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Saudi EFL College Learners' Preferences of Teachers' Oral Corrective Feedback Across Cognitive Styles

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Abstract:

This study aims to investigate Saudi female English as a foreign language (EFL) learners' preference of five types of teachers' oral corrective feedback (OCF), mainly explicit correction, recast, clarification request, elicitation, and repetition. It also investigates the reasons behind those preferences, and whether there is an association between the learners' preferences and their cognitive styles (CS). The researchers collected data from 164 level 5 and 6 college students with the aid of two questionnaires and cognitive style tests. The results show that recast and explicit correction are the most preferred types of OCF by both field-independent and field-dependent learners. The results also show that the given reasons for the preferences reflect the learners' concerns about their psychological status. Furthermore, it was found that while there is a significant association between the participants' cognitive styles and their preferences for recast and repetition, there is no association between the cognitive styles and their preference for explicit correction, elicitation, and clarification request. It is recommended that EFL teachers should be aware of the learners' preferences for one type of OCF over another, the impact of OCF types on the positive classroom environment, and the possible impact of cognitive styles on those preferences

Keywords: English as a foreign language teaching, field dependence, field independence, recast correction, explicit correction

Introduction

Learning English as a foreign language (EFL) is a challenge for native speakers of other languages. Thus, it is common for foreign learners of English to commit errors during their language-learning process. Making errors is a normal part of language learning; likewise, a natural, unavoidable, and effective part of both learning and teaching is the feedback provided to correct errors. Researchers have classified corrective feedback (CF) into two main types: written and oral feedback. It has so many forms: verbal and nonverbal CF, and formal and informal CF (Klimova, 2015; Mahmoud & El Deen, 2018). CF could be delivered to the learners either explicitly and/or implicitly in the classroom (Ellis, Loewen, & Erlam, 2009; Yoshida, 2008). Oral corrective feedback (OCF) refers to teachers' verbal correction in classroom settings and that focuses on students' speech. Ellis (2006) defined OCF as "responses to learner utterances containing an error" (p. 28). Previous research on OCF has confirmed that OCF is advantageous and efficient in language learning (Gooch, Saito, & Lyster, 2016; Li, 2010; Lyster & Saito, 2010; Lyster, Saito, & Sato, 2013; Yang & Lyster, 2010). Lyster and Ranta (1997) identified six types of OCF: the explicit correction by the teacher; recast of the correct form; clarification requests about the error; metalinguistic comments, questions, or information about the error; elicitation of the correct form; and repetition of the student's erroneous utterance.

CF is closely linked to language improvement because it allows learners to see the difference between their input and output. Farrokhi (2003) pointed out the significance of reacting to the learners' speech output, and for this reason, he argued that CF in foreign language learning is an important strategy in resolving learners' oral errors. Thus, students need to recognize their progress via the feedback provided by their teachers. Al-Solami (2019) indicated that OCF has a positive impact on EFL Saudi learners' language skills. Al-Saleh (2018) also indicated that the effectiveness of written CF strategies used via Showbie learning management system (LMS) differs from one learner to another. This difference might arise from the learners' individual differences. Thus, it is important to study how the individual psychological traits, in particular, affect the preferences of CF. Tayebipour (2019) concluded that explicit written feedback is more effective than explicit OCF in the accuracy and retention of EFL Omani learners' passive voice since some learners might have poor listening skills that hinder the benefit from OCF. Another possible interpretation for Tayebipour's (2019) conclusion might lie in the participants' learning styles. Some learners could be visual ones so that they did not benefit from OCF. Rassaei (2015a) indicated that the effectiveness of recasts and metalinguistic CF depended on the learners' level of anxiety.

Moreover, since OCF is mainly directed by the teachers in classrooms to students in front of other students, it is important to consider that learners have various psychological traits that may considerably affect their preferences of the

types of OCF used by their teachers in classrooms. The learners' cognitive styles are psychological traits that affect how learners perceive the environment around them. The cognitive style concept refers to the approach people adopt in perception, memory, and thinking, and this reflects individual differences in processing received information and experience. Witkin et al. (1954) proposed the field-dependent/independent (FD/FI) distinction, which has been most extensively studied and applied by researchers to the field of second language (L2) teaching. Based on this distinction, field-dependent (FD) learners, sometimes referred to as global or synoptic learners, tend to look at the whole image of a learning task, prefer social activities, and care about others' attitudes and behaviors. On the other hand, field-independent (FI) learners, sometimes referred to as analytic or ectenic learners, prefer to work independently and focus on particular items without being disturbed by the background context (Cheng, Wang, & Yan, 2017).

Al-Tale' and Salih (2019) indicated that FD/FI affects how EFL learners behave in EFL reading classes. FD students are willing to interact with their teachers and colleagues, whereas FI ones prefer to learn independently. In this sense, FI learners might not prefer the types of error correction in which the teachers ask them to elicit or clarify, and they might prefer explicit correction. FD ones, on the other hand, might like to discuss their errors with their teachers and colleagues and thus prefer elicitation and clarification requests. Some researchers have investigated the impact of CS on learning and the learners' preferences. They vary in their conclusions. For example, Darabad (2013) concluded that there is no relationship between learners' FD and FI cognitive styles and their reactions to prompts and recasts. However, Rassaei (2015b) concluded that only FI learners benefited from recasts. Also, Rahimi's (2015) findings offered a solid connection between EFL learners' CS and the retention of corrections in their writings, indicating that only FI learners could retain (short- and long-term) corrections. He added that while FD learners preferred explicit written corrective feedback (WCF), FI learners preferred indirect ones. Moreover, Moslemi and Dastgoshadeh (2017) pointed out a significant relationship between learners' CS and their preferences for WCF types.

Thus, it has been evident from previous research on the relationship between psychological traits and learners' benefits and preferences of CF that CS might affect the types of OCF preferred by EFL learners. Lyster et al. (2013) claimed that teachers' awareness of their students' CF preferences would help them use more effective error correction. Hence, if such awareness is accompanied by the knowledge of the students' psychological factors, the effectiveness of error correction will be enhanced. The present study examined the Saudi female EFL learners' preference for explicit correction, recasts, clarification requests, elicitation, and repetition, and the reasons behind these preferences. It also explored the associations between those preferences and the learners' cognitive styles.

