



Investigating Kurdish EFL Learners' Preferences to Oral Corrective Feedback at College Level

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate Kurdish EFL learners' preferences to oral corrective feedback (OCF) and any differences between Kurdish EFL learners' preferences to OCF strategies based on gender. It was carried out at four different departments of English in Duhok city. The participants of the study were 104 Kurdish EFL learners; 52 males and 52 females. A quantitative research methodology was used to conduct the study. Survey questionnaires were used to collect data from learners and SPSS program (version 26) was used to analyze the data collected from questionnaires. The results revealed that after finishing from speaking was the most preferred timing of correction among the participants. Regarding types of spoken errors and OCF strategies, participants mostly preferred the correction of serious spoken errors and metalinguistic explanation was the most preferred strategy. In addition, the results revealed that there were some gender differences in Kurdish EFL learners' preferences to OCF strategies. The implications of the study's findings will be of great significance to teachers, teacher training programs and curriculum designers where they highlight the importance of tailoring OCF and incorporating certain teaching methods based on learners' preferences and gender. Furthermore, it suggests the employment of qualitative methodologies and inclusion of other variables in order to have a better understanding of the study.

Keywords: Oral Corrective Feedback, Kurdish EFL Learners, Gender, Preferences

فه کولینا چه زین خاندنه فانین کورد EFL لهه مبهری به رسفدانان راستفه کر یا ده فه کی لسه ر ئاستی کولیژی

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پوخته

ئارمانجین ئه فی فه کولینی، فه کولینا چه زین خاندنه فانین کورد EFL (خاندنا زمانی ئینگیزی وه ک زمانه کی بیانی) لهه مبه ری OCF (به رسفدانان راستفه کر یا ده فه کی) و فه کولینا هه ر جیوازیه کا ره گه زی دنافه یا چه زین خاندنه فانین کورد EFL لهه مبهری ستراتیجیین OCF. ئه ف فه کولینه ل چار پشکین جیواز یین زمانی ئینگیزی ل باژیژی دهوک هاتبو جیبه جیکرن. به شداریوبین فی فه کولینی ۱۰۴ خاندنه فانین کورد EFL؛ ۵۲ ره گه ز نیرو ۵۲ ره گه ز می. لیکولینه کا شیوازی ژماره پی هاتبو بکارئینان بو ئیقه برنا فی فه کولینی. پرسه نامه هاتبون بکارئینان بو کومکرنا پیزانینان ژ خاندنه فانان و به رنامه (SPSS دان 26) هاتبو بکارئینان بو شیکارکرنا وان پیزانین کومکری ژ خاندنه فانان. ئه نجامان دیارکر کو پشتی دو ماهیکا ئاخفتی چه زترین ده می راستفه کرنی بول ناف به شداریوبیان دا. سه باره ت جورین شاشیین ئاخفتی و ستراتیجیین OCF ، به شداریوبیان ب گشتی چه ز راستفه کرنا شاشیین ئاخفتین رژی کر و رونکرنا زمانی چه زترین ستراتیجی بو. زیده باری فی چه ندی، ئه نجامان دیارکر کو هنده ک جیوازیین ره گه زی دنافه را چه زین خاندنه فانین کورد EFL لهه مبهری ستراتیجیین OCF هه نه. ئه نجامین فی فه کولینی دی گرنگیه کا مه زن هه بیت بو ماموستایان، به رنامه ی فیکرنا ماموستایان و داهینه رین وانه گوتی کو روندکته گرنگیه گونجاندا OCF و تیکه لکرنا هنده ک ریکین وانه گوتی ل سه ر بنگه هی چه زین خاندنه فانان و ره گه زی. ههروه سا، پیشنیا راکارئینانا لیکولینه کا شیوازی چه وانی و زیده کرنا بگورین دی دکته بو تیکه هشتنه کا باشتر د فه کولینی دا.

په یفین سه ره کی: به رسفدانان راستفه کر یین ده فه کی، خاندنه فانین کورد EFL، ره گه ز، چه ز

1. Introduction

Corrective feedback (CF) is a process of correction and responding between two or more individuals. It is a frequent and an important correctional tool used in various fields for various reasons, particularly in educational and language learning fields where committing errors of language are seen as a common phenomenon and the beginning of language development to learners who learn English as a second language (ESL) or as a foreign language (EFL) in schools and colleges. Thus, CF is information given by teachers to their learners as a reaction to linguistic errors that affect their oral production skills (Sheen & Ellis, 2011). There are numerous types of CF, but oral corrective feedback (OCF) in particular is the most common CF used in correcting learners' spoken errors. OCF is defined as the verbal given response as a reaction against an utterance that contains errors (Ellis et al., 2006). Nonetheless, this study argues that learners face many problems of

mispronunciation and fluency in uttering speech in speaking classes. Thus, choosing the right type of feedback strategy to correct Kurdish EFL learners' spoken errors could be problematic since correcting spoken errors of learners often leads to a reduction in confidence to speak and a rise in anxiety which will prevent them to actively participate and learn English in the speaking classes. Secondly, research findings have shown that learners respond differently to teachers' feedback based on different preferences and gender, regarding timing of correction, spoken errors that need correction and OCF strategies, thus the language development of their learners could hinder if it is not properly corrected by the teachers. Thirdly, failure in choosing the preferred type of feedback strategy could lead to the reemergence and fossilization of errors by learners which will lead to a constant linguistic deficiency in speaking skills. In summary, based on the points above, this study provides the pedagogical solutions by investigating the following research questions.

1. What are Kurdish EFL learners' preferences to OCF?
2. Are there any differences between Kurdish EFL learners' preferences to OCF strategies based on gender?

Based on the second research question, this study hypothesized that there are differences between Kurdish EFL learners' preferences to OCF strategies based on gender.

