

Investigating Oral Corrective Feedback in Teaching Speaking to Seventh-Grade EFL Students

 <https://doi.org/10.31004/jele.v10i4.983>

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ABSTRACT

Oral corrective feedback (OCF) is significant in helping develop students' speaking skills in the EFL classroom. However, its implementation varies depending on teaching style and classroom conditions. This research investigates the types and implementation of OCF used by seventh-grade English teachers at MTs NU Mranggen, a private secondary school. Employing a qualitative case study design, data were collected through observation and semi-structured interviews. The results showed that teachers used three types of OCF: recast, explicit correction, and clarification request, with recast being the most dominant as it allowed teachers to correct errors without interrupting the interaction process. Furthermore, OCF is most often implemented at the main activity stage, particularly when students' direct interaction with the teacher. The results suggest a more planned and strategic use of OCF to improve students' speaking ability in EFL classrooms.

Keywords: *Oral Corrective Feedback, Teaching Speaking, EFL Students*

Article History:

Received 29th May 2025

Accepted 19th June 2025

Published 22nd July 2025



INTRODUCTION

Teaching speaking in the EFL classroom presents significant challenges for teachers and students. One of the main challenges is how to help students to speak fluently and use correct English. Many EFL students are anxious to speak English because teaching approaches emphasize grammar rather than speaking skills (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017). In addition, students in EFL contexts usually lack exposure to natural English conversations outside the classroom, making it more challenging to maintain the motivation to learn (Amoah & Yeboah, 2021). The lack of natural speaking practice causes students to become increasingly insecure, which can hinder their speaking development (Octaberlina et al., 2022). So, a learning approach that encourages students to think and explore is needed to develop speaking skills (al-Tonsi, 2023). When students are given opportunities and a supportive environment, they will be more motivated, and their speaking ability will improve (Larasati et al., 2024).

Making mistakes is inevitable when learning a new language and should be seen as a natural part of the journey (Behroozi & Karimnia, 2017). When students make mistakes, they will be encouraged to look for the correct answer so that their brains will work more actively, which can improve their understanding of the foreign language they are learning (Guzmán-Muñoz, 2020). Mistakes in language learning are unavoidable, but they can be corrected based on the feedback (Erdoğan, 2005).

Changing mistakes without discouraging students is a challenge teachers face, so feedback in the form of correction is needed so that students know their own mistakes (Amalia et al., 2019). Corrective feedback is an instructional step in the form of statements and several questions to students as they communicate (Tian & Li, 2018). Corrective feedback is verbal or written feedback given to students to correct their mistakes in learning L2 (Sheen & Ellis, 2011). Providing intensive corrective feedback to language learners, regardless of age and ability, can accelerate the learning process and improve language learners' understanding (Alsolami,

2019). Oral corrective feedback, or OCF, is given by teachers to their students who make mistakes in using the target language, including grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation (Solikhah, 2015).

Several studies have been conducted on teachers' application of Oral Corrective Feedback (OCF) in EFL learning. The research by Yusofi et al. was a content analysis of previous studies on feedback in the last two decades. The results show that corrective feedback continues to be used every year, and the most dominant type of OCF is explicit feedback (Yusofi et al., 2022). Meanwhile, Zhang, Chao, and Zheng, who conducted a survey and oral test of university students in China, found that using OCF in teaching vocabulary and grammar can improve students' speaking ability (Zhang et al., 2022). Supporting these findings, Wangchuk explored the application of OCF in Bhutanese ESL classrooms and revealed that teachers mostly used recast, explicit correction, metalinguistic feedback, and repetition. Recast was the most frequently applied, with high student absorption and participation levels after teacher feedback (Wangchuk, 2023). Similarly, Sa'adah conducted a case study in a tenth-grade high school and found that explicit correction, metalinguistic feedback, and clarification requests were the commonly used types of OCF. Her findings also confirmed that OCF did not hinder classroom interaction and contributed positively to students' willingness to communicate (Sa'adah, 2019).