Although there is extensive literature examining the types of CF and its effect on teaching and instructional techniques (Gooch et al., 2016; Li, 2010; Yoshida, 2008), few studies have dealt with OCF learners' preferences, and fewer have investigated the relationship between OCF learners' preferences and

psychological factors. OCF studies examining its relationship to the learners' psychological factors have focused on one type or two types of OCF (Rassaei, 2015b; Darabad, 2013). Moreover, when Rahimi (2015) and Moslemi and Dastgoshadeh (2017) explored the relationship between cognitive styles and learners' preferences, they focused on various WCF types. Thus, the present study seeks to fill this gap by investigating EFL Saudi college learners' preferences for five types of OCF, the relationship between the preferences and their cognitive styles, and the reasons behind those preferences.

Overview of Related Literature

Oral Corrective Feedback Preference Studies

Khatib and Vaezi (2017) investigated 39 EFL teachers' preferences with various levels of experience and 84 intermediate-level learners regarding direct CF that involved explicit corrections and metalinguistic clues and indirect CF that involved repetitions and recasts. The researchers used a CF (scenario-based) questionnaire and interviews to collect data from the participants. The results of both the interviews and the questionnaire revealed that the EFL teachers and learners preferred indirect OCF (i.e., repetitions and recasts) to direct OCF types (i.e., explicit corrections and metalinguistic clues). However, the results showed a significant difference between the teachers' and the learners' preferences of the indirect OCF types. The teachers favored repetition over recasts, whereas the learners preferred recasts to repetition.

One year later, Mahmoud and El Deen (2018) investigated preparatory year instructors' perspectives on the role of OCF in developing their students' English language acquisition. The researchers used a questionnaire and interviews to collect the data. The results revealed that OCF is an essential component in the classroom interactions helping students to develop their English language acquisition by motivating them to take control of their EL progress. The results also showed that although most instructors have no idea about the concepts and types of OCF, they use it inside their classrooms. The researchers recommend some planning on the part on the teachers before using OCF in EFL classrooms.

Al-Khammash and Gulnaz (2019) examined Saudi EFL teachers' views on their feedback practices and their impact on their students' performance. The researchers designed an online survey to collect data from 57 EFL university teachers. The findings showed that the teachers preferred elicitation, repetition, and recast. The teachers used these types of OCF frequently with their students in the classrooms. The researchers concluded that "effective OCF on learners' spoken errors requires the use of appropriate techniques that best address particular types of error and are suitable for the type of learning activities as well as the types of learner" (p. 50).

Argüelles, Méndez, and Escudero (2019) also conducted a qualitative case study on EFL college Mexican teachers' attitudes towards OCF. The researchers collected the data from six teachers at a university in southern Mexico using interviews. The results showed that the teachers, guided by considerations of students' feelings and personalities, preferred implicit CF strategies rather than explicit ones. The results also indicated a lack of awareness on the part of teachers regarding the most effective CF strategies helping the learners learn better. The study suggests providing EFL teachers with more theory-based CF training and practice.

Using a self-report questionnaire, Sakiroglu (2020) examined 65 pre-intermediate and intermediate level students' OCF preferences in EFL communicative classes at Kafkas University in Turkey. The results showed that most students preferred to be corrected nicely and friendly by their teachers' manners after finishing their answers. The researcher recommends that EFL teachers should realize their students' attitudes toward OCF.

As seen above, OCF is an essential and useful component in the EFL classroom interactions (Mahmoud & El Deen, 2018). Some previous studies on the OCF preference have shown that while EFL learners prefer explicit correction to implicit ones (Rassaei, 2013), EFL teachers preferred implicit CF strategies rather than explicit ones (Al-Khammash & Gulnaz, 2019; Argüelles et al., 2019; Khatib & Vaezi, 2017). However, some added that learners also preferred implicit corrections (Khatib & Vaezi, 2017). Moreover, EFL learners preferred to be corrected by their teachers nicely and friendly (Sakiroglu, 2020). These studies also confirmed the importance of raising the awareness of EFL teachers about OCF types and the most effective CF strategies helping their students learn better (Argüelles, et al., 2019; Mahmoud & El Deen, 2018; Sakiroglu, 2020). Finally, Al-Khammash and Gulnaz (2019) confirm the possible relationship between OCF types' effectiveness and the learners' individual differences. The present study aims to add to the current literature by investigating the relationship between EFL learners' CS and their preferences for OCF types and the reasons for their OCF preferences. The following section presents some previous experimental and quasi-experimental studies dealing with CF's impact on language acquisition and the psychological factors' role in that impact.

Corrective Feedback, EFL Learning, and Psychological Factors

Lyster (2004) conducted a quasi-experimental study with four teachers and their eight classes investigating the impact of prompts and recasts on the acquisition of rule-based grammatical gender in form-focused instruction (FFI) environment. The results show that FFI is more effective when combined with prompts than with recasts or no feedback. Yang and Lyster (2010) also investigated the effects of FFI and feedback on the acquisition of regular and irregular past tense forms by EFL Chinese college students. The results revealed that while the prompts had a more

positive impact than recasts on the acquisition of regular past tense forms, there was no significant difference between the two types of feedback on the accuracy of irregular past tense forms.

Sheen (2010) investigated differential effects of oral and written CF on the grammatical accuracy of ESL adult learners' English articles. A pretest, immediate-posttest, and delayed-posttest were used in a quasi-experimental design. The participants were 12 intermediate ESL learners having different mother tongues. In addition to the control group, there were four groups of oral and written CF: oral recasts, oral metalinguistic, written direct correction, and written direct metalinguistic. The results revealed that while oral metalinguistic, written direct correction, and written direct metalinguistic CFs effectively helped learners improve the articles' grammatical accuracy, implicit oral recasts were not as effective as such. The study concludes that the key factor of CF effectiveness is the degree of explicitness of both oral and written CF rather than the CF's medium.

Darabad (2013) explored the influence of OCF – specifically, prompts (elicitation) and recasts – on the oral accuracy of 150 elementary EFL learners from various language institutes in Iran in terms of their FD and FI cognitive styles. The Group Embedded Figures Test and a placement test were used to collect the data. The results revealed that prompts enhance the oral accuracy of Iranian learners more than recasts. It was also found that there was no relationship between learners' cognitive styles and their reactions to recasts and prompts in the oral accuracy measurement.

Additionally, Rassaei (2015a) examined the extent to which high and low foreign language anxiety affect the learners' benefit from recasts and metalinguistic CF. An anxiety questionnaire and pre- and post-tests were used to collect data from 101 EFL college learners. The results revealed that, while high-anxiety learners benefited from recasts more than metalinguistic CF, low-anxiety learners benefited from metalinguistic feedback and recasts, although the first type was more effective in L2 development. It was concluded that these two types of CF's effectiveness depended on the learners' anxiety level.

In the same year, Rassaei (2015b) investigated whether FI and FD learners benefit differently from recasts. The Group Embedded Figures Test was used to classify 76 intermediate-level EFL participants into FD or FI learners. The participants were divided into two experimental groups and two control groups, which were pre- and post-tests using a writing task and a picture description task. The results showed that only FI learners benefited from recasts.