1.1 Significance of the Study

This study will be of significance to the Kurdish EFL teachers, teacher training programs, curriculum designers. Firstly, it will provide a deep insight to teachers, regarding Kurdish EFL learners' preferences to OCF in order to tailor the feedback strategies according to the preferences and gender of learners and avoid any misunderstandings which will be of great benefit in facilitating learning without the risk of damaging Kurdish EFL learner' confidence and raising their anxiety. Also, the findings of this study will contribute in improving teacher training programs by creating a supportive classroom climate through the use of appropriate strategies. Moreover, it will provide suitable and more effective CF suggestions to curriculum designers in order to integrate specific feedback strategies in teaching which will inform the development of new teaching methods for addressing learners' errors in speaking classes.

2. Literature Review

This section presents theoretical background about the field of corrective feedback, particularly oral corrective feedback and related studies done in the field.

2.1 Errors

The term "error" is taken from the Latin "errare" which means to drift, wander off or depart; its precise meaning varies depending on the context in which it is used (Hendrickson, 1978). According to Yang (2010), a linguistic error is a failed spoken production. Thus, errors are the defective aspects of a learner's speech that departs away from the chosen standard of adult language performance (Dulay et al, 1982). Native language users claim that it is the usage of an element of language in a manner that indicates flawed education (Chun et al., 1982). According to Moqimipour and Shahrokhi (2015), errors might result from a lack of proficiency with certain target language standards. Similarly, errors are seen by Brown (2000) as a detectable departure beyond a native speaker's language that indicates how proficient the learner is. This means that errors occur because learners do not have the appropriate knowledge of language, hence learners could lack the complete knowledge of grammar, pronunciation, spelling or vocabularies, and also committing errors indicate learners' language level because errors are not seen as standard language. However, recent studies and scholars experienced a shift in viewing the errors as a product of insufficient learning where the new view sees errors as a natural and expected development of learners' language journey. Thus, errors are now seen as an inevitable part of learning a new language instead of being the consequence of a lack of learning (Sultana, 2009).

2.2 Feedback

The word feedback is a general term with various definitions in various contexts with various purposes. However, in education and language learning, feedback holds an important position and considered as an important tool. According to Turner (2020), feedback is the input provided to learners regarding the content that they generate via spoken or written production during the course of language acquisition. Thus, feedback, particularly in the setting of education, is information provided to learners regarding how well they performed in a learning assignment or a task, typically with the aim of enhancing that performance (Ur, 1996). According to Westberg and Hilliard (2001), feedback is

information that learners get regarding their academic achievement with the goal of assisting learners in developing their perspectives and abilities in the field that they choose. In other words, feedback is the provision of guidance in the form of information given by different sources to learners which helps in correcting their errors and improving their skills in language. Henceforth, it is the feedback that helps learners get better and points them in the appropriate path (Westberg & Hilliard, 2001).

2.3 Corrective Feedback

It is important to recognize that feedback has many different types with different functions and the one type which is concerned with the correction of the learner's errors is known as CF. Chaudron (1977) defined CF as any response from the instructor that obviously alters, dismissively addresses to, or requests that the learner's production be improved. According to Lightbown and Spada (1999), CF is any hint given to learners showing their wrong utilization of their desired language. Furthermore, any spoken or written evidence which draws attention to learners' incorrect production is considered CF (Nassaji & Kartchava, 2017). Thus, it is a collaborative process between a teacher and learners where a teacher corrects the errors produced by the learners in speaking. However, it is necessary to mention that accuracy is part of CF since this type of feedback concentrates on the form. Thus, CF is considered efficient if it is applied in correcting an incorrect form of language production. In addition to being precise and particular, CF is concentrated, offers clear, useful and correct data, and is descriptive instead of evaluative, which helps those who get corrected feel less confused (Brandt, 2008). Usually, CF, commonly referred to by the terms like error correction or negative feedback, is generally understood to be information given to learners regarding the un-formedness associated with their L2 outputs (Gass & Mackey, 2012). However, the two terms which are CF and negative feedback are not the same; it is more like two different terms used for different ways of correcting errors and used in different areas. Su and Tian (2016) define negative feedback as any information which points out learners' incorrect production, while CF seeks to identify the learner's incorrect production and occasionally offers suggestions for fixing them. Basically, one feedback is used to indicate errors while the other type is used to identify and often correct errors. Additionally, Su and Tian (2016) noted that CF is utilized in the area of teaching and learning second languages, while the research area of mental psychological research includes utilization of negative feedback.

2.4 Oral Corrective Feedback

This type of feedback is related to the correction of speech errors, oral errors or more knowingly uncorrected utterances. OCF has been established as both an intricate phenomenon, having numerous uses (Chaudron, 1988) and as merely as reactions toward learners' utterances which include errors (Ellis, 2006). Thus, this particular type has received much attention in the research community where a large number of studies related to OCF are published around the world. Therefore, a taxonomy was developed for correcting the learners' speech errors in their utterances in order to facilitate and enhance foreign language learning. Lyster and Ranta's (1997) research revealed six strategies of OCF: explicit correction, recast, clarification request, metalinguistic feedback, elicitation and repetition. Afterwards, Panova and Lyster (2002) added translation to the list of six OCF strategies. Hence, this taxonomy of seven strategies is used in this study. The OCF strategies are illustrated in the following.

2.4.1 Clarification Request

According to Lyster and Ranta (1997), this type of feedback strategy is a kind of response as a notification alert initiated by the teacher to learners which states that either the teacher did not understand what they said or perhaps their response was poorly constructed (in terms of understanding or accuracy) and that an adjustment or restatement is necessary (e.g., pardon me, what do you mean by X).

