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Feedback preferences of EFL learners with respect to their learning styles

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Abstract: This study investigates the preferences of EFL learners for oral corrective feedback in relation to their learning styles in order to determine whether there exists a relationship between the two. The sample consisted of 348 preparatory class students studying English as a Foreign Language at a state university in Turkey. A questionnaire was administered to explore learners' oral corrective feedback preferences, and a learning style inventory was utilized to classify participants' learning styles. To analyse the obtained data, the frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation values were calculated, and a Chi-square test was employed to determine whether there existed a relationship between student feedback preferences and their learning styles. Most participants were classified as divergent learners, and they seemed to expect their teachers to provide frequent feedback. Moreover, they believed that frequent and serious errors should be addressed more often than occasional and minor ones. Explicit feedback, clarification and elicitation were the most preferred types of feedback, with teachers being the most favored source. These results suggest that learning styles do not account for students' feedback preferences and provide an explanation in terms of learners' varied preferences. Therefore, it has been concluded that the concept of learning styles is irrelevant for understanding learner feedback preference.

Subjects: Language and Literature; Language and Linguistics; Language Teaching and Learning

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PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

How much information can educators glean about a learner based on his/her learning style? A learning style refers to the characteristics and preferences of a learner, and numerous inventories have been developed by researchers in order to classify the different types of learning styles. The present study is concerned with the extent to which these styles contribute to learners' preferences for feedback. Feedback preferences concern learners' expectations regarding the methods used by their teachers to correct their errors. Ultimately, it has been found that learners have different feedback preferences regardless of learning style. Together with similar research findings, these results support the view that learning styles may change according circumstance. Thus, educators should encourage learners to utilize different learning strategies while themselves varying their own pedagogical techniques.

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Keywords: feedback preferences; language learning; learning styles

1. Introduction

Error is a natural part of learning; likewise, the feedback given to correct errors is a natural, inevitable and powerful part of both learning and teaching. Hattie and Timperley (2007) emphasize an important aspect of teaching in their claim that teaching involves not only the transfer of knowledge but also an understanding of how students make progress during this transfer process. For this reason, it is essential for students to understand their progress via the feedback provided by their teachers.

Educators should consider many factors prior to giving corrective feedback (Long, 1977). For example, they should consider the timing of their feedback, its mode of expression, and its focus or function (Çevikbaş & Argün, 2016). Brookhart (2008) also has clarified that educators should contemplate whether to give immediate or delayed feedback, the amount and frequency of their feedback, whether the feedback should be writing or oral, and whether to give group or individual feedback. These considerations vary according to circumstance and depend upon teachers', as well as students' feedback preferences, as there is no single method of feedback that has proven useful in all situations.

Teachers' feedback preferences often reflect their own educational experiences and the approaches they have consequently adopted. However, students' different feedback preferences may be the result of multiple factors including gender and cognitive style, both of which have been examined in recent studies (Evans & Waring, 2011, Khorshidi & Rassaei, 2013; Lin, Liu, & Yuan, 2001). Nevertheless, no known studies have investigated learning style as a potential factor affecting English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners' oral corrective feedback preferences. Therefore, the present study aims to provide insight into the nature of this relationship.

1.1. Theoretical framework

1.1.1. Categorization of feedback
In order to thoroughly comprehend the concept of feedback, it is necessary to recognize its various types. Feedback is categorized into various forms depending on certain factors. Brookhart (2008) has included the variables of "timing," "amount," "mode" and "audience" in her feedback model. Others have examined as variables the "source of feedback" and "function of feedback" (Çevikbaş & Argün, 2016). The present study bases its own framework for categorizing feedback upon both of these models, thus examining as variables the following: (a) necessity, (b) frequency, (c) timing, (d) type of error to be corrected, (e) types of feedback and (f) source.

1.1.2. Necessity and frequency of feedback
The amount of feedback chosen by an educator plays an important role in determining how it is administered. Brookhart (2008) argues that choosing the amount of feedback can be the most difficult decision for an educator. As a remedy, she proposes making use of the Goldilocks principle, namely "Not too much, not too little, but just right." (as cited in Brookhart, 2008). According to this principle, educators should be able to analyse the strong and weak points of a students' production, as well as to focus on two or three crucial points according to pre-established learning objectives. Similarly, Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006) have claimed that providing limited feedback is most effective for ensuring its use among learners. Considering the fact that some learners may prefer all of their errors to be corrected via feedback (Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010), educators should reflect collectively on their learners' perspectives, the nature of learners' productions or performances, and pre-established learning objectives.

1.1.3. Timing of feedback
In terms of its timing, feedback can be presented in either a delayed or immediate manner. Brookhart (2008) has proposed that when determining the timing of their feedback, educators should consider the situations of their students. Generally, the best moment for providing feedback is when learners are still

engaged in their productions or performances. Therefore, it is considered a faulty practice for a teacher to assess an assignment two weeks after his/her students have completed it. Similarly, Kulik and Kulik (1988) concluded that, compared with delayed feedback, immediate feedback results in better performances among learners in authentic settings. Thurlings, Vermeulen, Bastiaens, and Stijnen (2013) have also emphasized the advantage of immediate over delayed feedback.

