English Language Teaching Educational Journal
Vol. 5, No. 1, 2022, pp. 32-47

ISSN 2621-6485

EFL Learners' Preference for Corrective Feedback Strategies in Relation to Their Self-Perceived Levels of Proficiency

Kanokpan Wiboolyasarin [a,1], Ruedee Kamonsawad [b,2], Nattawut Jinowat [c,3]
Watcharapol Wiboolyasarin [d,4,*]

[a] Faculty of Management Science, Chandrakasem Rajabhat Univeristy, 39/1 Ratchadaphisek Road, Bangkok 10900, Thailand
[b] Faculty of Humanities and Social Science, Bansomdejchaopraya Rajabhat University, 1061 Itsaraphap Road, Thonburi, Bangkok 10600, Thailand
[c] Demonstration School of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, 1 U-Thong Nok Road, Dusit, Bangkok 10300, Thailand
[d] Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia, Mahidol University, 999 Phuttamonthon 4 Road, Salaya, Nakhon Pathom 73170, Thailand

[1] kanokpan.w@chandra.ac.th; [2] ruedee.ka@bsru.ac.th; [3] nattawut.ji@ssru.ac.th; [4] watcharapol.wib@mahidol.ac.th*
* corresponding author

ARTICLE INFO

Article history
Received 7 July 2021
Revised 15 March 2022
Accepted 27 April 2022

Keywords
Corrective feedback
English proficiency
Error correction
Preference
Rajabhat student

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this work was to address the overarching questions of how EFL Thai learners preferred corrective feedback strategies and whether there were any significant differences in preferences across learners' language ability levels. The quantitative study collected 418 Thai EFL learners' preferences for corrective feedback via a closed-ended Likert scale questionnaire. The survey showed that learners desired to edit when their speech or writing contained errors, particularly when the wrong utterance was responded to with a metalinguistic comment regarding the error's nature. Statistical analysis found significant differences in students' preferences for metalinguistic clues and public feedback between intermediate and elementary levels. It appeared that beginner-level learners would almost certainly experience embarrassment if they were corrected in front of their peers. Conversely, self-correction, which was necessary once the student's erroneous remark was explained in terms of grammar usage, probably made advanced students uncomfortable. While teachers should examine their EFL students' corrective feedback preferences, this study found that their proficiency levels were slightly relevant.

How to Cite: Wiboolyasarin, K., Kamonsawad, R., Jinowat, N., Wiboolyasarin, W., (2022). EFL Learners' Preference for Corrective Feedback Strategies in Relation to Their Self-Perceived Levels of Proficiency. *English Language Teaching Educational Journal, 5*(1), 32-47.

1. Introduction

The salience of corrective feedback in second language acquisition has been recognised over the past two decades. As its name implies, it relates to approaches used by teachers and peers to help learners identify their incorrect production in the target language. Teachers apply various instructional strategies the foreign language classroom, depending on the ability level, the time period, the context, the type of error, and other factors, to assist L2 learners in acquiring language competency. However, despite the varied techniques for providing corrective feedback, some might be impractical or fail to meet the students' expectations (Aliakbari & Raeesi, 2014). Teachers then must address ESL students' preferences for corrective feedback in order to motivate them to succeed in language learning (Lee,

2016). Numerous studies have discovered that students prefer a variety of corrective feedback procedures in the L2 classroom (Amador, 2008; Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010; Irwin, 2017; Li & Vuono, 2019; Lee 2013; Qutob & Madini, 2020; Yang, 2016). More importantly, past research has established that learners' proficiency levels are substantial determinants of their preferences (e.g., Orts & Salazar, 2016; Yang, 2016). As mentioned previously, while corrective feedback is an integral part of an L2 class, research on this phenomenon appears to have focused primarily on EFL/ESL students in Europe (Austen & Malone, 2018; Károly, 2015; Şakiroğlu, 2020), or Asia, more specifically in the dominant countries (Chung, 2015; Elwood & Bode, 2014; Moslemi & Dastgoshadeh, 2017; Zhan, 2016).

Although published studies on learner preferences for oral or written correction feedback are extensive, there is insufficiency in a study about varied proficiency levels of students towards preferences for correct feedback, notably in Thailand. The current study is an attempt in this regard. The specific objectives of this large-scale study were to ascertain Thai EFL learners' preferences for oral and written corrective feedback and to compare each group based on self-reported proficiency levels. The rationale for analysing undergraduate students at Rajabhat Universities (established initially as teachers colleges) was to identify gaps in their preferences and provide these prospective findings to policymakers for future revisions to EFL teacher training.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Corrective Feedback Type

Over the last twenty years, L2 scholars and practitioners have paid great attention to the subject of corrective feedback. A seminal work (Lyster & Ranta, 1997) identified six distinct oral corrective feedback strategies: recast, elicitation, clarification request, metalinguistic feedback, explicit correction, and repetition (Table 1). Multiple subsequent research has employed six different types of feedback, as defined by Lyster and Ranta's taxonomy of corrective feedback. For instance, Lee (2013) examined previous studies' categories of teacher corrective feedback and evaluated learner absorption and repair using this typology. In a Chinese as a second language classroom, Yang (2016) explored students' preferences for six types of oral corrective feedback on four different characteristics of errors. It also confirms comparable data found in other published studies (Bao, 2019; Wiboolyasarin et al., 2020).