2.4.2 Repetition

This strategy works when a teacher repeats a learner's incorrect production in speech; it is referred to as repetition where teachers typically change their intonation to emphasize what was wrong in the utterance of the learner (Lyster & Ranta, 1997). For example, when a learner says "Mohammed go to Germany yesterday", the teacher may respond with a rising intonation to emphasize what was wrong "Mohammed GO to Germany yesterday".

2.4.3 Translation

This strategy was not originally a distinctive strategy that was included in the taxonomy of OCF strategies, but over time, it was recognized and included within the taxonomy. According to Panova and Lyster (2002), If translation comes after a learner's inappropriate use of the L1, it might be viewed as a feedback adjustment. For example, when a learner

says “Dûşem” (the Kurmancî Kurdish word for Monday), the teacher may respond by providing the English equivalent “Monday”.

2.4.4 Explicit Correction

Explicit correction is when the teacher makes it obvious that the learner's response was erroneous and provides the proper form (Lyster & Ranta, 1997). For example, when a learner says “The frog jumped to the late”, the teacher may respond “You should say to the lake”.

2.4.5 Elicitation

This strategy of correction has more than one method. It could be applied in various ways, but all the different ways fall under two main categories which are pausing or questioning. For that reason, elicitation includes no less than three methods that teachers employ to get the correct production of the utterance out of their learners (Lyster & Ranta, 1997). To begin, teachers elicit the completeness of their own utterance by purposefully pausing so that learners can correct the error that follows (e.g., "Alind plays the..."), while metalinguistic remarks like "No, the answer" could appear before such elicit completeness or a repetition of the error could occur following a pause such as “Playin...” (Lyster & Ranta, 1997).

2.4.6 Metalinguistic Explanation

Metalinguistic feedback is considered as a guidance tool utilized in speaking classes where teachers employ to point out the errors that the learners made, and also guide the learners to correct the errors by themselves and have well-formed utterances. Thus, metalinguistic feedback does not specifically give the right form of the utterance; instead, it includes comments (e.g., “Can you find your error?”, “No, not X,” or even just “No.”), information (e.g., “It’s masculine”), or questions (e.g., “Do we use ‘he’ when referring to female?”) on how complete the learner’s oral production is (Lyster & Ranta, 1997).

2.4.7 Recast

This strategy is defined as the input of the teacher which is a reproduction of the output of the learner, but leaving the errors. Thus, the teacher can reproduce the learner’s speech production by recasting all or a portion of it, omitting the error that was made (Lyster &

Ranta, 1997). For example, when a learner says “Amad play a game every day”, the teacher may recast the utterance with the correct form “Amad plays a game every day, right”.

2.5 Timing of Correction

The ideal moment to offer CF has not been widely agreed upon by foreign language experts (Ellis, 2009). CF could be offered in two different times which are delayed and immediate feedback. Notably, CF can be offered immediately following an error or delayed until the conclusion of the communication in OCF, thus the decision to give feedback right away or later is entirely up to the teacher (Al-Azzawi & Al-Barwari, 2020). Therefore, OCF gives teachers the option of whether to correct their learners' incorrect utterances immediately or delay it until later (Ellis, 2009). According to Méndez and Cruz (2012), the primary contrast that many teachers emphasize is between accuracy and fluency, or whether the task entails form or meaning negotiation since teachers who prioritize teaching meaning and promoting fluency in their classes will choose to use delayed OCF, but both immediate and delayed OCF are recommended if their teaching emphasizes form and they wish to promote accuracy. Moreover, research by Bartram and Walton (1991) found that learners' emotions may be impacted by immediate OCF, which could cause them lose track of what they intend to discuss in conversations. Intriguingly, Hedge (2000) suggested a few strategies that teachers could apply to help learners with delayed OCF. For example, teachers may merely write down the errors made by the learners and address them at the end of the discussion, or they may record a task and then request learners to find and fix the errors that they made.

2.6 Types of Spoken Errors

In terms of types of spoken errors, there are two categories: global and local. Burt (1975) found that errors which severely impact intelligibility (in terms of that they lead the reader or listener to misinterpret the information or become confused about sentences that are difficult to understand) belong to global category of errors, while sentences that have no impact on intelligibility belong to local category of errors. Global errors are errors such as incorrect word order, absent word, incorrect word, or misplaced transitional phrases, or overgeneralizing grammatical principles, severely impact intelligibility and have an impact on total sentence structure (Burt, 1975). On the other hand, local errors are errors in noun and verb inflections, articles or auxiliaries that impact individual sentence components and typically do not severely impact intelligibility. Therefore, instead of attempting to correct

all errors learners make, researchers in methodology typically counsel teachers to concentrate on a small number of types of errors (Harmer, 2001; Ur,1991). In short, global errors made by learners should be corrected in fluency, but both global and local errors made by learners should be corrected in accuracy.

2.7 Related Studies

There have been numerous studies about OCF by various researchers. The following is a brief review of relevant studies on learners' preferences to OCF.

Barzani et al. (2022) conducted a study on EFL learners' preferences and attitudes to OCF at university level. The researchers aimed to investigate the learners' preferences and attitudes to OCF, timing, strategies and agents of correction. The participants were 51 learners. The study employed survey questionnaires to collect the quantitative data. The findings revealed that the majority of learners had a good attitude to OCF, stating that it promotes good learning. Regarding timing of correcting and OCF strategies, the results revealed that majority of learners preferred correction after finishing from speaking and explicit correction was the most preferred strategy. Furthermore, teacher correction was the most preferred agent of correction among the learners.