In contrast to the above opinions favoring immediate feedback regardless of circumstance, Clariana (1999) stated that the timing of the feedback should, in fact, be determined according to the complexity of tasks. She proposes the use of immediate feedback for difficult tasks and delayed feedback for more simple tasks.

1.1.4. Types of errors to be corrected

According to Corder (1973), error refers to "those features of the learner's utterances, which differ from those of any native speaker" (p. 260). He also distinguished between errors and mistakes, stating that errors are made by non-native speakers, cannot be self-corrected and are limited to second-language acquisition. Mistakes, on the other hand, can be made both by native and non-native speakers alike, and they can be self-corrected.

On the other hand, Burt (1975) distinguished between "local" and "global" errors. He explained that local errors do not hinder communication, while global errors block it. He argued that correcting global errors provides more efficient learning outcomes than correcting local ones. Similarly, Hendrickson (1978) pointed out that educators should focus more on correcting global errors.

1.1.5. Types of oral corrective feedback

Although there have been some other categorizations of oral corrective feedback, such as that of Fanselow (1977), the most commonly recognized one was provided by Lyster and Ranta (1997) and is employed in the present study. They distinguished six types of oral corrective feedback based on their study of teachers in French language lessons.

1.1.6. Explicit vs. implicit feedback

Oral corrective feedback can occur both explicitly and implicitly. Explicit feedback or explicit correction includes a clear indication that the learner has made a mistake (Ellis, Loewen, & Erlam, 2006). It is provided with the purpose of giving grammar explanation or direct correction (Long, 1996).

On the other hand, implicit feedback occurs when the source (most often the teacher) does not provide an apparent indication that the learner has made a mistake. Bitchener and Knoch (2010) highlighted that implicit feedback draws learners' attention to the error but does not involve its correction. This type of feedback is less interrupting and does not pose many risks in terms of terrifying, distressing or embarrassing learners (Yoshida, 2008).

1.1.7. Recasts

Recast as a term first was used to describe the nature of first-language acquisition (Farrar, 1992). In foreign language learning, recasts refer to a response by the teacher to learners' outputs by reformulating their utterances; however, teachers' responses do not include utterances like "use this word" or "you should say" (Lyster & Ranta, 1997).

It should also be noted that there have been different opinions regarding whether recasts should be considered as a form of implicit or explicit feedback (Ellis, 2008; Long, 2006). Some researchers have argued that the perceptions of learners concerning recasts are integral to defining it either as implicit or explicit, as learners sometimes may not be aware of the function of recasts as a form of corrective feedback (Mackey, Gass, & McDonough, 2000). Therefore, some researchers like Nassaji (2015) have underlined ambiguity as a disadvantage of using recasts for feedback purposes.

1.1.8. Clarification request

Clarification request is another type of feedback, which Ellis (2009) has examined under the categorization of implicit feedback, as it refers to an indication by the corrector that the utterance has not been understood. The teacher, therefore, wants his/her learner to reformulate theirs utterances, indicating that they have not been understood or that there has been an error in their form (Spada & Frohlich, 1995). Common phrases used by the teacher in the delivery of this feedback type are "Sorry," "Excuse me" and "Pardon me" to indicate that a communication error has been made (Lyster & Ranta, 1997).

1.1.9. Meta-linguistic feedback

Meta-linguistic feedback, sometimes referred to as "metalinguistic clues" (Lyster & Ranta, 1997), occurs when the teacher addresses questions or comments and provides information for learners related to their utterances with the purpose of eliciting information from the learners. The teacher may provide information by focusing on a grammar hint like "It's a continuous tense," addressing a question like "Is this how we form continuous tenses?" or simply giving a comment like "you have forgotten something."

1.1.10. Repetition

Repetition occurs when the teacher repeats students' utterances while intonating their errors. The main purpose is to draw attention to the errors in order to create question marks and clues for possible answers in the minds of learners.

1.1.11. Elicitation

In elicitation, the teacher attempts to elicit the correct answer from students. Lyster and Ranta (1997) mentioned three strategies related to elicitation. One strategy involves learners being asked to complete an utterance provided by the teacher, who gives a pause, like a "fill in the blank" activity. This can be followed by a comment as metalinguistic information, such as "no, not this." Secondly, teachers may sometimes use questions like "How do we say *x* in English?" with the purpose of eliciting correct forms from learners. The final strategy involves teachers asking learners to reformulate their speech (e.g., "Can you say that again?"). All of these techniques do not include an overt correction but simply ask the learner to try again (Smith, 2010).

1.1.12. Sources of feedback

Feedback has been categorized into three types in terms of its source: teacher feedback, peer feedback and self-assessment (Boud, 1995; Carless, 2006; Cohen, 1990).