Table 1. Oral Corrective Feedback Type (Lyster & Ranta, 1997)

Dimension	Type	Definition
Recasts	Recast	The teacher modifies the entirety or a portion of a student's vocal sound in an error-free manner.
Negotiation of form	Elicitation	The teachers elicit the correct version directly from the learner.
	Clarification request	The student's utterance is imprecise and should be repeated or reformulated. It may include a teacher's repetition of the error or phase such as Pardon.
	Metalinguistic comment	The teacher provides grammatical justifications for the learner's incorrect speech without providing the proper version, which is necessary for the learner to self-edit.
	Repetition	The teacher's repetition is in a high intonation to emphasise the fault.
Explicit correction	Explicit correction	The teacher either provides the right version or indicates that the learner's pronunciation was incorrect.

In terms of feedback in written production, Ellis's (2009) taxonomy of written corrective feedback types has been widely employed in much research (see Kılıçkaya, 2019; Shintani & Ellis, 2013, 2015; Suzuki et al., 2019). Ellis's concepts suggest a taxonomy for the two dimensions of written corrective feedback: teacher provision and student responses. The typology of written corrective feedback is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Written Corrective Feedback Type (Ellis, 2009)

Dimension	Type	Definition
Teacher's provision	Direct feedback	The teacher provides the correct version to the learner.
	Indirect feedback	The teacher identifies the existence of an error but does not rectify it.
	Metalinguistic feedback	The teacher provides a metalinguistic clue as to the error's nature.
	Electronic feedback	The teacher highlights an error and provides a link to a concordance file containing examples of proper usage.
	Feedback focus	This refers to whether the teacher makes an attempt to correct the majority of the learners' errors or focuses on a few specific types of faults.
	Reformulation	The teacher enhances the learners' entire content in order to create as much native-like written language as possible while maintaining the integrity of the original text.
Students' responses	Revision required	The student is tasked with correcting typos or rewriting the content.
	No revision required	The learner is not required to revise the text for errors or rewrite it.

2.2. Learner's Preferred Corrective Feedback Type

With a profusion of studies examining the impacts of corrective feedback, researchers and practitioners have focused on learner preference. Empirical investigations of learners' preferences have revealed that preferences for corrective feedback vary across EFL/ESL contexts. In terms of oral corrective feedback, a vast number of studies highlight the importance of oral corrective feedback strategies for grammatical or general errors (e.g., Yang, 2016). Katayama's (2007) findings showed that the most preferred correction strategy was elicitation or providing a clue to enable learners to become aware of their errors and self-correct. It is crucial to understand that this indirect correction is intended to point out that the students have made errors without humiliating them. Likewise, East Asian learners also demonstrated a high level of preference for elicitation, explicit correction, and metalinguistic feedback (Wiboolyasarin et al., 2020). These techniques alleviated the cognitive load associated with this self-correcting learner errors and shifted focus to some grammatical metalanguage. It is consistent with Katayama's (2006) results, indicating that the learners preferred feedback in which the teacher described why the student's statement was inappropriate.

Regarding peer correction, over half of the students thought that it was beneficial. Earlier research (e.g., Bruton & Samuda, 1980) found that ESL learners who corrected one another in group assignments believed that peer correction benefited them in the L2 class. One could argue that there is a definite preference for assigning responsibility for error correction to learners. Although there are virtually few studies on the preferred venue for offering corrective feedback, either private or public, Wiboolyasarin et al.'s (2020) work may be helpful in this area. The preferences of L2 learners of Thai for public and private correction were investigated, it was discovered that both were beneficial. It is worth noting, however, that students were more receptive to personal revision than to public correction.

The current study aimed to examining eight distinct kinds of oral corrective feedback: ignoring, repetition, explicit correction, elicitation, peer correction, metalinguistic comments, public feedback, and private feedback, as illustrated in Table 3.

Previous research has been conducted to ascertain the preferences of L2 students for written corrective feedback techniques. Sanu (2016) found that Indonesian students preferred receiving the correct version to the incorrect form. It collaborates with Black and Nanni's (2016) study, in which EFL students desired direct feedback with metalinguistic remarks since accuracy was the primary concern. It can be said that grammar errors directly affect students' grades. Many undergraduate students also prefer to comprehend the nature of their errors immediately. According to another survey (Diab, 2015), the majority of students favoured metalinguistic correction, which provided a clue to the origin and type of the error and encouraged learners to self-correct once the location of such an error was detected (Li & Vuono, 2019).

