

AN ANALYSIS ON ELICITATION AS CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK TO STUDENTS' GRAMMAR ERRORS

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Abstract

Teachers' feedback is vital part of teachers – students' interaction in EFL classroom where students' language can be evaluated by the teacher. This study examines teachers' use of elicitation as corrective feedback to students' grammatical errors. In order to achieve this objective, qualitative method was adopted in data collection and analysis. Accordingly, two sessions of EFL classroom with 90 minutes for each, were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed. Two English lecturers who are teaching Speaking at UIN (Islamic State University) Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh were participants for this study. The transcribed data was processed by following Mile's and Huberman's (1992) model of data analysis including data reduction, data display, and conclusion. The result shows that the teachers in both classrooms only used elicitation by questions as corrective feedback to students' grammatical errors where they always prompted a question to request students to reformulate their inappropriate grammar in their speaking. This successfully led them to the correct answer. Nonetheless, the teacher did not use elicitation by strategic pausing and gesture to elicit students' responses. This study suggests more techniques of elicitation feedback should be utilized for correcting students' errors in grammar and maximized to enhance students' proficiency of grammar knowledge.

Keywords: Elicitation, Corrective Feedback, Grammar, Speaking Class

1. Introduction

Elicitation is teachers' utterance which is requesting students' verbal response. It takes the biggest part of teacher-student interaction which includes teacher's questions, student's responses, and follow-up (Dailey, 2010). In language classroom, teachers use many strategies to correct students' grammar errors, one of which is by elicitation. This makes students aware of their mistakes without directly telling them that the answer was incorrect. In this stage, elicitation serves as corrective feedback (CF) for students and it is essential for encouraging students' self-correct. The most successful type of feedback resulting in student' repair was elicitation (Coskun, 2010). After getting elicitation feedback from the teacher, students can utilize information that they already have. Below is an example of elicitation:

S: I will go back to home tomorrow.

T: You will go back...?

L: Oh, I will go back home tomorrow.

(Ito, 2015)

In the above example, the learner reproduces the correct form after teacher's elicitation feedback. This gives a clue to the student to remodel the answer. Needless to mention, students already have a bank of knowledge but sometimes they also make mistakes and errors when applying the grammar. Hence, with the assistance of elicitation, she or he can reformulate the ill-formed sentence into "I will go back home tomorrow".

In the reality, elicitation is not properly applied in grammar instruction where students did not get enough feedback and evaluation after eliciting procedure. Therefore, they get fewer chances to practice English grammar forms they have just learned and yet they still make grammatical errors in their speaking and writing.

There are some previous studies conducted related to this issue. Many researchers have studied elicitation as corrective feedback in EFL classroom (English as Foreign Language). Esmaili (2014) on his study of corrective feedback and learner's uptake resulted that elicitation, clarification request, repetition, explicit correction successfully promoted learner uptake where students can provide the correct responses after feedback. This helps students to notice the errors they are making in interaction.

In addition, research on CF of elicitation was also conducted by Fan (2019) which revealed that the teacher utilized elicitation questions most frequently when providing CF and takes the highest frequency of all types of CF. Another study related to questions in teaching grammar was conducted by Sabilla (2020) where she found that question is a technique used by the teacher in correcting students' English grammar. Students are engaged in question-answer drill so that they understand how language rules applied in the sentences.

In filling gap between those studies, the writer would like to investigate how elicitation as corrective feedback to students' grammar errors which focuses only on elicitation type of CF to find out how teachers apply this technique to students' grammar errors. Teaching grammar is very crucial in language class. It enables students to use correct structure in four skills such as speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Hence, this study which involved two teachers who were teaching in Speaking classes at English Department of UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh is entitled "An Analysis on Elicitation as Corrective Feedback to Students' Grammar Errors" which are intended to find out the answers for question: How are elicitation are used by the teachers as explicit feedback to correct students' grammar errors?

2. Literature Review

Feedback is very important aspect in teaching. It is not only for evaluation, but also for motivation and reinforcement to students' effort (Cole and Chan, 1997). In teaching English language to students whose native language is Indonesian, giving feedback is very important due to it gives information for learners about how well they have mastered the target language rules, leads them to what is correct, and motivates them for better learning. Corrective feedback plays essential role in facilitating students' performance in learning the target language (Sheen in Ismaeli, 2019).

The teacher tends to use different types of CF to the students when they make errors especially in speaking, one of which is by using elicitation. Elicitation is one of corrective feedback techniques to requests students to self-correct. There are three ways of eliciting in this type which includes teachers' pause, teachers' asking open question, and teachers' asking reformulation of the ill-formed (Panova & Lyster, 2002). In giving feedback and evaluation, elicitation is essential because it encourage students' self-correct. The most successful type of feedback resulting in student' repair was elicitation (Coskun, 2010).