Rahimi (2015) explored the effect of college learners' FD and FI cognitive styles on their retention of the teachers' WCF and the learners' WCF preferences. The researcher used Ellis's (2010) cognitive style questionnaire and a writing motivation questionnaire to collect the data. The findings presented a solid connection between FI learners' retention of corrections in their writings and their cognitive styles. Only the FI learners were able to retain (short- and long-term)

corrections in their writings. Moreover, the results showed that FI learners preferred indirect WCF, whereas the FD learners preferred explicit WCF.

Using the Ehrman and Leaver's Learning Styles (2003) and Amrhein and Nassaji's (2010) questionnaires, Moslemi and Dastgoshadeh (2017) examined the relationship between EFL intermediate and upper-intermediate learners' FD and FI cognitive styles, and their preferences of the six different types of written CF (namely, direct CF, indirect CF, metalinguistic CF, focused versus unfocused CF, electronic feedback, and reformulation). The results showed a strong relationship between learners' cognitive styles and their choices of WCF types. The synoptic (FD) learners favored indirect correction, whereas the ectenic (analytic) (FI) ones favored the direct method of correction. Moreover, although synoptic learners prefer to receive clues from their teachers, the ectenic (analytic) ones prefer overt correction.

Al-Saleh (2018) examined the effect of positive CF via Showbie learning management system (LMS) on 24, level five Saudi female college students' English writing in Riyadh. The researcher used pre- and post- essay writing tests and a questionnaire to collect the data. The results show that positive CF via Showbie LMS positively impacts the students' writing performance. The results also show that most of the students benefited from direct CF, whereas few benefited from indirect corrective feedback.

Guo and Yang (2018) examined the impact of recasts and prompts on the English third-person singular form's acquisition by one hundred and seventy-five college students. They also examined the mediating role of CS on that impact. The participants were divided into three groups; prompt group, recast group, and control group. The group embedded figures test was used to determine their field dependence/independence. The results revealed that although the prompts impacted the verb form's acquisition positively, as shown in both the immediate and delayed written tests, there was no significant difference among groups in the text-completion test. The results also show that field dependence/independence mediates the effect of recasts on the third-person singular form's acquisition. However, that facilitation is only evident in the text-completion test.

Tayebipour (2019) investigated written and oral CF's differential effect on EFL part-time vs. full-time college students' accurate use and retention of the passive voice in Oman. Three part-time and three full-time classes participated in the study. Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT) was used to collect the data. The experimental group received explicit written and oral CF in their treatment phase, whereas the control groups did not receive such CF. The results revealed that while there is a positive impact of both written and oral CF on the passive voice's accuracy and retention, explicit written feedback is more effective than OCF. The researcher attributed this result to the medium's nature since learners might have poor listening skills that lessen the benefit from OCF.

Al-Solami (2019) conducted quasi-experimental classroom-based research on the effect of OCF on the EFL university learners' language skills at Najran University, Saudi Arabia. The researcher used an experimental group of students

who received an extensive OCF and a control group with a conventional classroom setting. The experimental group teachers used various OCFs with the students and observed the students' reactions to that feedback. Also, the students were recorded, and their performance was measured before and after OCF. The results reveal that OCF has a significant positive impact on the experimental group learners' language skills.

As seen in the above section, it has been indicated by researchers that the effectiveness of different types of CF differ from one context to another depending on the type of CF used, the medium of correction, and the learning task itself (Al-Solami, 2019; Tayebipour, 2019; Yang & Lyster, 2010). The researchers also have indicated that CS plays an essential role in CF effectiveness (Darabad, 2013; Guo & Yang, 2018; Rahimi, 2015). However, few of these studies have dealt with the relationship between feedback preferences and CS (Moslemi & Dastgoshadeh, 2017). None of them so far has dealt with the relationship between CS and preferences for OCF. Thus, the present study attempts to fill in this gap and add to the current literature on CS and OCF preferences by investigating Saudi female EFL learners' preferences for five types of OCF across CS. It also investigates the reasons for these preferences.

Rationale and Research Questions

Although there is extensive literature examining the types of CF and its effect on teaching and instructional techniques (Gooch et al., 2016; Li, 2010; Yoshida, 2008), few studies have dealt with OCF learners' preferences, and fewer have investigated the relationship between OCF learners' preferences and psychological factors. OCF studies examining its relationship to the learners' psychological factors have focused on one type or two types of OCF (Rassaei, 2015b; Darabad, 2013). Moreover, when Rahimi (2015) and Moslemi and Dastgoshadeh (2017) explored the relationship between cognitive styles and learners' preferences, they focused on various WCF types. Thus, the present study seeks to fill this gap by investigating EFL Saudi college learners' preferences for five types of OCF, the relationship between the preferences and their cognitive styles, and the reasons behind those preferences.

Hence, based on the concepts of cognitive styles and OCF types, the researchers' teaching experiences, and the gap in the related literature, the researchers address the following questions:

1. What are the Saudi female EFL FI- and FD-dominant learners' preferences of five types of teachers' OCF, mainly explicit correction, recast, clarification request, elicitation, and repetition?
2. What are the reasons underlying those preferences?
3. Are there correlations between the learners' preferences for OCF and their FD/FI cognitive styles?

Methodology

Participants

The present study uses data obtained from 164 Saudi female EFL students at the Faculty of Languages and Translation during the first academic semester of 2019–2020. The participants were selected from Levels 5 and 6 in the English department, which offers a bachelor's degree. The ages of the participants ranged from 19 to 20 years old. These students completed training in the four core skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) and had started studying English-language courses, (mainly linguistics, literature, and translation). These two levels were convenient samples available to the researchers and were also considered representative of the department's undergraduate students. The participants were intermediate-level students based on their current level. Since language proficiency level is a factor that might affect the OCF preferences, level 5 and 6 college students were chosen to be neither beginners nor advanced (intermediate) language learners. Thus, this characteristic is seen to help mitigate the possible effect of participants' language proficiency levels on their preferences of OCF.