Table 3. Oral Corrective Feedback Selected to Conduct the Study

Type	Definition
Ignoring	The teacher disregards the error that a student has made intentionally. S: I learning English. T: (silence)
Repetition	The teacher repeats the student's incorrect utterance with a doubting voice. S: One of my hobbies are bird watching. T: are? (with a high intonation)
Explicit correction	The teacher states clearly that the error happened while the student was speaking. The correct version is also given. S: I am interesting at history. T: No, you should say, 'I am interested in history.'
Elicitation	The teacher elicits an accurate model from the student by asking questions. S: Animal experimentation is a highly emotion issue. T: How do we say 'emotion' as an adjective?
Peer correction	The teacher asks the students to correct each other. S1: I am not do anything. T: Can you help me correct Mike's error, Emmie? S2: I am doing nothing.
Metalinguistics feedback	The teacher explains grammatical usages or comments on the student's incorrect utterances without explicitly providing the correct form. S: Last night I go to the movie. T: When something happened or existed before the present time, typically, a verb should refer to the past tense.
Public feedback	The teacher provides feedback to the student in front of others in public (e.g., in the classroom).
Private feedback	The teacher provides feedback to the student one-on-one or in private (e.g., in the teacher's room).

Moreover, Chen et al. (2016) found that learners preferred feedback that 1) locates the error, 2) explains the error's nature, and 3) provides the proper version. This finding is consistent with Amrhein and Nassaji's (2010) observation that ESL students viewed error correction with a comment as a tool for learning. Nearly half (44.4%) of them stated that the comments aided in understanding why the error occurred and how to correct it. Also, Lee's (2008) students requested more written comments because reading them was the most desired activity for both the skilled and incompetent groups. When interviewing nine L2 students in response to their teachers' feedback, learners reacted positively to feedback. They expressed the notion that, for instance, *'If the teacher gives you many feedbacks, you will feel very touched, that they care about you as a student. I read it, make corrections, and remember it. It is a pleasure for me'* (Hyland, 2013, p. 186). Along with their justifications for error types, most participants (71.4%) thought that grammar, spelling, and vocabulary were more critical than organisation and ideas. Similarly, Al Hajiri and Al-Mahrooqi (2013) discovered that providing clear, positive and grammar-focused comments was beneficial and understood for EFL undergraduate learners studying EFL. This conclusion differs slightly from another investigation (Elwood & Bode, 2014), reporting that Japanese EFL students viewed WCF favourably; nonetheless, they preferred details about their organisational mistakes.

Concerning the dose of corrective feedback, more than four-fifths (83%) of L2 students preferred to rectify have all errors (Lee, 2008). Similarly, Amrhein and Nassaji (2010) asserted that the majority of ESL students (94%) desired that their instructors corrected all errors. Furthermore, when students were asked to select between teacher and non-teacher feedback, they indicated that while they appreciated teacher input the most, they also valued peer feedback (Zhang, 1995). Likewise, Sanu (2016) explored students' preferences for teacher-provided corrective feedback in business lesson writing and the reasons for their preferences. It showed that L2 students chose to consult their peers even when they received both unsatisfactory and satisfactory corrective feedback.

Students' opinions regarding the red pen appeared to be unconcerned about the colour of the feedback writing. As Elwood and Bode (2014) reported, learners preferred red and blue markings approximately equally. It is consistent with Wiboolyasarin et al.'s (2020) study, in which L2 students preferred receiving feedback in red pen. Nonetheless, it is critical to note that in many cases (Jones,

2014), students did not understand what an instructor's red-penned comments meant in terms of supportive feedback. Therefore, when evaluating learners' preferences for written corrective feedback, it is vital to assess their preferences for the following eight moves: ignoring, indirect feedback, error code, no updated version required, revised version required, all error rectification, peer correction, and red pen marking, as presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Written Corrective Feedback Selected to Conduct the Study

Type	Definition
Ignoring	The teacher indicates no errors and provides no correct version.
Indirect feedback	The teacher identifies the error by circling, underlining, crossing, or highlighting it without providing an accurate model.
Error code	The teacher brief comments on the error, such as 'ww' stood for a wrong word or 'sp' for spelling.
No revised version required	The teacher does not ask students to revise their written work.
Revised version required	The teacher asks students to fix their written work.
All error correction	The teacher corrects all errors found in a piece of written work.
Peer correction	The teacher tells students to add a written comment to their peer's written work.
Marking in red pen	The teacher indicates the error and provides the correct form by drawing in a red pen.

2.3 Learners' Preferences and Proficiency Level

A myriad of researchers has investigated the relationship between learners' preferences and their characteristics, such as cultural background (Yang, 2016), attitudes (Hamouda, 2011; Parkes & Fletcher, 2017; Wanchid, 2015), cognitive/learning styles (Moslemi & Dastgoshadeh, 2017; Tasdemir & Yalcin Arslan, 2018), needs (Nurie, 2018), academic performance (Morris & Chikwa, 2016), and educational activities (Alnasser & Alyousef, 2015; Jolley, 2019; Károly, 2015). In light of the evidence, Chen et al. (2016) discovered that learners' preferences were not significantly related to their English ability levels. Students likely demonstrated a distaste for grammar instruction and an obsession with precision regardless of their grades. Additionally, participants favoured direct correction over indirect correction and showed a strong preference for increased self-correction activity throughout the revision stage.

