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Students' Responses to Direct Oral Corrective Feedback on Speaking Vocabulary at a Junior High School

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine students' responses to direct oral corrective feedback, exploring its perceived benefits and challenges in vocabulary acquisition when speaking English. Using a descriptive qualitative design, this study involved four purposively selected seventh-grade students at a public junior high school in Karawang. Data were collected through direct interviews and documentation, including photographs and audio recordings, and were analyzed qualitatively through data reduction, display, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that direct oral corrective feedback was perceived as beneficial, helping students understand vocabulary in context, recognize their speaking errors, and apply proper vocabulary. Positive responses included increased confidence and improved speaking skills, whereas negative responses involved embarrassment when corrected in front of peers. Students also expressed constructive attitudes and a motivation to become more fluent. The implication is that teachers should provide oral corrective feedback in a supportive and personalized manner, especially when students feel embarrassed, in order to maximize its benefits.
Keywords: Direct Oral Corrective Feedback; Students' Responses; Speaking Vocabulary; EFL Learners; Junior High School

INTRODUCTION

Speaking is one of the language skills which is very important to be mastered by students in order to be a good communicator. According to Fulcher (2003), speaking is the verbal use of language to communicate with others. English speaking remains one of the most difficult skills for students to master, as effective oral communication requires not only grammatical accuracy but also fluency, pronunciation, and appropriate vocabulary use. In practice, many junior high school students still struggle to use English for everyday conversation despite years of instruction, revealing a gap between their theoretical knowledge and actual speaking performance.

Based on observations by researchers and English teachers at a public junior high school in Karawang, several specific problems were identified. These include limited opportunities for students to receive direct oral feedback during speaking activities, a lack of vocabulary that hinders effective idea expression, and students' hesitation or fear after receiving corrections due to being afraid of making errors. Furthermore, the natural use of English is only practiced in the school setting during the learning process, resulting in a limited English-speaking environment. These interconnected problems highlight the urgent need for effective feedback strategies that not only address vocabulary errors but also consider students' emotional responses during speaking activities.

Feedback plays an important role in guiding students' learning. According to Brown and Rodgers (2002), students' mistakes in using the target language must be corrected; if teachers do not correct errors, students may consider that performance to be correct. Ellis (2009) defines corrective feedback as a response to students' oral utterances containing linguistic errors. In its classroom application, oral corrective feedback is a part of the teaching process because it has an important role in students' vocabulary use during speaking activities. According to Ali (2024), corrective and positive feedback strategies are effective in helping students understand and remember new vocabulary more successfully. Through this process, students are guided not only to correct mistakes but also to expand their speaking vocabulary.

While several studies focus on students' general perceptions and the overall role of corrective feedback in developing EFL speaking skills (Bawut et al., 2025). Septiana et al. (2016) analyzed the use of corrective feedback on the speaking skills of high school and vocational school students in Banda Aceh and found that almost all students liked regular feedback from their lecturers, believing that it helped them strengthen their speaking ability. However, what remains underexplored is a deeper investigation into the specific reasons underlying seventh-grade students' positive or negative responses when direct oral corrective feedback targets their speaking vocabulary. Recent research has also not yet explored how teachers can deliver corrections in a way that is clear and easily understood by students (Muslem, 2021). Without understanding the reasons behind students' responses, teachers tend to rely on positive feedback alone, which allows speaking errors to persist. Therefore, there is a clear research gap in understanding not only how students respond, but more importantly, why they respond in particular ways to direct oral corrective feedback on vocabulary at the junior high school level, where speaking habits are still being formed.

This study aims to explore students' responses toward direct oral corrective feedback on vocabulary in speaking at the junior high school level. It involved seventh-grade students in one school, with data collected through interviews and documentation. Specifically, this study is guided by two research questions: (1) What are students' responses toward direct oral corrective feedback on vocabulary in speaking activities? (2) What are the reasons behind the students' responses after receiving direct oral corrective feedback during speaking activities?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Students' Responses

Students' response is fundamentally defined as an action taken to react to what others are doing. According to Applebee (1989), through responding, students become better able to view materials as possible realities and understand them in terms of the world rather than merely the real world as they know it, and response to learning is considered important because it establishes a direct relationship with the learning outcomes or objectives achieved by students. Clay and Breslow (2007) found that certain conditions, such as difficult and boring material, should be anticipated by teachers who wish to keep their subject running well, as students tend to give good responses when they encounter materials that match their capacities. In the context of feedback, Van der Kleij and Lipnevich (2021) defined feedback perception as the way students comprehend, perceive, and value the feedback message, a definition that encompasses a wide range of cognitive and affective experiences that students deal with while giving and receiving feedback. Expanding on this, Van Der Kleij and Adie (2020) added that perception also includes students' beliefs about themselves, the purposes of feedback, and how they interpret the feedback they receive. Related to the mode of delivery, students were found to generally enjoy each role of providing, receiving, and observing feedback; however, they valued positive feedback delivered orally while preferring negative feedback to be given in written form.

