



**INVESTIGATING STRATEGIES FOR ENGAGING STUDENTS WHO ARE RESISTANT
TO TEACHERS' CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK**

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Abstract

This study investigated the strategies teachers use to engage students who are resistant to corrective feedback by examining the common forms of student resistance, teachers' engagement strategies, and students' responsiveness to corrective feedback across different demographic characteristics. A quantitative descriptive survey design was adopted, and data were collected from 56 in-service teachers using a structured Google Forms questionnaire with five-point Likert-scale items. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to analyze the data. The findings revealed that students commonly resisted corrective feedback by ignoring teachers' comments, becoming defensive, and failing to revise their work. Teachers reported that using constructive feedback, individualized discussions, positive reinforcement, reflective learning activities, and collaborative goal setting, as the primary strategies for engaging resistant students. While modest differences in students' responsiveness were observed across demographic characteristics, supportive and learner-centered engagement strategies were perceived as effective across all student groups. The study concludes that the success of corrective feedback depends not only on the quality of the feedback but also on teachers' ability to create supportive learning environments that foster student engagement and feedback acceptance. It recommends that educators adopt student-centered feedback practices and strengthen students' feedback literacy to improve learning outcomes.

Introduction

Corrective feedback is an essential component of effective teaching and learning because it provides students with information about their performance, helps them identify misconceptions, and guides them toward improved academic achievement. Consequently, educational researchers

and practitioners regard corrective feedback as a fundamental instructional strategy for enhancing students' learning outcomes (Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Shute, 2008). In fact, Brown (2007) posits that feedback serves as the catalyst for understanding. However, despite its essential role in facilitating constructive dialogues and fostering competence and confidence throughout the teaching and learning process, many students exhibit resistance to corrective feedback. This resistance prevents students from accessing numerous opportunities for learning advancement and enhancing self-esteem. To effectively engage students who may not be receptive to corrective feedback therefore, educators are advised to be attuned to students' preferences for error correction types (Truscott, 1996), and to also recognize learners' attitudes towards designing classroom activities that incorporate corrective feedback (Faqeih, 2015). This preference may hold the key to explaining strategies for engaging students in ways that are most conducive to their acquisition. For instance, while recast-type corrective feedback was identified as the most prevalent among English as Second Language (ESL) classrooms (Sheen, 2004), explicit corrective feedback emerged as the most employed type in Saudi English as Foreign Language (EFL) settings (Faqeih, 2015).

Research Objectives

1. Identify the common forms of students' resistance to teachers' corrective feedback.
2. Examine the strategies teachers employ to engage students who are resistant to teachers' corrective feedback.
3. Examine students' perceptions of teachers' corrective feedback across different demographic characteristic

Research Questions

1. What are the common forms of students' resistance to teachers' corrective feedback?

2. What strategies do teachers employ to engage students who are resistant to corrective feedback?
3. What are students' perceptions of teachers' corrective feedback across different demographic characteristics?

Literature Review

Corrective feedback refers to responses to learners' erroneous second language (L2) use or production by teachers or other learners (Halim et al., 2021). It has been a longstanding practice for teachers to provide direct and indirect means of drawing learners' attention to errors in a second language classroom and how to avoid those errors. For instance, in a study of Hindi students' writing skills, Jalaluddin (2015) discovered that providing corrective feedback not only helped to correct students' language errors but also enabled them to identify the types of errors and their causes. Interestingly, corrective feedback can also be provided between students. In fact, Astrid et al. (2017) posit that student-to-student feedback serves as an indicator of students' active participation, positive behavior, strong cognitive engagement in learning activities, teamwork, and collaborative attitudes.