Further supporting the positive perception of OCF, Muwaffaqah and Wahyuni investigated the practice and perception of OCF among teachers and students in a public junior high school. The research showed that explicit correction and repetition were the most frequently used strategies as they were perceived as simple and effective (Muwaffaqah & Wahyuni, 2023). Gaffar et al. focused on vocational high school students in Bandung. They found that repetition, clarification requests, and repetition were the most frequently used types of OCF, with repetition being the most effective in improving pronunciation, grammar, and confidence. The research also showed that students may feel uncomfortable if feedback is not delivered in a supportive way (Gaffar et al., 2024). In online learning, Anugrah revealed that although teachers use different types of OCF, such as recast, explicit correction, and repetition, technical issues, such as unstable internet connections, often interfere with feedback delivery (Anugrah et al., 2024). Finally, Azzawi and Barwari found that EFL teachers in Duhok preferred repetition for pronunciation errors and metalinguistic feedback for grammar. Most of the feedback led to student improvement, and teachers were generally positive about OCF regardless of gender, experience, or school type (Kasim Al-Azzawi & Zaya Al-Barwari, 2020).

This research aims to answer the following main questions: (1) What types of OCF are most frequently used by teachers in teaching speaking skills for seventh-grade students, and (2) How is OCF implemented in teaching speaking skills for seventh-grade students. Several studies have examined teachers' implementation of Oral Corrective Feedback in EFL learning. However, limited studies still focus on teaching speaking skills in private secondary schools because most previous studies were at the university level. This situation encouraged the researcher to conduct in-depth research on effective OCF strategies and their application in the classroom. Pedagogically, this research is helpful for teachers because it provides insight into the types of OCF that are effective in teaching speaking skills so that they can help improve students' speaking skills. Theoretically, this research is expected to be a reference for researchers interested in studying the same topic.

METHOD

This research employed a qualitative research approach with a single case study design. Qualitative research explores phenomena in real-life contexts using various data sources such as interviews, documentation, and observation (Yin, 2014). Case studies allow researchers to gain deep insights into complex issues in the real world (Crowe et al., 2011). Therefore, this method is considered appropriate to explore the types of OCF given by teachers and how they are implemented in the teaching and learning process of speaking in a seventh-grade private secondary school.

Respondents

The respondent of this research is an English teacher at MTs NU Mranggen, selected through purposive sampling. The researcher was chosen based on the following criteria: (1) have more than ten years of teaching experience, and (2) actively teach English to seventh-grade students. Seventh-grade students were chosen as the focus because they are at the early stage of learning English, where they are starting to use the language to communicate with peers and teachers.

Instruments

The instruments used in this study were field notes and semi-structured interview guidelines. Classroom observations focused on recording the types of OCFs frequently used by teachers and how OCFs were implemented in teaching speaking skills on the topic of 'requesting and giving directions.' The observations focused on identifying the types of OCF (e.g., recast, explicit correction, and clarification request) and analyzing the lesson stages (opening, main activities, closing) where OCF occurred. Students' responses to OCF were also recorded. Semi-structured interviews aimed to explore teachers' experiences, frequency of OCF use, reasons for choosing particular types of OCF, perceptions of OCF effectiveness, students' responses, and hesitations in providing feedback. The interview guide consisted of 11 open-ended questions, and the interviews lasted about 40 minutes. All observations and interviews were supported by video and audio recordings, with prior consent from the respondents.

Procedures

This research went through several stages to obtain in-depth data on using OCF in teaching speaking skills in grade seven. First, the researcher took care of the school's research permit by conveying the purpose and the research permit letter from the faculty to the principal and the seventh-grade English teacher. After obtaining permission, the researcher and teacher scheduled a classroom observation. Second, the researcher conducted classroom observation to identify the types of OCF and its implementation in learning with the topic of asking and giving directions. The researcher took videos during the lesson with the respondents' permission to facilitate data analysis. Third, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with English teachers. This interview aimed to discover the teachers' experiences and views on using OCF. The interview was recorded with the respondents' permission to facilitate data analysis.