Instruments

The present study utilizes a mixed-methods research design, with the quantitative design as the dominant one, and an additional qualitative part. The researchers used two instruments to collect the data. The first instrument is a questionnaire. It consists of 18 items, accompanied by two cognitive style tests designed to collect data related to the students' cognitive styles (see Appendix A). The second instrument is a questionnaire consisting of 5 items, accompanied by an open-ended question to elicit the participants' preferences of the types of OCF used by their teachers, and the reasons for their choices (see Appendix B). The present study's researchers adopted and adapted the cognitive style questionnaire items from Laskey and Gibson (1997) and Ehrman and Leaver (2003). The items 1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 13, and 18 are adapted from Laskey and Gibson (1997), and the items 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, and 17 are adapted from Ehrman and Leaver (2003). Half of these 18 items elicit the learners' FI cognitive style, and half of them elicit their FD cognitive style. The modified cognitive style questionnaire and test consist of three parts. The first part is designed to elicit the participants' demographic information. The second part consists of 18 items arranged on a Likert scale ranging from 5 (always) to 1 (never). The third part consists of an embedded-figure test and a rod-and-frame test (see Appendix A). The purpose of these two tests is to validate the cognitive styles' obtained results.

The second instrument used to investigate the students' preferences regarding OCF was an adapted version of the Questionnaire for Corrective Feedback Approaches proposed by Lyster and Ranta (1997) and modified by Gipyo Park (2010). The questionnaire was modified and translated to be appropriate for eliciting responses from the participants. It consists of five different types of OCF (explicit correction, recast, clarification request, elicitation, and repetition) by using a Likert

scale ranging from 5 (most favorite) to 1 (least favorite; see Appendix B). Since metalinguistic feedback has some of the clarification request features and elicitation and might be confusing to the participants, it was excluded from this study. Only the five types mentioned above were included in the questionnaire. An open-ended question was added to the questionnaire to elicit the reasons for the participants' preferences.

Validity and Reliability of Data Collection Instruments

The reliability and validity of the two questionnaires are confirmed because they were adopted and adapted from previous research in the field. On the one hand, the cognitive style questionnaire items were adopted and adapted from Laskey and Gibson (1997) and Ehrman and Leaver (2003). The questionnaire for corrective feedback approaches, on the other hand, was adapted from Lyster and Ranta (1997) and modified by Gipyo Park (2010). Moreover, the two questionnaires, in their final versions, were also reviewed by two assistant professors in the field.

Data Analysis Instruments

For data analysis, Microsoft Excel, Version 16, was employed to calculate the means of the students' responses to the questionnaire's items and the cognitive style tests and to draw the graph that shows the participants' cognitive styles. It was also to draw the graph for means of FI-dominant and FD-dominant learners' preferences for OCF types. The SPSS program, Version 23, was used to conduct descriptive statistics for the participants' preferences of OCF. This program was also used to conduct chi-square tests of association to test the statistical association between the participants' cognitive styles and their preferences for the five types of OCF. Moreover, the SPSS program was used to compute internal consistency between field-dependence items and field-independence ones. The purpose of this procedure is to check the validity of the CS questionnaire results.

Procedures

The researchers distributed the two questionnaires stapled together. Each two stapled questionnaires were given to one participant. This procedure aims to simplify and guarantee the accuracy of the analysis process, i.e., to ensure that each participant who has the CS resulting from the first questionnaire analysis is the same one who has the OCF preferences in the second questionnaire. The participants were given 50 minutes to complete the two questionnaires. They were given a clear explanation of the purpose and how to respond. The participants were told that their responses will be kept confidential and used only for research purposes. They were also given the chance to answer anonymously. The questionnaire items were translated into Arabic to ensure their understanding of the various items. The researchers also instructed the participants to ask for any clarification. After

collecting the participants' responses, the mean number of each participant's scores of being either FD dominant or FI dominant, or mixed, was computed manually based on the scoring table (Appendix A). The participants whose FI scores were higher than their FD ones are termed "field-independent dominant," whereas those whose FD scores were higher than FI ones are termed "field-dependent dominant." The participants who have the same scores for both FI and FD are termed "mixed" ones. Later, the three groups' total numbers were inserted into Microsoft Excel, Version 16, to draw the figure of the cognitive styles obtained. The researchers then used the SPSS program, Version 23, to conduct frequency tests and descriptive statistics for the participants' preferences of the five types of OCF. The same program was used to conduct chi-square tests of association to determine whether there is a significant relationship between the students' cognitive styles and their preferences for explicit correction, recast, clarification requests, elicitation, and repetition. The chi-square tests were seen to be appropriate to obtain the associations between the two variables: independent variables (FI or FD cognitive styles) and the sequential dependent ones (OCF preferences). Because the study aims to investigate whether learners' FI or FD styles affect their preferences for the type of feedback used by their teachers in class, the eight mixed participants and their associations with the cognitive styles were excluded from the analysis of the feedback preferences. To investigate whether the learners' cognitive styles affect the reasons for their preferences for OCF types, five FI students and five field-dependent ones were compared concerning the reasons they gave for their preferences. Content descriptive analysis was conducted to answer the open-ended question about the reasons for their preferences. This analysis was conducted manually using thematic content analysis.

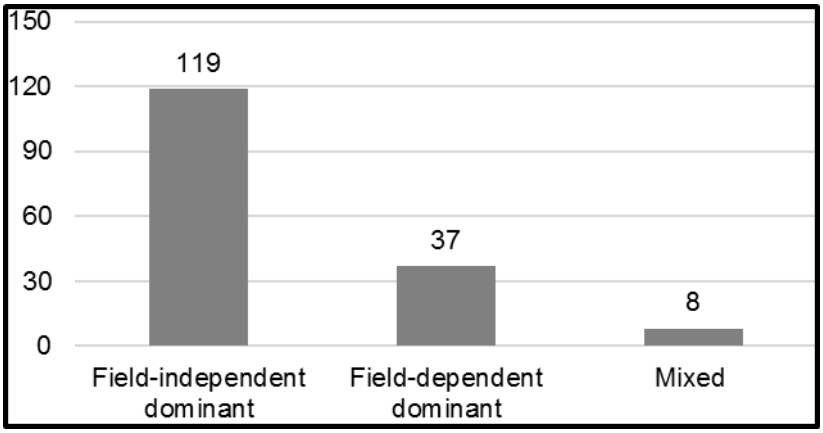
Results

Saudi Female EFL Students' Cognitive Styles

The results of the study show that Saudi female EFL university students display various mixtures of cognitive styles. The results revealed that most of them are FI dominant (72.6%), some of them are FD dominant (22.6%), and a few of them are mixed (4.8%)—that is, they exhibit the same portion of FI or FD cognitive styles. The results are shown in Figure 1 below:

Figure 1

Participants' Cognitive Styles



Item-Total Correlation tests were conducted to check the internal consistency between the FD and FI items. The results show that the correlations between each item of the field – independence cognitive style (9 items) and its overall degree are significant with P- values <0.05, which range between (0.163) and (0.554). These values indicate the strong relationship between test results and criterion variables. Table 1 below shows this result.