Peer feedback is a process in which learners engage in conversations pertaining to their performances (Carless, 2006). Learners give each other feedback by commenting on their work. Rollinson (2005) has asserted that peer feedback is preferred by teachers for a few reasons. First, peer readers are useful sources of feedback. Second, it is not a usual way of providing feedback. Responses from students have been found to be more specific. Finally, reading others' work can contribute to learners becoming critical readers and being able to self-reflect based on their feedback experience. Rollinson further noted that peer feedback may have some limitations, such as time constraints and that student characteristics may make it difficult for the learners and teachers to make use of this type of feedback. Smith (2010) has argued that group and pair communicative activities which allow learners to provide peer feedback are more often preferred in modern language learning environments.

Teacher feedback can be considered the most commonly preferred feedback type, as the teacher is the richest source of the target content in the classroom. With regard to the process approach in language learning, the teacher is the usual and continuous provider and source of feedback (Paulus, 1999).

A final source of feedback may be learners themselves, who often repair their productions. This process is known as **self-correction** or **self-repair**, and it most commonly been discussed with regard to written feedback (Bitchener, Young, & Cameron, 2005; Chandler, 2003).

1.2. Feedback preferences and learning characteristics

Although a number of previous studies have addressed the effectiveness of and preference for different types of feedback, recent studies have begun to include new considerations. A few studies have attempted to determine whether preferences for corrective feedback may be shaped by considerations, such as gender, education program or educational context (Behroozi & Karimnia, 2017; Carvalho, Santos, Conboy, & Martins, 2014; Khorshidi & Rassaei, 2013), and cognitive styles (Evans & Waring, 2011). The rationale behind these studies has been the fact that learner characteristics may influence the effectiveness of feedback (Nassaji, 2016).

Another aspect that can be included in the description of learner characteristics is the concept of learning styles (Lightbown & Spada, 1999). Individuals may prefer to use different strategies when they learn new things, and correction practice can be considered as a part of these learning preferences (Hill, 2007). O'malley and Chamot (1990) also have stated that preferred strategies for giving or receiving feedback can be associated with learning styles.

1.3. Learning styles

1.3.1. Definitions of learning style

One recognized truth among education researchers has been that some learners outperform others, despite the fact that they are provided with the same quality and equal amounts of instruction (Vollmeyer & Rheinberg, 2000). It is an undeniable nature of learning that individuals may differ when they attempt to acquire new information, often choosing different methods based on individual preferences (Woolfolk, Winne, & Perry, 2003). Within an education framework, Dörnyei (2005) has clarified these differences in terms of learners' individual characteristics.

Learning styles are one way in which learners may differ. These have been defined as the characteristics and preferences of individuals in the processes of receiving, remembering and processing knowledge (Felder & Silverman, 1988). Similarly, Kolb (1984) defined learning styles as the preferred strategies of learners in acquiring and processing knowledge.

According to Cornett (1983), individuals derive natural tendencies from birth, and these particular characteristics are affected by environmental, personal and cultural factors which result in learning styles.

The above conceptions of learning styles have resulted in several different learning theories. However, the present study makes use of Kolb's model for learning styles, as this model has been reported as being appropriate in a Turkish context (Aşkar & Akkoyunlu, 1993).

1.3.2. Kolb's model for learning styles

Kolb's model for learning styles lies within the scope of information processing. The fundamentals of this model are mainly based on John Dewey's concept that learning has its roots in experience (Teixeira, 2001, as cited in Eyyam, Meneviş, & Doğruer, 2011). According to this model, learning strategies are based on a four-stage learning cycle (Kolb, 1976, 1984) consisting of the following: Concrete Experience (CE), Reflective Observation (CO), Abstract Conceptualization (AC) and Active Experience (AE). The methods of each learning stage involve "Feeling," "Watching," "Thinking" and "Doing" (Aşkar & Akkoyunlu, 1993).

Concrete Experience refers to the characteristics of learners who tend to feel, think and experience the world. They tend to be involved in real-life situations and to solve problems intuitively rather than via scientific strategies. **Reflective Observation** is based on the capacity to comprehend ideas in detail.

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Learners in this stage tend to have an objective attitude and be patient. As the name implies, they tend to reflect and observe rather than involve themselves actively in a situation. The fundamental learning methods in this stage are watching and listening. *AC* involves tendencies toward rationale and ideas instead of feelings in the process of problem-solving. As opposed to CE, individuals prefer to make use of cognitive skills rather than feelings. A fundamental strategy of this stage is thinking. *Active Experimentation* is characterized by the abilities of changing situations and being actively involved in the practice of learning. Learners do not prefer solely to watch situations but also tend to play an active role in the environment with the purpose of productivity. A fundamental learning strategy in this stage is doing (Eyyam et al., 2011; Kolb, 1976, 1984; Richmond & Cummings, 2005).

