



Teachers' Strategies in Providing Immediate and Delayed Corrective Feedback in EFL Speaking Class

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Abstract

Speaking remains one of the most challenging skills for Indonesian EFL learners, especially at the senior high school level. Frequent grammatical, lexical, and pronunciation errors are often inconsistently corrected, affecting learners' long-term speaking development. Teachers thus face a pedagogical dilemma in deciding whether to provide Oral Corrective Feedback (OCF) immediately during speech or after the activity. This study investigates teachers' strategies in delivering immediate and delayed OCF during speaking lessons involving descriptive text tasks. Using a qualitative case study design, two English teachers from a senior high school in East Java, Indonesia, were observed across four classroom sessions and interviewed twice. Data were analyzed thematically and interactionally. The findings reveal that teachers adjusted feedback timing based on instructional goals, students' affective conditions, and task complexity. For example, immediate feedback was applied when repeated grammatical errors disrupted meaning, while delayed feedback was used after presentations to preserve fluency and confidence. Teachers also demonstrated reflective decision-making by modifying feedback timing during lessons when similar errors persisted. These results highlight the importance of flexible, student-responsive, and reflective feedback practices for effective EFL speaking instruction.

Keywords: Corrective Feedback Timing; Speaking skill; Teaching strategy

Introduction

According to the EF English Proficiency Index (2023), Indonesia ranks 81st out of 113 countries in global English proficiency, and speaking remains the weakest productive skill among high school students. Many learners struggle to describe familiar topics such as people or daily activities in English, they often produce inaccurate sentences or hesitating to speak. The problem often happened in speaking classroom is repeated errors, such as grammar, pronunciation,

vocabulary or word choice, which are corrected or not corrected inconsistently (Normawati et al., 2023). If those errors continue, they cannot be fixed. Hence, they hinder the language development in long term.

At the same time, teachers also deal with dilemma in deciding when and how to correct students' oral errors. On one hand, immediate feedback can interrupt communication flow and embarrass or discourage students, especially those who are shy and less confident. On the other hand, delayed feedback which given after speaking performance can cause loss of learning moment or confusion about which part was wrong. The dilemma between promoting fluency and ensuring accuracy constructs pedagogical challenge which need careful judgement and well consideration strategy on teacher side. In practice, several teachers tend to correct spontaneously without clear pattern. Meanwhile, others adopt more systematic approach rely on learning objectives and classroom context.

Those feedbacks are known as Oral Corrective Feedback (OCF). It has been recognized as significant pedagogical tool in the development of speaking skill. Oral corrective feedback refers to the responses provided by teachers or peers to students' spoken language errors. It aims to help learners recognize and correct their errors, thereby improving their language proficiency (Mohebbi, 2021). This feedback divides into six types; explicit correction, recast, metalinguistic feedback, clarification request, elicitation and repetition (Nhac, 2022). Previous study from Rohmah and Halim (2023) have also shown that corrective feedback contributes to students' speaking improvement, underscoring its pedagogical importance." Beyond these six types, another crucial aspect of OCF concerns when feedback is delivered, its timing. Recently, researchers have paid increasing attention to whether feedback should be given immediately or after the task.

One key dimension of corrective feedback which has drawn increasing scholarly attention is its timing. Nassaji and Kartchava (2021) distinguish between immediate feedback, provided to students right after they make an error during a task, and delayed feedback, given after the completion of a task or activity. Moreover, immediate feedback is believed to help students reinforcing correct language uses immediately while delayed feedback allows students to process their errors and think critically about their language use to promote fluency and reduce students' anxiety during speaking tasks. Hence, the choice between two feedbacks may affect not only linguistic aspects but also students' emotional responses, such as confidence and motivation.

Previous studies have examined the effectiveness and perceptions of OCF timing in various EFL contexts. Ha et al. (2021) examined the alignment between teachers' and students' belief in Vietnamese secondary schools, finding that while both valued OCF, students preferred immediate feedback and teachers favored delayed feedback. Similarly, Nhac (2022) explored the perceptions of EFL teachers and low-proficiency students in Vietnamese higher education, reporting a shared preference for metalinguistic feedback and delayed correction for emotional comfort. In a Turkish context, Öztürk (2023) compared immediate and delayed OCF

in online classes and found that delayed feedback had a stronger positive effect on pronunciation improvement. Despite these valuable contributions, most of the existing literature focuses on learners' perceptions and learning outcomes, rather than teachers' decision-making processes.