Nemati et al. (2017) also reported that students at all proficiency levels preferred direct unfocused feedback. The lecturer corrected any errors discovered in the students' text by providing the right form. Surprisingly, while the majority of learners opposed metalinguistics comments in their native language, half (50%) of students across all levels anticipated their lecturer to provide such clarifications in English. Roy (2019) found that the student writers anticipated explicit directive comments from their lecturers, especially those expressing confidence in their abilities preferred audio input to written comments. Another empirical study (Orts & Salazar, 2016) identified that learners at the lowest competence level preferred to be informed of the correct answers, but more than half (60%) of higher-level pupils would like to fix their own errors. However, most students, particularly B2 students, paid attention to their teacher's constructive comments. Chen et al.'s (2016) research findings corroborated this conclusion, as their proficient learners preferred detailed feedback to general error correction.

On the contrary, according to Li and He (2017), performance disparities substantially affected the preference for indirect written corrective feedback. Also, Wanchid (2015) observed that students' opinions towards various sorts of feedback differed significantly depending on their personality and preferences. Therefore, it can be inferred that there might be no specific feedback that any proficiency groups favoured.

The issue to probe further is oral corrective feedback. Yang (2016) indicated that metalinguistic comments were seen positively by students at all levels, whereas intermediate students preferred clarification questions. Furthermore, data revealed that EFL learners of varying proficiency levels demonstrated a strong proclivity for having a variety of preferences. Kaivanpanah et al. (2015) assessed EFL language learners' attitudes towards various oral corrective feedback strategies and their relationship to their English ability. The results showed that Iranian primary pupils studying English as a foreign language desired metalinguistic information. However, proficient learners reported a

distinct preference for self-correcting elicitation. In a similar context, Saudi EFL students at the advanced level favoured corrective feedback more than low-proficient students (Alhaysony, 2016).

Interestingly, L2 Grade 6 pupils from Quebec and Ontario who spoke English at the elementary to low intermediate levels preferred explicit feedback during ESL-FSL tandem chat exchanges (Giguère & Parks, 2018). These findings contradict Morris's (2005) claim, which advocated for the provision of implicit negative feedback (e.g., recasts and negotiation). A possible explanation is that Morris's students possessed intermediate to advanced proficiency levels. Nonetheless, another study (Bryfonski & Ma, 2019) revealed that explicit corrective feedback was more beneficial for beginners with less competency.

As previously stated, a significant portion of current research on corrective feedback focuses on EFL learners in developed countries, where the learner-centred approach has long been a recurring theme in numerous national education policies. It is critical to emphasise that the adoption of this technique has become a prominent issue in Thailand over the last two decades. As Black and Nanni (2016) argue, Thailand's educational system has been in a perpetual state of reform, advocating for a shift away from a teacher-centred approach toward one that is learner-centred. A vast number of Thai students have been taught using traditional methods that emphasise memory and passive learning and are centred on the teacher (Fry & Bi, 2013). It can be said that students who have passively acquired knowledge over an extended period of time may prefer for their teachers to spoon-feed them their corrections (Black & Nanni, 2016); in other words, they may differ from other nationality groups in actively participating in their education. Therefore, it needed us to consider a large number of Thai EFL students with varying degrees of English language proficiency in terms of their preferred corrective feedback techniques in order to address the following research questions:

RQ1. What types of oral and written corrective feedback strategies do Thai EFL learners prefer?

RQ2. Does the proficiency level of Thai EFL students affect their preferences for oral and written corrective feedback strategies?

3. Method

3.1. Participants and Demongraphics

Previous studies (e.g., Lee, 2013; Rassaei, 2015; Yang, 2016) have advised performing a large-scale study to ascertain the persuasive techniques preferred by EFL learners in order to provide insight into how instructors in general, and Thai lecturers in particular, might be more productive in their EFL teaching. G*Power 3.1 was used to estimate the sample size for a one-way ANOVA with a probability of alpha errors at 0.05 and a power of 0.90. A sample of 360 would be necessary for small effect size (d = 0.20). Due to the survey's accessibility to participants, a random sample of 418 EFL students (351 females and 67 males) from twenty Rajabhat universities in Thailand was chosen to complete it. The majority (n = 146) were in their second year of the four-year Bachelor programmes, while some were in their first year (n = 102), third year (n = 92), or fourth year (n = 78). Participants have at least 10-20 years of experience in learning English as a foreign language since kindergarten or first grade, according to Thailand's National Education Act BE 2542 (1999). Respondents were asked to identify themselves using the Common European Framework of References for Languages' descriptors; they assigned various English skill levels ranging from A1 to B2. Nearly half (42.1%) of participants (n = 176) claimed proficiency at the A2 level, while the others were assessed on the A1-level (n = 134, 32.1%), B1-level (n = 91, 21.8%), or B2-level (n = 17, 4.1%) scales. Among the four distinct proficiency levels, groups A1 and A2 were designated as 'beginning' and 'elementary' levels of proficiency, respectively. The B1 and B2 groups, respectively, represented the 'intermediate' and 'upper intermediate' levels.

As the authors have taught at various Rajabhat universities, we asked our EFL undergraduates to answer an online questionnaire utilising SurveyPlanet and remaining accessible for a three-month period (July-September 2020). Additionally, acquaintances from other Rajabhat universities were called to urge their students to participate in the internet survey. All respondents participated voluntarily and anonymously, and the surveys were kept strictly confidential.

