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# The impact of a professional development program on EFL teachers' beliefs about corrective feedback

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the impact of a professional development (PD) program enabling teachers to explore and reflect on their beliefs about oral corrective feedback (CF). It examined whether, how and to what extent those beliefs were influenced by a contextually feasible teacher PD program, consisting of a workshop followed by experiential and reflective activities. Participants were ten EFL teachers from two public high schools in Vietnam. Data were collected over a 14-week period, including recordings of pre- and post-intervention interviews, and three sources of written reflections (journals, self-video-recorded lesson reflections, peer observation reflections). Thematic analysis of the multiple data sources showed some minor changes in the teachers' beliefs regarding CF importance, targets and sources, and some major changes regarding CF types and timing. After the program, the teachers claimed to use a broader range of CF types, especially using more output-prompting CF. They became willing to provide immediate CF in both fluency and accuracy work. This study suggests that PD programs consisting of a workshop supported by appropriate, well-guided experiential and reflective activities can help teachers change CF beliefs to be more aligned with the findings of second language acquisition (SLA) research. Implications for teacher PD programs in EFL contexts are discussed.



## 1. Introduction

Teachers' beliefs are a major focus in research on teacher education and professional development (PD) because they have a strong association with teachers' actual classroom behaviours (Borg, 2015, 2019). In the context of language teacher education, beliefs are considered as "a key element in teacher learning and have become an important focus for research" (Borg, 2011, p. 371), and beliefs "may be the clearest measure of a teacher's professional growth" (Kagan, 1992, p. 85). In a recent review of *System*'s contributions to research on language teacher education, Guo, Tao, and Gao (2019) conclude that "among all topics related to language teacher education, language teacher cognition and teacher learning to effect cognitive changes (e.g., beliefs, knowledge, perspective, and understanding) may be the two central issues that deserve more attention". This

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**Table 1**
A classification of CF types (Based on Ellis, 2017).

| | Implicit | Explicit |
|---|---|---|
| Input-providing | 1. Conversational recasts | 2. Didactic recasts<br>3. Explicit corrections |
| Output-prompting | 4. Repetitions<br>5. Clarification requests | 6. Metalinguistic comments<br>7. Elicitations<br>8. Non-verbal clues |

study addresses the latter issue by exploring the impact of a PD program on EFL teachers' beliefs about a key aspect of L2 instruction – oral corrective feedback.

Corrective feedback (CF) is a key topic in L2 instructional practice because of its important role and frequent occurrence in the classrooms. CF (teacher or peer responses to learner erroneous utterances) has both written and oral forms, but only oral CF is investigated in this study. Therefore, any mention of CF henceforth refers to oral CF. CF is of major interest to second language acquisition (SLA) researchers due to its importance in the development of theories of L2 acquisition. The questions provoking the most research attention so far are whether CF works, and which types of CF are most effective (Ellis, 2017; Nassaji, 2016). This research agenda has provided adequate evidence that CF is beneficial for learning (Kartchava, 2019; Lyster & Saito, 2010; Lyster, Saito, & Sato, 2013; Nassaji, 2017). However, research on CF beliefs have not necessarily kept up with the developments in the field (Akiyama, 2017). Specifically, it has been noted that CF beliefs are distinct from beliefs about other aspects of L2 instruction and need to be investigated separately (Li, 2017; Loewen et al., 2009).

Similar to beliefs about other aspects of L2 instructional practice, CF beliefs can be influenced by education (Mackey, Polio, & McDonough, 2004), for example, participation in an SLA course (Busch, 2010; Kartchava, Gatbonton, Ammar, & Trofimovich, 2020). However, so far, there have been only a few studies investigating the impact of teacher CF training, and they have all been conducted in US ESL contexts, employing an SLA course or academic articles as agents for change, and thus their implications are of limited relevance to teachers' PD in other contexts. No studies have been conducted with teachers in foreign language teaching contexts, which tend to be "low-resource" contexts for teacher PD (Guo et al., 2019, p. 138). Also, whether or not experienced teachers can change their CF beliefs has not been explored empirically. Thirdly, few if any studies have investigated the changes in teachers' beliefs regarding specific aspects of CF such as CF types, timing or targets. Moreover, no studies have investigated the impact of contextually feasible PD programs such as workshops and reflective activities for in-service teachers, regarding CF beliefs. This study is, therefore, timely. It is the first attempt to explore the impact of a pilot PD program consisting of (1) a workshop and (2) three experiential and reflective activities on experienced EFL high school teachers' CF beliefs. This study will provide insights into "how we may facilitate language teachers to undergo cognitive changes before behavioural ones" (Guo et al., 2019, p. 137), and inform the development of feasible PD programs to meet the needs of in-service high school EFL teachers in mainstream education in Asia and globally. Following this section is a review of the literature, then the presentation of the study consisting of research methods, results, discussion, conclusion and implications.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. Corrective feedback

Research has attempted to address five pedagogical issues, namely CF effectiveness, types, targets, timing and sources. It has been argued that CF has a facilitative role in helping to draw learners' attention to the discrepancies between their incorrect output and the target form, and these processes can bring about target language development (Doughty & Varela, 1998; Gass, 1997; Long, 2017; Nassaji, 2015). Pre- and post-test studies show that CF is useful in improving learners' accuracy in their grammar judgement and performance tests, as indicated in several meta-analyses (e.g., Li, 2010; Lyster & Saito, 2010; Mackey & Goo, 2007). Descriptive studies show that CF is used by teachers frequently in various classroom contexts (Brown, 2016; Ha & Murray, 2020; Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Nassaji, 2016; Sheen, 2004). CF has been classified into different types according to its functions and its explicitness (Table 1). CF is usually selective because not all errors can be treated, due to practical constraints and teachers' priorities. It can originate from different sources: the teacher, the student who makes the error, or another student. CF can be provided immediately or shortly after an error is made (immediate CF). It can also be delayed until the pedagogical activity has been completed (delayed CF).