Table 1

Correlation Between Field-Independent Items

Item	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)
I prefer to study alone.	0.163*	0.037
I enjoy classes where the teacher uses textbooks as a method of teaching.	0.498**	0.000
I like to prepare before coming to class to avoid any unexpected situations.	0.564**	0.000
I like to look for similarities among things.	0.428**	0.000
I like to learn through concepts and theories.	0.418**	0.000
I prefer teachers who provide careful course outlines and objectives.	0.554**	0.000
I tend to think about things before I do or say them.	0.549**	0.000
In my spare time, I like to solve puzzles rather than read a story.	0.360**	0.000

I like to learn grammatical rules.	0.491**	0.000

The results also show significant correlations between each item of the field-dependent cognitive style items (9 items) and its overall degree with P- values <0.05. These values range between (0.213) and (0.613). They indicate a strong relationship between test results and criterion variables. Table 2 below shows this result.

Table 2

Correlation Between Field-Dependent Items

Item	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)
I usually go to class without a prior plan to be more flexible for any changes.	0.278*	0.000
I often act or speak without thinking about it.	0.385**	0.000
I prefer teachers who encourage class discussions and activities.	0.518**	0.000
I like to interact with the world while learning.	0.613**	0.000
I like to learn grammatical rules through reading a passage or a story.	0.400**	0.000
I enjoy classes where I can work with a group.	0.580**	0.000
During my spare time, I like to read stories rather than solve puzzles.	0.213*	0.006
I like to explore the differences among things.	0.346**	0.000
I usually study with friends or in a group.	0.427**	0.000

Cognitive Styles and Learners' Preferences for OCF

The researchers conducted descriptive statistics to elicit the OCF preferences of FD- and FI-dominant learners. The following sections present these results.

FI-Dominant Learners' Preferences

The study results show that FI-dominant learners preferred recast OCF to be used by their teachers, followed by explicit correction, repetition, elicitation, and finally, clarification request. Table 3 shows this result below:

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics for the FI-Dominant Learners' Preferences

Variable	OCF	Explicit Correction	ecast	Clarification Request	Elicitation	Repetition
FI Dominant (N = 119)	Mean	3.75	4.05	2.71	2.88	3.01
	Percent	75	81	57.8	57.6	60.2
	Std. Deviation	1.410	1.234	1.541	1.468	1.576

FD-Dominant Learners' Preferences

The study results also show that the FD-dominant group members preferred recast OCF to be used by their teachers, followed by explicit correction, repetition, clarification request, and elicitation. Table 4 shows this result below:

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics for the FD-Dominant Learners' Preferences

Variable	OCF	Explicit Correction	ecast	Clarification Request	Elicitation	Repetition
FD Dominant (N=37)	Mean	3.24	3.51	2.89	2.86	2.97
	Percent	64.8	70.2	54.2	57.2	59.4
	Std. Deviation	1.640	1.677	1.542	1.456	1.213

Reasons for the Learners' OCF Preferences

By comparing five field-independent students and five field-dependent ones, concerning the reasons they gave for their preferences, the researchers found

out that most of the reasons given by the two groups of learners for their preferences are almost the same. The analysis of the participants' reasons for OCF preferences shows that the nature of OCF used in the classroom by teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL) has a profound impact on learners' feelings and their willingness to participate in the learning experience. The following sections present these reasons.

Explicit Correction

The participants reported that they prefer explicit correction because it is a direct correction from the teacher, clear enough for them to recognize their errors and not repeat them in the future. Some participants reported that this type of correction is useful specifically for correcting their erroneous grammatical structures. Others approved it because they think all of the students in the class can clearly understand the mistake and thus benefit from the correction. Some participants who do not prefer explicit correction think that this type of correction may be embarrassing for the student in front of other students. Others reported that this type of error correction does not allow them to think about their errors themselves and clarify what they wanted to say.

Recast

Learners who prefer recast provided several reasons for this preference, such as this method is polite and helpful; it is less embarrassing for the students; its use does not make them feel as though they are "in trouble" and thus hesitant to participate in class, or even to be present; it does not put them under pressure; it helps them to be more attentive, and to understand their errors; it assists them in grasping their errors quickly and clearly; it clarifies their errors, and it is better than merely saying that their answers are incorrect. Interestingly, a few learners gave reasons why they do not prefer recast. They stated that this correction method is not clear enough to identify where they have made mistakes.

Clarification Request

Most learners do not prefer their teachers to use the clarification request type of correction, reporting that when they make mistakes, they do not know the answers, they are confused, and thus, they will not clarify. Many learners also reported that being asked to clarify their words or thoughts publicly in a second language is embarrassing, may lead them to hate participation, and even to be absent from the classroom. They stated that the teachers should be sensitive to the students' fear and tension, realize that the students need their help, and do not like to be embarrassed if they do not know the correct answers. The few learners who prefer this type of error correction reported that they wish it could be applied only in certain cases depending on the type of error; if the student knows the answer but does not clarify his or her answer; or if the teacher does not understand what the student means. They appreciated being allowed to clarify their answers and reported

that it is an excellent technique to encourage students to understand their errors better and discover where they have made mistakes, as they will retain the knowledge as a result.

Elicitation

Those learners who do not prefer to be corrected by the elicitation correction technique reported that it might be difficult for them to volunteer accurate information due to a lack of knowledge and understanding. These learners also reported that the elicitation technique might have harmful consequences, such as causing students to hate classroom participation and be absent. They added that it is very embarrassing when the student does not know the correct answer. However, learners who prefer learning by elicitation reported that this correction method helps students learn independently and organize their ideas. They perceive it as an effective way of allowing students to think and discover the correct answer for themselves, a process that aids the remembrance and application of the subject matter.

Repetition

Those learners who did not favor the repetition technique reported that they find the teacher repeating the student's error without clarification to be inimical: instead of facilitating learning, it tended to make the student confused, nervous, and tense. They also considered this repetition to be a kind of sarcasm, which would cause them to lose confidence. They added that this technique is not helpful. It is irritating, making them feel shy and unwilling to speak in class. The learners who prefer the repetition type of correction reported that it is sometimes useful if they fail to grasp the error from the beginning of the tutorial or exercise. They also found it helpful in remembering the mistake and avoiding repeating it later.