Kolb (1984) noted that most individuals undergo the above four stages. Accordingly, learners "first have a CE, then observe and reflect it from different perspectives, then form abstract concepts and generalizations in theories and finally actively experience these theories and test what they have learned in complex situations" (Eyyam et al., 2011, p. 2). Therefore, any given one of these four dimensions is not itself sufficient for defining learning styles, as these stages collectively determine a particular learning style, which may be recorded via a Learning Style Inventory (Aşkar & Akkoyunlu, 1993).

The learning style of each individual is a combination of four basic learning personalities: accommodator, assimilator, diverger and converger. The characteristics of these four learning styles are explained in Table 1 below.

1.4. Related studies

As mentioned previously, numerous researchers have investigated issues related to feedback including its timing, source, amount and mode/expression. These studies have aided educators in comprehending the nature of feedback and its role in educational environments. The following table presents significant studies that have examined issues, such as feedback use, practice, preference and effectiveness, as well as those which have considered feedback in relation to other variables.

The studies on corrective feedback listed in Table 2 can be divided into three categories: (a) those investigating the effectiveness of feedback types, (b) those investigating the preferences of learners and teachers for corrective feedback and (c) those investigating feedback preferences in relation to learner characteristics. Considering studies focusing on the effectiveness of feedback, there seems to be no common feedback type that can be marked as "effective." The study by Oliver and Mackey (2003), which reported different effectiveness in different contexts, can be considered as a conclusion. Regarding the preferences for oral corrective feedback, it seems that teachers and learners have different perceptions. However, studies on feedback preferences and learner characteristics seem to have focused mainly on gender (Carvalho et al., 2014; Evans & Waring, 2011) and recent studies have tended to focus on aspects, such as educational context

Table 1. Learning styles in Kolb's model of experiential learning (Kolb, 1976, 1981)			
Learning style	**Combination of**	**Good at**	**Key question**
Accommodator	Concrete experience and active experimentation	Making plans, performing decisions and participating in new experiences	"If …, what will happen?" (Şahin & Çelik, 2011)
Assimilator	Abstract conceptualization and reflective observation.	Concepts and ideas	"What?"
Diverger	Concrete experience and reflective observation	Organize relationships in a meaningful way	"Why?"
Converger	Abstract conceptualization and active experience	Problem solving, making decisions, logical analysis of the ideas and systematic planning	How?

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Table 2. Studies on feedback and other variables			
Author/Citation	**Purpose**	**Sample and method**	**Key findings**
Fanselow (1977)	Types of errors to correct and to ignore the way to correct errors	Videotaped 11 teachers	The most frequently practiced way of correcting errors was to give the right answer.
Lyster and Ranta (1997)	Corrective feedback types and learner uptake.	Transcription of 18 h of French class	The most frequently used feedback type was recast. Others were elicitation (14%), clarification request (11%), metalinguistic feedback (8%), and explicit correction (7%).
Ellis, Basturkmen, and Loewen (2001)	Corrective feedback types	Adult learners of English as a second language	Recasts were the most commonly used and the most successful feedback type.
Oliver and Mackey (2003)	Practice of feedback in different learning and teaching contexts	Conducted in child ESL classrooms	Teachers' choice of corrective feedback type differed depending on the context. Explicit feedback use was more commonly in a language-focused context.
Jabbari and Fazilatfar (2012)	Frequency of corrective feedback types	Audio-recordings on learners with different levels of English	Most commonly used types: Repetition and metalinguistic.
Long, Inagaki, and Ortega (1998)	The Role of Implicit Negative Feedback in SLA	Experimental study	Recast can be effective in certain conditions.
Park (2010)	Teacher and learner beliefs on correcting errors	ESL learners and teachers	A significant difference existed between learners' and teachers' views on timing, methods and source.
Najmaddin (2010)	Opinions of the learners toward different types of corrective feedback	With 31 first-year university students and nine teachers through a questionnaire,	The learners were happy with all types of feedback. Explicit feedback types were preferred to implicit ones.
Carvalho et al. (2014)	Effect of gender and the education program on perception of feedback	Primary school EFL students	Education program had no effect on students' perceptions; however, the study showed that there were differences in perceptions regarding gender.
Evans and Waring (2011), Behroozi and Karimnia (2017)	The relationship between student teachers' gender, cognitive styles and their feedback preferences Educational Context and ELT Teachers' Corrective Feedback Preference	Questionnaire with Indigenous and international students EFL teachers from language institutes and EFL teachers from different schools	A statistically significant difference existed between students with different gender and cognitive styles and their perceptions of feedback. Teachers from private institutions used recast most frequently, while teachers from public schools used repetition most frequently.

(Behroozi & Karimnia, 2017). On the other hand, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, there seems to be no study investigating oral corrective feedback preferences in relation to learning styles in an EFL context. Therefore, the present study is thought to be the first one to provide insight into these two aspects.