### 2.2. Beliefs about corrective feedback

Research on beliefs about CF started with broader surveys comparing beliefs of students and teachers about language teaching, learning and the role of error correction. Overall, these studies showed that students were positive about CF and

[1] In Fig. 1, a three-week gap between the reflective activities and the post-intervention interviews was the time for classroom observations which were not the focus of this paper.

willing to receive it, while teachers were relatively reluctant to provide it (Jean & Simard, 2011; Lee, 2013; Li, 2017; Roothooft & Breeze, 2016; Schulz, 1996, 2001). It has been suggested that the main reason for this difference is the teachers' concern that CF may cause students anxiety and embarrassment (Kartchava, Gatbonton, Ammar, & Trofimovich, 2020; Roothooft, 2014; Roothooft & Breeze, 2016; Vásquez & Harvey, 2010). However, teachers were found to be quite positive about CF in some other studies. For example, in Rahimi and Zhang's (2015) study, Iranian EFL teachers were positive about CF, and the experienced teachers were more supportive of CF than the novice teachers. Roothooft (2014) revealed that although her Spanish EFL teachers had some reservations due to their concern about student's affective responses and the likelihood of disrupting the communication flow, they all stated that CF was important. Vietnamese primary EFL teachers were also found to be positive about CF (Ha, 2017; Ha & Murray, 2020).

The literature has also provided some insights into teachers' beliefs concerning targets, types, timing and sources of CF. Regarding CF targets, teachers consider that correcting students' errors may disrupt the students' communication flow, which directs them to opt for correcting only errors which are likely to influence understanding (Basturkmen, Loewen, & Ellis, 2004; Kamiya, 2016; Roothooft, 2014). This concern has also been shown to lead teachers to opt for implicit CF types such as recasts (Kartchava, Gatbonton, Ammar, & Trofimovich, 2020; Roothooft, 2014), especially for novice teachers (Rahimi & Zhang, 2015). In other cases, teachers' preferences for CF types have been found to be influenced by time constraints (Yoshida, 2008) and their perceptions about students' cognitive styles (Yoshida, 2008, 2010). Teachers' concern about the flow of communication is also a reason for their reservations about immediate CF (Kartchava, Gatbonton, Ammar, & Trofimovich, 2020; Li, 2017; Rahimi & Zhang, 2015). Regarding the source of CF, Agudo (2014) showed that his pre-service teachers highly valued students' self-correction rather than teacher correction or peer correction. Teachers' CF beliefs have been shown to be influenced by their language learning experience (Junqueira & Kim, 2013), teaching experience, and education (Gurzynski-Weiss, 2010, 2014, 2016; Mackey, Polio, & McDonough, 2004; Rahimi & Zhang, 2015).

To sum up, these studies have suggested that the concern about students' affective responses and the probability of disrupting the communication flow have accounted for teachers' unfounded assumptions about CF. They may not believe in the effectiveness of CF, thus they may be hesitant to provide it. They may believe that (1) implicit CF is better than explicit CF, (2) CF should be provided for accuracy work only, (3) delayed CF is better than immediate CF, and (4) CF should only be used for errors influencing communication. These views are partially in line with those presented in some influential teachers' guides (e.g., Harmer, 2007; Ur, 1996). Ellis (2009, 2017) has argued that the perspectives presented in these teachers' guides have not been based on SLA research, but the authors' own experiences or interviews with experienced teachers. Ellis (2017) suggests that some of these recommendations may need to be revised. For example, regarding CF timing, research has revealed that immediate CF occurs frequently in many classroom settings (Lyster et al., 2013; Nassaji, 2016), and it is actually helpful to students' learning (Li, 2010; Lyster & Saito, 2010), supporting the case that immediate CF can be used for both accuracy work and fluency work.

Due to the complexity of CF, and the fact that the CF literature has not yet provided a full understanding of the effectiveness of particular CF types (Nassaji & Kartchava, 2017, 2020), no clear-cut guidelines on CF provision in L2 classrooms have been made by SLA researchers. For example, in a book discussing the dimensions of CF, Nassaji (2015) concluded that "there is no simple answer on how to treat learner errors in L2 classrooms" and "by discussing practical implications, we do not intend to dictate to teachers how to correct learner errors" (p. 201). Alternatively, Ellis (2009, 2017), Nassaji (2015) and Nassaji and Kartchava (2020) have suggested that the best way to advise teachers on how to promote the effectiveness of CF in L2 classrooms is to enhance teachers' awareness of the complexities involved in how CF works and encourage them to reflect on their own practice to figure out the best strategies for their teaching contexts. Following this recommendation, and to address the issue that teachers' beliefs about CF may be counterproductive and the fact that CF provision is a skill that good teachers need to master (Nassaji & Kartchava, 2020), the intervention in this study has been designed to provide the participants with input on the current perspectives of SLA research on errors and CF in L2 classrooms. More importantly, it provided opportunities for reflection with clear guidelines for the participants to think deeply about their own CF use so that they could revisit and potentially reshape some of their existing beliefs. In this way, the dialogue between research and pedagogy could be more effectively facilitated (Sato & Loewen, 2019).

### *2.3. Corrective feedback training*

One of the most important sources of teachers' beliefs is their schooling experience, but teachers' existing beliefs can nevertheless be reshaped by PD programs (Borg, 2015). Research on CF training is limited, but it has revealed some initial evidence about changes in the CF beliefs of students (Sato, 2013) and teachers (Vásquez & Harvey, 2010).

To our knowledge, there have been only a few published studies investigating whether teachers' CF beliefs are influenced by education. Kamiya and Loewen (2014) conducted a case study to examine whether an experienced ESL teacher in the US would change his CF beliefs after reading three academic articles about CF. The interview data revealed that reading articles raised the teacher's awareness of CF and encouraged him to reflect on his classroom practice, but it did not change his beliefs regarding CF. This could be attributed to a lack of opportunities for the teacher to apply and reflect on the new knowledge gained from the reading. Indonesian EFL teachers in Cirocki & Farrell, 2019 study also claimed that reading professional literature was one of the least impactful PD activities. Research in general education has also supported this observation. In a seminal paper discussing teachers' beliefs, Kagan (1992) claims that many teachers find research irrelevant to their teaching, and reading research papers does not usually affect teachers' beliefs.