Cognitive Styles and Feedback Preferences

Descriptive statistics and chi-square tests were performed to determine whether there is an association between the students' cognitive styles and their preference for explicit correction, recast, clarification request, elicitation, or repetition types of OCF. The results are presented in the following sections:

The results of the study indicate that 75% of FI-dominant learners and 64.8% of FD-dominant students preferred explicit correction to be used by their teachers. The chi-square test shows that this difference is not significant, indicating no association between students' cognitive style and their preference for the explicit correction ($\chi = 7.174a$, $p = 0.127 > 0.05$). The study results also show that FI-dominant learners preferred recast to be used by their teachers more than FD-dominant ones. 81% of FI-dominant learners preferred recast to be used by their teachers whereas only 70.2% of FD-dominant students favored it. The chi-square

test shows that this difference is significant, indicating a strong association between students' cognitive style and their preference for the recast correction type (χ = 15.278a, p = 0.004 < 0.05).

Besides, the results of the study indicate that there is no significant association between students' cognitive style and their preferences for the clarification request method. 57.8% of FI-dominant learners versus 54.2% of FD-dominant students preferred the clarification request method to be used by their teachers. The chi-square test shows that this difference is not significant at all, indicating that there is no association between students' cognitive styles and their preference for the clarification request method of correction (χ = .633a, p = 0.959 > 0.05). Moreover, the results of the study indicate that there is no significant association between students' cognitive styles and their preference for the elicitation correction method. 57.6% of FI-dominant learners versus 57.2% of FD-dominant students preferred the elicitation correction method to be used by their teachers. The chi-square test shows that this difference is not significant, indicating no association between students' cognitive styles and their preference for the elicitation of correction (χ = 5.749a, p = 0.219 > 0.05). However, the results of the study show that FI-dominant learners preferred the repetition method of correction to be used by their teachers more than FD-dominant ones. 60.2% of FI-dominant learners preferred the repetition method of correction to be used by their teachers, as opposed to 59.4% of FD-dominant students. The chi-square test indicates that there is a significant association between students' cognitive styles and their preference for the repetition method of correction (χ = 10.420a, p = 0.034 < 0.05). Figure 2 and Table 5 show this result below.

Figure 2

Frequency of OCF Preferences by FD-Dominant and FI-Dominant Learners

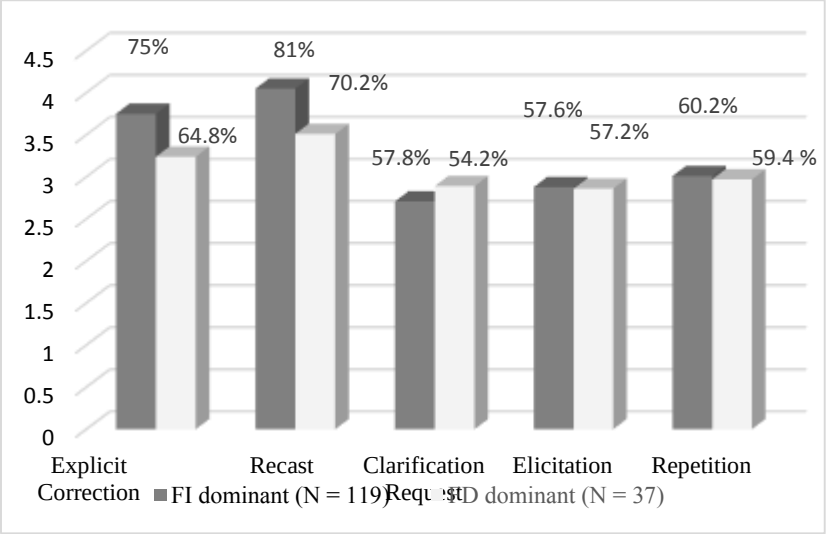


Table 5
Association Between Students' Cognitive Style and their Preferences for OCF Types

	OCF & CS	Explicit Correction	Recast	Clarification request	Elicitation	Repetition
Pearson Chi-Square	Value	7.174a	15.278a	.633a	5.749a	10.420a
	df	4	4	4	4	4
	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	0.127	0.004	0.959	0.219	.034

Discussion

This study aimed at presenting some useful insights based on the investigation of the EFL learners' OCF preferences, the reasons for these preferences, and the relationship between these preferences and their FD/FI

cognitive styles. The results indicated that most of the participants are FI dominant, some are FD dominant, and a few are mixed, having the same proportion of FI or FD cognitive styles. The researchers used this finding as a primary step to investigate the impact of the two main types of cognitive styles on the participants' OCF preferences.

Regarding the oral corrective feedback preferences among FI-dominant and FD-dominant learners, the results revealed that most of them prefer recast and explicit correction in class. Although FI-dominant learners prefer explicit correction more than FD-dominant ones, this difference is not significant enough to indicate an association between students' cognitive styles and their preference for explicit correction. This slight difference reminds us of the fact that FI-dominant learners prefer clear outlines and tend to rely on their conscious control. However, the lack of significant association might arise from the fact that the two groups' division is not clear cut and that they exhibit various levels of the two cognitive styles. This finding supports Darabad's (2013) conclusion that no relationship exists between learners' cognitive styles and their reactions to OCF. Furthermore, this finding is in line with Tasdemir and Arslan's (2018) conclusion that EFL learners prefer explicit correction OCF. This preference for explicit correction might arise from the benefit the learners realize from their teachers use of this type of correction. This interpretation is supported by Lyster's (2004) indication that FFI is more effective when combined with prompts. It is also supported by the findings of the previous research that has proven the effectiveness of direct correction (prompts) in improving EFL learners' oral accuracy and in teaching grammar (Darabad, 2013; Guo & Yang, 2018; Sheen, 2010; Yang & Lyster's, 2010). This interpretation is also supported by Al-Saleh's (2018) conclusion that most of the students benefited from direct CF.

However, the present study's finding that EFL learners preferred explicit correction does not support Khatib and Vaezi's (2017) finding that they preferred indirect OCF to direct ones. Their finding is in line with this study's finding that recast is the most preferred type of OCF among both FI- and FD-dominant learners. Recast occupies the first rank in the learners' preferences. This finding supports Khatib and Vaezi's (2017) claim that the learners experience no pressure or stress when receiving indirect corrective feedback methods. FI-dominant learners preferred recast more than FD-dominant learners do. The difference is significant, indicating an association between students' cognitive styles and their preference for recast OCF. This finding differs from that of Darabad (2013), who concluded that no relationship exists between learners' cognitive styles and their reactions to recasts. This strong association between field independence and recast preference might be because FI learners are usually more attentive than FD ones to their teachers' indications of the errors while recasting the sentence in the correct form. This explanation is supported by Rassaei's (2015b) claim that attention plays a role in differentiating between the FI and FD cognitive styles. Furthermore, Wooldridge (1995) stated, "FI learners are more achievement-oriented, competitive, disciplined and focused than are FD learners" (cited in Rassaei, 2015b, p. 513). This means that FI learners can effortlessly obtain information from their teachers' speech. The

finding that recast and explicit correction are the most preferred OCF types by FI-dominant learners and FD-dominant ones supports Tasdemir and Arslan's (2018) conclusion that EFL learners favor their teachers as the most useful source for providing corrective feedback. However, this finding does not support Rassaei's (2013) conclusion that EFL learners prefer explicit correction to recasts.