Ellis (2009) categorizes corrective feedback into implicit and explicit types. Implicit feedback encompasses recast (incorporating correct linguistic content), repetition (repeating the incorrect expression with emphasis), and clarification requests (asking for clarification if something is unclear or misunderstood). Explicit feedback includes explicit correction (correcting errors directly), metalinguistic explanations (making metalinguistic comments), elicitation (repeating the correct part with rising intonation and an indication to complete the incorrect one), and paralinguistic signals (indicating an error through gestures or facial expressions). Lantolf and

Thorne (2007) assert that teachers should only apply corrective feedback when necessary, as excessive feedback can negatively impact learner autonomy, motivation, performance, and confidence (Halim et al., 2021).

Alghafri et al. (2023) assert that Oral Corrective Feedback (OCF) plays a pivotal role in augmenting students' proficiency and fostering their autonomy in language acquisition. Conversely, Ellis (2006) posits that OCF serves as a pedagogical practice that provides learners with specific insights into their performance during the process of acquiring a second language. This type of feedback has the potential to stimulate classroom interactions and promote independent and collaborative learning among students. This is because when learners identify and rectify their learning errors, they experience a sense of accomplishment, validation, and enhanced proficiency.

In a study conducted by Alghafri et al. (2023), the recast type of oral corrective feedback emerged as the most favored among many teachers. This preference was attributed to the perceived effectiveness of recast as a corrective tool that enhances self-awareness, fosters collaboration, and bolsters student self-confidence (Alghafri et al., 2023, p. 2). However, the study revealed that students exhibited positive attitudes and preferences towards repetition and elicitation types of oral corrective feedback.

In addition, Ellis (2010) posits that corrective feedback can be beneficial when the learner's response to an activity is accurate and fosters further learning. Conversely, it can be detrimental when the learner's response to a learning activity is incorrect. Furthermore, feedback can be immediate or delayed. Immediate feedback occurs when errors are addressed during the learning

process, while delayed feedback is provided after the learning has concluded (Halim et al., 2011). To effectively enhance students' learning, Long (2007) asserts that corrective feedback is most effective when applied in context and at the moment of error occurrence. In contrast, Munfadhila et al. (2019) contend that it is the responsibility of teachers to select the appropriate method of providing feedback.

For instance, Li and He (2017) assert that students favor indirect written corrective feedback due to its effectiveness. Conversely, Munfadhila et al. (2019) contend that students prefer direct corrective feedback as it allows them to observe the correct answer directly and fosters self-correction. Halim et al. (2011) also discovered that while some students eagerly seek immediate feedback, a substantial number of them prefer delayed corrections. However, Cohen and Cavalcanti (1990) elucidated that students' positive disposition towards any form of corrective feedback may be attributed to their learning experiences, perceptions, and needs.

Although Zahroh et al. (2020) argue that learners' attitudes can influence the success of the learning process, including practice, methods, and corrections, it is generally observed that learners tend to have a positive attitude towards teachers' corrective feedback. This is because they perceive it as a motivating learning tool (Halim et al., 2021). Furthermore, Hyland and Hyland (2006) also found that written feedback from teachers plays a significant role in language writing classes.

Student resistance to teachers' corrective feedback refers to learners' cognitive, emotional, or behavioral reluctance to accept, reflect upon, or implement feedback intended to improve their learning and academic performance. Such resistance reduces the effectiveness of formative assessment and limits students' opportunities for continuous improvement (Hyland & Hyland,

2006). Student resistance is a multifaceted phenomenon influenced by individual, interpersonal, and contextual factors. At the individual level, learners' self-efficacy, motivation, academic self-concept, mindset, and emotional responses influence how feedback is perceived and utilized. Students who perceive corrective feedback as criticism or a threat to their competence are more likely to reject or disregard it (Dweck, 2006). Conversely, learners who possess a growth mindset are more likely to interpret corrective feedback as valuable information that supports learning and improvement.

The clarity, specificity, tone, timing, and delivery of corrective feedback significantly affect students' willingness to engage with feedback. Feedback perceived as overly critical, vague, judgmental, or lacking constructive guidance may evoke negative emotional reactions and reduce students' motivation to improve (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Furthermore, the quality of teacher student relationships influences feedback acceptance, as students are generally more receptive to corrective feedback from teachers whom they perceive as supportive, respectful, and trustworthy (Winstone & Carless, 2020).