In the model of corrective feedback, elicitation question is categorized as explicit feedback (Sheen and Ellis, 2011). With this technique, the teacher does not show directly the correct form to students, but questions are used for instead to lead to the correct one. It is directly requesting a self-correction from students (Lyster, et all, 2001). This kind of explicit feedback can be realized by using teachers' pause, teachers' asking open question, and teachers' asking reformulation of the ill-formed (Panova & Lyster, 2002).

Elicitation by questions

Teachers commonly apply questions to elicit students' responses and request reformulation of students' grammatical errors. Question is reported as one of the common strategy in successful large class (Candlin & Mercer as cited in Yu, 2009). Hence, questions are significant for monitoring students' language practice which encompasses language pattern, meaning, and use and providing error-correction. Questioning is a common elicitation technique in communicative approach where students learn target language by having communication with the teacher and friends. Elicitation is directly eliciting a self-correction from students and it is frequently in form of wh-questions. Various questions enable teachers to modify the way of giving feedback when finding errors in students' speech (Lyster, et all, 2001). The example can be seen below:

Student : I go to zoo last Sunday.
Teacher : How do we say "go" in past tense?
(Obando, 2014)

The teacher-student interaction above shows that the teacher leads the students to find the appropriate rule of past tense by posing question "How do we say 'go' in past tense"? The teacher explicitly tells that the answer was ill-formed, so that the student should find the correct form herself.

Elicitation by pausing

Unfinished sentence is sometimes applied by the teacher to elicit the correct form from students by pausing and asking them to complete the utterance (Lyster and Ranta, 1997). This technique is called as strategic pausing (Alsubaie, 2015). This strategy triggers students to find the correct form themselves as presented in the following example:

Student : Tomorrow I bring the book.
Teacher : No, tomorrow I.....?
(Obando, 2014)

Another way to explicitly correct students' erroneous sentence is by giving incomplete sentence as pictured in the exchange above. It can be seen that students' use of future tense in the first turn is incorrect which then followed by the second slot "no, tomorrow I....?". This points out that students need to correct the utterance because it is grammatically wrong.

Elicitation by gesture

Teachers in EFL classroom use many ways to elicit students' talk where they can evaluate their use of grammar points and lexical items. One of which is by using gestures. Sometimes, it can be an alternative way for eliciting that enables students to realize the mistakes they are making, encourage thinking, and discover correct language use (Scrivener, 2012). Gestures as explicit feedback can be

nodding head, miming, or using body language. Feedback by gestures can be realized as shown in the following extract:

Teacher : (Thumbs down)
Student : No. I don't.
Teacher : Excellent.

(Dailey, 2010, p.13)

The exchange above describes that the teacher corrects students' errors by using hand gestures of thumbs down which indicates that the answer is incorrect. Due to this, the student provides the correct structure afterward. Non-verbal body language such as gesture, facial expression can be served as explicit feedback when they made an ill-form in speaking instead of telling them the right answer.

Elicitation questions as explicit feedback for grammar instruction is essential because these procedures lead to self-discovery of the right pattern. As it is known that grammar is very important aspect in speaking and other language skills. If students want to be able to speak fluently in English, they need to be able pronounce correctly and use appropriate pattern (Harmer, 2007). By having adequate proficiency in grammar, students can express meaning through phrase, sentence, and clause properly (Doff in Widodo, 2006). Obviously, mastering a certain amount of grammar and vocabulary is very crucial in order to speak foreign language (Bygate, 1997). In a nutshell, elicitation questions to explicitly correct grammatical construction from students can be executed through three methods; questions, pausing, and gesture.

3. Research Method

This study was conducted under qualitative design where the researcher acted as active observer in collecting the data for the research. Classroom observation was done to find out main data about teachers' elicitation questions in grammar instruction. There was no alternative way for direct observation to investigate classroom interaction (Nunan in Yu, 2009). Therefore, teacher-students interaction during the lesson in two speaking classes was recorded and served as main data for analysis. Data analysis follows Mile and Huberman's Model (1992) which involves data reduction, data display, and conclusion/verification. Data reduction is reducing the data for choosing main data by fitting teachers' explicit feedback into transcription. Data display is in which the findings are served in discussion. Meanwhile, meaning and interpretation is given to the result to draw conclusion.