In the Indonesian context, limited research has explored how teachers decide when and how to provide corrective feedback during speaking activities. In classrooms where fluency and accuracy must be balanced, teachers' professional judgement plays a vital role in shaping feedback practices. However, few studies have systematically investigated how this judgment is formed and operationalized in real classroom situations.

Research question

What strategies do teachers use when providing immediate and delayed oral corrective feedback in EFL speaking activities?

To address this issue, the present study explores how Indonesian senior high school English teachers determine the timing of oral corrective feedback, either immediate or delayed, during speaking activities. It focuses on the pedagogical reasoning underlying their choices, including students' affective conditions, instructional goals, classroom situations, and the nature of speaking errors. The novelty of this study lies in its focus on teachers' practical reasoning and instructional strategies in authentic classroom practice, which has not been widely represented in existing literature.

Method

This study used a qualitative case study design, which aims at exploring teachers' strategies in providing immediate and delayed oral corrective feedback (OCF) during speaking activity in EFL classroom. The case was limited within one senior high school in Surabaya, involving two English teachers as participants within the same institutional context. A qualitative approach was chosen to allow in-dept understanding of teachers' decision-making process in natural classroom settings (Creswell, 2013).

Two English teachers participated in this study. Both were certified English educator with 5-10 years of teaching experience at the senior high school level. They held undergraduate degrees in English education, and one of them was pursuing a master's degree in the same field. Both teachers were currently teaching tenth-grade students using the national *Kurikulum Merdeka* framework. Participants were selected purposively based on their teaching experience, classroom management skills, and willingness to participate in the research.

Ethical considerations were observed through the process. Participants were

informed about the research objectives, procedures, and data confidentiality. Written informed consent was obtained from each teacher prior to the observation and interview sessions. Their names and school identities were anonymized in all research reports to ensure privacy and ethical compliance.

Data were collected through classroom observation and semi-structure interview conducted over a four-week period. Each teacher was observed during two teaching sessions, each lasting approximately 90 minutes. The observed lessons focused on speaking tasks related to descriptive text, resulting in a total of four speaking tasks observed across both participants.

During the classroom observations, the researcher used an observation checklist adapted from previous OCF studies and took detailed field notes to record instances of immediate and delayed feedback, including contextual factors such as student responses, timing decisions, and classroom dynamics. All observations were audio-recorded to ensure data accuracy and support subsequent analysis.

Following the observations, in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted individually with each teacher. Each interview lasted 30-45 minutes and consisted of ten open-ended questions designed to explore teachers' pedagogical reasoning, emotional considerations, and perceptions about corrective feedback timing. Interviews were conducted in a quiet room within the school premises, recorded with participants' permission, and later transcribed verbatim for analysis.

All qualitative data including observation notes, interview transcripts, and classroom recordings were analyzed following Creswell (2013) data analysis spiral which involved organizing and preparing the data, reading it repeatedly for overall understanding, manually coding significant units, and grouping them into broader themes reflecting teachers' strategies and decision-making in providing oral corrective feedback. The themes were refined through constant comparison across data source and interpreted in relation to the theoretical framework of feedback timing and teacher cognition. To ensure trustworthiness, triangulation was applied by cross-checking observation, interview, and field note data, while member checking allowed participants to confirm the accuracy of interpretations.

Results

The findings are drawn from classroom observation and interviews with two English teachers who taught tenth-grade students in a senior high school in Surabaya. Thematic analysis identified five major themes representing teachers; strategies in determining when to provide oral corrective feedback (OCF) during speaking lessons involving descriptive text tasks. These themes are summarized in table 1 and elaborated below.

No.	Theme	Observation frequency	Feedback Type Observed
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1.	Learning Objectives Shape Feedback Timing	4 sessions	Immediate (accuracy)/Delayed (fluency)
2.	Student Factors Affect Feedback Decisions	3 sessions	Mostly delayed for anxious students
3.	Blended Feedback Strategy	4 sessions	Alternation between immediate and delayed
4.	Strategy Adjustment Based on Student Response	3 sessions	Adaptation during ongoing activities
5.	Reflective Practice and Feedback Development	2 sessions	Post-lesson reflection and planning

Table 1. Summary of Themes and Frequency of Occurrence

1. Learning Objectives Shape Feedback Timing

Both teachers adjusted feedback timing based on the instructional focus of the lesson. During accuracy-based activities, such as grammar drills or sentence formation, they provided immediate feedback by stopping students and modeling the correct form. In fluency-based activities like presentations or discussions, feedback was postponed.