Alharbi (2020) conducted a study on EFL male and female learners' preferences to OCF at university level. The researcher aimed to investigate learners' preferences to OCF, types of errors, timing of correction, agents of correction, OCF strategies and differences in learners' preferences based on gender and teachers' awareness to learners' preferences. The participants of the study were 100 learners and 8 teachers, and the study employed survey questionnaires to collect quantitative data. The results revealed that both groups agreed that errors should be corrected in the class and preferred correction after finishing from speaking. Regarding types of errors and agents of correction, most learners preferred the correction of frequent errors and peer correction as an agent of correction. In terms of the strategies of OCF, metalinguistic explanation and explicit feedback were the most preferred ones. In addition, there were no significant differences in learners' preferences to OCF based on gender and teachers were aware of most of learners' preference.

Salehi and Jafari Pazoki (2020) conducted a study on EFL learners' preferences to OCF at university level. The researchers aimed to investigate learners' preferences to OCF, types of errors, timing of correction, agents of correction, OCF strategies and differences

in learners' preferences based on gender. The participants of the study were 32 learners (22 males and 10 females) and the study employed survey questionnaires to collect quantitative data. The results revealed that learners agreed that errors should be corrected and preferred correction after finishing from speaking. Regarding types of errors, learners preferred grammatical errors to be corrected, followed by vocabulary and pronunciation errors. In terms of OCF strategies, explicit correction was the most preferred strategy. In addition, there were significant differences in learners' preferences to OCF based on gender; female learners showed more preference to peer and self correction, compared to male learners who showed more preference to teacher correction. However, there were no significant gender differences in learners' preferences in terms of types of errors and OCF strategies.

Amalia et al. (2019) conducted a study on male and female learners' preferences to OCF at university level. The researchers aimed to investigate the learners' preferences, reasons and gender differences to OCF strategies and teachers' actual use of OCF strategies. The participants were one teacher and 39 learners (11 males and 28 females). The study employed observations and interviews to collect qualitative data. The findings revealed that explicit correction was the most frequently used strategy by the teacher. Similarly, explicit correction was the most preferred strategy among males, stating it is helpful in identifying and providing correction immediately, while recast and metalinguistic explanation were the most preferred strategies among females, stating that it promotes critical thinking. The findings also revealed that clarification request and repetition were the least preferred strategies among both groups.

Tasdemir and Arslan (2018) conducted a study on EFL learners' preferences to OCF at university level. The researchers aimed to investigate learners' preferences to OCF, types of error, timing of correction, agents of correction, OCF strategies and the influence of learning styles on learners' preferences to OCF. The participants of the study were 348 learners and the study employed survey questionnaires to collect quantitative data. The results revealed that most learners agreed that errors should be corrected and preferred correction immediately. Moreover, teacher correction was the most preferred agent of correction, followed by self and peer correction. Regarding types of errors, most learners preferred correction of serious errors, followed by frequent and individual errors. In terms of OCF strategies, clarification and explicit feedback were the most preferred ones,

followed by repetition, elicitation, metalinguistic, implicit feedback, recasts and no feedback. In addition, there was no influence of learning styles on learners' preferences to OCF.

To sum up, there were numerous studies done on learners' preferences to OCF. However, to the researchers' knowledge and investigation, no study has been conducted in Duhok city in Kurdistan Region of Iraq to study Kurdish EFL learners' preferences to OCF at college level. Therefore, this study aims to address this gap.

3. Method

This section presents the methodology used to conduct the study, including the context and participants of the study, data collection and data analysis procedures.

3.1 Research Methodology

A quantitative research methodology was used in the study where survey questionnaires were employed to collect data from learners. This methodology was chosen because it is effective in quantifying the learners' preferences to OCF in a clear and statistical manner.

3.2 The Context and Participants of the Study

This study was carried out at departments of English at College of Basic Education, College of Languages at Duhok, Newroz and Cihan Universities in Duhok city in Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The participants of the study were 104 third-year Kurdish EFL learners: 52 males and 52 females. They were chosen based on their availability and willingness to participate in the study where 26 participants (13 males and 13 females) from each department participated in the study.

3.3 Data Collection and Data Analysis Procedures

The research instrument employed to collect data was a closed-ended survey questionnaire consisting of five Likert-scale options. The survey questionnaire employed in this study was adapted from Saeed's (2014), Ramadhani et al.'s (2021) and Jinowat and Wiboolyasarin's (2022) survey questionnaires. Regarding validity and reliability, the research instrument used in this study was sent to a group of jury members who are specialists in the field of applied linguistics who ensured the validity of the research instrument, then it was employed in a small pilot study of 24 participants which achieved

a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.773, indicating a good reliability. Afterward, the questionnaire were printed out and distributed to the participants of this study after explaining the purpose of the study, ensuing confidentiality and anonymity and obtaining their permissions to collect data.

Regarding data analysis, SPSS program (version 26) was used to analyze the data through descriptive statistics in order to obtain Frequency (Fr), Percentage (%), Mean and Standard Deviation (SD) of each item of the questionnaire based on the overall responses of learners in order to answer both research questions. In addition, T-Test software was used to analyze the data of the second research question in order to indicate whether there are statistically significant differences between Kurdish EFL learners' preferences to OCF strategies based on gender. Furthermore, the reliability of learners' questionnaire in this study achieved a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.645, indicating a good reliability.

4. Data Analysis and Results

Data analysis of the survey questionnaires and the results of the analysis of both research questions are presented in this section.

4.1 Kurdish EFL Learners' Preferences to OCF

Regarding the first research question, data analysis was done and divided into three related parts based on preferences to OCF which are preferences to timing of correction, types of spoken errors that need correction and OCF strategies. Each part of the preferences was analyzed through descriptive statistics indicating in a table below where it presents the results of all the participants to each item and provides a summary in the end.