By contrast, SLA courses do appear to have a role in teachers' CF beliefs. Gurzynski-Weiss (2010, 2016) found that university-level Spanish FL teachers who had taken some SLA courses took into account more factors (e.g., learner individual differences, linguistic targets) in their in-class decisions regarding CF provision than teachers without SLA education. Also, the beliefs and practices concerning implicit CF of the teachers with SLA experience were more congruent than those of the teachers without SLA experience (Gurzynski-Weiss, 2010). In a study with pre-service teachers, Kartchava, Gatbonton, Ammar, & Trofimovich, 2020 revealed that teachers who had taken an SLA course felt more strongly about providing immediate CF to students' errors than those without any SLA experience. Busch (2010) conducted a mixed method study investigating the effects of an SLA course on pre-service teachers' beliefs about language learning and CF. During the course, the participants were asked to tutor an ESL student, analyze the language samples from the tutoring, reflect on their personal language learning experience, and analyze the changes or resistance to change of their beliefs as a consequence of taking the course. Analysis of the participants' responses to pre- and post-course questionnaires showed that teachers' beliefs had changed considerably regarding various aspects of language learning and error correction.

Also looking at the development of teachers' beliefs via an SLA course, Vásquez & Harvey, 2010 conducted a case study with 9 postgraduate students (Master and PhD, with varied teaching experience) enrolling in a Master level SLA course. In the beliefs component of the course, the participants performed a partial replication of a published study of CF. They were asked to self-video-record a lesson, transcribe it, code CF episodes and write a report of their findings. The study showed significant changes in teachers' CF beliefs. At the beginning of the course, the student teachers reported that they had little knowledge about CF and were concerned primarily about its affective aspects. However, after the course, they also focused on cognitive aspects of CF such as students' noticing, uptake, and CF types. They showed a more nuanced and sophisticated understanding of the role and function of CF, and its interaction with student uptake.

These studies suggest that informing teachers only may not influence their CF beliefs, but PD programs which "include experiential and reflective activities seem to have a stronger effect on the development of beliefs systems than declarative knowledge" (Busch, 2010, p. 319). It is important to note that the studies reviewed above have all been conducted in US contexts. The implications are valuable, but may not be applicable in EFL contexts where teachers do not share similar characteristics or learning resources. School EFL contexts are actually where most English learning happens, and these contexts remain unexplored.

This study makes the first attempt to explore experienced teachers' belief changes regarding CF via a PD workshop and follow-up experiential and reflective learning activities. This is also the first study looking at CF belief changes of mainstream EFL teachers. It aims to explore the impact of teacher learning on their beliefs regarding CF, and open up avenues for PD programs serving teachers who do not have the chance to take part in academic programs. Furthermore, this study explores the changes in teachers' beliefs about various aspects of CF, seeking to address the following research questions:

1. What are Vietnamese high school EFL teachers' existing beliefs regarding five main aspects of CF, namely, CF importance, targets, sources, types, and timing?
2. What (if any) changes are observed after completion of a targeted PD program?

## 3. Methods

### 3.1. Research design

This is a qualitative study exploring the impact of a pilot PD program on Vietnamese high school EFL teachers' beliefs regarding oral CF. It involves an in-depth exploration of teachers' existing beliefs, and an examination of the evidence indicating change after participating in the program. Therefore, a basic qualitative research design (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) was employed to realize the aims because the primary objective of qualitative research is "to get to the bottom of what is going on in all aspects of social behaviour" (Holliday, 2010, p. 99), and basic qualitative research can help to understand "(1) how people interpret their experiences, (2) how they construct their worlds, and (3) what meanings they attribute to their experiences" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 24). In a discussion about the methods of studies investigating the impact of PD programs, Borg (2019, p. 47) noted that only qualitative studies can help us "develop deeper understandings of how teachers' beliefs are shaped during a PDI (professional development initiative)".

### 3.2. Context and participants

This study was conducted in two public high schools in Vietnam, where English was a compulsory subject, taught for three 45-min lessons per week. Students' English proficiency levels ranged from elementary to intermediate although most had been learning English since grade six, or earlier. In Vietnam, students are assessed by written exams, including a final national exam for graduation, and teaching and learning are highly test-driven. Efforts to enhance the teaching and learning outcomes have been made by the National Project 2020 over the last decade, with mixed results (Ngo, 2019).

The participants of the study were 10 experienced Vietnamese EFL teachers (10–21 years) (Table 2). They were all trained as high school teachers and had obtained degrees in EFL teaching from Vietnamese universities before starting their careers. The teachers reported they had never participated in any SLA course. Regarding instruction on CF provision, although teachers

**Table 2**
Summary of participants' background.

| Name (Pseudonym) | Gender | Age (years) | Teaching experience (years) | School (Pseudonym) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Duong | Female | 33 | 11 | A |
| Chi | Female | 32 | 10 | A |
| Giao | Female | 34 | 12 | B |
| Hieu | Male | 42 | 15 | B |
| Le | Female | 36 | 14 | A |
| Nguyet | Female | 38 | 16 | A |
| Tham | Female | 45 | 21 | A |
| Thu | Female | 36 | 12 | B |
| Vien | Female | 44 | 21 | A |
| Vinh | Female | 41 | 17 | A |

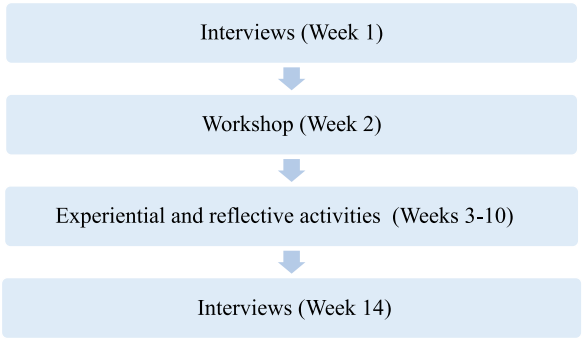


**Fig. 1.** Overview of intervention and data collection procedure .

had been told to provide CF after students finished speaking, they had not been trained specifically on how to provide CF, nor had their training included any discussion about other aspects of CF provision.

In the past, these teachers had participated in PD activities of different types, most of which were organized by the provincial department of education and training during their summer vacations. The most notable one for all the teachers was the C1 course, an English proficiency course to help them gain the required level of proficiency (level 5/6). They also participated in workshops on how to use new textbooks, but there were no workshops on specific classroom techniques. At the school level, they had group meetings every week to discuss administration and teaching issues. Every semester, each teacher had to teach two demonstration lessons for the whole group to observe, and these lessons were discussed and evaluated at later group meetings.