Furthermore, utilizing semi-structured interviews, AlGhafri et al. (2023) reported that English students in Oman held positive attitudes toward oral corrective feedback, confirming that cultural context may also shape how feedback is received. However, student responses to feedback are not uniform, Sharma (2025) noted that students respond to teacher feedback in different ways depending on their individual characteristics and the learning environment, highlighting the complexity of feedback reception. The centrality of the teacher's role in shaping these perceptions has been widely acknowledged, and Van Der Kleij and Adie (2020) emphasized that teachers who accompany their feedback with dedicated revision time can encourage their students to perceive feedback more positively, suggesting that the conditions surrounding feedback delivery are as important as the feedback itself. Despite these valuable insights into the nature of feedback perception and the general preference for oral positive feedback, fewer studies have specifically explored the underlying reasons behind students' varied responses to direct oral corrective feedback that targets speaking vocabulary, particularly at the junior high school level where learners are still developing both their speaking skills and emotional resilience toward correction.

Direct Oral Corrective Feedback

Feedback is information given by a teacher or another learner to help students improve their learning (Ellis, 2009). Based on theory Ellis (2009), there are two

types of teacher's feedback. They are oral corrective feedback and written corrective feedback, which can be delivered immediately during an activity or delayed until its completion. Oral corrective feedback is a crucial element in speaking classes because it serves as helpful input when provided at the right moment. However, Oral corrective feedback is crucial in speaking classes, but Annie (2011) cautions that verbal corrections can interrupt the flow of ideas and cause anxiety, thereby reducing fluency. Therefore, direct oral corrective feedback is specifically defined as the teacher immediately and overtly supplying the correct form the moment an error occurs, without waiting for learner self-correction. This distinguishes it from implicit types such as recasts or elicitation, which rely on learner self-repair. This anxiety may lead students to speak very cautiously, ultimately reducing their fluency. Furthermore, Alzubi et al. (2022) explains that oral feedback can be explicit, where the teacher directly states the error and provides a grammatical explanation or overt correction. In addition to explicit correction, direct oral corrective feedback offers an immediate correction of vocabulary and pronunciation during speaking activities, supporting more accurate language use in subsequent practice.

Speaking Vocabulary

Vocabulary means the appropriate diction which is used in communication. It is the next important aspect of speaking skill, without vocabulary cannot be conveyed at all but grammar a little bit can be conveyed. The speakers are supposed to mastery many kinds of vocabulary Conversely, students who possess richer vocabulary knowledge demonstrate greater confidence and are better able to maintain conversations, respond appropriately, and convey messages fluently. Waring and Takaki (2003) conducted one of the best-controlled studies on extensive reading and found that small amounts of vocabulary learning occurred incidentally through meaning-focused reading. Their study revealed that although the vocabulary gains were relatively small, learning happened at different levels of strength, including form recognition and meaning understanding. This finding aligns with recent research suggesting that repeated exposure to vocabulary in meaningful, multimodal contexts enhances retention and productive use (Reynolds & Teng, 2021). Ultimately, this gradual vocabulary growth contributes directly to improved speaking ability, as productive vocabulary knowledge enables learners to access words more automatically during real-time communication (Zhang & Zhang, 2022).

Previous Related Studies

Several studies on oral corrective feedback in speaking classes have reported similar positive perceptions from students. Faisal (2024) found that students perceive oral corrective feedback as highly beneficial for recognizing errors in pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. Apriani (2020) revealed that teachers used five types of oral feedback in the classroom, with praise being the most dominant type used to motivate students and build their confidence. Muslem (2021) similarly showed that students hold positive perceptions of oral corrective feedback

and consider it an essential component of learning to speak. All studies agree that oral corrective feedback helps students identify their mistakes, improve specific language aspects, and prevent the recurrence of the same errors. However, differences appear in focus and approach, with some emphasizing direct correction for accuracy while others highlight praise and positive reinforcement to maintain motivation. There is a lack of in-depth research that specifically examines how different types of oral corrective feedback such as explicit correction versus elicitation affect students' psychological responses and long-term speaking development. No research has explored how students interpret their emotional experiences when receiving different feedback types, how teacher feedback timing influences student anxiety levels, and how these factors interact to shape speaking confidence.