Teacher A (interview 1): "If the focus is on fluency, I delay the feedback. Yet, I correct immediately if they practice grammar."

In one observed class, the teacher interrupted a student's monologue to correct a verb error "He go to school yesterday" -> "He went to school yesterday." However, in another session emphasizing fluency, the teacher waited until the discussion ended before providing feedback on pronunciation and word choice.

2. Student Factors Affect Feedback Decisions

Teachers also considered students' emotional and personal characteristic. Both teachers reported delaying feedback for shy or anxious students to avoid discouragement, while confident learners received more immediate correction.

Teacher B (Interview 2): "If students are shy, I tend to delay the feedback."

Field notes confirmed this tendency: in two classes, teachers allowed hesitant students to complete their turn before correcting grammatical errors, while outgoing students were corrected mid-sentence. This adaptation showed teachers' sensitivity to learners' affective needs.

3. Blended Feedback Strategy

Neither teacher used only one feedback timing consistently. Instead, they applied a blended strategy, alternating between immediate and delayed feedback

depending on classroom dynamics.

Field Note (observation 3): "Teacher A initially delayed correction during pair speaking, but later intervened when several students repeated the same misuse of 'have' and 'has.'"

This example illustrates teachers' flexibility in combining feedback types to address persistent errors without disrupting overall fluency.

4. Strategy Adjustment Based on Student Response

Teachers' feedback decisions were also shaped by how students reacted. Some learners responded positively to immediate feedback and quickly corrected their mistakes, while others became hesitant.

Teacher A (interview 1): "If I often provide immediate feedback during speaking, some students become hesitant."

In observation 2, a student froze after being corrected mid-sentence, whereas another student smiled, repeated the correct phrase, and continued speaking. These mixed responses encouraged teachers to re-evaluate when feedback should be given in future lessons.

5. Reflective Practice and Feedback Development

Both teachers displayed strong reflective awareness of their feedback practices. They evaluated the effectiveness of their timing decisions and sought ways to improve them.

Teacher B (Interview 2): "I want to develop a more effective way of giving delayed feedback, maybe by using recordings for later discussion."

This reflection indicates that feedback was not treated as a one-time reaction but as an evolving part of professional teaching practice. Teachers viewed their corrective decisions as strategic and context-dependent, shaped by continuous experience and observation.

Discussion

1. Teachers' Strategic Decision on Feedback Timing

The findings indicate that the teachers' decisions to provide immediate or delayed Oral Corrective Feedback (OCF) were not spontaneous, but shaped by real-time pedagogical reasoning. Feedback timing emerged as a reflective and context-driven process, aligning with Nassaji and Kartchava (2021) argument that feedback timing plays a crucial pedagogical role in language learning.

Teachers in this study made their decisions dynamically during classroom interaction. When repeated errors disrupted comprehension, they used immediate feedback to restore communication clarity. Conversely, when the goal was fluency and confidence building, feedback was intentionally delayed until after the task. The finding supports Ellis (2009) and Sheen (2019) perspectives that corrective feedback decisions are interactionally situated, purpose-oriented, and pedagogically sensitive to classroom goals.

Moreover, the teachers' practice in this study resonates with Rohmah and Halim (2023) who found that the timing of feedback significantly influences students' speaking performances depending on the learning task and affective readiness. Similar to their conclusion, the teachers here intentionally delayed feedback during fluency-focused activities to sustain students' confidence and engagement.

This result also reflects the Indonesian EFL context where teachers often balance fluency and accuracy simultaneously within large, heterogenous classes. Their awareness of when to intervene demonstrates pedagogical flexibility rather than adherence to a fixed feedback routine.

2. Affective Considerations in Teachers' Feedback Strategies

Teachers consistently demonstrated affective sensitivity in their corrective strategies. Interview and observation data revealed that they considered students' emotional states such as shyness, anxiety, and self-confidence before deciding when and how to correct. This finding aligns with Lyster and Saito (2010) notion of affectively supportive form-focused instruction which emphasizes that effective feedback depends not only on *when* and *how* but also for *whom* it is given.

This affective awareness made feedback a personalized, student-centered act rather than a purely linguistic intervention. Teachers adjusted timing depending on students' verbal and non-verbal responses. Such responsiveness demonstrates the dynamic balance between pedagogical empathy and instructional objectives where teachers sought to reduce students' fear of correction while maintaining focus on learning progress.