1. Preferences to Timing of Correction.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of Kurdish EFL Learners' Preferences to Timing of Correction

No.	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Mean	SD
	Fr	%	Fr	%	Fr	%	Fr	%	Fr	%		
1	12	11.5	33	31.7	29	27.9	13	12.5	17	16.3	3.0962	1.25039
2	19	18.3	52	50.0	17	16.3	14	13.5	2	1.9	3.6923	0.98609
3	18	17.3	35	33.7	29	27.9	19	18.3	3	2.9	3.4423	1.06877

In Table 1 above, item 1 “Immediately”, the point on the Likert scale “Agree” scored the highest percentage of 31.7 %, followed by “Neutral” with 27.9 %, while “Strongly Disagree” with 16.3 % and finally “Disagree” with 12.5% and “Strongly Agree” with 11.5% respectively. The mean value of this item is 3.0962 and SD is 1.25039.

Item 2 “After finishing speaking”, the point on the Likert scale “Agree” scored the highest percentage of 50.0 %, followed by “Strongly Agree” with 18.3 %, while “Neutral” with 16.3 % and finally “Disagree” with 13.5 % and “Strongly Disagree” with 1.9 %. The mean value of this item is 3.6923 and SD is 0.98609.

Item 3 “At the end of the class”, the point on the Likert scale “Agree” scored the highest percentage of 33.7 %, followed by “Neutral” with 27.9 %, while “Disagree” with 18.3 % and finally “Strongly Agree” with 17.3 % and “Strongly Disagree” with 2.9 %. The mean value for this item is 3.4423 and SD is 1.06877.

In summary, item 2 “After finishing speaking” scored the highest percentage of agreement, followed by item 3 “At the end of the class”, then item 1 “Immediately” with the lowest percentage of agreement.

2. Preferences to Types of Spoken Errors That Need Correction.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics of Kurdish EFL Learners’ Preferences to Types of Spoken Errors That Need Correction

No.	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Mean	SD
	Fr	%	Fr	%	Fr	%	Fr	%	Fr	%		
4	24	23.1	35	33.7	27	26.0	15	14.4	3	2.9	3.5962	1.08403
5	8	7.7	30	28.8	32	30.8	24	23.1	10	9.6	3.0192	1.10586
6	5	4.8	28	26.9	44	42.3	20	19.2	7	6.7	3.0385	0.96465
7	6	5.8	25	24.0	46	44.2	20	19.2	7	6.7	3.0288	0.97000

In Table 2 above, item 4 “Serious spoken errors”, the point on the Likert scale “Agree” scored the highest percentage of 33.7 %, followed by “Neutral” with 26 %, while “Strongly Agree” with 23.1 % and finally “Disagree” with 14.4 % and “Strongly Disagree” with 2.9 %. The mean value of this item is 3.5962 and SD is 1.08403.

Item 5 “Less serious spoken errors”, the point on the Likert scale “Neutral” scored the highest percentage of 30.8 %, followed by “Agree” with 28.8 %, while “Disagree” with 23.1 % and finally “Strongly Disagree” with 9.6 % and “Strongly Agree” with 7.7 %. The mean value of this item is 3.0192 and SD is 1.10586.

Item 6 “Frequent spoken errors”, the point on the Likert scale “Neutral” scored the highest percentage of 42.3 %, followed by “Agree” with 26.9 %, while “Disagree” with 19.2 % and finally “Strongly Disagree” with 6.7 % and “Strongly Agree” with 4.8 %. The mean value for this item is 3.0385 and SD is 0.96465.

Item 7 “Infrequent spoken errors”, the point on the Likert scale “Neutral” scored the highest percentage of 44.2 %, followed by “Agree” with 24 %, while “Disagree” with 19.2 % and finally “Strongly Agree” with 5.8 % and “Strongly Disagree” with 6.7 %. The mean value of this item is 3.0288 and SD is 0.97000.

In summary, item 4 “Serious spoken errors” scored the highest percentage of agreement, followed by item 5 “Less serious spoken errors”, then item 6 “Frequent spoken errors” and finally item 7 “Infrequent spoken errors” with the lowest percentage of agreement.

3. Preferences to OCF Strategies.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics of Kurdish EFL Learners’ Preferences to OCF Strategies

No.	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Mean	SD
	Fr	%	Fr	%	Fr	%	Fr	%	Fr	%		
8	20	19.2	38	36.5	27	26.0	14	13.5	5	4.8	3.5192	1.09705
9	19	18.3	39	37.5	25	24.0	12	11.5	9	8.7	3.4519	1.17316
10	19	18.3	27	26.0	33	31.7	20	19.2	5	4.8	3.3365	1.12871
11	8	7.7	31	29.8	36	34.6	19	18.3	10	9.6	3.0769	1.08558
12	22	21.2	38	36.5	23	22.1	13	12.5	8	7.7	3.5096	1.18236
13	18	17.3	48	46.2	18	17.3	16	15.4	4	3.8	3.5769	1.06755
14	10	9.6	38	36.5	37	35.6	18	17.3	1	1.0	3.3654	0.91437

In Table 3 above, item 8 “Clarification request”, the point on the Likert scale “Agree” scored the highest percentage of 36.5 %, followed by “Neutral” with 26.0 %, while “Strongly

Agree” with 19.2 % and finally “Disagree” with 13.5 % and “Strongly Disagree” with 4.8 %. The mean value of this item is 3.5192 and SD is 1.09705.

Item 9 “Repetition”, the point on the Likert scale “Agree” scored the highest percentage of 37.5 %, followed by “Neutral” with 24.0 %, while “Strongly Agree” with 18.3 % and finally “Disagree” with 11.5 % and “Strongly Disagree” with 8.7 %. The mean value of this item is 3.4519 and SD is 1.17316.

Item 10 “Translation”, the point on the Likert scale “Neutral” scored the highest percentage rate of 31.7 %, followed by “Agree” with 26.0 %, while “Disagree” with 19.2 % and finally “Strongly Agree” with 18.3 % and “Strongly Disagree” with 4.8 %. The mean value for this item is 3.3365 and SD is 1.12871.