However, the difference between this study and previous research is that there has been no specific research examining the comparative effectiveness of positive feedback versus explicit correction in a single experimental design, which would allow direct measurement of their relative benefits. Previous studies have also not explained how feedback delivered in different ways can either reduce or increase psychological burdens such as embarrassment and fear of making mistakes. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by analyzing how different types of oral corrective feedback can boost self-confidence and speaking skills, particularly among English learners.

METHOD

Design and Samples

This study used a qualitative descriptive design. The use of this approach is suitable for exploring students' responses toward direct oral teacher feedback in speaking at junior high school. According to Creswell (2015), the characteristic of qualitative research is analyzing the data for description and themes using text analysis and interpreting the larger meaning of the findings. This method is often referred to as an explanatory method because research data refers to the interpretation of data found in the field. Data collection is conducted through in-depth interviews with students.

A qualitative descriptive approach allows the researcher to investigate students' responses toward direct oral corrective feedback in a natural classroom setting. According to Sugiyono (2013), the qualitative descriptive method is a research method based on the philosophy of post-positivism used to examine the condition of natural objects where the researcher is the key instrument. Data collection techniques are carried out through data collection, qualitative data analysis, and the results emphasize meaning rather than generalization. According to Furidha (2023), the descriptive research method aims to provide a systematic description of the data, properties, and relationships of the phenomena to be studied. The participants in this research are grade VII students at a public junior high school in Karawang, totaling 4 students. They were specifically selected because this study employs

purposive sampling, participants are selected based on their direct oral corrective feedback on spoken vocabulary, and receiving sample recommendations suggested by the English teacher. This sampling approach ensures that the data collected are relevant and capable of answering both research questions comprehensively.

Instrument and Procedure

In this research, the researcher used an interview guide and documentation as research instruments to collect the data. The researcher used an interview guide for the participants. In this study, data were collected through interviews. The interviews were conducted to explore students' responses to the teacher's direct oral corrective feedback in speaking activities. Through these interviews, the researcher identified students' responses and the reasons behind them. Each interview lasts about 20 to 30 minutes. All interviews are conducted in Indonesian to make it easier for students to follow along in their mother tongue. All relevant information was gathered and documented for analysis. Documentation was carried out to take evidence in the form of photographs taken during the interviews and audio recordings of the participants' responses. According Braun and Clarke (2022), Throughout the data collection, the researcher captured several photographs during each interview session and recorded the whole conversation. From this documentation, the researcher was able to obtain concrete data concerning the students' answers and the reasons they expressed.

The procedure adapted from Creswell (2015), beginning with identifying classroom phenomena related to Indonesian junior high school students' responses and reasons toward learning English. This was followed by a literature review to underscore the significance and purpose of the study, which then guided the specification of a focused research objective and scope. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews to gain flexible yet informative insights into students' opinions, enabling well-grounded conclusions. The collected data were then analyzed through three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions to interpret and examine the findings comprehensively. Finally, this study was reported and evaluated, presenting the results as new findings or an extension of previous research.

Data Analysis

In this study, the researcher analyzed the data using the three-step model proposed by Miles (2014), which consists of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction refers to the process of simplifying, summarizing, selecting the essential information, classifying, and focusing on data that share similar themes and patterns. the researcher coded the transcripts, producing initial codes such as "happy to be corrected," "embarrassed," "desire to improve," and "encouragement," which were then grouped into four main categories: positive responses, negative responses, constructive reasons, and motivational reasons. Following this, the data were presented in narrative form with relevant interview excerpts to illustrate each category. Finally, the third stage is conclusion drawing, where qualitative research

seeks to present new findings as the ultimate outcome of the study. These new discoveries may take the form of descriptions or depictions of previously unclear phenomena, thereby clarifying the object of the research, including interactive relationships between symptoms.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In this section, the researcher explains the results and discussion of the research, which were conducted with four junior high school students as participants.

Positive Responses

Direct oral corrective feedback has been shown to make learning to speak easier for students. With direct feedback, students feel they better understand where they went wrong, particularly in terms of vocabulary. Some students noted that this approach helps improve their understanding of proper vocabulary usage and pronunciation errors in English speaking activities. Through this approach, students not only realize they have made a mistake but also immediately receive the correct pronunciation, making the learning process more effective.