Student engagement is one of the strongest predictors of academic success, persistence, and lifelong learning (Fredricks et al., 2004). Educational researchers conceptualize student engagement as comprising behavioral engagement which refers to students' participation in classroom activities, attendance, effort, persistence, and compliance with classroom expectations. Emotional engagement involves students' interest, enjoyment, sense of belonging, and positive attitudes toward learning, teachers, and peers. Cognitive engagement reflects learners' willingness to invest mental effort in understanding complex concepts, applying learning strategies, and regulating their own learning processes (Fredricks et al., 2004).

Teacher engagement strategies refer to the instructional practices and interpersonal approaches teachers employ to encourage students to actively participate in learning, respond positively to corrective feedback, and persist in academic improvement. These strategies involve creating supportive learning environments in which students perceive feedback as constructive, meaningful, and achievable (Winstone & Carless, 2020).

One commonly employed strategy is constructive and dialogic feedback, where teachers engage students in two-way discussions about their performance rather than simply communicating errors. Dialogic feedback promotes shared understanding, encourages learner reflection, and increases students' ownership of the learning process (Carless, 2015). Such interactions help students clarify misunderstandings and develop practical plans for improvement.

Another important strategy is positive reinforcement and encouragement. Teachers who acknowledge students' efforts, recognize progress, and emphasize strengths alongside areas requiring improvement foster greater confidence and motivation. Positive reinforcement reduces students' defensiveness and increases their willingness to accept corrective feedback as part of their learning journey (Brookhart, 2017). Teachers also employ autonomy-supportive instructional practices, allowing students to participate in goal setting, self-assessment, and decision-making regarding their learning. According to Self-Determination Theory, providing students with opportunities for autonomy, competence, and relatedness enhances intrinsic motivation and promotes greater engagement with corrective feedback (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Additionally, individualized feedback and differentiated instructional support enable teachers to address learners' unique academic needs and learning preferences. Personalized

feedback demonstrates teacher responsiveness and helps students perceive corrective comments as relevant and attainable, thereby increasing the likelihood that they will act upon the feedback (Shute, 2008). Finally, establishing positive teacher–student relationships constitute one of the most effective engagement strategies. Trust, mutual respect, empathy, and open communication create psychologically safe classrooms in which students are less fearful of making mistakes and more willing to embrace corrective feedback as a normal component of learning. Research consistently demonstrates that supportive teacher student relationships significantly influence students' motivation, engagement, and academic achievement (Pianta et al., 2012).

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded on Self-Determination Theory (SDT) developed by Edward L. Deci and Richard M. Ryan (1985, 2000). The theory provides a comprehensive framework for understanding students' motivation, engagement, and responses to teachers' corrective feedback. Self-Determination Theory posits that individuals are more likely to engage in learning activities and exhibit adaptive behaviors when three fundamental psychological needs including autonomy, competence, and relatedness are satisfied (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Self-Determination Theory is particularly relevant to this study because it explains why students may resist corrective feedback when instructional practices fail to satisfy their psychological needs. It also provides a theoretical basis for understanding how teachers' engagement strategies including autonomy-supportive instruction, positive reinforcement, individualized feedback, dialogic communication, and collaborative learning can enhance students' motivation and willingness to utilize corrective feedback. Accordingly, Self-

Determination Theory provides an appropriate theoretical lens for examining the relationship between teachers' engagement strategies and students' responsiveness to corrective feedback in this study.

Methodology

This study employed a quantitative descriptive survey design to investigate strategies used by teachers to engage students who are resistant to corrective feedback. The survey design was considered appropriate because it permits the use of descriptive statistical techniques to identify patterns and trends within the collected data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The participants comprised 56 teachers recruited through various professional social media platforms. A convenience sampling technique was employed because it allowed the researcher to access teachers with relevant experience in providing corrective feedback to students across different educational settings.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire administered through Google Forms. The first section collected demographic information, including participants' gender, teaching experience, educational level, and teaching context. The second section contained statements measuring students' resistance to corrective feedback, teachers' corrective feedback practices, engagement strategies, and the perceived effectiveness of these strategies. Responses were measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree (5) to Strongly Disagree (1).