### *3.3. PD program and data collection procedures*

#### *3.3.1. Overall procedures*

After ethical approval was granted by the human research ethics committee of the researchers' university and the consent from all the participating teachers and the school principals had been obtained, the data were collected within 14 weeks (Fig. 1)[1]. Firstly, the teachers were interviewed individually by the lead researcher (66–78 min each). Secondly, they participated in a workshop. Thirdly, they were to complete follow-up activities for eight weeks. Finally, they were interviewed individually by the lead researcher (52–62 min each). All the interviews were audio-recorded for transcription and analysis. The interviews were conducted in Vietnamese. They were transcribed verbatim, and only quotes used in the paper were translated into English. The data sources for this paper, therefore, included interviews before the workshop (henceforth pre-intervention interviews), interviews after the workshop and follow-up activities (henceforth post-intervention interviews), reflective journals, peer observation reflections, and self-video-recorded lesson reflections.

#### *3.3.2. Interview*

Each participant took part in two individual semi-structured interviews with the lead researcher (see Appendix 1 for interview questions). The pre-intervention interview consisted of three parts, namely background, overall beliefs about language teaching and learning, and the main part, concerning beliefs about various aspects of CF. The interview questions of the main part were developed based on the literature, including seven aspects of CF: importance, types, timing, targets, sources, students' affective responses, and factors influencing teachers' CF beliefs and provision. Regarding beliefs about CF types, the teachers were given three scenarios to discuss whether and how they would correct the errors. They were then

given 11 examples of CF types for each scenario to discuss their benefits and drawbacks. They were then asked to discuss their preferences for CF types in general. In this way, the teachers were prepared with some knowledge of CF types before they were required to talk about their general preferences.

The post-intervention interview consisted of the same questions excluding those concerning (1) the teachers' background, (2) their general beliefs about language learning and teaching, and (3) possible factors influencing their CF beliefs and provision. Moreover, they were asked to comment on what had changed (or not) regarding their CF beliefs and provision as a result of the PD program.

### 3.3.3. Workshop

The content of the workshop (Appendix 2) was developed based on the SLA literature. Relevant research findings and pedagogical implications were synthesized, presented and discussed with the teachers. The 4.5 hr workshop was conducted in Vietnamese and video-recorded by the lead author. It consisted of five activities, (1) discussion of teachers' CF beliefs, (2) brief presentation of pedagogical guidelines, discussion about SLA research findings and recommendations, (3) watching and analyzing teaching videos, (4) workshop evaluations, and (5) guidelines for follow-up activities.

There were several reasons for the inclusion of both (1) and (2) as the input of the workshop. As noted by Borg (2011), in order for teacher education to have a meaningful impact on teachers' beliefs, we need to "provide teachers not only with opportunities to make their beliefs explicit but also with space to question and doubt those beliefs", and this consideration is "particularly important in in-service contexts, where teachers typically bring to the course previous training, substantial classroom experience, and deep-rooted beliefs about many aspects of their work" (p. 379). Therefore, we firstly created a space for our experienced teachers to openly discuss their own CF beliefs. Then, a summary of pedagogical guidelines on CF provision synthesized from popular teachers' guides (e.g., Scrivener, 2005; Ur, 1996), a possible source of their existing CF beliefs, was presented. After that, the updated SLA research findings and implications (the main workshop input) were presented and discussed, elaborating on the similarities and differences between the SLA perspectives and the pedagogical guidelines. In this way, the teachers would have opportunities to reflect on, challenge and possibly doubt their existing CF beliefs and practices, particularly those which may be inconsistent with SLA perspectives. Therefore, they may want to experience the implementation of the new input in their teaching, undertaking a process of experimentation and reflection which may ultimately influence their CF beliefs. The two key references for the teachers were a book chapter by Ellis (2017) and one by Nassaji (2015). Following is a summary of the SLA research implications synthesized from the most recent literature regarding CF provision:

1) CF is an integral part of language teaching, and it is helpful and deliverable.
2) All CF types are effective depending on the error types and the context in which the CF is provided. It is advisable to use a variety of CF types. A combination of prompting student's self-correction and providing the correction may work best.
3) All teacher correction, peer correction and self-correction are potentially helpful.
4) Immediate CF can be used for both accuracy work and fluency work without necessarily having to disrupt the flow of students' speech. Delayed CF may also be effective.
5) CF can be selective, as teachers may not be able to deal with all errors. The selection of errors is dependent on the objectives and pedagogical competence of teachers. It is not always feasible to distinguish errors from mistakes, or local errors from global errors.

### 3.3.4. Experiential and reflective activities

Experiential learning refers to a learning approach of which the center is a focus on a lived experience where learners can reflect, think and act. The learning cycle encompasses "action that results in experience, reflection on action and experience, abstraction drawn from reflection and action resulting from this reflection" (Girvan, Conneely, & Tangney, 2016, p. 130). Learners (in this case, in-service teachers) are seen as involved, active and engaged participants in their own learning supported through reflective practice (Girvan et al., 2016; Morris, 2019), and reflection on action, therefore, is a key for learning (Richards & Farrell, 2005). This approach is suggested to motivate teachers to try new teaching techniques and make desired changes which are applicable to their classroom reality. The approach to PD in this study included both reflective and experiential learning opportunities.