Item 11 “Explicit correction”, the point on the Likert scale “Neutral” scored the highest percentage of 34.6%, followed by “Agree” with 29.8%, while “Disagree” with 18.3% and finally “Strongly Disagree” with 9.6 % and “Strongly Agree” with 7.7%. The mean value of this item is 3.0769 and SD is 1.08558.

Item 12 “Elicitation”, the point on the Likert scale “Agree” scored the highest percentage of 36.5 %, followed by “Neutral” with 22.1%, while “Strongly Agree” with 21.2 % and finally “Disagree” with 12.5% and “Strongly Disagree” with 7.7%. The mean value of this item is 3.5096 and SD is 1.18236.

Item 13 “Metalinguistic explanation”, the point on the Likert scale “Agree” scored the highest percentage of 46.2%, followed by “Strongly Agree” and “Neutral” with a similar percentage of 17.3%, while “Disagree” with 15.4% and finally “Strongly Disagree” with 3.8%. The mean value for this item is 3.5769 and SD is 1.06755.

Item 14 “Recast”, the point on the Likert scale “Agree” scored the highest percentage of 36.5%, followed by “Neutral” with 35.6%, while “Disagree” with 17.3% and finally “Strongly Agree” with 9.6% and “Strongly Disagree” with 1.0%. The mean value for this item is 3.3654 and SD is 0.91437.

In summary, item 13 “Metalinguistic explanation” scored the highest percentage of agreement, followed by item 12 “Elicitation”, item 9 “Repetition”, item 8 “Clarification request”, item 14 “Recast”, item 10 “Translation” and finally item 11 “Explicit correction” with the lowest percentage of agreement.

4.2 Differences between Kurdish EFL learners' preferences to OCF strategies on the basis of gender

Concerning the second research question, descriptive statistics and T-Test software were used to analyze the data in order to investigating differences between Kurdish EFL learners' preferences to OCF strategies based on gender as a variable. The results are presented in the table below followed by a summary.

Table 4

Differences in Kurdish EFL Learners' Preferences to OCF Strategies Based on Gender

No.	Variables	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Mean	SD	T-Test
		Fr	%	Fr	%	Fr	%	Fr	%	Fr	%			Sig.
8	Male	4	7.7	18	34.6	12	23.1	11	21.2	7	13.5	3.0192	1.19624	0.088
	Female	4	7.7	12	23.1	20	38.5	13	25.0	3	5.8	3.0192	1.01923	
9	Male	1	1.9	17	32.7	19	36.5	9	17.3	6	11.5	2.9615	1.02826	0.327
	Female	4	7.7	11	21.2	25	48.1	11	21.2	1	1.9	3.1154	0.89997	
10	Male	5	9.6	13	25.0	18	34.6	11	21.2	5	9.6	3.0385	1.11955	0.012
	Female	1	1.9	12	21.1	28	53.8	9	17.3	2	3.8	3.0192	0.80417	
11	Male	9	17.3	19	36.5	14	26.9	6	11.5	4	7.7	3.4423	1.14470	0.620
	Female	11	21.2	19	36.5	13	25.0	8	15.4	1	1.9	3.5962	1.05272	
12	Male	11	21.2	19	36.5	11	21.2	4	7.7	7	13.5	3.4423	1.28968	0.156
	Female	8	15.4	20	38.5	14	26.9	8	15.4	2	3.8	3.4615	1.05647	
13	Male	11	21.2	15	28.8	14	26.9	11	21.2	1	1.9	3.4615	1.11076	0.694
	Female	8	15.4	12	23.1	19	36.5	9	17.3	4	7.7	3.2115	1.14338	

14	Male	6	11.5	15	28.8	14	26.9	10	19.2	7	13.5	3.0577	1.22736	0.028
	Female	2	3.8	16	30.8	22	42.3	9	17.3	3	5.8	3.0962	0.9343	

In Table 4 above, item 8 “Clarification request”, for male learners, the point on the Likert scale “Agree” scored the highest percentage of 34.6%, followed by “Neutral” with 23.1%, while “Disagree” with 21.2% and finally “Strongly Disagree” with 13.5% and “Strongly Agree” with 7.7%. Their mean value is 3.0192 and SD is 1.19624. On the other hand, for female learners, the point on the Likert scale “Neutral” scored the highest percentage of 38.5%, followed by “Disagree” with 25.0%, while “Agree” with 23.1% and finally “Strongly Agree” with 7.7% and “Strongly Disagree” with 5.8%. Their mean value is 3.0192 and SD is 1.01923. For this item, there is no statistically significant difference in learners’ preferences based on gender because the P value of T-Test is 0.088 which is higher than the standard level of 0.05.

Item 9 “Repetition”, for male learners, the point on the Likert scale “Neutral” scored the highest percentage of 36.5%, followed by “Agree” with 32.7%, while “Disagree” with 17.3% and finally “Strongly Disagree” with 11.5% and “Strongly Agree” with 1.9%. Their mean value is 2.9615 and SD is 1.02826. On the other hand, for female learners, the point on the Likert scale “Neutral” scored the highest percentage of 48.1%, followed by “Disagree” and “Agree” with a similar percentage of 21.2% and finally “Strongly Agree” with 7.7% and “Strongly Disagree” with 1.9%. Their mean value is 3.1154 and SD is 0.89997. For this item, there is no statistically significant difference in learners’ preferences based on gender because the P value of T-Test is 0.327 which is higher than the standard level of 0.05.