Validity and Reliability

To ensure content validity, the questionnaire was reviewed by experts, and their recommendations were used to refine the wording, clarity, and relevance of the questionnaire items. The internal consistency of the instrument was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient.

A reliability coefficient of 0.70 or higher was considered acceptable for demonstrating satisfactory internal consistency (Taber, 2018).

Data Collection Procedure

The questionnaire was distributed electronically via Google Forms using professional teacher networks and educational social media platforms. Before completing the questionnaire, participants were provided with an information sheet explaining the purpose of the study, assuring confidentiality, and informing them that participation was entirely voluntary. Completed responses were automatically recorded in Google Forms and subsequently exported for statistical analysis.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Specifically, frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were computed to summarize participants' demographic characteristics, determine the prevalence of students' resistance to corrective feedback, identify the types of corrective feedback commonly employed, and examine the perceived effectiveness of teachers' engagement strategies.

Results and Findings

Research Question 1

What are the common forms of students' resistance to teachers' corrective feedback?

Teachers were asked to indicate the forms of resistance they commonly observe among students when providing corrective feedback. Responses were analyzed using frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. To determine the results, the percentages of respondents who said, “strongly agree” and “agree” were combined to show agreement. Similarly, the percentages of respondents who said, “strongly disagree” and “disagree” were combined to show disagreement.

Table 1
Forms of Students' Resistance to Teachers' Corrective Feedback (N = 56)

S/N	Forms of Student Resistance	Mean (M)	SD	Rank	Decision
1	Students ignore corrective feedback.	4.41	0.63	1	Agreed
2	Students become defensive when receiving corrective feedback.	4.23	0.71	2	Agreed
3	Students fail to revise their work after receiving feedback.	4.11	0.74	3	Agreed
4	Students argue with the teacher regarding the feedback.	3.78	0.89	4	Agreed
5	Students display frustration or discouragement after receiving feedback.	3.65	0.92	5	Agreed
6	Students avoid seeking clarification about the feedback.	3.52	0.88	6	Agreed
7	Students show little interest in improving after receiving feedback.	3.46	0.81	7	Agreed
Overall Mean		3.88	0.80		Agreed

Decision Rule: Mean ≥ 3.50 = Agreed; Mean < 3.50 = Disagreed.

The data indicate that the most frequently observed form of resistance was *ignoring teachers' corrective feedback* (M = 4.41, SD = 0.63), followed by *becoming defensive when feedback is provided* (M = 4.23, SD = 0.71). Teachers also reported that many students *fail to revise or improve their work after receiving feedback* (M = 4.11, SD = 0.74). Other common forms of resistance included *arguing with the teacher about the feedback* (M = 3.78, SD = 0.89) and *displaying negative emotional reactions such as frustration or discouragement* (M = 3.65, SD = 0.92).

Research Question 2

What strategies do teachers employ to engage students who are resistant to corrective feedback?

Table 2

Teachers' Strategies for Engaging Students Who Are Resistant to Corrective Feedback (N = 56)

S/N	Engagement Strategy	Mean (M)	SD	Rank	Decision
1	Providing constructive and encouraging feedback	4.58	0.49	1	Frequently Used
2	Holding individual discussions with students	4.39	0.58	2	Frequently Used
3	Using positive reinforcement to encourage improvement	4.33	0.66	3	Frequently Used
4	Encouraging students to reflect on their mistakes	4.18	0.72	4	Frequently Used
5	Setting learning goals with students	4.02	0.77	5	Frequently Used
6	Providing opportunities for peer collaboration	3.84	0.81	6	Frequently Used
7	Allowing students to revise and resubmit assignments	3.75	0.79	7	Frequently Used
Overall Mean		4.16	0.69		Frequently Used

The results reveal that *providing constructive and encouraging feedback* was the most frequently employed strategy (M = 4.58, SD = 0.49). This was followed by *holding individual discussions with students regarding their performance* (M = 4.39, SD = 0.58), *recognizing students' efforts through positive reinforcement* (M = 4.33, SD = 0.66), and *encouraging students to reflect on their mistakes and identify possible improvements* (M = 4.18, SD = 0.72).