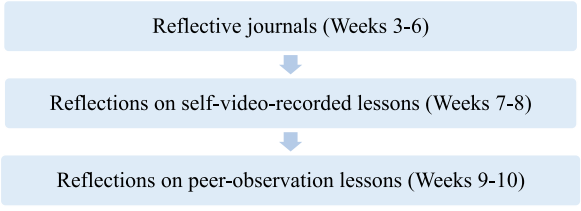


**Fig. 2.** Experiential and reflective activities.

In the current study, by the end of the workshop, the teachers were guided to do three follow-up activities for the following eight weeks (Fig. 2). These activities were to assist the teachers to critically think and reflect on their own CF provision after participating in the workshop. Firstly, each teacher was to write three weekly reflective journals, each reflecting on their CF provision after a week. Secondly, each teacher self-video-recorded a speaking lesson, reviewed it and wrote a reflection on that lesson, focusing on their CF provision. Thirdly, the teachers were paired up to observe a colleague teach a speaking lesson, and they discussed the lessons after the observation for about 20 min, focusing on CF use. Then, the observer wrote a reflection on that lesson. Accordingly, each teacher was asked to write three reflective journals, one reflection on their peer's teaching, and one reflection on their own teaching video. The experiential component lay in the opportunities provided for the teachers to modify their practice and reflect on the outcomes. For practical reasons, the teachers were given four weeks to complete the reflective journals, the next two weeks to record and write reflections on their own teaching, and the last two weeks to observe their peer teaching and write reflections. These guided activities were designed to help the teachers to "bring their beliefs to the level of awareness" (Farrell & Ives, 2015, p. 605) so that they could become more "engaged in reflexive examination of their own beliefs and action" (Leung, 2009, p. 53). These activities provided the teachers with essential opportunities to implement their newly learned knowledge from the workshop, critically reflect on their implementation of it, and exchange their experiences with their peers. It was anticipated that these processes would be likely to result in the reshaping of some of their CF beliefs.

The ultimate aim of the program was to facilitate the teachers to think and reflect on their CF provision which may have involved the implementation of the new knowledge from the workshop. It must be emphasized that because all the teachers were qualified and experienced the program was not a didactic guide of what the teachers should do regarding CF, but it was an opportunity for them to revisit and discuss the theory and practices regarding CF, and explore and reflect on their CF use via a number of guided experiential and reflective activities. The findings on whether the teachers changed, what they changed or did not change in their beliefs will be discussed in relation to the workshop input, the context and the literature.

### *3.4. Data analysis*

The data (interview transcripts, reflective journals, peer observation reflections and self-video-recorded lesson reflections) were analyzed thematically with the support of NVivo software. Firstly, the transcripts and writings were read thoroughly many times for a complete understanding of the data. Then, phrases and sentences with similar meanings were grouped together and categorized according to the five main themes of CF research, namely, the importance of CF, CF types, timing, targets and sources (Ellis, 2017; Nassaji, 2016). Next, the codes were refined, so that overlap and redundancy were resolved. The teachers' responses to the themes coded in the pre-intervention interviews were compared with those coded in the post-intervention interviews and the post-workshop reflections. For example, regarding CF timing, teachers' comments about immediate CF in the pre-intervention interviews were compared with their statements after the workshop. The main themes derived from the analysis will be reported and discussed below.

## 4. Results

Analysis of the multiple data sources (pre-intervention interviews, reflective journals, peer observation reflections, self-video-recorded lesson reflections, and post-intervention interviews) revealed that most teachers showed some minor changes in their beliefs regarding the importance and necessity of CF, CF targets and sources, and some more significant changes regarding CF types and timing. Findings regarding the teachers' beliefs about students' possible affective responses to CF will be discussed together with beliefs regarding CF types because they are closely related to each other.

### *4.1. Changes in beliefs regarding the importance and necessity of CF*

Overall, before the PD program, all the teachers were positive about the important roles of CF in promoting students' learning, claiming that providing CF was an integral part, and a mandatory requirement of their teaching job. The teachers' positive attitudes towards CF were also reflected in their comments related to the three given scenarios. They said that all three errors were important in particular ways, and they would not neglect responding to any of them. After the program, they felt that they paid more attention to their CF provision, and they took into consideration a number of factors (e.g., errors, situations) to make CF choices appropriately rather than giving CF unconsciously and intuitively. All the teachers said that they put more thought into CF and provided more CF than they used to do. Nguyet, for example, said in her post-intervention interview:

> Before participating in this program, my feedback provision was just like a natural reaction to students' errors, I did not really think about what I did or how I did it. However, I now pay more attention to my CF provision. I feel that CF is really important and necessary for students' learning.

Eight of the ten teachers changed their beliefs regarding providing CF in the two particular types of language learning work. Prior to the program, they claimed that immediate CF was necessary and beneficial for students' learning, but it was only appropriate for accuracy work. As regards fluency work, they believed that only delayed CF should be applied. However,

after the program and the experience of observing the results of modifying their practice, they supported the argument that immediate CF could be used for both accuracy and fluency work.

### 4.2. Changes in beliefs regarding CF targets

Regarding beliefs about providing CF to important errors, all the teachers remained consistent in their beliefs over the PD program, holding to the view that serious errors were the most worthy of correction. These errors were the ones that could influence communication (global errors, e.g., wrong word order), errors related to the lesson focus, errors occurring frequently with many students. Errors which were not related to the lesson focus, or just occurred infrequently, might be ignored in some cases. Generally, the teachers said that minor errors that may not influence communication (local errors) such as articles (a, an, the) were less urgent and could sometimes be ignored. However, in some cases, the errors were local in nature, but they were related to the lesson focus, so teachers considered they were worth correcting. For instance, in his post-intervention interview, Hieu stated:

> Errors that do not interfere with communication, such as plural vs singular, or -ed ending, can be ignored. However, if they are related to the lesson focus, or the lesson focus is grammar, then they need correcting.

Concerning beliefs about the four main types of errors (pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and pragmatics), four of the ten teachers held consistently to their existing beliefs, while the others displayed variation throughout the program. However, no particular pattern of change was found. It is interesting that seven of the teachers did not think that pragmatic errors were worth considering. In the pre-intervention interviews, no teachers made any comment on this error type before the interviewer raised the topic. Although some teachers said in the workshop that pragmatic errors were important, no evidence from the interviews or reflective writings about their experiences after the workshop suggested that they gave priority to this type of errors.

Overall, the teachers showed some changes in their beliefs about particular aspects of CF targets. After the program, they claimed to pay more attention to error types, and to select errors to correct consciously and systematically in relation to their lesson focus and students' proficiency levels. For example, Duong commented:

> After the program, I started to consider the types of errors, which errors should be corrected, which errors should not, or which errors can wait … I also observed that good classes need more CF on pronunciation errors, and weak classes need more CF on grammar errors.

### 4.3. Changes in beliefs regarding CF sources

Six of the ten teachers maintained their belief that all the three CF sources (teacher direct correction, peer correction and self-correction) were helpful for students' learning. They felt that the teacher was the main source of CF, but in some cases, a student could self-correct or peer correct. They believed that self-correction made the error makers more conscious of their errors, which could help them retain the target forms better. Three of these teachers also claimed that after self-correcting, the error makers would feel proud, motivating them to participate more actively in further activities. Peer correction was considered useful in that it would not only help the error makers or other peers to draw on the target form, but it also made them more involved in processing the target forms.