Data Analysis

The data in this research were analyzed using the interactive analysis model of Miles and Huberman (1992), which consists of three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. In the data reduction stage, the researcher sorted and simplified the data from the observation and interview transcripts related to the implementation of Oral Corrective Feedback (OCF) in speaking learning, after which the researcher identified the types of OCF used by teachers, such as recast, explicit correction, clarification of requests, and others. At the data presentation stage, the findings were arranged as tables and dialogue quotes to facilitate the analysis of OCF usage patterns in speaking lessons. Finally, at the conclusion stage, the researcher interpreted the analyzed data to answer the research questions: What types of OCF are often used by teachers to correct the mistakes of seventh-grade students, and how OCF is implemented in speaking lessons.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION*Types of Oral Corrective Feedback Most Frequently Used by Teachers*

This section presents the research findings based on direct observations and interviews with teachers. It focuses on the types of Oral Corrective Feedback (OCF) used and how they were implemented. The analysis is organized into subheadings based on the three most commonly used types of OCF: Recast, Explicit Correction, and Clarification Request.

Recast

Recast is the most dominant type of Oral Corrective Feedback used by teachers in speaking lessons in grade seven, accounting for 47.4% of the total OCF observed. Based on the

lesson observations, it was found that teachers more often correct implicitly through the recast form, which repeats or restates the student's utterance with the correct version without explicitly explaining the location of the error.

Table 1. Example of Recast Implementation

No	Student Utterance	Teacher Feedback	Focus of Correction	Outcome
1	"Corner"	"On the corner."	Preposition use/ phrase correction	Students hear the correct form of the phrase
2	"Good bye"	"You're welcome"	Pragmatic expression (social function)	Students understand context-appropriate expressions
3	"Library near the school"	"The library is near the school"	Grammar: article on verb (is)	Students absorb the correct sentence structure
4	"Can you help me the way to the /bæŋ/"	"The /bæŋk/"	Pronunciation	Students correct the pronunciation of the word "bank" correctly.

Table 1 shows that teachers use recast to correct various language errors, such as vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. The teacher's feedback is delivered naturally without disrupting the flow of communication and without stopping the student's conversation.

One of the interview data supports this finding; the teacher stated that recast is the most frequently used form of OCF:

Data sample 1

".....The form of feedback I use most often is recasting...."

This statement shows that the teacher consistently uses recast types in the lesson. The teacher explains that the reason for using recast in learning:

Data sample 2

"The one I use most often is recast... it's a subtle correction because it doesn't directly point out that the student has made a mistake."

This statement shows that by using recast, teachers can still provide feedback without embarrassing students. This aligns with the opinion of Lyster and Ranta (1997), who categorize recast as an implicit correction, namely providing feedback on student errors without explaining the error directly. Furthermore, Sardabi et al., (2025) found that students exposed to implicit feedback such as recasts produced a greater desire to communicate because such indirect feedback created a less stressful classroom environment, thus encouraging spontaneous participation and active involvement of students in learning activities.

Research conducted by Wangchuk (2023), Gaffar et al. (2024), and Azzawi & Barwari (2020) also supports this finding. They highlighted that recasts are one of the most effective and frequently used Oral Corrective Feedback strategies in English language learning. Recasts are the most commonly applied by teachers and result in a high level of student absorption without disrupting the smoothness of communication.

Muwaffaqoh & Wahyuni (2023) also revealed similar findings, stating that teachers choose recasts because they are the simplest and easiest for students to understand. One of the most common reasons teachers use the recapitulation method is to manage time, gain student trust, and increase interaction. Even Choi & Li (2012) emphasized that the recast form is equally used by novice and experienced teachers in public and private schools; they prefer recast because teachers do not want to disrupt interactions with students and utilize learning time.

Thus, recasting is a pedagogical strategy that considers students' communication and does not just correct linguistic errors. Correcting students using recasts shows that the teacher is aware of the need to keep students engaged in the lesson and ensure that students feel relaxed in the classroom instead of afraid.

Explicit correction

Explicit correction is a type of OCF delivered clearly and directly by the teacher. In explicit correction, the teacher informs students that they have made a mistake and then gives the correct form. In contrast to recast, which is delivered implicitly, in explicit correction, the teacher explicitly points out the student's mistake by telling the location of the error. Based on

the observation, explicit correction accounted for 31.6% of the total OCF observed. Explicit correction is used when students' errors, such as pronunciation and sentence structure, are considered significant.