In light of the above, this study investigated the oral corrective feedback preferences of students at a state university in Turkey in relation to students' learning styles as a part of their cognitive processes in order to contribute to a better understanding of the nature of feedback and feedback preferences. An outcome of this study was to determine whether or not oral corrective feedback preferences can be explained by learning styles and, at the same time, whether or not learning styles impact feedback preferences.

The study sought answers to the following research questions centered on learning styles and feedback preferences:

(1) What are Turkish EFL learners' opinions and preferences for oral corrective feedback?
(2) How are the learning styles of the students distributed according to the Kolb learning style model?
(3) Does the concept of learning styles account for Turkish EFL learners' preferences for oral corrective feedback?

2. Method

2.1. Participants
This study was conducted in the School of Foreign Languages at a state university in Turkey. A total of 348 students enrolled in a preparatory English program were administered a questionnaire and an inventory during the 2016–17 academic year. Each individual elected to participate in this study, and confidentiality was ensured. This study employed a convenience sampling method, which the researcher deemed appropriate for implementing a questionnaire and an inventory. Participants' ages ranged from 19 to 25 years, and their native language was Turkish. The proficiency levels of the students were A2, B1 and B2, which was specified by the institution. Students at the A1 level were not included in the study, as their interaction with English instruction at university level was considered to be limited. The participants included students from different departments.

2.2. Data collection tools

2.2.1. Learning style inventory
Kolb's Learning Style Inventory was utilized in this study, as it was found to be most suitable in a Turkish context (Aşkar & Akkoyunlu, 1993). Students were divided into the four learning style categories of convergers, assimilators, accommodators and divergers based on their scores. The inventory had been translated into Turkish by Aşkar and Akkoyunlu (1993). The Learning Style Inventory consists of 12 statements with four options. As the developer of the Turkish version of the inventory, Aşkar and Akkoyunlu (1993) administered the inventory in their own study and provided a reliability score of .71. In the present study, Cronbach's alpha scores for each part of the inventory ranged from 0.64 to 0.76, which are acceptable for reliability. A pilot study was conducted with 40 students for the level of difficulty and intelligibility of the items in the questionnaire, and its validity was tested.

2.2.2. Feedback preferences questionnaire (FPQ)
The second instrument employed in the process of data collection was a Feedback Preferences Questionnaire for students (FPQ). The questionnaire was first developed and used by Fukuda (2004). It is comprised of an introductory section containing items related to the demographic information of the participants. The second part includes 22 items divided into six sections, each of which aims to

investigate a different aspect of preferences for oral corrective feedback: (a) necessity, (b) frequency, (c) timing, (d) types of errors, (e) types of errors and (f) source. Each item in Section (e) aims to investigate participants' preference for each type of oral corrective feedback commonly used in literature.

The FPQ was also previously implemented by Park (2010), Gürbüz (2013), Çetinkaya and Hamzadayi (2015) and Zhang and Rahimi (2014). The version employed in this study was adapted from Çetinkaya and Hamzadayi (2015), who translated the questionnaire into Turkish and reported that the questionnaire was administered to the same group on two occasions in order to analyze the reliability. They determined that the participants had provided similar responses to the items, with 90%. The results of reliability analysis for this study indicated a Cronbach's Alpha of .60, which is considered acceptable for the sample size of this study (Loewenthal, 2001). A pilot study was conducted with 40 students for the level of difficulty and intelligibility of the items in the questionnaire, and its validity was tested.

2.3. Data collection

A pilot study was conducted before the administration of the questionnaire and inventory, and necessary changes were made accordingly. The questionnaires were then administered on two different occasions so as not to overwhelm the participants during their break time at school. The FPQ was administered first; then, one week later, the learning styles inventory was given to the same students. The participants were asked to write nicknames on the papers in order to be able to combine the two questionnaires later and, thus, determine their preferences for oral corrective feedback, as well as their learning styles.

The participants were given information concerning the purpose and content of the study. They were assured that the information would be kept confidential and that they were free not to participate in the questionnaire. The instructors responsible for each classroom were informed about the questionnaire components and administration procedure.

2.4. Data analysis

The frequencies, means, percentages and standard deviations of the items in the questionnaire were calculated, and the learning styles of the students were determined by a formula developed on Microsoft Excel and based on Kolb's model. In order to learn about learners' opinions, frequencies and descriptive statistics were utilized. A Chi-square test, also known as the Pearson Chi-square Test, was performed in order to analyse the relationship between the two independent variables, oral corrective feedback preferences and learning styles. To carry out the chi-square analysis, a five-point Likert scale was arranged into three categories for each section of the FPQ.

3. Findings

3.1. Results of research question 1: what are Turkish EFL learners' opinions and preferences for oral corrective feedback?

The results pertaining to Research Question 1 are presented in accordance with the Likert scale types in the questionnaire. These are (a) necessity of feedback; (b) timing of feedback; (c) source of feedback, in which participants rated the items from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree"; (d) frequency of feedback; (e) types of errors to be corrected, in which participants rated the items from "always" to "never"; and (f) types of feedback, in which participants rated the items from "ineffective" to "effective." Related findings are given in Table 3.