3.2. Instrument

The survey began with a demographic section from which the aforementioned information was extracted. Following that, in order to uncover students' CF preferences, the questionnaire was divided into two sections. Part 1 featured eight statements in which participants stated their views on oral corrective feedback. The second section included eight items that assessed attitudes towards written corrective feedback. All questions were devised by the authors to accomplish the study's objective of enquiring about students' preferences for corrective feedback in the English class. The questionnaire was issued using a 6-point Likert scale ranging from *'worst'* – 1, *'very bad'* – 2, *'bad'* – 3, *'good'* – 4, *'very good'* – 5, *'best'* – 6 and was written in Thai to guarantee that each item was understood. Furthermore, reliability and validity were verified prior to the implementation.

Content validity was determined using a sample collection of items before the pilot test. The content validity index (CVI) was developed to evaluate the degree of agreement between a purposively sampled committee of five content specialists in the field. The experts were deliberately selected based on academic criteria, including the following: (a) a PhD in English or a related field of study, (b) ten or more years of experience in English teaching, and (c) publication of at least three relevant research articles within the last five years. To calculate the I-CVI, five experts were asked to independently assess the relevance of each item to the objectives using a 4-point rating scale: (1) not relevant, (2) somewhat relevant, (3) quite relevant, and (4) very relevant (Waltz et al., 2010, p. 165). If raters assigned a 3 or 4 to any item, an X would mark the spot. The results indicated that item CVI equaled 0.96, representing a satisfactory level of content validity. A few amendments were made to the items in response to their suggestions.

Cronbach's alpha coefficient measures internal consistency reliability. A pilot study with 40 potential volunteers was conducted. The result of examining a 16-item scale was 0.761, which was considered 'reliable' (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 774). Calculating for each item on the scale, the values ranged between 0.727 and 0.777, showing that internal consistency would improve if the following items were omitted. However, the item-total correlations for items 1, 3, and 8, which were substantially lower than all the other correlations, were redefined.

As previously indicated, the internet-based questionnaire was utterly anonymous since it did not require the participant's name. The consent statement was located on a separate introductory web page containing information about the study's purposes and a privacy statement. Respondents would not be able to access the survey questions until they clicked the 'Begin' button to indicate their acceptance of the voluntary participation. The survey's quantitative data was analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics 22. A one-way ANOVA was used to investigate the effects of learners' proficiency and their preferences for oral and written corrective feedback and indicate statistically significant differences using Bonferroni correction at an overall level of significance of 0.05.

4. Findings

4.1. Research Question 1: What Types of Oral and Written Corrective Feedback Strategies Do Thai EFL Learners Prefer?

Table 5 shows the average scores of learners' self-reported preferences for corrective feedback. Participants were asked to rate on a 6-point Likert scale, with 1 being the worst and 6 being the best. Items with mean scores of less than or equal to 3.50 reported that the majority of respondents were averse to corrective feedback techniques, whilst items with mean scores of more than 3.50 indicated that learners preferred these strategies. As demonstrated, EFL students made similar preferences for both scenarios, scoring somewhat higher for oral corrective feedback (M = 4.115, SD = 0.941) than for written corrective feedback (M = 3.915, SD = 1.011).

As presented in items 1-8, the results showed that metalinguistics feedback (M = 5.31) was the preferred strategy by Rajabhat students. Moreover, most of them agreed that they favoured being directly informed of their faulty utterance and being supplied with an error-free model (M = 5.31). It would also be *'very good'* if any feedback were offered in a private chat (M = 4.57) rather than in a classroom (M = 4.01). In speaking situations, Rajabhat undergraduates preferred to be informed of the error and asked to say the correct version themselves (M = 4.39) and have their statements corrected by other students (M = 4.06). Learners found teachers' lack of attention to any errors to be unpleasant

(*M* = 2.41). Similarly, students did not appreciate hearing their wrong utterance's intonation rise (*M* = 2.63).

Table 5. Mean and Standard Deviation of Each Item in the Learners' Preferences Questionnaire

Item	Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation	Definition
Oral corrective feedback				
1	Ignoring	2.41	.915	very bad
2	Repetition	2.63	1.038	very bad
3	Explicit correction	5.31	.825	best
4	Elicitation	4.39	1.054	very good
5	Peer correction	4.06	.865	good
6	Metalinguistic feedback	5.54	.783	best
7	Public feedback	4.01	.931	good
8	Private feedback	4.57	1.123	very good
	Average	4.115	.941	good
Written corrective feedback				
9	Ignoring	1.95	.901	very bad
10	Indirect feedback	3.62	1.1078	good
11	Error code	3.87	1.130	good
12	No revised version required	3.35	1.009	bad
13	Revised version required	4.53	.960	very good
14	All error correction	3.84	1.175	good
15	Peer correction	3.84	.960	good
16	Marking in red pen	4.36	.846	very good
	Average	3.915	1.011	good

Items 9-16 depicted learners' reactions to the written corrective feedback. Most L2 students requested additional work by stating that they should revise assignments after the teacher corrected them (*M* = 4.53). Using a red pen for corrections appears to be beneficial (*M* = 4.36). Furthermore, they expressed a general preference for correction strategies such as error code (*M* = 3.87), all error correction (*M* = 3.84), and peer correction (*M* = 3.84). It was also *'good'* if students were informed of an error without inserting metalinguistic clues or writing the correct form above or around the linguistic error (*M* = 3.62). On the other hand, it was considered undesirable to overlook learners' faults deliberately (*M* = 1.95). Not surprisingly, EFL students were dissatisfied unless they had an opportunity to revise the assignment when they committed errors (*M* = 3.35).