Item 10 “Translation”, for male learners, the point on the Likert scale “Neutral” scored the highest percentage of 34.6%, followed by “Agree” with 25.0%, while “Disagree” with 21.2% and finally “Strongly Disagree” and “Strongly Agree” with a similar percentage of 9.6%. Their mean value is 3.0385 and SD is 1.11955. On the other hand, for female learners, the point on the Likert scale “Neutral” scored the highest percentage of 53.8%, followed by “Agree” with 23.1%, while “Disagree” with 17.3% and finally “Strongly Disagree” with 3.8% and “Strongly Agree” with 1.9%. Their mean value is 3.0192 and SD is 0.80417. For this item, there is statistically a significant difference in learners’ preferences based on gender because the P value of T-Test is 0.012 which is lower than the standard level of 0.05. This reveals that this item is more significant for male learners than female learners.

Item 11 "Explicit correction", for male learners, the point on the Likert scale "Agree" scored the highest percentage of 36.5%, followed by "Neutral" with 26.9%, while "Strongly Agree" with 17.3% and finally "Disagree" with 11.5% and "Strongly Disagree" with 7.7%. Their mean value is 3.4423 and SD is 1.14470. On the other hand, for female learners, the point on the Likert scale "Agree" scored the highest percentage of 36.5%, followed by "Neutral" with 25.0%, while "Strongly Agree" with 21.2% and finally "Disagree" with 15.4% and "Strongly Disagree" with 1.9%. Their mean value is 3.5962 and SD is 1.05272. For this item, there is no statistically significant difference in learners' preferences based on gender because the P value of T-Test is 0.620 which is higher than the standard level of 0.05.

Item 12 "Elicitation", for male learners, the point on the Likert scale "Agree" scored the highest percentage of 36.5%, followed by "Neutral" and "Strongly Agree" with a similar percentage of 21.2% and finally "Strongly Disagree" with 13.5% and "Disagree" with 7.7%. Their mean value is 3.4423 and SD is 1.28968. On the other hand, for female learners, the point on the Likert scale "Agree" scored the highest percentage of 38.5%, followed by "Neutral" with 26.9%, while "Strongly Agree" and "Disagree" with a similar percentage of 15.4% and finally "Strongly Disagree" with 3.8%. Their mean value is 3.4615 and SD is 1.05647. For this item, there is no statistically significant difference in learners' preferences based on gender because the P value of T-Test is 0.156 which is higher than the standard level of 0.05.

Item 13 "Metalinguistic explanation", for male learners, the point on the Likert scale "Agree" scored the highest percentage of 28.8%, followed by "Neutral" with 26.9%, while "Disagree" and "Strongly Agree" with a similar percentage of 21.2% and finally "Strongly Disagree" with 1.9%. Their mean value is 3.4615 and SD is 1.11076. On the other hand, for female learners, the point on the Likert scale "Neutral" scored the highest percentage of 36.5%, followed by "Agree" with 23.1%, while "Disagree" with 17.3% and finally "Strongly Agree" with 15.4% and "Strongly Disagree" with 7.7%. Their mean value is 3.2115 and SD is 1.14338. For this item, there is no statistically significant difference in learners' preferences based on gender because the P value of T-Test is 0.694 which is higher than the standard level of 0.05.

Item 14 "Recast", for male learners, the point on the Likert scale "Agree" scored the highest percentage of 28.8%, followed by "Neutral" with 26.9%, while "Disagree" with 19.2% and finally "Strongly Disagree" with 13.5% and "Strongly Agree" with 11.5%. Their mean value is 3.0577 and SD is 1.22736. On the other hand, for female learners, the point on the Likert

scale “Neutral” scored the highest percentage of 42.3 %, followed by “Agree” with 30.8%, while “Disagree” with 17.3% and finally “Strongly Disagree” with 5.8% and “Strongly Agree” with 3.5%. Their mean value is 3.0962 and SD is 0.93431. For this item, there is statistically a significant difference in learners’ preferences based on gender because the P value of T-Test is 0.028 which is lower than the standard level of 0.05. This reveals that this item is more significant for male learners than female learners.

In summary, there are no statistically significant differences in the majority of items because they scored close percentages of agreement and P values are higher than the standard level of 0.05, with the exception of two items. Item 10 “Translation” and item 14 “Recast” scored different percentages of agreement and their P values were lower than the standard level 0.05, indicating a significant difference in Kurdish EFL learners’ preferences based on gender. For male learners, item 14 “Recast”, followed by item 10 “Translation” scored high percentages of agreement, while for females, item 14 “Recast”, followed by item 10 “Translation” scored low percentages of agreement.

5. Discussion

This section presents the findings of both research questions and their connections to other findings in the related studies and their implications.

5.1 The Findings of the First Research Question

The findings of data analysis and results of the first research question were divided into three related parts based on Kurdish EFL Learners’ preferences to OCF which are the following:

Regarding timing of correction, the findings revealed that most learners preferred correction ‘after finishing from speaking’, followed by ‘at the end of the class’, then ‘immediately’. These findings are in contrast with those of Tasdemir and Arslan’s (2018) study, but consistent with the findings reported in Salehi and Jafari Pazoki’s (2020), Alharbi’s (2020), and Barzani et al.’s (2022) studies. Depending on the reasons for this outcome, it seems that learners feel more confident when they are corrected after speaking because they appreciate the chance to express themselves without being interrupted by the teacher in front of their peers, which may cause anxiety. This implication highlights the importance of delayed feedback in developing learners’ confidence to speak and reducing anxiety where it suggests that teachers should consider time as a key factor when correcting spoken errors in relation to learners’ emotion. On the other hand, at the

end of the class was the second preferred timing of correction, followed by immediate correction. This evidence may advocate the idea that correction at the end of the class provides additional time for reflection and is advantageous where there is no interruption which may cause anxiety like immediate correction, but the feedback might not be effective due to reaching the end of the lesson where learners lose interest. This indicates that this timing will be suited if the teacher wants to present a thorough correction of all occurred errors. Furthermore, immediate correction was the least preferred since it may lead to anxiety through instant interruption. This implies that teachers should correct errors immediately if the focus of the lesson is on accuracy.

