate/discussion format. It was not a formal debate, but a conversation with strong opinions and reasons for their opinion.
Activity 6: The grammar element in the first half of class was adverb clauses of contrast/unexpected results. The activity was taken from the Azar teacher resource center, as with Activity 3. The learners got a brief list explaining identical vs fraternal twins, then used a chart in the book to make at least three sentences each using "because" and "even though". They wrote their sentences down on paper first, then read them aloud to the group. We corrected any grammar issues as needed together. The activity was done in plenary so everyone could hear each other's sentences. The lesson also turned into a bit of science lesson involving how twins are formed.

Depending on whether the activities were conducted primarily as a whole class, or in pairs or small groups, the main corrections were discussed in plenary after the conclusion of the activity. This offered students both immediate feedback on errors and delayed feedback on those errors, as well as the opportunity to hear the instructor’s corrective feedback to other classmates

on their errors. After the activity and feedback session in plenary, students circled whether they were satisfied with the amount of corrections or not (options included "yes", "no" and "I'm not sure/I don't know"), and which corrections were most helpful to them. I allotted the time needed, about 2 minutes, for students to write before collecting the traffic selection forms[5].

Finally, after the six-week data collection period, participants completed a written exit questionnaire about their experience with the study[6]. A focus group discussion conducted in plenary with learners seated in a horseshoe formation offered participants an opportunity to share additional comments and feedback.

DATA

The data collection took place in the second half of class for various reasons. One, in case any students were late they would not miss the activity, and two, the first session allowed for preparation of new language elements to be used in the activity. The language element was review to some students and somewhat new to others, due to level and experience variability in the class. Whether it was new or a refresher, all students were exposed to a particular grammar element in the first part of class, such as adverbial clauses. All the activities in the second half of class were communicative in nature, but with a clear focus on accuracy; activities offered the students and opportunity to use the language they reviewed during the earlier part of class. The oral activities after the grammar lesson included a role play, dialogue response, partner interview, debate, and two sentence creation activities. The main textbook used in this classroom was *Understanding and Using English Grammar,* by Betty Azar and Stacy Hagen. The grammar areas of focus were mainly conjunctions and various types of adverbial clauses. This text was

[5] Examples of completed traffic signal selection forms can be found in Appendix C.
[6] The exit questionnaire can be found in Appendix D.

assigned by the school and served as the basis for the grammar lessons. The oral activities were either adapted from the book or brought in as original material to complement the lesson focus.

Before the traffic signal data collection began, students were also asked to explain the signal in their own words, to ensure understanding of the technique. The simplicity of the traffic signal lends itself to this well and all students demonstrated a clear understanding of the selection form and the purpose of the study. The learners completed the post-activity questionnaire before they left class, so this helped capture some of the most meaningful corrections. Sometimes learners wrote down specific corrections, and other times they noted an area of language (grammar, pronunciation), where they felt they got the most value from class. A summary of the data collection methods is shown below:

Table 2

Data collection sequence

Collection Method	**Occurrence**
Entrance questionnaire	One time, at start of data collection period
"Traffic signal" forms distributed to learners	Weekly, for six weeks
Exit questionnaire	One time, at end of data collection period
Teacher Reflection journal	Updated throughout data collection process

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

ENTRANCE QUESTIONNAIRES

Before the data collection began, students completed a brief entrance questionnaire. The students completed the questionnaires on their own in written form. The questionnaire began by asking about the learners' experience with correction in a language classroom and whether their

teachers offered feedback during the speaking activities, and how often that feedback was provided. Some comments from the learners included:

> "I really like correction. Unfortunately, it doesn't happen a lot in the classroom but I think I need it. Those times it happens for me were about grammar and pronunciation." (Anahita)

> "I'm easy to make mistake about the grammar. When I was studying English for the first year, I made mistakes about pronunciation and grammar very often, and the teacher always corrected me." (Wang Yan)

> "In my language class my teacher often correction in grammar, pronunciation. She correct us as when she found the mistake." (Diya)

> "My teacher corrects our grammar and pronunciation while we are speaking. But I think I would her to do more." (Niko)