As for the other four teachers, there were several changes in their beliefs. They claimed to have more trust in their students' ability to perform peer correction. Thu, for example, in her pre-intervention interview, stated that her students were weak and were not able to provide CF for their peers. She was concerned that some students knew their peers' errors and could correct them, but their correction might make their peers embarrassed. However, afterwards, she expressed the view that it was fine for her students to give feedback to their peers, and there were even more benefits than teachers' CF. Similarly, Tham changed her beliefs regarding peer correction, feeling that peer correction could have positive affective outcomes, as reflected in the following comment:

> Before the program I thought that some students might be ashamed if they were corrected by their peers, but now I think this (peer correction) is ok. Some students are happy if they can self-correct their errors with the assistance of their peers.

### 4.4. Changes in beliefs regarding CF types

Notably, there were considerable changes regarding teachers' beliefs about CF types. Before the PD program, all the ten teachers claimed to provide CF intuitively and unconsciously whenever they recognized an error and felt that it was important and worth correcting. Several teachers said that they even had not thought of how to correct students. Prior to this program, they had never received any training in how to provide CF. Four teachers mentioned that they sometimes discussed CF provision in their group meetings after particular demonstration lessons, but focused only on CF timing. Tham was the only one who recalled CF (mostly CF timing) being discussed in a PD program for in-service teachers, in this case 10 years before.

After the program, the teachers claimed to pay more attention to their choices of CF types and do their CF provision strategically. Nguyet, for example, said:

> The program has helped me understand more about the nature of CF and how to provide CF. Before, I thought CF provision was 'normal', that means teaching includes error correction. After the program, I found that giving CF is very important. It needs to be applied seriously in the lessons. It is better to use a variety of CF types.

The second change concerns the 'best' type of CF. After the PD program the teachers claimed to use a broader range of CF types, consisting of less input-providing CF but more output-prompting CF. Chi, for example, expressed her view that it was not good to use a particular CF type for all situations, but "it is necessary to use a variety of CF types. I used to recast one word or repeat the error, but now I use more varied types to make my lessons more interesting". The teachers seem to lend more support to output-prompting CF types. They changed their definition of an effective CF type from being based on 'correcting the error' to 'what students do with the correction'. They used to think that making students realize the error and the language rules indicated success of CF, but they changed to believing that effective CF should be quick, interesting and being able to involve students in thinking about the correction. Four teachers (Hieu, Le, Tham, and Thu) mentioned uptake after the workshop, considering uptake as evidence of the CF effectiveness. Le, for instance, approached her CF provision differently after the workshop and was satisfied with her new strategies. She wrote in her journal:

> The thing that I have missed in my previous CF provision is that I did not require students to repeat the correct form (i.e., uptake). I only showed the error and corrected the error, which did not help students to practice using the language successfully.

Before this PD program, as revealed in the pre-intervention interviews, the teachers tended to give feedback in the ways they were used to, but they did not consciously reflect on what and how they did. However, peer observations and self-video-recorded lesson reflections helped the teachers to look into what they were actually doing regarding CF provision after the workshop. These activities enabled the teachers to engage in deep reflection on their own beliefs and action (Farrell & Ives, 2015). In the reflection on his self-video-recorded lesson, Hieu recognized that his CF provision largely included recasts and explicit corrections, and he expressed a wish to use CF more flexibly with a broader range of CF types. He wrote:

> In this lesson, I used recasts and explicit corrections the most frequently. I sometimes used repetitions and elicitations. I have used CF more consciously, not just using it intuitively as I did before. I think this is a good thing I have gained from the workshop. I will try to integrate different CF types, from the easiest to the most difficult one, for different errors, in a way that students can learn the most from my CF provision.

Of the reflective activities, self-video-recorded lesson reflection was the most helpful in facilitating the teachers to review and self-evaluate their new experiences. All the teachers stated that they had never tried recording their own teaching, but reported that this was a very interesting activity. They claimed that they would not have been aware of their predominant use of recasts if they had not reviewed their videos. More importantly, the video reviewing showed them how often and how effectively they implemented various CF strategies. Tham, for instance, stated in her post-intervention interview that her beliefs and use of CF types developed over the program:

> I used to use recasts the most often because I just used it naturally as a habit. However, the workshop showed me that all types are helpful, especially prompting which can lead to students' uptake. I tried prompting techniques such as repetition frequently, and I observed in my video that they were very effective in helping students to self-correct. I just need to increase my intonation immediately after the students' error.

There were some interesting observations regarding the teachers' beliefs about the relationship between CF types and students' potential affective responses. Overall, the teachers did not consider students' affective responses to CF as a primary concern in their choices of CF types. However, four of the ten teachers (Chi, Hieu, Le and Vinh) suspected that clarification requests (e.g., what?) might be face-threatening to students, and this belief remained more or less the same. These teachers claimed that clarification requests did not tell students where they made the mistakes, which could make students worried or confused. They also said that clarification requests were not good for weak students, but could be used for stronger students. Some teachers said that their choice of CF types did not have any noticeable negative influence on students' feelings, but their attitudes to students and their use of the language of direct rejection or blunt negative evaluation of the students' performance could potentially make them demotivated. Giao, for example, stated that teachers' negative evaluative response to students' errors such as 'no no, you are wrong' could make students feel sad and insecure.

### *4.5. Changes in beliefs regarding CF timing*

Teachers' beliefs about CF timing underwent considerable changes through the PD program. Except for Vinh and Vien, the other eight teachers claimed to have learnt and changed their views about the best CF timing. Before the program, they claimed not to provide CF while students were doing a speaking activity. Six of the ten teachers believed that it was a principle of teaching that teachers should not interrupt students' speaking to correct errors, especially for fluency work (e.g., a student's presentation after group-work). They preferred to note down errors and correct them after the speaking activity. For example, in the pre-intervention interview, Duong said "I usually provide feedback to students after they finish a speaking activity. One

of the teaching principles is that teachers are not allowed to interrupt students to provide feedback when they are speaking regardless of the speaking activity types". These teachers assumed that giving students feedback during a speaking activity was disruptive, and risked influencing the students' flow of speech and ideas, which would undermine their confidence and influence their further participation negatively. Giao, for instance, commented "correcting a student as soon as an error is made can disrupt the student's thinking and flow of speech, which makes that student lose confidence". However, after the program, these teachers felt much more comfortable about providing CF as soon as an error is made. For instance, in her post-intervention interview, Duong said:

> Before attending the program, I always thought that correcting students' errors while they were speaking was disruptive, which could hurt their feelings, make them embarrassed. However, after the program, I felt that I can provide feedback as soon as a student makes an error without causing any issues.