4. Results and Discussion

The participants of this study are two English Lecturers who are teaching Speaking to English Department students of UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh with 90 minutes for each meeting. The data were obtained through classroom observation to investigate how elicitation question used by the teacher to explicitly correct students' grammatical errors. The video recorder was settled at the back of the classroom to capture all activity and interaction existing in the classroom. Meanwhile, the writer took some important notes about what happened during the class. The data gained from this observation was transcribed into written form in order to ease the analysis. The transcript was analyzed qualitatively which includes data reduction to take important and relevant data for analysis where only teachers' questions were extracted, data display to present the result of analyzed data in the discussion, and conclusion.

Main data of this study was classroom transcription which then was analyzed to find out the research question: How are elicitation questions are used by the teacher as explicit feedback to correct students' grammar error? After following some steps of data collection and analysis, significant numbers of elicitation questions were identified in the classroom. It revealed that the teachers in speaking classes only employed elicitation feedback by questions. This means that both teachers did not implement elicitation by strategic pausing and gesture as feedback to students' ill-formed structures.

Elicitation by Question

This strategy is often found during interaction between teachers and students in language class. When a student performs a wrong grammar pattern, the teacher usually asks her/his a question to reformulate the utterance so that she/he can be more alert of the mistakes and provide the right one afterward. Elicitation is directly eliciting a self-correction from students and it is frequently in form of wh-questions (Lyster, et all, 2001). Students in language class often makes errors and mistakes in grammar in speaking and the teacher generally gives feedback to their speech by elicitation in form of questions. It can be seen in the following data:

- S : ...Man is more stronger than women.
T : Sorry? how is the correct sentence?
S : Mmm the man is more..is stronger than woman.
T : The man is stronger than woman.

(See Appendices 2: 80-83)

Extracted transcription above points out teacher's use of explicit feedback by elicitation question where the teacher prompted to request students to perform the correct rule of grammar. In the first line, the sentence "Man is stronger than woman" contains errors in construction of comparative degree. Therefore, because of teacher's CF in form of WH question in the second line, she came out with accepted one "the man is stronger than woman". This shows that teacher's feedback is successfully lead the student to provide the correct grammar. Further, the next sample shows application of CF with another type of question.

- S : Because it open opportunity to work widely.
T : Open or opens?
S : Opens.
T : Ok please repeat.
S : It widely opens opportunity to work.
T : Ok good.

(See Appendices 1: 109-114)

In this speaking class, students are engaged in communicative activity about "Job interview" in which they performed speaking with friends and the teacher. As pictured in the intearaction above, student's wrong pattern about simple present "it's open opportunity to work" is directly followed by T's CF "open or opens?" to signify that the utterance was incorrect and it needs correction. This makes student aware of the error and need to fix it based clue provided in teacher's feedback. The same feature is also presented in the following extract:

- S : I choose Asri,, because she has a lot experiences and she also have a job as a manager
T : Again. Have or has?
S : I choose Asri,, because she has a lot experiences and she also has a job as an manager.
T : Good.

(See Appendices 132 – 135)

Another teacher's CF with question appears in the communication above where the student's response "she also has a job as a manager" was grammatically incorrect and the teacher hints with elicitation feedback "Have or has?". This question stimulates student's thinking to pick the right use of "have/has" for singular subject in simple present tenses. Evaluation part is really important to examine students' language use of the target language such as checking how well they apply English tenses in their communication as evident in the classroom transcription below:

- S : He was sick.
T : Was sick? Now?

S : Eh. He is sick

(See Appendices 1: 84 – 86)

Similarly, teacher-student interaction above draws the same corrective feedback from the teacher which is functioned to request reformulation of appropriate grammar use from student. The elicitation in T line “was sick? Now?” is teacher’s evaluation to the ill-formed structure of past form of to be. Finally, in the third move, the student replied “He is sick” as correction form to the teacher’s comment in the feedback move. From this finding, elicitation is effective to repair students’ error. It is the most successful feature of feedback in student’ error correction (Coskun, 2010). To sum up, elicitation does not only enable teacher to supply proper feedback for students’ response, but also allows students to think critically, reactivate their existing knowledge about grammar, increase more talking time and active participation, and improve grammar adequacy in language skills.

5. Conclusion

After a long discussion and fitting the data to the framework of CF by elicitation, it was found that the English lecturers in both classes only used elicitation by questions as corrective feedback in correcting students’ grammatical errors. They are some aspects that students successfully repaired after elicitation CF such as simple present tense, to be, past tense, and comparative degree. Meanwhile, they did not use other ways of elicitation such as by pausing and gesture as their elicitation CF strategy. This finding is relevant to the result of previous studies where questions are the most frequent elicitation strategy teachers applied in EFL classroom among all types of corrective feedback . Differently, this study focused on investigating elicitation in repairing grammar errors. This due to elicitation is the most effective way to get students’ correct reformulation. It triggers them to self discovery, increase participation, and promote grammar competence in speaking.

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