From these data, it is apparent that learners want corrective feedback in the classroom. In some instances, learners report positively about their experience being corrected in the language classroom, and in others they express a desire for more correction. When asked about the importance of error correction in the classroom and whether it is important for learning and improving spoken English, feedback included:

"I think it's important because it helps me to improve my language and don't repeat my mistakes again and again." (Anahita)

"Yes, I think so. If the teachers have never corrected you, you couldn't make a progress and stay in the previous level. You'll make the same errors all the time." (Zhang Li)

"Yes, definitely as for me. I want to speak fluently and grammatically right." (Oleksandra)

"In spoken English, pronunciation of the word is very important which help the listener to understand what you are saying. If we do correction we'll help to reduce the mistake." (Diya)

"Yes, Because it can help to improve my spoken English." (Wang Yan)

These data report learners' perspectives on corrective feedback in the classroom and how this relates to improving their English language skills. They show that the learners believe that correction will help reduce spoken mistakes in the target language and improve communication through increasing intelligibility and fluency.

A learner from Mexico offered a more nuanced perspective: "I think is important but sometimes can cut the time estimated to deliver all the class content prepared for that day" (Valentina). This is an important aspect for the instructor to consider, as applying the "green" traffic signal for every part of a lesson will undoubtedly take more time and possibly take the

direction of the lesson off track. Whether this time is best spent on correction or on further content will differ by situation and perspective.

Niko, a student from Japan, offered some additional verbal feedback after completing the entrance questionnaire, which included frustration that her American husband does not correct her errors. She expressed a desire for correction of all elements, like pronunciation, even it interrupts the conversation. She also said that it is helpful to hear corrections given to other students, and expressed that it is hard for her to understand when more than one person answers a question at a time. Her additional feedback was given freely and not directly requested. This freely offered feedback is in line with learner feedback from other studies, which have shown that students' attitudes have consistently shown that they would like corrective feedback (Ellis, 2007). Zacharias' (2007) study showed that Indonesian students favored corrective feedback from the instructor, and considered the feedback to be "accurate, valid, and trustworthy" (as cited in Ellis, 2007, keynote speech to CELEA).

TRAFFIC SIGNAL SELECTIONS

The following tables illustrate how each learner responded to the post-activity questionnaire, along with the specific corrections they hand wrote on the questionnaire forms (all entries are represented here exactly as the learner wrote).

Table 4

Learner Data: Li Jing

Activity	Traffic Selection	Satisfied?	Amount of correction	Corrections remembered
1	Green	Yes	About the right amount	Have problems doing sth.
2	Green	I'm not sure	Too little	merry/merrily

3	Green	Yes	About the right amount	Pronunciation/ many words.
4	Green	I'm not sure	Too little	None
5	Green	Yes	About the right amount	punctuation marks/best: critical thinking
6	Green	Yes	About the right amount	"Toddler" pronunciation

Table 5

Learner Data: Zhang Li

Activity	Traffic Selection	Satisfied?	Amount of correction	Corrections remembered
1	Green	Yes	About the right amount	I said "my girl" and my teacher corrected me "It should be my daughter"
2	Green	Yes	Too little	I said "Young people follow the stars blindly". Actually, I wanted to say "movie stars". My teacher asked me what kind of stars? She reminded me and made me realize I was wrong.
3	Green	Yes	About the right amount	I pronounced "chicken" wrongly. My teacher corrected me.
4	Green	Yes	About the right amount	We made a conditional clause. The teacher helped us correct the tense.
5	Green	Yes		I was grown up -> I grew up in
6	Green	I'm not sure	Too little	I spoke too little and didn't make many mistakes. I didn't remember anything.