Regarding types of spoken errors that need correction, the findings revealed that most learners preferred the correction of serious spoken errors, followed by less serious spoken errors, frequent spoken errors, and finally infrequent spoken errors. These findings are in line with Tasdemir and Arslan's (2018) study, but different from the findings found in Salehi and Jafari Pazoki's (2020) and Alharbi's (2020) studies. The outcome of this preference could be the misunderstanding that serious spoken errors occur where the meaning of the intended message is not understood by the listeners, thus these errors are seen as the product of low proficiency in the language classes which cause anxiety to learners. This suggests that teachers should create a supportive classroom climate, where committing and correcting serious errors is considered as an opportunity to learn without the fear of raising learners' anxiety, especially if the focus of the lesson is enhancing communication. Moreover, there were some preferences to less serious and frequent spoken errors; the contributed reason could be an indication that learners see these errors as somewhat less important since they do not affect the understanding as a whole, but still need to be corrected. Infrequent errors were the least preferred type of spoken errors that need correction; the reason for this, learners may see this type as mistakes not as errors, unless they become frequent. This suggests that the teacher should consider delayed feedback or no feedback depending whether the errors show some patterns or not.

Regarding OCF strategies, the findings revealed that most learners preferred metalinguistic explanation strategy, followed by elicitation, repetition, clarification request, recast, translation and explicit correction. These findings are significantly different from previous findings which were reported in Tasdemir and Arslan's (2018), Amalia et al.'s (2019), Salehi and Jafari Pazoki's (2020), Alharbi's (2020), and Barzani et al.'s (2022) studies. The reasons

contributed to this preference could be the learners' desire to have a clear understating of the nature of the errors in order not to commit them in the future and to be independent in their learning. This suggests that teacher training programs should consider trainee teachers to give feedback in the form of explanation and curriculum designers need to incorporate more time for teachers to guide and help their learners to be independent in finding the correct forms. On the other hands, there were some preferences to elicitation, repetition and clarification request; the reason could be that these strategies make learners more interactive in correcting their errors which are different from recast, translation and explicit correction where they do not promote interaction among learners and there is a chance that learners may not notice their errors if those strategies were employed by the teacher. This suggests that teachers should consider the preceding interactive strategies and incorporate them in communicative lessons in order to encourage active interaction among the learners, while the less interactive strategies must be incorporated in interactive teaching methods in order for learners to understand their errors.

5.2 The Findings of the Second Research Question

The findings of data analysis and results of the second research question are discussed below:

Regarding differences between Kurdish EFL learners' preferences to OCF strategies based on gender, the findings revealed that there are differences where translation and recast were more preferred among male learners than female ones. These findings differ from the findings found in Amalia et al.'s (2019), Salehi and Jafari Pazoki's (2020), and Alharbi's (2020) studies. The reasons may be attributed to male learners' desire to be corrected by the teacher implicitly where they will not be interrupted in front of their peers which may cause them anxiety and female learners' desire to have strategies that provide more understanding and interaction. This suggests that the teacher should consider their learners' gender differences and preferences when applying certain strategies and this may inform curriculum designers to adapt certain gender teaching methods in order to make learners' comfortable with correction.

In summary, the findings revealed that Kurdish EFL learners preferred correction after they finish from speaking which will make them more confident in speaking and reduce anxiety, and also serious spoken errors which cause misunderstanding was the most preferred type

of errors that need correction in order to improve understanding and communication. In terms of OCF strategies, the majority of learners preferred metalinguistic explanation and strategies that provide explanations to the nature of their errors which will ensure understanding and promote independence in learning. In addition, translation and recast were more preferred among male learners than female ones, showing the need of considering learners' gender and preferences when applying certain strategies and the need for an adaptive teaching method based on learners' gender. Furthermore, it is important to recognize that this study has some limitations, despite the valuable findings that has been provided to the field. One of the most recognizable limitations is the use of survey questionnaire which depends on self-reported data that is vulnerable to bias. Secondly, this study did not employ other research instruments to discover and have a complete understanding behind learners' preferences to OCF. Finally, this study did not include and consider the impact of other variables like age or culture on learners' preferences.

6. Conclusions

This section presents the following concluding remarks depending on the main findings of the study.

1. The findings of the first research question revealed that Kurdish EFL learners mostly preferred correction after finishing from speaking and serious spoken errors were the most preferred types of spoken errors that need correction and metalinguistic explanation was the most preferred strategy among OCF strategies.
2. The findings of the second research question revealed that there are some gender differences in Kurdish EFL learners' preferences to OCF strategies where translation and recast were more preferred by male learners than females.
3. The findings of both research questions showed OCF impacts on learners' confidence in speaking, anxiety and understanding, and the need for a more adaptive teaching method based on gender and preferences of learners. Therefore, this study contributes by offering practical solutions to teachers, teacher training programs and curriculum designers in the broader field of language.

7. Recommendations

Based on the conclusions, this study offers the following recommendations.

1. Learners' spoken errors should be corrected after learners finish from speaking in order not to damage their confidence and raise their anxiety.
2. Serious spoken errors should be corrected since they hinder understanding and communication.
3. Metalinguistic explanation should be used in order to provide clear understanding and promote independence in learning.
4. New teaching methods should be applied based on learners' preferences and gender.

8. Suggestions for Future Research

Based on the conclusions, this study suggests the following:

1. Future studies should employ interviews and observation in order to have a better understanding of learner's preferences to OCF.
2. This study also suggests that future researchers should include and study the impact of other variables like age, proficiency and culture on learners' preferences to OCF.

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