As can be seen in Table 3, most students (92.2%) were found to be willing to receive oral corrective feedback. Participants rated their agreement on the timing for receiving corrective feedback, which included "*after I finish speaking*" "*as soon as errors are made,*" "*after the activities*" and "*after the lesson.*" The most preferred timing (%79, $f = 277$) was "*after I finish speaking,*" followed by "*as soon as errors are made*" (%32.4, $f = 113$). The most favorable source was *teachers* (98.3%, $f = 342$) followed by *self-correction* (85.0%, $f = 296$) and *peer-correction* (38.5%, $f = 134$).

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Table 3. Oral corrective feedback preferences (strongly agree-strongly disagree)					
Dimensions of feedback	**Items**		**Strongly agree/ Agree**	**Neutral**	**Disagree/Strongly disagree**
Necessity of feedback	I want my errors to be corrected	*f*	321	22	5
		%	92.2	6.3	1.5
Timing of feedback	After I finish Speaking	*f*	277	35	36
		%	79.6	10.1	10.3
	As soon as errors are made	*f*	132	93	123
		%	38.0	26.7	35.3
	After the activities	*f*	113	102	133
		%	32.4	29.3	38.2
	At the end of the class	*f*	38	41	269
		%	10.9	11.8	77.3
Source of feedback	My teachers	*f*	342	4	2
		%	98.3	1.1	.6
	Myself	*f*	296	36	16
		%	85.0	10.3	4.6
	Peers	*f*	134	94	120
		%	38.5	27.0	34.5

Results pertaining to types of errors to be corrected are provided in Table 4. Most students (82.7%, *f* = 288) indicated that they expect their teachers to provide corrective feedback either "always" or "usually." Errors were categorized in terms of frequency, seriousness and source, namely (a) *serious spoken errors*, (b) *less serious spoken errors*, (c) *frequent errors*, (d) *infrequent errors* and (e) *individual errors*. The findings demonstrate that students expect their teachers to correct "*serious spoken errors*," "*frequent errors*" and "*individual errors*" more often than the other types of errors (89.4%, *f* = 311; 82.2%, *f* = 302; 47.9%, *f* = 167, respectively).

Finally, results about learners' preferences for oral corrective feedback are given in Table 5. Out of the eight different types of feedback defined by Lyster and Ranta (1997)—*clarification*,

Table 4. Oral corrective feedback preferences (always-never)					
			Always/ Usually	**Sometimes**	**Seldom/ Never**
Frequency of feedback	Always/usually correct my errors	*f*	288	51	9
		%	82.7	14.7	2.6
Types of errors to be treated	Serious errors	*f*	311	34	3
		%	89.4	9.8	.9
	Frequent errors	*f*	302	37	6
		%	82.7	10.6	1.7
	Individual errors	*f*	167	112	69
		%	47.9	32.2	19.8
	Less serious errors	*f*	144	132	72
		%	41.4	37.9	20.7
	Infrequent errors	*f*	111	105	132
		%	31.9	30.2	38.0

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Table 5. Oral corrective preferences (very effective-very ineffective)					
			Very effective/ Effective	**Neutral**	**Ineffective/ Very ineffective**
Types of feedback	Explicit	*f*	2,894	37	19
		%	83.6	10.6	6.3
	Clarification	*f*	291	36	21
		%	83.6	10.3	6.0
	Elicitation	*f*	262	57	29
		%	75.3	16.4	8.3
	Repetition	*f*	265	56	27
		%	76.2	16.1	7.8
	Metalinguistic	*f*	222	80	46
		%	43.8	23.0	13.2
	Implicit	*f*	214	79	55
		%	61.5	22.7	15.8

repetition, implicit feedback, explicit feedback, elicitation, no feedback, metalinguistic feedback and *recast*—the most favored types of feedback were found to be explicit feedback (43.6%, *f* = 169) and clarification (83.6%, *f* = 291), followed by elicitation (75.3%, *f* = 262), repetition (76.2%, *f* = 265), metalinguistic feedback (63.8%, *f* = 222), implicit feedback (61.5%, *f* = 214), recast (60.9%, *f* = 212) and no feedback (9.2%, *f* = 32).

3.2. Results of research question 2: how are the learning styles of the students distributed according to Kolb's learning style model?

According to the results of the inventory, nearly half of the students (46.6%) possessed "assimilator" learning styles. Furthermore, 27.9% of the students were "convergers," 17.5% "divergers" and 8% "accommodators."

3.3. Results of research question 3: does the concept of learning styles account for Turkish EFL learners' preferences for oral corrective feedback?

This section presents the results of Chi-square analysis, which was utilized to determine whether the relationship between preferences for oral corrective feedback and learning styles is significant. The results pertaining to *Research Question 3* are presented in accordance with the six sections of the FPQ in Table 6 below.