Table 6

Learner Data: Hong

Activity	Traffic Selection	Satisfied?	Amount of correction	Corrections remembered
1	Green	Yes	About the right amount	(left blank by learner)
2	Green	Yes	Too little	(left blank by learner)
3	Green	Yes	About the right amount	The pronunciation of "non prescription decongestants"
4	ABSENT	ABSENT	ABSENT	ABSENT
5	Green	Yes	About the right amount	from she was born -> since she was born
6	ABSENT	ABSENT	ABSENT	ABSENT

Table 7

Learner Data: Wang Yan

Activity	Traffic Selection	Satisfied?	Amount of correction	Corrections remembered
1	Green	Yes	Too little	I learned about the word "warmth"
2	Green	Yes	About the right amount	When I made the wrong sentences, the teacher corrected me, but I couldn't remember the words
3	Green	Yes	About the right amount	Now I know what is common cold meaning
4	Green	Yes	About the right amount	I can't remember
5	ABSENT	ABSENT	ABSENT	ABSENT
6	Green	Yes	About the right amount	I learned about the twins today, and I learned many words that I didn't know before this lesson.

Table 8

Learner Data: Valentina

Activity	Traffic Selection	Satisfied?	Amount of correction	Corrections remembered
1	Green	Yes	About the right amount	Definitions and pronunciations
2		ABSENT		
3	Green	Yes	About the right amount	Pronunciation/ Hydration meaning. Grammar mistakes
4	Green	I'm not sure	Too little	Make vs did
5	Green	Yes	Too little	spelling
6	ABSENT	ABSENT	ABSENT	ABSENT

Table 9

Learner Data: Diya

Activity	Traffic Selection	Satisfied?	Amount of correction	Corrections remembered
1	Green	Yes	About the right amount	She corrected in my pronounces
2	Green	Yes	About the right amount	Corrections about adverbs
3	Green	Yes	About the right amount	Corrections in pronunciation
4	Green	Yes	About the right amount	In English Grammar
5	Green	Yes	About the right amount	Both pronunciation and grammar
6	Green	Yes	About the right amount	She corrected my pronunciation

Table 10

Learner Data: Niko

Activity	Traffic Selection	Satisfied?	Amount of correction	Corrections remembered
1	ABSENT	ABSENT	ABSENT	ABSENT
2	Green	Yes	About the right amount	It wasn't corrections but she answered me the other questions
3	Green	Yes	About the right amount	Crackers. R and L is still difficult for me.
4	Green	No	Too little	(left blank by learner)
5	Green	Yes	About the right amount	writing. I'm not good at to use "a" or "the" so that was very helpful.
6	Green	Yes	About the right amount	"Toddler"

Table 11

Learner Data: Anahita

Activity	Traffic Selection	Satisfied?	Amount of correction	Corrections remembered
1	Green	No	About the right amount	I said she has progress, my teacher correct me "She makes progress"
2	ABSENT	ABSENT	ABSENT	ABSENT
3	Green	Yes	About the right amount	It works so well, not good. Some pronunciation
4	Green	Yes	About the right amount	Grammatical problem
5	Green	Yes	About the right amount	grammar - speaking
6	Green	Yes	About the right amount	Pronunciation - new words

Table 12

Learner Data: Oleksandra

Activity	Traffic Selection	Satisfied?	Amount of correction	Corrections remembered
1	Green	Yes	About the right amount	Emphasis, pronunciation
2	ABSENT	ABSENT	ABSENT	ABSENT
3	Green	Yes	About the right amount	Pronounce
4	Green	Yes	About the right amount	[pronunciation of] Clothes, humor, conditional #2
5	Green	Yes	About the right amount	grammar
6	ABSENT	ABSENT	ABSENT	ABSENT

After a six-week data collection period and analysis of the data, some general conclusions and reflections about the learners in this group can be established. The first two research questions are follows:

(1) What preferences did individual learners select when given choices?

(2) Does this preference change over the short-term (6 weeks)?

In this study, all learners displayed a preference for a great deal of correction. All the learners selected "Green" in every class period over the six weeks, indicating that they preferred to be corrected as much as possible, both on elements of the language lesson and all other elements of language (pronunciation, vocabulary, word choice). In this area of amount of CF requested by the learner, there was no variation among participants. These preferences remained constant over the six-week data collection period. These consistent preferences may not be true of all classrooms, depending on a variety of factors, such as age, language goals, and language proficiency when entering the class. The high-intermediate level of this classroom may have contributed to the request for lots of CF, as students had a considerable grasp on the language coming into the class. Also, this course level was marketed to students as a primarily grammar-focused class, so those learners with a strong preference for improving their language accuracy, as opposed to fluency, may have been in higher numbers than in other classes at Entranceways.