4.2. Research Question 2: Does the Proficiency Level of Thai EFL Students Affect Their Preferences for Oral and Written Corrective Feedback Strategies?

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to determine whether statistically significant differences in proficiency levels for corrective feedback preferences existed. The 0.05 level of probability was used to test the difference. The test revealed statistically significant differences in their CF preferences for elicitation (F (3, 414) = 2.721, p = .044), metalinguistic feedback (F (3, 414) = 4.989, p = .002), and public feedback (F (3, 414) = 3.287, p = .021).

However, the one-way ANOVA does not reveal the differences between the groups; the Bonferroni correction is used to identify the precise location of the discrepancies. According to Fig. 1, there was no significant difference between the groups on item 4 (elicitation). Nevertheless, there were substantial disparities in metalinguistic hints between B2-level learners and the remaining three groups. Additionally, there was a significant difference in public feedback between B1- and A1-level learners. According to the data, there was no difference between the A1 and A2 groups or between the B1 and B2 cohorts. In conclusion, varying levels of English competence have little bearing on corrective feedback views on the majority of issues.

Table 6. EFL Learners' Proficiency Level on Each CF Preference

Item	Mean score[1]				P-value One-way ANOVA
	A1 (n = 134)	*A2 (n = 176)*	*B1 (n = 91)*	*B2 (n = 17)*	
1	2.40	2.37	2.48	2.59	.666
2	2.57	2.60	2.69	3.06	.286
3	5.20	5.36	5.38	5.29	.284
4	4.25	4.45	4.55	3.94	.044*
5	4.00	4.13	4.08	3.59	.075
6	5.49	5.62	5.58	4.88	.002*
7	3.87	4.01	4.24	3.76	.021*
8	4.63	4.66	4.43	4.00	.063
9	1.94	1.90	1.99	2.29	.355
10	3.66	3.64	3.54	3.59	.867
11	3.87	3.81	3.92	4.12	.669
12	3.40	3.33	3.36	3.00	.477
13	4.43	4.55	4.62	4.59	.525
14	3.76	3.89	3.85	3.94	.784
15	3.84	3.88	3.80	3.71	.872
16	4.33	4.35	4.36	4.65	.542

[1]where 1.00-1.82 = worst; 1.83-2.66 = very bad; 2.67-3.50 = bad; 3.51-4.33 = good; 4.34-5.17 = very good; 5.18-6.00 = best
*$p < .05$

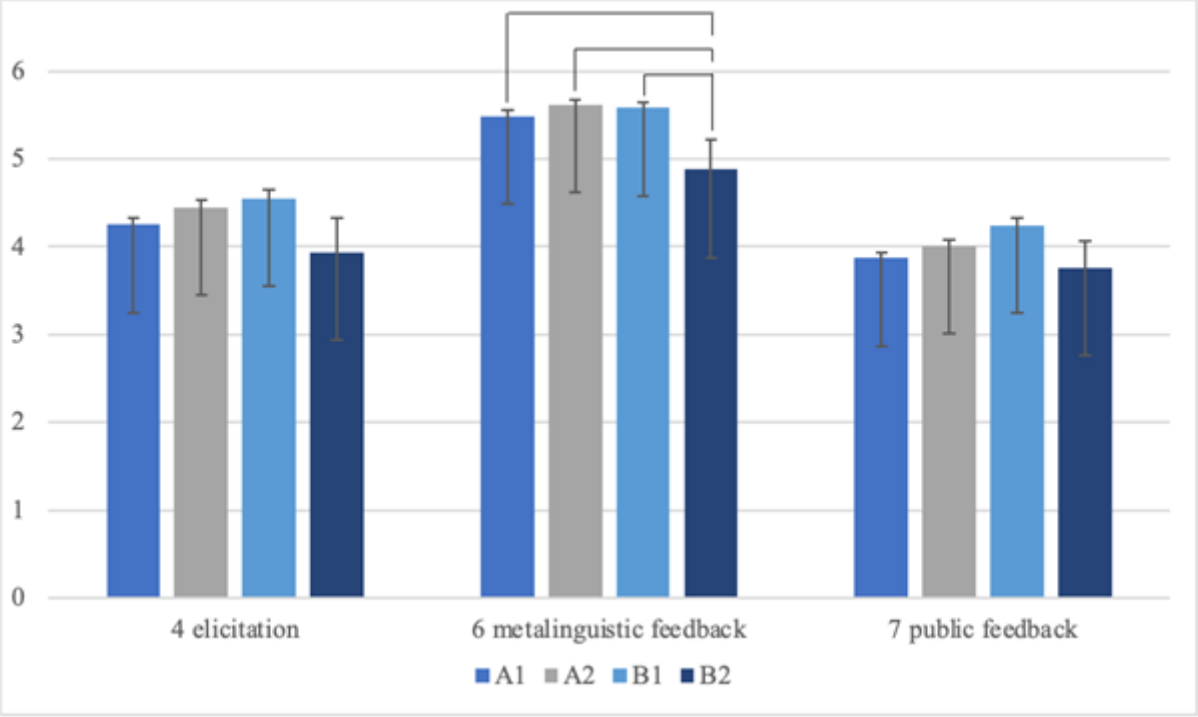

Fig. 1. Means and standard errors for EFL learners' proficiency level on selected CF preferences