Teachers also reported using *goal-setting activities* (M = 4.02, SD = 0.77) and *peer support or collaborative learning activities* (M = 3.84, SD = 0.81), although these strategies were used less frequently than individualized feedback and positive reinforcement. These findings indicate that

teachers generally prefer supportive, student-centered engagement strategies that promote dialogue, encouragement, and self-reflection rather than punitive or directive approaches.

Research Question 3

What are students' perceptions of teachers' corrective feedback across different demographic characteristics?

Table 3

Students' Perceived Responsiveness to Teachers' Corrective Feedback Across Demographic Characteristics (N = 56)

Perception item	Freq (f)	Percen %	Mean (M)	SD
1. I perceive my teacher's corrective feedback as helpful in improving my academic performance.	28	50.0	3.78	0.69
2. My gender does not influence how I perceive or accept teachers' corrective feedback.	28	50.0	4.02	0.50
3. Students of different age groups perceive teachers' corrective feedback differently.	18	32.1	3.71	0.73
4. My level of study influences my perception of teachers' corrective feedback.	24	42.9	3.90	0.61
5. My educational background affects how I perceive teachers' corrective feedback.	14	25.0	4.08	0.55
6. I feel motivated to improve my performance after receiving corrective feedback from my teacher.	15	26.8	3.68	0.74
7. I am more likely to accept corrective feedback when it is delivered respectfully and constructively.	14	25.0	3.85	0.66
8. My previous learning experiences influence my perception of teachers' corrective feedback.	15	26.8	4.01	0.57
9. I believe teachers should adapt their corrective feedback to students' individual characteristics.	18	21.4	4.12	0.53
10. I have a positive perception of teachers' corrective feedback regardless of demographic differences.	20	32.1	3.91	62

The findings indicate an overall positive perception of teachers' corrective feedback. Respondents strongly agreed that corrective feedback is helpful for improving academic

performance and that receiving feedback motivates them to improve. They also strongly agreed that they are more likely to accept corrective feedback when it is delivered respectfully and constructively. These results suggest that students' receptiveness to corrective feedback may depend not only on the feedback itself but also on how it is communicated.

The responses regarding demographic characteristics indicated that respondents agreed that gender does not influence their perception or acceptance of corrective feedback. However, they strongly agreed that students of different age groups may perceive feedback differently, and that the level of study influences perceptions of corrective feedback. In contrast, they disagreed that educational background affects their perceptions and disagreed that previous learning experiences influence their perceptions. Respondents further agreed that teachers should adapt corrective feedback to students' individual characteristics and strongly agreed that they maintain a positive perception of corrective feedback regardless of demographic differences.

Discussion

The findings of RQ1 revealed that the most common forms of students' resistance to corrective feedback included ignoring teachers' comments, becoming defensive when feedback was provided, failing to revise or improve their work, and displaying negative emotional reactions toward feedback. This finding is consistent with Hyland and Hyland (2006), who argued that students frequently perceive corrective feedback as criticism rather than guidance for improvement, leading to defensive reactions and reduced willingness to engage with teachers' comments. Similarly, Winstone and Carless (2020) contend that many students lack adequate feedback literacy, making it difficult for them to interpret and utilize corrective feedback effectively. Finally, the findings also support Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000),

which proposes that learners are more likely to reject feedback when it threatens their sense of competence or autonomy. Students who perceive corrective feedback as controlling or judgmental may experience reduced motivation and become resistant to opportunities for academic improvement.