This strong preference for error correction is in line with what Sheen and Ellis conclude, that "Learners almost invariably express a wish to be corrected" (2017, p. 606). The results of this small-scale study are in line with this preference for correction.

The next research questions are below:

(3) Do learners report satisfaction with the corrective feedback they receive, when they have selected a specific amount?

(4) What corrections did learners report as being the most helpful?

Overall, students reported satisfaction with the amount of correction they received in the classroom over the six-week period. However, there were some reports of not being satisfied with the amount of corrections in a lesson, as well as finding the amount of correction to be "too

little". Li Jing marked "too little" and "I'm not sure" about her satisfaction level on two occasions each. Zhang Li also marked "too little" on two occasions, and "no" for satisfaction once. Anahita only marked "no" for her satisfaction once and remained consistent for "about the right amount" of CF; however, my impression from her during the course was that she was always looking for and wanting more correction than she received, which she noted on her exit questionnaire (to be discussed in detail later in this section). Hong remarked "too little" only once, but was satisfied with the amount of CF overall; she was also absent twice and gave birth to her son in late November, so was not present for exit questionnaire. She has the lowest language proficiency of the group overall. Wang Yan marked "too little" one time, but was satisfied overall. Valentina marked "too little" twice, and had one "I'm not sure". Valentina was also absent twice during the study.

Diya always marked that she was satisfied and received "about the right amount" of correction. Niko, aside from Activity 4, was satisfied. Oleksandra was absent twice but remained constant in being satisfied with the amount of CF she received. So, while there were some instances of not being satisfied, most learners indicated satisfaction with the amount of CF they received most of the time, according to the post-questionnaire results. Overall, about two-thirds of learners indicated on one or more occasions that the amount of CF they got was "too little".

When analyzing the results by activity, we see that Activity 2 (an adverb sentence creation game in small groups of three) and Activity 4 (partner interview in pairs) received the lowest satisfaction marks and selections of "too little." These activities were not "teacher centered", as they involved breaking the larger group into smaller groups of either two or three students. I would circulate around the room during the activity providing corrections, but due to the nature of that arrangement I was not in any one group for much longer than one-third of the

time. Though I wrote down notes in my reflection journal and presented common or salient errors to the class in plenary at the end of class, it seems this arrangement may not have been as satisfactory to the students. Given that our group was so small, the activities conducted together as a group allowed most or all learners to participate directly in speaking and for me to align to the whole group. Due to this classroom arrangement, all learners had the opportunity to hear the error corrections provided to their classmates. For example, the pronunciation of "toddler" in Activity 6 (CF provided to Niko, as she struggles with the l/r distinction), was documented as the most helpful correction for multiple learners.

The activity which was most highly rated in terms of satisfaction was Activity 3, which was a dialogue response and discussion about the common cold, using the Azar teacher resources available through the course book website. The entire session was conducted in plenary. While various elements could have contributed to higher or lower satisfaction scores, it is possible that the classroom organization of small group versus plenary played a role.

Learners were asked at the end of the activity to provide an example of a helpful correction during the session; as they knew about this as a focal point before the activity, their attention to corrections would presumably be higher than usual. This hopefully served to increase the effectiveness of the recast; the effectiveness of CF will be discussed in more detail in the next section. Whether uptake has taken place is not possible to determine from these data, but the learner is offered an opportunity to at least recognize that they made an error. The example on page 2 from Ellis and Sheen notes optional uptake after the final exchange. While the learner can repeat or self-repair the correct form, it is not known from that data whether this information is solidified in the learners' mind.