5. Discussion

The findings indicated that EFL Rajabhat students, regardless of their proficiency level, were receptive to corrective feedback, as shown by their responses to preferences for oral ($M = 4.115$) and written ($M = 3.915$) scenarios. The results also suggested that metalinguistic feedback was the most preferred approach for correcting their errors, as indicated by their replies to its frequency ($M = 5.54$). As the metalinguistic comment clarifies grammar usage or other linguistic terminology, it has an effect on students' academic progress in general (Kayar & Veyis, 2020). It may aid learners' perceptions by providing them with an explicit rule or grammatical explanation to use in other contexts. There was, however, a significant difference between B2 and non-B2 learners. The highly proficient students

appeared to favour metalinguistic feedback more minor than the other groups. It is feasible that self-correction seems undesirable because B2-level students would be embarrassed to discuss their faults, especially if the incorrect answer is repeated.

Furthermore, explicit error correction was placed in the second position ($M = 5.31$). It was helpful for L2 learners since a straightforward strategy could be made clear to them and was more likely to assist them in self-correcting their errors (Ellis, 2017). According to Amador's (2008) research, EFL college students favoured strategies in which they were explicitly informed about the linguistic challenge. It echoes Yang's (2016) findings, revealing that both metalinguistic feedback and explicit correction have high ratings in learners' favour. As a result, it has become evident that metalinguistic comments and explicit corrections also significantly impact on Thai EFL learners.

The analysis of the learners' questionnaire responses suggested that explicit correction was significant. As explicit correction informed learners directly of an error and the right form (Quinn & Nakata, 2017), B2-level undergraduates preferred this strategy less than other cohorts of students. One probable explanation is that learners' language abilities were assessed and addressed at the upper intermediate level. They are thought to have more tremendous potential for successful language learning than any other. If their mistakes were to be repaired, this inevitably resulted in significant anxiety, demotivation, or timidity among L2 Thai learners. However, this is yet another field of exploration for future research.

In general, it was pertinent to provide oral corrective feedback in public for the benefit of the entire class (Ur, 2012). Rather than discussing their errors publicly ($M = 4.01$), Rajabhat students requested to discuss them privately ($M = 4.57$). Their strong preference for private feedback corroborated Li's (2010) assessment; learners were more engaged with feedback obtained during individual interactions than during classroom interactions. Another interpretation of this finding is that providing feedback in front of other students may increase students' humiliation. This is particularly true for low-proficient students. As Wiboolyasarin et al. (2020) remark, acknowledging the existence of mistakes might undermine learners' confidence and pride, or cause them to lose face if they disclose the mistakes in front of their classmates. While all high proficiency learners favoured public comments, a statistically significant difference between students in the B1 and A1 groups was required to be noticed. Less proficient students preferred receiving personal error corrections to obtaining feedback from their peers in order to avoid being ridiculed or thrust into the spotlight.

With regards to those who correct the mistakes, EFL Thai students did not feel awkward or uncomfortable when corrected by friends. It was highly likely that peer interactions provide a framework for learners to explore freely with language use (Sato, 2017), with less concern about being corrected and increased autonomy (Philp et al., 2014). A quick glance at this suggests that Thai learners believed their peers were qualified to correct their errors. It echoes some resemblance to a discussion of other findings (e.g., Zhang & Rahimi, 2014). Nonetheless, the notion that only the language teacher is capable of providing feedback is controversial. According to Amador's (2008) study, nearly half (47.9%) of EFL learners in Costa Rica implied that peers should not correct them and were, therefore, unreliable sources due to the learners' common language proficiency.

Previous research showed that learners with a high degree of proficiency tended to prefer elicitation (Katayama, 2007; Papangkorn, 2015). By contrast, there was a significant difference in learners' elicitation preferences. In comparison to learners at the fundamental level, B2-group students were the least satisfied with eliciting the correct version. A probable explanation for this is that when teachers pushed students to provide the right form, it was reasonable to presume some erroneous information was present, causing embarrassment to advanced learners who made it. Conversely, most learners in this study viewed repetition as ineffective since it did not supply adequate information to correct the errors. Besides, it was claimed to be the detrimental effect of repeating incorrect forms (Gooch et al., 2016). It is also consistent with Yang's (2016) findings that intermediate-level students do not favour elicitation and repetition for their errors. As Yang points out in reference to Katayama's (2006) explanation, repetition and elicitation via non-verbal cues are highly ambiguous in terms of interpretation and self-correction.