One student stated, "I think it's good because it helps me know what mistakes I make in English, so I can learn from them and understand better" (P1). Another added, "In my opinion, it’s useful and helpful because it helps me with my English" (P2). Other participant expressed similar positive sentiments, stating that the feedback is beneficial and helps them correct their mistakes (P3, P4). Based on the quotes above, it can be concluded that students find oral correction feedback from the teacher helpful in understanding vocabulary. This approach is considered effective because it makes them aware of their mistakes, so they can learn and improve. Students also felt comfortable when teachers corrected the vocabulary they used while speaking English.

As one participant said, "It’s comfortable when the teacher speaks directly to correct mistakes" (P3). Another noted, "Because it makes me feel more confident, and the teacher’s corrections help me understand the correct way to use English" (P4). Students expressed a strong preference for direct oral corrective feedback. One student stated, "Yes, I really like being corrected because it helps me understand my mistakes when speaking" (P1). Others agreed, stating that they like being corrected because it helps fix their mistakes and allows them to ask questions immediately if there is a wrong word (P2, P3, P4).

Negative Responses

In addition to the positive responses, however, there were also some negative responses from students. Some participants mentioned that they encountered challenges or barriers when receiving direct correction during speaking activities. One student, for instance, stated that he faced difficulty because he was not

accustomed to using English, as he was more used to speaking Indonesian in his daily life.

One participant shared, "I feel a little embarrassed when I make pronunciation mistakes, but it's fine because I can learn from them and fix them" (P1). Another stated, "Usually, it happens in front of the class, and my friends look at me and laugh after the teacher corrects me" (P3). A fourth participant added, "feeling embarrassed when I make a mistake while speaking and my friends laugh at me" (P4). Based on the quotes, it can be concluded that some students felt embarrassed when they made pronunciation errors and received direct oral correction from the teacher. This suggests that limited exposure to English can affect students' readiness to receive direct oral feedback. Instead of seeing corrections as helpful, some students become too shy to speak for fear of being laughed at by their classmates.

Constructive Reasons

There were also some constructive reasons from students regarding direct oral corrective feedback. In particular, they found it helpful in building their vocabulary when the teacher corrected the words they used while speaking English. This approach was very helpful because it provided immediate clarification, allowing them to understand their mistakes right away and learn the correct forms from the teacher. One student stated, "Yes, it really helps me learn, improve my understanding, and expand my vocabulary" (P1). Another added, "Yes, it helps, because the teacher's corrections help me understand better and become more fluent" (P3). A fourth participant noted, "Yes, because it helps me improve my English fluency" (P4). Based on the quotes above, it can be concluded that direct oral correction not only aids vocabulary acquisition but also plays a crucial role in building students' confidence and accuracy in speaking.

Motivational Reasons

There were also some motivational reasons from students regarding direct oral corrective feedback. Some participants stated that one motivating reason for them was the desire to become more fluent in speaking English. This became a strong driving force that encouraged them to be more open to receiving corrections from the teacher, as they viewed feedback as a valuable tool for self-improvement. One participant shared, "Because I want to be able to speak English fluently like the characters in movies" (P1). Another stated, "I read more and study it in greater depth so that I can be more confident in speaking English" (P2). A third added, "My motivation is to study harder so that I can become better at speaking English and learn more vocabulary" (P3). The fourth participant concluded, "So that I can understand better and correct my mistakes" (P4). Based on the quotes above, it can be concluded that the desire to achieve greater fluency motivates students to actively participate in English speaking activities, as they understand that every correction brings them one step closer to their goal of communicating more naturally and confidently in English.

The study found that direct oral corrective feedback makes speaking learning beneficial and helpful. Students find it easier to absorb learning since it helps them understand the use of vocabulary in context. Most participants stated that the teacher's corrections helped them better understand their mistakes in speaking English, enabling them to relearn and understand the proper use of vocabulary. These findings are in line with Ellis (2009), who stated that oral corrective feedback serves to correct and identify students' errors, as well as to provide positive reinforcement so that learning outcomes are long-lasting. Similarly, according to Annie (2011), oral corrective feedback is the teacher's verbal response to students' speaking errors, which often focuses on vocabulary and language patterns. During the learning process, some students demonstrated active engagement, such as rewriting vocabulary words, memorizing them, and reusing them in conversation. This indicates that direct oral corrective feedback not only helps students recognize errors immediately but also encourages them to take concrete steps to correct and reinforce their understanding of vocabulary.