Most of the specific corrections noted regarded elements of pronunciation, including specific words corrected in class. Some of their corrections were the same as what I had written down in my reflection journal. Students' written comments on their post-activity questionnaires revealed additional corrections that I had not noted, but that students found. Some examples included:

"[pronunciation of] Crackers. R and L is still difficult for me." (Niko)

"I pronounced "chicken" wrongly. My teacher corrected me." (Zhang Li)

"The pronunciation of "non-prescription decongestants." (Hong)

Grammar elements were also noted:

"Writing. I'm not good at to use "a" or "the" so that was very helpful." (Niko)

"From she was born -> since she was born." (Hong)

"I was grown up in -> I grew up." (Zhang Li)

Other specific corrections were in regards to vocabulary and word choice, as detailed below:

"I said "my girl" and my teacher corrected me "It should be my daughter"." (Zhang Li)

"Make vs did" (Valentina)

EXIT QUESTIONNAIRES

After the traffic signal data collection was completed, learners completed an exit questionnaire. Only five of the nine participants were present for the final day of class, which is when this questionnaire was conducted. This questionnaire asked learners about how they felt about the corrections provided during the study, whether they were satisfied overall, asked for examples of helpful corrections they remembered from the class, and whether they think error correction in the classroom is important. The exit questionnaire was structured in a similar way

to the entrance questionnaire, and served to provide an opportunity to reflect more on corrective feedback after having participated in the study for six weeks. Some of their written comments included:

> "I like the corrections. And this Level 5 is very important for me, a lot of Grammar and the corrections." (Oleksandra)

> "I would like you to correct more." (Niko)

> "I want to be corrected as much as possible. So most time I think the teacher gave us just right corrections. (Li Jing)

> "That was good, even I prefer more corrections. About other student, I felt good, especially with pronunciation correction." (Anahita)

> "I hope you can keep on correcting me next year" (Zhang Li)

The responses to the exit questionnaire echoed those of the entrance questionnaire; learners want correction in class and they think it is important for improving their spoken language skills. Some learner comments indicate that they would prefer even more corrections than they received.

The remaining research question is as follows:

(5) What else can I/the learners notice when learners are consulted on a weekly basis regarding their CF preferences?

The focus group discussion conducted with the class had after they completed their exit questionnaire yielded some interesting comments. None of the learners had participated in a research study before, or conducted research themselves. They expressed being open to participating in more research in the future (as Oleksandra put it, "Why not?"). When discussing their previous experience with learning English, they lamented about previous classes only focusing on grammar, accuracy, and passing exams; there was no emphasis on using language in conducting daily life. Two Chinese learners mentioned that they can write and read in English very well, but that listening and speaking skills are not as high, due to the structure of their previous lessons. They also complained of little to no work on pronunciation, or not having native teachers, so they did not have the opportunity to hear natural English L1 accents in the classroom.

As the discussion continued, it became clear that while they disliked many elements of their previous English language learning experience, such as an excessive focus on grammar, they nonetheless sought and valued feedback on their oral production in this classroom experience. All learners expressed a desire for more correction and were very open to receiving corrections in class. They did express a desire for speaking opportunities and practicing listening skills.

POSSIBLE DRAWBACKS OF STUDY

One area where this sample is quite limited is with regard to the small number of participants and the ethnic backgrounds and cultures they represented. More than half of the language learners came from Asian countries, and the remainder included the Ukraine, Iran, and Mexico.

Another factor is, that while each student did not make a public display of their corrective feedback preference (green, yellow, or red), this information was also not hidden. I placed the traffic selection forms on top of each student's book/notebook during the short coffee break. As students returned from the break, they marked their selection. I made sure to go around and note their preferences without any comments on what it was. Then, the activity began. Often the forms got hidden under other papers or out of sight as the second half of class went on, so while it is possible that information may have been hidden from other classmates, it is likely that learners could see the selections made by their neighbors. It is possible that a sense of group alignment and solidarity may have contributed to all "green" requests, however from this data I am not able to accurately draw any conclusions about this.

This study does not directly speak to ways to best serve individual needs in large classrooms with greater numbers of learners. With nine learners, giving individual focus is not terribly difficult. In some contexts, class sizes can reach upward of 30 or 50 or more learners. How to serve students individually, purely from a logistical perspective, changes with a much larger class size. However, there may be ways to better cater to individual needs even in a setting such as that, and purely being aware of learner preference for CF could make a difference the classroom, both in terms of learner language acquisition and more affective elements, such as learner confidence and the relationship between instructor and student.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN THE CLASSROOM