Table 2. Example of Explicit Correction Implementation

No	Student Utterance	Teacher Feedback	Focus of Correction	Outcome
1	"Up.....on"	"Itu untuk semester kemarin, in direction kita pakai 'above'"	Preposition choice	Students corrects to 'above'
2	"Turn right, library beside science lab"	"No..no, go straight forward. The library is beside the science lab"	Grammar: article+subject-verb structure	Students revises to 'The library is beside the science lab'
3	"Can you give me /di'rekʃən/ to post office?"	"bukan /di'rekʃən/, tapi /də'rek.ʃən/"	Pronunciation	Students correct the pronunciation to "direction."

Based on Table 2, the teacher uses explicit correction when students make mistakes that have the potential to confuse the interlocutor or disrupt the meaning of the sentence. For example, in the case of a student who says "up....on," the teacher explicitly states that the student has made a mistake that in direction, the correct word is 'above'. The teacher makes corrections to ensure students understand prepositions based on the proper context. Interviews conducted with teachers also support the use of this form. The teacher stated:

Data sample 3

.... but sometimes I also use explicit correction, this is an effective type because students know what is wrong and how to fix it".

Data sample 4

"In my experience, student responses vary widely...most are positive so they immediately repeat what was said...well, only a few students ignore it."

It reflects that explicit correction is the most effective form of OCF because it clearly shows where and how to fix the mistake. Students' responses to this form are positive, marked by immediately saying the correct form, although some students ignore it.

Lyster and Ranta (1997) similarly noted that explicit correction is a form of OCF by providing direct information to students that they have made mistakes. Sheen & Ellis (2011) added that explicit correction can increase linguistic awareness and students' understanding of the target language. Muwaffaqoh & Wahyuni (2023) also highlighted that explicit correction is the simplest type of OCF because it is easy to understand and is considered the easiest to correct mistakes.

Han (2023) and Maulida & Arianti (2024) found that students accept explicit correction more than implicit correction because they immediately know where the error is and how to fix it. Research by Yilmaz & Granena (2016) emphasized that students with low skill levels are considered appropriate when given explicit correction because they need a simple form. Other studies also show that teachers often use explicit correction because it is considered a more straightforward strategy, readily accepted by students, and effective in improving grammar and interpersonal skills (Sa'adah et al., 2018).

Thus, explicit correction not only corrects linguistic errors but also clarifies students' understanding of their errors. Teachers use this form when students make errors that have the potential to hinder smooth communication.

Clarification Request

Clarification request is a form of OCF used by teachers to indicate a lack of understanding of students' speech, thus indicating that they have made a mistake. This form does not clearly explain where the error is but instead provides subtle cues so that students realize and then correct their mistakes. Generally, teachers use cues, such as the expressions "Huh?" and "Sorry?" to provide clues that there is a mistake in the student's speech. Clarification requests are used when teachers want to allow students to understand and correct themselves without directly stating that they have made a mistake. The following is observation data on the use of clarification requests in learning:

Table 3. Example of Clarification Request Implementation

No	Student Utterance	Teacher Feedback	Focus of Correction	Outcome
1	"Turn left"	"Hah?"	Word choice	Students corrects to 'turn right'
2	"Where is clinic"	"Ulangi lagi!"	Grammar: article omission	Students repeat with 'Where is the clinic?'
3	"Yaya is near Putri"	"Near?"	Word choice	Students corrects to 'beside'

The example in Table 3 shows that the clarification request strategy is indirectly used to provoke students' linguistic awareness. When students answered the teacher's question, "*Apa Bahasa inggrisnya belok kanan?*" with "*Turn left,*" the teacher only responded, "*Huh?*" The response made students think again and then realize their mistake. Then, without interruption, they repeated the answer correctly by saying, "*Turn right.*"

From the interview data, the teacher revealed that clarification request is a form of OCF that can encourage students to think critically:

Data Sample 5

".... but for minor mistakes, I usually use clarification requests....so I just say 'huh?' or Just ask back. They immediately realise there is a mistake."

This form of OCF will not pressure students because it does not directly state that they have made a mistake. Thus, the learning atmosphere remains positive, which can build students' confidence in speaking English.

This finding is supported by the theory of Lyster & Ranta (1997), which states that clarification requests are a type of OCF that negotiates meaning. When the teacher shows confusion in understanding students' utterances without explicitly mentioning the error, the students correct their mistakes after receiving the teacher's instructions.