The results found that the students had a range of preferences for the oral corrective feedback strategies discussed previously, ranging from good to best. Many learners believed that their errors should be repaired regardless of the techniques utilised. Not surprisingly, if the teacher frequently chose to dismiss most, if not all, errors, more than half of students evaluated their preferences for such

neglect on a scale of *'bad'* and *'very bad'*. This conclusion confirms prior research findings that no corrective feedback provided was the least favoured method by EFL learners (Zhang & Rahimi, 2014).

Another critical finding was in a writing environment. This study discovered that no feedback was more evident for written correction (M = 1.95) than oral (M = 2.41). This means that teachers should not forgo all forms of error correction. Even though it may be upsetting to students' sensibilities (e.g., Truscott, 1996), the data indicated that Rajabhat EFL learners desired to edit their L2 writing mistakes. Likewise, Amrhein and Nassaji's (2010) study revealed that when learners were asked whether teachers should correct any errors, they wanted the teacher to correct their errors. In light of the evidence, Thai students request further written work for themselves, indicating that they should be assigned to rewrite it (M = 4.53). On the other hand, replies from learners' ratings presented a slightly lower preference score (M = 3.35) in the absence of replication in the updated version. This appears to contradict one of Truscott's arguments, stating that it undermined students' confidence.

Generally, written corrective feedback highlighting numerous errors with red marks tended to frustrate learners, who frequently committed many mistakes (Scrivener, 2005). Conversely, our findings suggested that participants were unconcerned with error correction in red pen (M = 4.36). Other scholars (Elwood & Bode, 2014; Orts & Salazar, 2016) also found that L2 learners reported a clear preference for red-penned corrections in a similar vein.

Concerning the subject of whether teachers emphasise location or type of error or both, the present study revealed that when error code and indirect feedback were compared, error code (M = 3.87) had a slightly higher view of preference than indirect feedback (M = 3.62). This finding implies that while indirect feedback merely indicates the presence of an error, the error code provides an indication as to the cause and error's nature (Li & Vuono, 2019). It appears likely that students prefer to focus on the specifics and correct their mistakes through the use of grammar rules (Li & Roshan, 2019). Since written corrective feedback aims to raise the learners' awareness of their errors, oral and written feedback preferences were identical.

The questionnaire for this study showed that all error correction and peer feedback received the same preference for corrective feedback (M = 3.84). In the former, the teacher comments on each inaccuracy; in the latter, it is up to the student to correct their classmates' mistakes. Typically, learners are welcome to participate in the correction process (Schulz, 2001), regardless of who handles it. It is feasible to note that teachers play a minor role in error correction. In comparison, the data indicated a strong preference for empowering students with the ability to modify. Regarding whether all mistakes are repaired, earlier research reported that students required their English teachers to point out all of their mistakes (Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010; Irwin, 2017). As the finding indicated, peer correction seemed to contradict other scholars' results (Hamouda, 2011; Saeli & Cheng, 2019; Sanu, 2016). Rajabhat students agreed in this study that their peers should correct one another in class. It is consistent with Trabelsi (2018), whose Omani EFL learners stated that they valued peer input because each student brought a unique perspective that enabled them to correct one another. This again demonstrates the beneficial effect of peer and teacher correction on the student.

6. Conclusion

The primary goal of this study was to assess EFL Rajabhat undergraduate students' preferences for corrective feedback techniques and to examine whether there are significant differences between learners at various levels. Based on the analyses of the self-reported questionnaire, the study provided the following results. First, metalinguistic feedback and requesting students to revise their written work were preferred for most corrective feedback strategies by students. This is because Thai EFL learners desperately needed corrective feedback to learn English as an exact model for instructing them to recognise their own mistakes or places for growth. Among the techniques that most students choose are those that demonstrate the proper form or provide vital information on how to rectify it and the opportunity to receive additional assignments that have been altered in response to feedback. On the other hand, learners disagreed that teachers ignored and did not rectify their errors and indicated that there were errors by repeating students' mistakes with doubting intonations. Secondly, this study assisted in determining how the rates of learner preferences varied according to the students' competency levels. Even if students preferred metalinguistic feedback, the result found that students with a high level of skill in the target language tended to evaluate their preferences for metalinguistic

comments lower than learners at the beginner or intermediate levels. Similarly, low proficiency students viewed public comments as a relatively favourable strategy, but not the advanced level group.

Although this study sheds light on learner preferences for corrective feedback techniques across self-perceived competency levels, some limitations should be acknowledged. It is necessary to emphasise that the data collection method was restricted and adhered tightly to the questionnaire. It could not elicit information about the factors that influenced their preferences. Future research with a similar design and additional instruments would be advantageous. For instance, cooperating with the in-depth interview elicits a complete picture of the underlying reasons and delves further into their true thoughts on corrective feedback.

Acknowledgment

We would like to express our gratitude to the editor and anonymous ELTEJ reviewers for their constructive comments on earlier versions of this paper.

Declarations

Author contribution	:	Kanokpan Wiboolyasarin: initiated the research ideas, instrument construction; Ruedee Kamonsawad and Nattawut Jinowat: collected and analysed data. Watcharapol Wiboolyasarin: revised the research ideas, literature review, data presentation and analysis, and the final draft.
Funding statement	:	The research is non-funded
Conflict of interest	:	The authors declare no conflict of interest.
Additional information	:	No additional information is available for this paper.

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