One area of challenge with providing corrective feedback is how to serve all learners within a limited amount of time, while balancing instructional and practice activities. Through reflections noted in my journal after each session, it came to my attention that conducting

activities in plenary versus small group provided an opportunity for all learners to hear the corrections given to other students. For example, when one Japanese student had trouble pronouncing "toddler", and I corrected her with the correct pronunciation, other students got involved as well. A few others tried sounding out the word themselves and multiple learners noted that specific correction on the post-survey questionnaire as helpful. If this correction were given to the individual only or in a small group, only a few learners would have had the opportunity to learn from this correction. My time with any one person or group was necessarily limited, as was my time to connect or to provide corrections to everyone in a meaningful way. If I popped into a group for a few minutes, circulating around, I may have heard an error and could provide correction, or perhaps I missed the part of the activity in that group where correction could have been more meaningful to them. One way of mediating this was to note corrections in my journal as I went around to the various small groups and then put the corrections on the white board at the end of the activity. This way, all learners heard the correction, and some heard the correction twice if they were in the small group where it occurred as well.

Another challenge of this study was balancing both teaching and researching at the same time. Freeman put it well when he wrote:

> Doing teacher-research can feel like juggling…Teaching draws you into taking action and doing things in the classroom, based on what you know and need to accomplish; research pulls you in the opposite direction, toward questioning the bases of those actions and what you assume to be true (1998, p.86).

There was a lot to manage during the data collection sessions. Aside from various administrative tasks, like distributing the color traffic selection forms and noting the requests, my main responsibility was to teach. An informative and clear presentation of the activity, taking questions from learners, and managing logistics of group formation took up much of my mental focus. As this group selected "green" for every lesson, remembering individual selections was more manageable than I initially expected, as I knew everyone wanted as much correction as possible. However, then I needed to try to provide as much correction as possible! Even with just nine or fewer learners present, this still posed a challenge. Trying to provide the level of correction they wanted, while completing the activity in the time allotted (45 minutes), and making reflective observations for later, was often challenging. My reflection journal helped with the latter element; if I made a quick note in class, I could expand after the class was finished and it was still clear in my mind. Still, I sometimes felt I was not managing all of elements to the best of my ability, simply because they were all occurring contemporaneously.

REFLECTIONS ON TEACHING PRACTICE

In regards to the future of my own teaching practice, this study highlighted something that perhaps should have been obvious from the start: not all learners think the way I do. During my own experience in an immigration program in Germany, I was in German language classes (mainly grammar-based), five hours a day, five days a week, for over a year. If I had been given the traffic selection form then and participated in a similar project, I think I would have selected "yellow" most of the time. I believe that receiving some corrections on the lesson focus would have been my preference, however my experience in language classes was much more time intensive than this program at Entranceways. The experience of learning another language in-

country, along with all the social and cultural transitions and experiences, can be quite overwhelming. If the instructor had provided corrections on every error I made, I believe I would have felt quite defeated. I somewhat naively projected this mindset into the planning of this inquiry. This left me quite surprised when all the learners selected "green" every class. While it is possible that the behavior demonstrated by the learners was influenced by being part of the research project, known as the Hawthorne Effect, the extent of this, if any, is not possible to determine (McCambridge, Witton, & Melbourne, 2014)

Additional discoveries were present in other areas. While I expected the results to focus on entirely on the *amount* of correction, the real results show preference beyond the desire for correction, into whether learners are satisfied with the corrections they got, in addition to what specific corrections were most helpful. Aside from insights into error correction and feedback, it also solidified the value of involving learners more in their learning. Instead of assuming what they think or want, I could just ask them and collect other forms of data to explore patterns. Learners may not always know what they want or be able to communicate that effectively in an L2, but helping learners raise their awareness about their own learning makes them co-beneficiaries of the inquiry. In this case of learner preference for the amount of CF, the data showed that learners want a considerable amount of CF in classroom and want their mistakes corrected as often as possible. As part of raising awareness for adult learners, it is also important to address practices to the students; practices which research suggests that may be *different from* their beliefs, such as having the students engage in fluency/speaking activities not involving immediate correction from the teacher, but rather delayed feedback.