Sato & Loewen (2018) highlight that clarification requests can develop EFL students' speaking fluency. Tasdemir & Arslan (2018) further highlighted that clarification requests are the most preferred form of OCF for students because they feel they are not directly blamed and are encouraged to correct their mistakes Gaffar et al. (2024) also reported that clarification requests are commonly used in EFL classrooms, mainly to encourage students to rethink their mistakes without interrupting the flow of communication. Clarification requests do not tell students there are mistakes in their speech but require students to recognize and be aware of their mistakes.

Thus, clarification requests are used in speaking learning to give students subtle corrections and the opportunity to rethink and correct their mistakes. This strategy can make students more involved in learning and improve their English-speaking courage.

Implementation of Oral Corrective Feedback in Teaching Speaking

The implementation of Oral Corrective Feedback in learning to speak in class VII is conceptually implemented by the stages of learning, including the opening, main activities, and closing stages. However, based on the observation, OCF mostly appeared during the main activities, such as asking for directions, giving place directions, and conducting dialog in front of the class. The following is the implementation of OCF based on the stages of learning activities:

Table 4. Implementation of OCF in teaching speaking

No	Stage	Activity	Type of OCF
1	Opening	Greeting students, praying and checking attendance.	None
2	Main Activity	With the help of students, the teacher writes examples of prepositions of place on the board	Recast and explicit correction
		The teacher explains how to ask others about the location of a place	Recast and explicit correction
		The teacher asks the expressions to asking and giving directions to others, and the teacher tells the social functions	Recast
		Students are asked to identify a picture and indicate the location of a place (based on the	Recast, explicit correction and clarification request

		textbook)	
		Students are asked to present the dialog in front of the class and the teacher give feedback	Recast and explicit correction
3	Closing	The teacher and students summarize the key point of the lesson	Recast

Table 4 shows that OCF was used most in the main activity stage. OCF has not been identified in the opening stage because the teacher's activities only include leading prayers, checking students' attendance, and delivering the material to be learned. At the closing stage, OCF was identified when the teacher and students reflected and concluded the day's lesson.

In practice, the teacher provides OCF in an unstructured manner, but it appears as a response when there are errors in students' utterances. For example, when students say, "Library near the school, the teacher immediately provides recast feedback by responding: "The library near the school." Alternatively, in another example, when the student answered "front" to the question "bagaimana memberikan arahan 'didepan'?" the teacher responded by asking back "front?" as a form of clarification request. This encourages students to rethink and recognize their mistakes; then, they repeat their utterance by saying, "In front of."

In the interview, the teacher stated that the provision of OCF was adjusted to the situation and the comfort of the students:

Data Sample 6

"Yes, usually if I see students looking nervous or shy, I refrain from giving corrections....I don't want to reduce their motivation to learn English..."

The responses indicate that giving feedback in learning should look at the situation and condition of students' motivation. Teachers give correction feedback explicitly when students look confident and ready to receive input. On the other hand, teachers choose to use re-request and clarification for students who look hesitant because it is more subtle and does not disturb their confidence

This finding aligns with Rahmawati's (2023) opinion, which states that students' discomfort due to too direct correction can reduce their enthusiasm for learning, so teacher sensitivity is significant to maintaining students' learning motivation. Several other studies have also found that consistent implementation of OCF can create a positive learning environment, increasing student learning motivation (Arumugam et al., 2022; Prakoso et al., 2024; Yusofi et al., 2022).

In general, implementing OCF in speaking lessons is adaptive and unstructured. This strategy can create a positive learning environment and consistently encourage students to speak English more confidently if the teacher provides timely feedback that does not interrupt and reduces students' confidence.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings indicate that teachers at MTs NU Mranggen strategically employ recast, explicit correction, and clarification requests based on the context and type of student error, with their implementation most prominent during the main activity when students are actively participating in speaking activities.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

All praise and gratitude are due to Allah SWT for His bounty, which allowed the writer to complete this article, "Investigating the Use of Oral Corrective Feedback in Teaching Speaking for the Seventh Grade of EFL Students." The researcher would also like to thank the teachers and seventh-grade students of MTs NU Mranggen for their help and time during the data collection process.

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