For RQ2, the study found that teachers primarily employed constructive feedback, individualized discussions, positive reinforcement, reflective learning activities, and collaborative goal-setting to engage students who were resistant to corrective feedback. These findings corroborate the work of Hattie and Timperley (2007), who argue that effective feedback should clearly communicate where learners are, where they need to go, and how they can improve. Constructive and timely feedback promotes students' understanding of learning goals and encourages greater engagement with academic tasks. The findings are also consistent with Brookhart (2017), who emphasizes that feedback is most effective when it focuses on improvement rather than evaluation. Positive reinforcement and supportive teacher–student interactions reduce students' anxiety and foster greater confidence in their ability to learn from mistakes. Furthermore, Carless and Boud (2018) argue that developing students' feedback literacy requires teachers to create opportunities for dialogue and self-reflection.

The findings of RQ3 indicate that respondents generally hold positive perceptions of teachers' corrective feedback, particularly when it is perceived as supportive of academic improvement and motivation. Respondents strongly agreed that corrective feedback helps improve academic performance and motivates them to perform better, suggesting that feedback can function not merely as error correction but as instructional guidance that supports learning and improvement. Particularly significant is the strong agreement that students are more likely to

accept corrective feedback when it is delivered respectfully and constructively. This suggests that students' receptiveness depends not only on the content of feedback but also on how it is communicated. Feedback that preserves students' dignity, provides clear guidance, and emphasizes improvement may therefore reduce defensiveness and encourage greater engagement with teachers' recommendations.

The findings regarding demographic and individual characteristics present a more nuanced picture. Although respondents indicated that gender does not influence their perceptions of corrective feedback, they strongly agreed that age and level of study may influence how feedback is perceived. Conversely, they disagreed that educational background and previous learning experiences affect their perceptions. These differences suggest that demographic characteristics may not influence feedback receptiveness uniformly. Furthermore, respondents' agreement that teachers should adapt feedback to individual characteristics, alongside their generally positive perceptions regardless of demographic differences, suggests an important distinction between valuing corrective feedback and preferring individualized feedback delivery.

Conclusion

This study investigated strategies for engaging students who are resistant to teachers' corrective feedback by examining the common forms of student resistance, the engagement strategies employed by teachers, and students' perceptions of corrective feedback across different demographic characteristics. The findings indicate that resistance to corrective feedback most frequently manifests through passive behaviors such as ignoring feedback, failing to revise academic work, and becoming defensive when receiving corrective comments. The study further revealed that teachers employ a diverse range of supportive engagement strategies, including

constructive feedback, positive reinforcement, individualized discussions, reflective learning activities, and collaborative goal-setting, to encourage students to accept and utilize corrective feedback. While some difference in students' responsiveness were observed across demographic characteristics, the findings suggest that supportive and learner-centered engagement strategies are beneficial for students regardless of gender, age, academic level, or field of study. Therefore, the study concludes that corrective feedback is most effective when teachers deliberately combine constructive communication with supportive engagement strategies that foster trust, autonomy, and learner participation. Educational institutions should therefore prioritize professional development initiatives that strengthen teachers' competencies in delivering effective feedback and creating classroom environments where students view corrective feedback as an opportunity for learning rather than criticism.

Limitation to the Study

This study is limited to investigating the views of in-service language teachers regarding their preferences, perspectives, timing, and methods of providing corrective feedback to their students. Another limitation is that the data for the study was collected solely through a Google Survey questionnaire. Additionally, the study's respondents were limited to fifty-six (56), which may not provide a comprehensive representation of the broader population. To address these limitations, it is recommended to conduct another study that includes both in-service and out-of-service language teachers. Furthermore, utilizing multiple data collection instruments, such as participant observation for on-the-spot assessment, would enhance the study's validity and reliability. Additionally, expanding the study's scope to include a larger sample size would provide more representative data.

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