This approach can create a supportive and comfortable learning environment for students when receiving corrections from the teacher. Students explained that they felt comfortable when the teacher corrected the vocabulary they used because the corrections were given slowly and directly, making them more knowledgeable and not feeling pressured. According to Van der Kleij and Lipnevich (2021), feedback perception is defined as how students comprehend, perceive, and value feedback messages, which covers the cognitive and affective experiences that students deal with while giving and receiving feedback. These findings also align with AlGhafri et al. (2023), who reported that English students in Oman had positive attitudes toward oral corrective feedback, especially when delivered in a supportive manner. In this study, students became more confident after receiving direct oral corrective feedback because they felt helped in understanding the correct pronunciation and no longer hesitated to speak. However, the findings also revealed that not all students responded in the same way; some students felt embarrassed when their mistakes were corrected in front of their peers, especially if followed by laughter from classmates. Therefore, although direct oral corrective feedback is effective in improving students' vocabulary comprehension and self-confidence, teachers need to consider more sensitive delivery methods and the social context in the classroom so that corrections do not negatively impact students' emotional engagement.

This study also found that direct oral corrective feedback positively influenced students' vocabulary acquisition in speaking English. Some participants admitted that they initially felt nervous and afraid of making mistakes when speaking in front of the class, but after receiving direct corrections from the teacher, they felt more supported and began to understand the vocabulary better. This finding supports Clay and Breslow (2007), who explain that teachers must anticipate conditions such as difficult and boring material to ensure that learning continues to proceed well, and that students will respond positively when they encounter material that matches their abilities. Similarly, Waring and Takaki (2003) state that repeated exposure to vocabulary in meaningful contexts can support vocabulary development, which in

turn contributes to students' speaking ability. In this study, students felt more comfortable when corrections were provided immediately because they could quickly identify their mistakes and learn from the teacher without having to wait too long, making the learning process feel more effective and less frustrating.

Furthermore, some students faced emotional challenges when receiving direct oral corrective feedback, particularly regarding feelings of embarrassment. Some students reported feeling embarrassed when they made pronunciation errors and were corrected in front of their peers. This emotional response sometimes made them hesitant to speak again. These findings support Sharma (2025), who explains that students respond to teacher feedback in different ways depending on their individual characteristics and learning environment. Similarly, Annie (2011) states that students who are corrected through interruptions in the middle of their speech may experience discomfort. In this study, students who felt embarrassed tried to overcome this barrier by attempting to use the correct pronunciation provided by the teacher.

Another important point concerns students' understanding of the meaning of direct corrective feedback from the teacher. Students view the teacher's corrections as a form of assistance that is highly beneficial for deepening their understanding of vocabulary and correct pronunciation, so they do not feel bothered or offended when corrected directly. This finding is consistent with Van der Kleij and Lipnevich (2021), who argue that the perception of feedback encompasses how students cognitively and affectively understand, evaluate, and value feedback messages. Some students also stated that the reasons provided could motivate them to study with greater enthusiasm, become more fluent, and feel more confident when speaking English. Therefore, when students perceive direct oral corrective feedback as a positive tool for developing their speaking skills, their intrinsic motivation grows stronger, which ultimately encourages active engagement in the English language learning process in the classroom.

Overall, the findings of this study indicate that direct oral corrective feedback has a positive impact on students' vocabulary understanding and speaking confidence, though it also presents emotional challenges for some learners. The approach helps students recognize and correct their mistakes immediately, which supports more accurate and fluent speaking. However, several students experienced embarrassment and anxiety when corrected in front of their peers, which occasionally reduced their willingness to speak. Therefore, students' responses are shaped by individual characteristics, the learning environment, and the teacher's delivery style, emphasizing the need for a balanced and emotionally sensitive approach to oral correction

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion, it can be concluded that direct oral corrective feedback plays a significant role in improving junior high school students' vocabulary in speaking skills, while also influencing their emotional and

motivational responses in both positive and negative ways. The approach helped students recognize and correct their vocabulary mistakes immediately, which supported more accurate and fluent speaking. Most students felt more confident and comfortable when receiving direct correction, as long as the feedback was delivered slowly and respectfully. However, some students experienced emotional barriers such as shyness and fear of being laughed at by peers, suggesting that teachers should balance immediate correction with emotional sensitivity and consider the classroom's social context. This study has several limitations, including a small sample of only four students from a public junior high school in Karawang, as well as a reliance solely on interview data without classroom observations or other supplementary methods. Therefore, future research is recommended to involve a larger and more diverse sample, include multiple school settings, and employ additional data collection techniques such as classroom observations or video recordings to provide a more comprehensive understanding of students' responses to direct oral corrective feedback.

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