Repetition OCF is the third preferred type for both FI- and FD-dominant EFL learners. However, FI-dominant learners appear to prefer the repetition method of correction more than FD-dominant learners do. The difference is significant, indicating an association between students' cognitive styles and their preference for repetition OCF. This association between FI and repetition preference might also be because FI-dominant learners are more attentive to the error indicators while their teachers repeat the sentence in the correct form. FI-dominant learners tend to understand the reason behind the repetition of errors. This reasoning is supported by the views of both Rassaei (2015b) and Wooldridge (1995) that FI learners are more attentive and focused than FD learners are. Because FD-dominant learners tend to care more about the context and the attitudes of others toward them, they feel that this type of correction threatens their self-image in the classroom, a probable reason for why they do not prefer the repetition type of OCF.

The present study shows that clarification requests and elicitation are found to be the least preferred OCF types among both FI- and FD-dominant learners. Moreover, no association was found between students' cognitive styles and their preferences for these two types of OCF. This finding also supports Tasdemir and Arslan's (2018) claim that cognitive style differences fail to explain the various preferences of oral feedback by learners. However, it does not support Tasdemir and Arslan's conclusion that EFL learners prefer clarification and elicitation as oral corrective feedback techniques. The participants' reasons for their preferences reflect their concerns about their psychological status in the classroom. The participants who prefer explicit correction appreciated direct and explicit correction from the teacher, but participants opposed to it expressed that it was embarrassing and counterproductive.

As for recast, the majority of the participants advocated its use for psychological reasons. They stated that it is polite, less embarrassing than other methods, and that recast use does not cause them to feel that they are in trouble in the classroom. This reason supports Sakiroglu's (2020) conclusion that the majority of EFL students preferred that their teachers correct them nicely and friendly. The few learners who do not prefer it reported that this technique is not clear enough to show them their errors. In addition to the quantitative data, the qualitative data did indicate that most learners do not prefer clarification requests and elicitation OCF since it is embarrassing to be asked to clarify something they do not know. Those who prefer these two types of OCF think it is good to clarify their answers and discover where they made errors. The finding that most learners do not prefer elicitation OCF might be due to some non-verbal behaviors EFL teachers use with

OCF (Muñoz & Mavrou, 2020; Wang & Loewen, 2016). These non-verbal behaviors might not be similarly suitable for different learners.

Conclusion, Implications, and Limitations

Based on the above findings of the study, it is concluded that EFL learners, regardless of their cognitive styles, prefer recast and explicit OCF the most, and they prefer clarification requests and elicitation the least. Based on this conclusion, EFL teachers should use various types of OCF, basically recast and explicit correction. They should generally avoid clarification requests, elicitation, and repetition OCF if they notice that the learners stop participating when these techniques are employed. Understanding that different learners prefer different types of OCF will help teachers understand and avoid some of the problems that arise in their EFL classrooms, such as unwillingness to participate in and attending lectures. It is also concluded that FI EFL learners prefer recast and repetition more than FD ones do. The reasons given by the participants for their OCF preferences draw the attention of EFL teachers to the importance of considering the learners' psychological status while using the OCF. The teachers can use educational tools, such as giving students a cognitive style test at the beginning of the course. They can also ask them about their preferred type of OCF to ascertain the best way to give them constructive feedback.

In the future, the findings of this study may be utilized by researchers as a starting point to conduct more detailed practical research on each type of oral corrective feedback and its relationship to the EFL learners' cognitive styles using observation and classroom interaction recordings. Also, researchers can further conduct similar research on Saudi male EFL students to complement the present study's findings. With more studies on OCF preferences and how they relate to EFL learners' psychological characteristics, further beneficial theoretical inferences and insights about EFL OCF classroom best practices can be attained.

The present study also concludes that EFL FI- and FD-dominant learners, while reporting their reasons for OCF preferences, are very concerned about the related psychological consequences of OCF in the classroom. This finding draws both EFL teachers and researchers' attention to the importance of affective factors in EFL classroom interactions. Future researchers can also conduct triangulated research about the relationship between the participants' psychological status and enthusiasm to participate in the EFL classrooms, and the types of OCF used by teachers. It is also important to conduct future research on both verbal and nonverbal behaviors related to OCF since non-verbal behaviors that accompany OCF might affect the learners' preferences.

The present study has some limitations. Firstly, it deals with only five types of OCF: explicit correction, recast, clarification request, elicitation, and repetition. Metalinguistic OCF, which the researchers exclude in the current study, can be investigated in further research. Second, it investigates OCF preferences only for

intermediate level students. Further research can compare OCF preferences for low-level and advanced-level students. Third, it excludes male learners due to cultural constraints. Male learners can be included in further similar research to complement the findings of the present study. Fourth, it used eclectic questionnaire items and two tests to elicit the learners' cognitive styles. Although this instrument has been checked for validity, further similar research can utilize the Group Embedded Figures Test (GEFT), developed by Witkin et al. (1971), to guarantee more accurate results of the participants' division into FI and FD ones.

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APPENDIX A
COGNITIVE STYLES QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear students:

This questionnaire is to obtain information about how you perceive information for learning English as a foreign language. There are no correct or wrong answers. Your answers will be kept confidential and used only for research purposes. Please answer all questions as accurately as you can.

Part 1: Demographic information (Required)

Name (optional)…… Age: …… Level: ……

Part 2: Write the numbers 5, 4, 2, 3, or 1 after each statement:

Always = 5 Often = 4 Sometimes = 3 Seldom = 2 Never = 1

No.	Statement	Number
1	I prefer to study alone.	
2	I usually go to class without a prior plan to be more flexible for any changes.	
3	I enjoy classes where the teacher uses textbooks as a method of teaching.	
4	I like to prepare before coming to class to avoid any unexpected situations.	
5	I often act or speak without thinking about it.	
6	I like to look for similarities among things.	
7	I like to learn through concepts and theories.	
8	I prefer teachers who provide careful course outlines and objectives.	

9	I prefer teachers who encourage class discussions and activities.	
10	I like to interact with the world while learning.	
11	I like to learn grammatical rules through reading a passage or a story.	
12	I tend to think about things before I do or say them.	
13	I enjoy classes where I can work with a group.	
14	In my spare time, I like to solve puzzles rather than read a story.	
15	I like to learn grammatical rules.	
16	During my spare time, I like to read stories rather than solve puzzles.	
17	I like to explore the differences among things.	
18	I usually study with friends or in a group.	