Similar to their awareness regarding CF types, observing colleagues' teaching and observing their own classes in the videos gave the teachers a more accurate picture of when they actually provided CF to their students' errors. The teachers appeared to feel comfortable with immediate CF, for both accuracy and fluency work. Duong, for example, wrote in her reflection on her peer's teaching that "in this lesson, Tham mostly provided feedback immediately after students' errors, and this did not influence the students' participation or flow of the lesson at all". Such processes of reflexive examination on their own actions and beliefs may be one important reason for change in the teachers' beliefs, as is illustrated in Thu's comment in her post-intervention interview:

> As I wrote earlier in my video reflection report, in that speaking lesson, I tried prompting students' self-correction while they were presenting their group's ideas, I observed that they reformulated their answers and continued their speaking naturally, not like what I had thought. I used to think that it was wrong to correct students when they did not finish their speaking, but actually correcting students immediately after their utterances, or even while they are speaking is totally fine. It really depends.

The teachers' beliefs about CF timing became more sophisticated. They did not simply consider that CF should be either delayed or immediate as revealed in the pre-intervention interviews. They took into consideration the relationship between CF timing, error types and activity types when discussing the appropriate CF timing. During short dialogues or conversations involving several short turns, they felt that CF should be provided immediately after the errors, or shortly after the utterances, while in longer students' presentations the choice of CF timing required more thinking and effort. For example, immediate CF was claimed to be suitable and easy to be applied with pronunciation errors, while grammar errors, especially those which required long explanations, could wait to the end of the activity. This is reflected in Giao's comment in her post-intervention interview:

> Pronunciation errors can be treated straightaway, but grammar errors which I will explain more will be better corrected once the student has finished speaking. Students cannot recognize their pronunciation errors after they have finished speaking, therefore, it is better to correct them immediately.

The teachers also took into account the nature of errors, whether they were global or local, in their justifications for the appropriate timing of their CF provision. As to local errors, they claimed to correct them as soon as possible, using quick CF types and focusing on correcting them for those who made the errors. When it came to global errors, they expressed their view that delayed CF was more suitable, because they needed more time for these 'more important errors'. Also, when correcting global errors, they tended to draw attention from the whole class. For example, in her post-intervention interview, Vinh explained:

> I would spend a few minutes after the activity or by the end of the lesson talking about big errors, the systematic errors, and the errors which are made by many students. These are usually grammar errors such as 'for or since' in present perfect tense. I would summarize them for the students (i.e., explain the rules). The errors corrected at this stage are grammar errors, not pronunciation or vocabulary errors.

## 5. Discussion

The teachers entered the PD program with their own existing beliefs regarding various aspects of CF. All the teachers considered that CF was important and necessary in teaching and learning. This belief may originate from their language learning experience (Junqueira & Kim, 2013) where they were taught by traditional teachers with grammar translation as a predominant method and may have been reinforced by the exam-oriented teaching context of Vietnamese EFL (Ha, 2017). Also, the nature of their teaching experience may also contribute to the initial positive attitude towards CF of these teachers.

The changes observed in the teachers' beliefs highlight the importance of the experiential and reflective activities on teachers' learning (Borg, 2011; Busch, 2010; Cirocki & Farrell, 2019; Vásquez & Harvey, 2010). Before the program, the teachers were not completely aware of what types of CF they usually gave to their students. Some of the teachers' existing beliefs developed slightly, and some others were completely reshaped after the program. The most noticeable reshaping was related to the beliefs regarding CF timing, and CF in fluency and accuracy work.

The teachers' existing beliefs regarding CF timing could be seen as a very strong one, as most teachers considered the practice of giving CF after students have finished speaking to be based on a teaching principle which may not be challenged. Chi, for example, commented that she admired her former teaching methods lecturer who advised her to give students' feedback only after they had finished speaking, suggesting that this belief had been shaped during undergraduate education. This belief might also have developed under the influence of the teachers' guides (e.g., Scrivener, 2005; Ur, 1996), whose recommendations may be based on the experiences of the authors or experienced teachers, not derived from research findings (Ellis, 2017). The teachers' comments (e.g., Le) on the warning received from educational experts about the use of immediate CF in fluency work indicate that this advice was given to the teachers during their PD activities.

Furthermore, Kartchava, Gatbonton, Ammar, & Trofimovich, 2020 suggested that teachers who had not taken an SLA course were more hesitant about immediate CF than those who had. None of our teachers had had a chance to attend an SLA course at university. However, their comments suggested that the teachers' involvement in the workshop discussion and the activity of watching authentic video extracts had impressed them. Also, reflecting on their peer's lessons and their own self-video-recorded lessons, in which they could observe different types of CF used in different learning activities at different times, had helped them to analyze their new beliefs in relation to their own practice. These reflective activities enabled the teachers to implement new knowledge, observe the effects and make their own decisions/conclusions about their teaching. The teachers reported that this made them reconsider their beliefs regarding CF timing, giving more support for the provision of immediate CF, especially for fluency work.

Clearly, the workshop input and the opportunities for reflective activities also influenced the teachers' beliefs regarding CF types. Before the program, the teachers showed little knowledge about CF types and focused on eliminating errors. After the program, the teachers said that they provided CF more strategically and consciously. They also claimed to use a broader range of CF types, especially using more output-prompting CF. The data confirm that the teachers had not received prior instruction on how to provide CF before taking part in this program. The program presented the role and occurrence of uptake in the literature, which may have made the teachers consider the relationship between uptake and CF types. This may also be the reason why some teachers changed their preferences for CF types from input-providing CF to output-prompting CF. Also, in the context of exam-oriented and accuracy-advocated teaching, getting students to repeat short utterances or sentences to increase the accuracy is a frequent activity.