An unexpected result of this study was that it helped me to consider the interactional structures of different activities, e.g., whole group versus small group; individually offered CF

offered immediately and face to face vs. delayed CF to a group. Group arrangements have emerged as a new interest of mine after exploring CF in the present study.

Another element that emerged from analyzing the data from this study is that students' preferences for CF seemed to be contextualized within the interactive activities and communicative tasks that they found very worthwhile and meaningful. While the learners spoke unfavorably about grammar-focused classes they had experienced in the past, they showed both preference for and satisfaction with the CF in the context of meaningful activities.

With experience comes learning about what one would do differently. Adding a discourse-based component, involving recordings and analyses of spoken discourse, could have added other valuable perspectives on this study. For the future, this is something I will consider, as well as a survey or questionnaire exploring why learners chose to enroll in the particular language course featured in the study. This could add deeper knowledge about student motivations and background, as well as language goals.

CONCLUSIONS

The results of this small-scale study are consistent with other research that shows that language learners want corrective feedback in the classroom. While students reported satisfaction with the amount of CF they received when they requested "as much as possible," there are indicators that learners preferred more CF than I could provide in a classroom of nine students. Specific corrections that learners noted as most helpful included grammar points, elements of pronunciation, vocabulary and word choice. While these data are not representative of all groups of learners, it offers a glimpse into CF in the classroom and how it could be received by learners.

Through conducting this study, I have gleaned knowledge not only about learner preferences for corrective feedback, but also gained experience as a teacher-researcher. The process of conducting research in the classroom offers a unique opportunity each time and requires thoughtful planning and execution. Through this initial classroom-based research project, I have come away with valuable learning for future studies.

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APPENDIX A

Images of Classroom Where Study Took Place

Above: Main table where plenary sessions were conducted.

Above: Wider view to include tables for small group/pairwork

APPENDIX B

Entrance Questionnaire

What is your experience with correction in a language classroom? Have some of your teachers in the past offered you corrective feedback ***during*** speaking activities—while you are speaking? How often did you receive corrections? Do you remember if the corrections were mostly about the grammar?

Do you think error correction in the classroom is important? Why or why not?

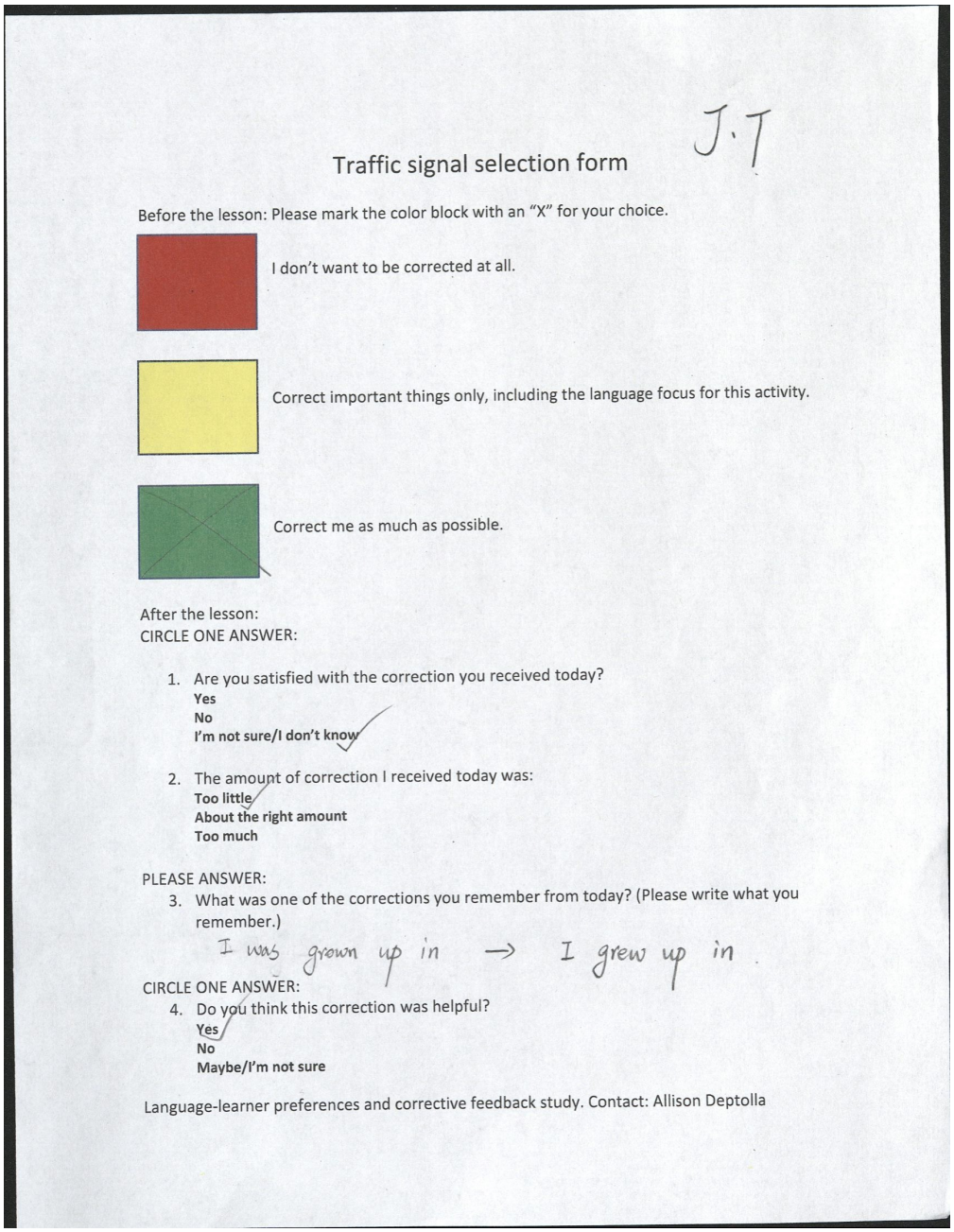
Do you think error correction is important in order for you to learn and improve your spoken English?