The results of statistical analysis indicate that learning styles and preferences for oral corrective feedback are independent variables, as shown in Table 6 ($p > .05$). It appears that the students had similar preferences for oral corrective feedback regardless of learning style. It can be stated that Kolb's

Table 6. Learning styles and preferences for oral corrective feedback	
Section	**Chi-square test results**
Necessity of feedback	$p > .05$
Frequency of feedback	$p > .05$
Timing of feedback	$p > .05$
Types of errors to be treated	$p > .05$
Types of feedback	$p > .05$
Source of feedback	$p > .05$

concept of learning styles does not provide an explanation for the nature of preferences for oral corrective feedback.

4. Discussion

Unlike researchers who emphasize that feedback is detrimental to the learning process (Krashen, 1982; Truscott, 1999), the results of this study indicate that students strongly prefer to receive oral corrective feedback. This expectation on behalf of learners therefore supports the view that feedback plays a significant role in teaching and learning (Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Ramsden, 1992). Nevertheless, educators should be cognizant of the fact that frequently correcting spoken errors may hinder the flow of communication, lead to restlessness and demoralize learners during oral communication activities (Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2005).

The most preferred timing (*M* = 4.08) for feedback was "*after I finish speaking*" followed by "*as soon as errors are made*" (*M* = 3.03), similar to the results of several other studies (Genç, 2014; Park, 2010; Rashti & Tous, 2016). The majority of the learners did not want their teachers to interrupt them while speaking, and they expected to have a chance to finish their oral utterances. Learners strongly preferred to receive feedback "*after I finish speaking,*" which corresponds with the results of related studies.

In addition to having high expectations for the timing of feedback, learners also expected all types of errors to be treated in some way. It can also be inferred that students perceived any type of error as a threat to their learning processes and thought that these errors could cause misunderstandings.

Similar to the above, Taheri and Khanlarzadeh (2016) also have reported that students expect treatment for all local and global errors. On the other hand, Park (2010) has noted the difference between students and teachers in terms of types of the errors to be corrected. He reported that students expect their teachers to correct any type of error, while teachers prefer to correct only frequent and serious errors. These findings are also in line with some other previous studies (Park, 2010; Rashti & Tous, 2016)

The findings regarding the methods of providing corrective feedback are consistent with similar studies in literature. Rashti and Tous (2016) reported that the most valued feedback types among learners are elicitation and explicit feedback. Park (2010) and Gürbüz (2013) also have observed that learners favor explicit feedback and elicitation more than other feedback types. Several other studies have also reported that explicit feedback is a common preference among learners (Atma & Widiati, 2016; Genç, 2014; Kim, 2015; Öztürk, 2016).

In light of the above findings, students may favor explicit feedback due to a form-focused rather than communicative perception, as they expect their teachers to provide grammatical explanation. Similarly, the negative attitudes of learners toward recasts, the least favored type of feedback in this study after "no feedback," can also be explained by the nature of recasts. Oliver and Mackey (2003) have asserted that the highest amount of uptake is obtained through recasts during communication-focused activities. Learners in this study may have thought recasts to be ineffective because they perceive themselves as grammar-focused learners.

The results indicate that students strongly believe in the effectiveness of teachers and self-correction as sources of feedback; however, they do not trust their peers as sources of correction. As suggested by Paulus (1999), teachers can be considered as a usual and continuous source for delivering feedback. The findings seem to correlate with the results of Schulz (2001), who reported that majority of the learners favor their teachers more as a source of feedback. Park (2010) also has found out that learners prefer their teachers to provide feedback and that classmates are the least favorable sources. Several other researchers have reported similar results in reference to the sources to delivering feedback (Fukuda, 2004; Genç, 2014; Rashti & Tous, 2016; Taheri & Khanlarzadeh, 2016).

Considering the characteristics of learning styles, it seems that the majority of learners in this study, who tended to have assimilator learning styles, tried to find answers to the question "What?" while learning. Abstract concepts and ideas are significant for assimilator learners and these learners perform better in classrooms with traditional teaching methods as they prefer to learn by watching and feeling (Kolb, 1984). The high number of assimilator learners in this study and in a Turkish context in general may be simply a coincidence; however, this is open to debate. Since the most distinguished characteristic of assimilators is learning through observation (Reflective Observation) and abstract concepts (AC), these learners tend to be passive in the classroom as these characteristics do not require active involvement. When considering the characteristics of the educational system in Turkey, a report published by the British Council on English language education in Turkey has argued that, in Turkey, English is not taught as a means of communication but as a subject (TEPAV & British Council, 2013). The report claimed that the majority of classrooms observed had a teacher-centered setting. Therefore, it can be suggested that the ways in which individuals learn may be shaped by the methods of instruction and strategies implemented by their teachers, as also stated by Kurbal (2011).