3. Integrating Immediate and Delayed Feedback as Reflective Practice

Another significant pattern was the integration of both feedback timings within a single lesson, representing a blended strategy. Teachers shifted between immediate and delayed feedback based on real-time classroom cues, for instance, switching to immediate correction when a particular error became widespread. This flexibility echoes Ozturk (2023) argument that combining feedback types enhances both accuracy and fluency simultaneously.

Ellis (2009) also argued that effective corrective feedback is not a rigid routine but an adaptive process shaped by contextual factors. The teachers' behavior in this study supports this by showing that feedback decisions are negotiated through interaction and grounded in reflective judgement rather than pre-determined technique.

Interestingly, the blended feedback pattern was more prominent during speaking activities involving group interaction than in individual presentations. This suggests that Indonesian teachers view OCF as a collaborative classroom tool rather than a one-way corrective act.

4. Reflection, Student Responses, and Professional Growth

Students' reactions were crucial for teachers in evaluating the success of their feedback strategies. Some students appeared hesitant after receiving immediate feedback, while others became more self-aware and corrected their errors confidently. This variability highlights that OCF effectiveness is highly contextual and depends on learners' perception of correction.

The finding resonates with Ha et al. (2021) who emphasized understanding students' emotional responses to different feedback forms. The teachers in this study recognized that frequent immediate correction might inhibit fluency while delayed feedback could lead students to forget their errors. Consequently, they constantly reflected on how to balance timing, emotional safety and linguistic accuracy.

Reflection became a vital component of professional development. Consistent with Evan's (2013) idea of feedback as dialogic practice, teachers treated feedback not as a one-directional transmission of information but as interactive meaning-making aimed at supporting learners' linguistic and affective growth. Their reflection also informed their long-term pedagogical improvement, particularly in designing future speaking activities that integrate timely and supportive feedback.

5. Limitations and Implications

This study is limited to two EFL teachers within a single school which may constrain the generalizability of findings. Classroom culture, institutional policy, or student proficiency levels in other contexts might lead to different feedback behaviors. Future research could include multiple schools or grade levels and explore the same phenomenon in online learning settings where feedback timing is mediated by technology.

Despite this limitation, the study offers important pedagogical implications. Teacher training programs should emphasize the reflective and affective dimensions of corrective feedback rather than treating it as a mechanical skill. Professional workshops could include microteaching sessions where teachers practice adjusting feedback timing according to students' emotional readiness and communicative goals. This study also contributes to ongoing discussions about context-responsive teaching, encouraging teachers to develop flexible, empathetic, and data-informed feedback practices.

Conclusion

This study reveals that teachers' strategies for providing immediate and delayed corrective feedback in EFL speaking classes are shaped by ongoing pedagogical reasoning rather than fixed routines. The two participating teachers adjusted their feedback timing based on learning objectives, students' affective conditions, and the real-time flow of classroom interaction. Immediate feedback was generally used to support accuracy, especially when repeated errors risked fossilization or

disrupted comprehension. In contrast, delayed feedback was employed during fluency-oriented tasks to maintain students' confidence, reduce anxiety, and encourage uninterrupted communication.

The findings also show that teachers did not rely on one type of timing exclusively instead they used a blended strategy, shifting between immediate and delayed feedback within a single lesson. This flexibility allowed them to respond to emerging needs, such as recurring errors, changes in student performance, or visible signs of confusion or hesitation. Students' responses played an important role in shaping these strategies decisions, as teachers continually evaluated how their feedback influenced learners' motivation, engagement, and willingness to speak.

Professional reflection further strengthened teachers' strategies. Both teachers actively reviewed the impact of their feedback practice and expressed a desire to refine their delayed feedback techniques, such as by using recording-based post-task analysis. This indicates that corrective feedback strategies are not only a classroom practice but also part of an ongoing developmental process in teachers' professional growth.

Overall, the study highlights that effective corrective feedback in EFL speaking classes is context-responsive, student-centered, and strategically adapted to balance accuracy and fluency. These findings emphasize the importance of equipping teachers with reflective skills and classroom-based decision-making strategies in teacher education programs. Future studies could involve larger samples, multiple schools, or technology-mediated feedback to explore how teachers refine and expand their corrective feedback strategies in diverse instructional settings.

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