Please briefly explain the "traffic signal" method in your own words.

Language-learner preferences and corrective feedback study. Contact: Allison Deptolla

APPENDIX C

Examples of Learner Responses to Traffic Signal Form



J.T

Traffic signal selection form

Before the lesson: Please mark the color block with an "X" for your choice.

I don't want to be corrected at all.

Correct important things only, including the language focus for this activity.

Correct me as much as possible.

After the lesson:
CIRCLE ONE ANSWER:

1. Are you satisfied with the correction you received today?
   Yes
   No
   I'm not sure/I don't know ✓
2. The amount of correction I received today was:
   Too little ✓
   About the right amount
   Too much

PLEASE ANSWER:

3. What was one of the corrections you remember from today? (Please write what you remember.)

   I was grown up in → I grew up in

CIRCLE ONE ANSWER:

4. Do you think this correction was helpful?
   Yes ✓
   No
   Maybe/I'm not sure

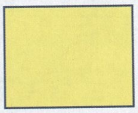
Language-learner preferences and corrective feedback study. Contact: Allison Deptolla

ON

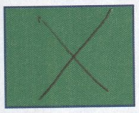
Traffic signal selection form

Before the lesson: Please mark the color block with an "X" for your choice.

I don't want to be corrected at all.



Correct important things only, including the language focus for this activity.



Correct me as much as possible.

After the lesson:
CIRCLE ONE ANSWER:

1. Are you satisfied with the correction you received today?
   Yes
   No
   I'm not sure/I don't know

2. The amount of correction I received today was:
   Too little
   About the right amount
   Too much

PLEASE ANSWER:

3. What was one of the corrections you remember from today? (Please write what you remember.)
   cloth, humor, condition #2

CIRCLE ONE ANSWER:

4. Do you think this correction was helpful?
   Yes
   No
   Maybe/I'm not sure

Language-learner preferences and corrective feedback study. Contact: Allison Deptolla

APPENDIX D

Exit Questionnaire

How do you feel about the corrections that I gave to you during this study? What about the corrections that I gave to other students: How do you feel about those?

Are you satisfied with the type and amount corrective feedback you received?

Can you give an example of a correction that you feel was helpful?

Do you think error correction in the classroom is important? Why or why not?

Do you have any other comments or feedback about this study?

Thank you for your helpful participation!

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