Scoring Procedures:

Put the point value on the line next to the corresponding item below. Add the points in each column to obtain the cognitive style score under each heading. Always = 5 points Often = 4 points Sometimes = 3 points Seldom = 2 points Never = 1 point

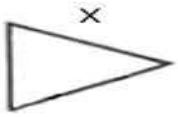
Dependent		Independent	
NO.	PTS	NO.	PTS
2		1	
5		3	

6		4	
9		7	
10		8	
11		12	
13		14	
16		15	
18		17	
Field-Dependent Cognitive Style=		Field-Independent Cognitive Style=	

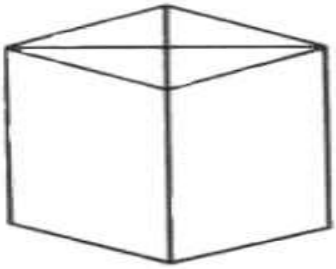
Part 3:

Shadow the shape x within the more complex figure.

Here is a simple form which we have labeled "X":



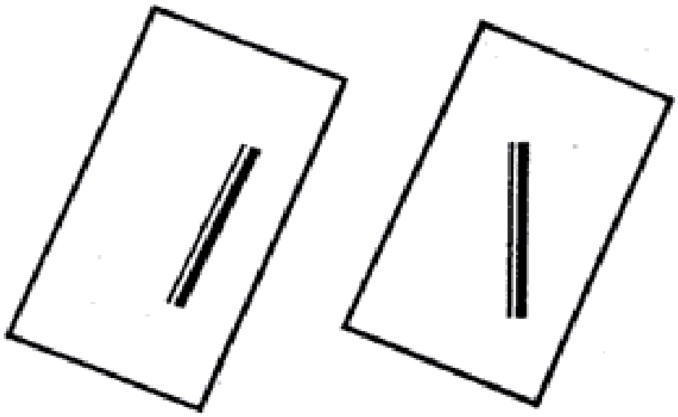
This simple form, named "X", is hidden within the more complex figure below:



B. Choose the correct answer about the following shapes.

1. _____ The rod is vertical in A. 2. _____ The rod is vertical in B.

A. B.



Your participation is highly appreciated!

APPENDIX B
ORAL CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear students:

This questionnaire aims to obtain information about your preferences for the type of oral corrective feedback used by your teachers in class. There are no correct or wrong answers. Your answers will be kept confidential and used only for research purposes. Please answer all questions as accurately as you can.

Part 1:

Please read carefully the five different types of oral corrective feedback and the description of each corrective feedback in the table below. Then, circle the numbers (from 5 to 1) based on how often you prefer your teacher to use that type of correction in class (from most favorite (5) to the least favorite (1)).

No.	Type of Correction
1	Explicit Correction: the explicit provision of the correct form. Example: Student's Error: I go to school yesterday. Teacher's Explicit Correction: You should say "I went to school yesterday."
	Most favorite __ ___ ___ ___ ___ Least favorite 5 4 3 2 1
2	Recast: the teacher's reformulation of all or part of a student's utterance, minus the error. Example: Student's Error: There are two book on the desk. Teacher's Recast: There are two books on the desk.
	Most favorite __ ___ ___ ___ ___ Least favorite 5 4 3 2 1
3	Clarification Request: the teacher's indication that the student's utterance has been misunderstood by the teacher, or that the utterance is ill-formed. Example: Student's Error: I enjoyed eye shopping last weekend. Teacher's Clarification Request: What do you mean by eye shopping?
	Most favorite __ ___ ___ ___ ___ Least favorite 5 4 3 2 1

4	Elicitation: to get the student to produce the correct form either by completing the teacher's restatement or by asking the student to repeat the utterance in a reformulated version. Example: Student's Error: The baby bird has fall from the tree. Teacher's Elicitation: The baby bird has _____ from the tree.
	Most favorite __ ___ ___ ___ ___ Least favorite 5 4 3 2 1
5	Repetition: the teacher's repetition, in isolation, of the student's error. Example: Student's Error: Mommy is making cookies for we. Teacher's Repetition: For we?
	Most favorite __ ___ ___ ___ ___ Least favorite 5 4 3 2 1

Part 2:

Give reasons for your preferences. You can use Arabic to answer this question.

Your participation is highly appreciated!

تفضيلات طالبات اللغة الإنجليزية لأنواع التغذية الراجعة الشفوية من المعلمات وعلاقتها بالأساليب المعرفية

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ملخص البحث :

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى معرفة اساليب التغذية الراجعة الشفوية التي تفضلها الطالبات السعوديات بقسم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية بالكلية. تم التركيز على خمسة أنواع وهي: التصحيح الواضح المباشر للخطأ من المعلمة وإعادة الصياغة من المعلمة للجملة بشكلها الصحيح وطلب التوضيح من الطالبة واستنباط التصحيح من الطالبة نفسها وتكرار المعلمة للجزء الخاطئ. كذلك تركز الدراسة على الأسباب الكامنة وراء هذه التفضيلات ، وما إذا كان هناك ارتباط بين تفضيلات المتعلمين وأنماطهم المعرفية. جمع الباحثون بيانات من 164 طالبة بالكلية من المستوى الخامس والسادس باستخدام استبيانين واختبارات للأسلوب المعرفي. تظهر النتائج أن إعادة الصياغة والتصحيح الواضح المباشر هما أكثر الأنواع المفضلة من قبل المتعلمين المستقلين عن المجال والمتعلمين المعتمدين على المجال. تظهر النتائج أيضًا أن الأسباب المعطاة للتفضيلات تعكس مخاوف المتعلمين بشأن حالتهم النفسية. علاوة على ذلك فقد وجد أنه على الرغم من وجود ارتباط كبير بين الأنماط المعرفية للمشاركين وتفضيلاتهم لإعادة الصياغة والتكرار، لا يوجد ارتباط بين الأنماط المعرفية وتفضيلهم للتصحيح الواضح المباشر والاستنباط وطلب التوضيح. وأوصت الدراسة بضرورة وعي اساتذة اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية بتفضيلات المتعلمين لنوع واحد على الآخر، وتأثير هذه الانواع على البيئة الإيجابية للفصل الدراسي، والتأثير المحتمل للأنماط المعرفية على تلك التفضيلات.

الكلمات المفتاحية : تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية ، الاعتماد على المجال ، الاستقلال عن المجال ، إعادة الصياغة، التصحيح الواضح المباشر