In light of the literature, these changes are of great significance and can be seen as evidence of the success of the program. Ellis (2017) argued that some of the points mentioned in the teachers' practical guides (e.g., immediate CF vs delayed CF, and CF for fluency work vs accuracy work) might need to be revised based on pedagogical implications from research. In this study, the teachers changed their beliefs regarding CF timing and CF types in accordance with research implications: firstly that immediate CF might be useful and deliverable for both fluency work and accuracy work, and secondly that giving feedback in a systematic manner using a wide range of CF types can enhance the effectiveness of CF.

The teachers considered that most CF types, including explicit correction, did not influence students' affective responses. This belief might be explained by their experience as language learners where they were taught and corrected explicitly by their traditional teachers (Ha, 2017). It has also been reported that more experienced teachers are less concerned about students' affective responses than inexperienced teachers (Ha & Murray, 2020; Junqueira & Kim, 2013; Rahimi & Zhang, 2015). However, it is interesting that four of the ten teachers (Chi, Hieu, Le and Vinh) maintained that clarification requests may make students embarrassed or worried, and their beliefs did not change over the program. The interview data suggest that the cause of confusion and anxiety that the teachers were worried about may be attributable to their perceptions that the corrective function of these linguistic structures may not be clear, making students unsure about what is happening with their utterances. Le even commented that clarification requests should be used when the repetition of the error made the teachers lose patience. In Lee's (2013) study, some postgraduate advanced ESL students claimed that clarification requests were the least preferred CF type. Fourteen of the students explained that clarification requests did not have a clear corrective function, and they were embarrassed when the teachers asked them to clarify their erroneous utterances while they did not know what their errors were.

The teachers in our study did not change this belief over the program. This might be because they did not use many clarification requests, especially in their peer observation and self-video-recorded lessons, which did not provide them with sufficient opportunities to reflect on the results of this CF type. It should also be noted that there were no recommendations in the workshop implying that the teachers actually should change their beliefs regarding clarification requests because there was not enough evidence supporting or critiquing this CF type in the literature. This may have reduced the probability that teachers would modify their practice in the recorded or subsequent lessons.

## 6. Conclusions and implications

The present study examined the impact of a pilot PD program on Vietnamese EFL teachers' beliefs regarding oral CF. Analysis of multiple data sources revealed that, after participating in the workshop and the experiential and reflective activities, the teachers modified and reshaped some of their beliefs about various aspects of CF. Most of the teachers displayed some minor changes in their beliefs about the importance, targets and sources of CF, and some more significant changes concerning CF types and timing. At the outset, they were positive about the importance of CF in promoting students' learning, but they felt that they had provided CF intuitively and unconsciously. After the program, they claimed to pay more attention to their CF provision, taking into account various contextual factors to make their CF choices more appropriate and strategic.

They also claimed to think more about CF targets, selecting errors for their correction more consciously and systematically. Regarding CF sources, some teachers developed more trust in their students' ability to perform peer correction. In terms of CF types, they reported employing a more varied range of CF types, especially using more output-prompting CF. They shifted their views about characterising an effective CF type by its ability to eliminate the error, moving towards considering how appropriate it is in particular situations and what the students do with the correction. Regarding CF timing, the teachers became more positive about immediate CF, and felt more comfortable supplying immediate CF during students' fluency work.

This study is the first attempt to explore the impact of a PD program consisting of a workshop and follow-up reflective activities on experienced EFL teachers' CF beliefs. Their comments that they had little knowledge about CF and had never received instructions on how to provide it, combined with the teachers' eagerness to learn suggest that CF is a topic of interest for PD programs for in-service EFL teachers in Vietnam. This may also be the case for other contexts. CF provision is an important and integral aspect of L2 instruction, but it seems that teacher education programs for both pre-service and in-service teachers have not paid adequate attention to this aspect of teaching. In this article we have argued that teachers' CF beliefs can be developed effectively via a workshop and follow-up experiential and reflective activities, a format which is feasible for in-service teacher PD in many contexts where teachers do not have opportunities to attend SLA courses or do practitioner research (Vásquez & Harvey, 2010). Teachers at secondary schools in Vietnam have limited PD opportunities, and many of them might not be committed or capable enough to do practitioner research. Most of our teachers commented that they tried to read the assigned reading materials, but they had difficulties understanding the content, except for the PowerPoint handouts. Therefore, a single workshop combined with follow-up activities can be suitable for teacher PD regarding CF, and possibly also other topics.

The study shows that, even in the case of very experienced teachers, CF beliefs are changeable via appropriate PD programs. For changes to happen, some researchers recommend longer training (e.g., S. Borg, personal communication, July 16, 2018), which in-service teachers might not be able to attend due to practical constraints (e.g., cost, time, and overlapping teaching schedules among teachers). The workshop in the current study was short, but the reflective activities provided a significant boost. Teachers can do these reflective activities independently, and the trainers only need to facilitate the learning process. This opens up avenues for PD programs that can reduce time and effort for both educators and teachers by making use of experiential and reflective learning activities such as peer observation reflections, or self-video-recorded lesson reflections. These programs can enable teachers to access and discuss the implications of SLA research findings, especially when supplemented with guided activities for them to reflect on such input. Accordingly, research findings can be applied in altering teachers' beliefs and classroom behaviours and, as this study has shown, meaningful outcomes can be achieved with PD programs which are contextually feasible to design and deliver.

Despite the contributions of the study, there are several limitations in scope that warrant further research to provide a more complete understanding of in-service teacher learning regarding CF. Firstly, this study included only ten teachers from two schools in a province in Vietnam. While there is not a great deal of contextual variation among different schools in the system, it nevertheless limits the generalisability of the findings. Future research may investigate the effects of this model of PD in other contexts, or with a larger number of participants. Secondly, this study was conducted with only experienced teachers. It is not known how novice teachers may respond to similar PD programs regarding CF provision. Therefore, future research is needed to explore whether, how and to what extent novice teachers would change their beliefs regarding CF after taking part in such a PD initiative.

## CRediT authorship contribution statement

**Xuan Van Ha:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Investigation, Writing - original draft, preparation, Writing - review & editing, Visualization, Project administration. **Jill C. Murray:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing - review & editing, Supervision, Project administration.

## Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary data to this article can be found online at https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2020.102405.

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