To the best of the researcher's knowledge, no existing study has examined learning styles in relation to preferences for oral corrective feedback. Therefore, this finding provides a basis for further research. However, the results are consistent with some other studies focusing on the relationship between learning styles and aspects similar to feedback preferences, such as learning preferences. Halaçoğlu (1999) and Loo (2004) have claimed that there exists no significant relationship between learning preferences and learning styles. Zeng (2006) also has asserted that learners who have different learning styles according to Kolb's experiential theory do not differ from each other in terms of their opinions and preferences for a particular type of instructional method. Yilmaz-Soylu and Akkoyunlu (2009) investigated the effect of learning styles on student achievement in different learning settings, and they reported no difference in the achievement scores of the students with different learning styles. Aliakbari and Qasemi (2012) studied the relationship between learning style and level of English proficiency and found no difference between them. On the other hand, some studies have reported a relationship between learning style and variables, such as school achievement (Busato, Prins, Elshout, & Hamaker, 1998; Olić & Adamov, 2016), study habits (Kayacık, 2013) and gender (Philbin, Meier, Huffman, & Boverie, 1995; Severiens & Ten Dam, 1994).

In combination with the above research findings, it can be inferred that differences in learning styles may be observed in some dimensions. However, studies have also shown that there exists no difference among individuals with different learning styles in some other dimensions, such as learning preferences, school achievement and, as this study suggests, preferences for oral corrective feedback.

5. Conclusion

Like many other studies conducted in a Turkish educational context, the results of the current study related to the distribution of learning styles support the claim of Aşkar and Akkoyunlu (1993), who argue that the most common learning style in Turkey is that of an assimilator and the least common one is that of an accommodator. Aşkar and Akkoyunlu (1993) suggestion that Kolb's Learning Style Inventory is appropriate in Turkey has also been supported by the results of the current study.

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the concept of learning styles in relation to preferences for oral corrective feedback. However, the results indicate that learners positioned in different parts of Kolb's learning cycle do not significantly differ from each other in terms of their feedback preferences. Thus, it can be concluded that Kolb's theory of learning styles may not be useful in comprehending some aspects of learning, such as feedback preferences. It has been observed that learning styles do not help to explain the nature of feedback preferences, and it is still difficult to understand why learners have different preferences for feedback. These findings correspond with those of other studies (Aliakbari & Qasemi, 2012; Halaçoğlu, 1999; Loo, 2004; Yilmaz-Soylu & Akkoyunlu, 2009; Zeng, 2006), which have demonstrated that students with different learning styles often do not differ from each other in certain circumstances. Therefore, teachers should be able to utilize a variety of methods and techniques, as well as vary their teaching methods. As Loo (2004) suggests, particular

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methods should not be associated with particular learning styles and learners should be encouraged to be open to different practices. Rather than altering teaching methods according to the learning styles of students, it is more productive to evaluate these strategies in terms of timing and reason for use (Yilmaz-Soylu & Akkoyunlu, 2009). Therefore, practitioners and interpreters of learning style inventories should be careful not to categorize students without considering additional factors.

The findings of this study also demonstrate that learners are sensitive about their errors and expect their teachers to provide corrective feedback for their serious and frequent spoken errors through different strategies in terms of type and source of feedback. Although teachers adopt different approaches for giving feedback, they should shape their approaches by considering students' expectations. As noted by Bada and Okan (2000), teachers should contemplate the expectations and preferences of their students, who themselves should be given opportunities to express their expectations.

This study's findings have several pedagogical implications for EFL instructors in Turkey. First, these teachers should provide a learning atmosphere in which their students feel assured that their errors are noticed and corrected when necessary. Frequent and serious errors should be the focus of error correction and teachers should avoid providing feedback for every error. They should adopt the aforementioned Goldilocks principle which proposes a "not too much, not too little, but just right" approach to error correction (as cited in Brookhart, 2008). When learners have a variety of preferences for types of feedback, teachers should have the capacity, awareness and knowledge to meet the expectations of the learners.

Teachers should also refrain from interrupting learners' speech for the sake of error correction and, instead, allow them to complete their speech, as learners do not want to be interrupted. Moreover, it has been proven that direct interruption is not a natural method of corrective feedback (Amara, 2015). Nevertheless, if teachers think feedback on a particular error is necessary, they can make use of the recast feedback method, a more natural correction method that involves communication without direct interruption. Finally, teachers should guide and assist learners to improve their self-correction skills, as learners sometimes want to be given opportunities to correct their own errors.

Further studies should continue investigating students' oral corrective feedback preferences in order to contribute to an understanding the nature of feedback. Experimental and ethnographic studies may be conducted in order to include students with different learning styles and to analyse how these students react to different types of feedback practices. Student interviews can also be performed in order to obtain more reliable data regarding learners' preferences for oral corrective feedback.

The potential limitations of this study include the absence of studies directly investigating learning styles in relation to feedback preferences, which has made it difficult to compare the results of this study. Moreover, students may have interpreted the questionnaire items in different manners. Therefore, a certain level of subjectivity, which cannot be determined, should be taken into consideration (Ackroyd, 1992).

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