Oral Corrective Feedback in University EFL Contexts: The Interplay Between Students' and Teacher's Beliefs

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Abstract This exploratory study aimed at (a) identifying and comparing the beliefs of a class of seven EFL students and their teacher in relation to oral corrective feedback (OCF) within the context of a university English language course, (b) identifying students' emotional response to OCF, and (c) determining how students' and the teacher's beliefs about OCF interplayed in the classroom. Qualitative data were gathered by means of semi-structured interviews and videotaped classroom observations. The results showed that the students' and teacher's beliefs were largely in agreement regarding the reception and provision of OCF. Students and their teacher shared the beliefs that OCF contributed to language learning and agreed that the most effective ways of providing and receiving OCF were (a) avoiding interruptions to provide OCF while students speak, (b) encouraging students to achieve self-correction by providing output-prompting OCF strategies, and (c) providing OCF which does not generate negative emotions. As regards their emotional responses to OCF, the students showed a range of mixed emotions towards the reception of OCF. Besides, the teacher was aware of the impact OCF could have on students' emotions and on their classroom oral participation.

Keywords Oral corrective feedback · Teacher beliefs · Learner beliefs · University students' emotions

1 Introduction

The need to communicate orally in English to have access to better professional prospects is essential for Argentinean university students. Therefore, how to better develop university students' speaking skills becomes a major concern for English as

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a foreign language (EFL) teachers. One way to help students become more effective communicators is by providing corrective feedback on students' errors when delivering oral messages. It has been acknowledged that the oral corrective feedback (OCF) provided by teachers is of great importance for students' language development (Ellis, 2017; Lyster & Saito, 2010; Mori, 2011), and that students' eagerly look forward to receiving evaluative comments on their oral productions from their teachers (Kartchava, 2016; Martínez Agudo, 2012, 2013; Schulz, 2001). Furthermore, the emotional impact that the provision of OCF might cause on students' classroom participation is starting to gain attention (Ellis, 2017; Méndez López, 2016; Nassaji & Kartchava, 2017; Pekrun, 2014; Roothooft & Breeze, 2016).

An important distinction must be made between error correction[1] (EC) and OCF. Lyster (2018) explains that "teachers actually cannot correct students' errors, but they provide feedback and it is up to the students to ultimately correct their errors" (R. Lyster, personal communication, April 17, 2018). Regarding the study of beliefs about OCF in the field of FL, researchers have recently examined teachers' beliefs about the provision of OCF in FL classes (e.g., Ayedh & Khaled, 2011; Battistella & Santos Lima, 2015; Pessôa & Santos Lima, 2019), and teachers' beliefs as well as their impact on their practices (e.g., Alkhammash & Gulnaz, 2019; Bao, 2019; Dilāns, 2016; Sánchez Centeno & Ponce, 2019). In addition, investigations have also been undertaken regarding students' beliefs and/or emotional responses to OCF in FL contexts (e.g., Akiyama, 2017; Elsaghayer, 2014; Kartchava, 2016; Kartchava & Ammar, 2014; Martínez Agudo, 2013; Santos Gargallo & Chaparro, 2014; Zhang & Rahimi, 2014) and comparison between teachers' and students' beliefs about OCF have also been made (e.g., Brown, 2009; Da Silva & Figueiredo, 2006; Farahani & Salajegheh, 2015; Garcia-Ponce & Mora-Pablo, 2017). However, very few studies have explored and compared teachers' and students' beliefs and emotions about OCF in FL classrooms (Roothooft & Breeze, 2016; Santos Gargallo & Alexopoulou, 2014). This also applies to studies that have explored and compared students' and teachers' beliefs about OCF in EFL classes at the university level.

This research study sets out to explore EFL students' and their teacher's beliefs in relation to the reception and provision of OCF at an EFL language classroom at university level. It is exploratory in nature and aimed at (a) identifying and comparing the beliefs of seven students and their teacher in relation to OCF within the context of a university EFL course and (b) determining how their beliefs about OCF interplayed in the EFL university classroom. These objectives led to the following research questions:

1. What are the beliefs held by seven EFL university students about OCF and their emotional reactions to it? (RQ1)
2. What are the beliefs held by an EFL university teacher about OCF? (RQ2)
3. How do the students' and the teacher's beliefs about OCF feedback interplay in the EFL classroom? (RQ3)

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[1]Throughout this paper, the concept of *error correction* is also sometimes used interchangeably with *corrective feedback*; in addition, the concepts of *error* and *mistake* are also employed interchangeably.

2 Literature Review

From a contextual perspective (Barcelos, 2003), beliefs are defined as "a form of thought, constructions of reality, ways of seeing and perceiving the world and its phenomena which are co-constructed with our experiences and which result from an interactive process of interpretation and (re)signification, and of being in the world and doing things with others" (Barcelos, 2014, as cited in Kalaja et al., 2015, p. 10). In turn, emotions are defined as "the primary human motive" which functions as an "amplifier, providing the intensity, urgency, and energy to propel our behavior in everything we do" (MacIntyre, 2002, p. 61). The complex relationship between beliefs and emotions is one of interaction and reciprocity, not one of causality (Barcelos, 2015). By the same token, Barcelos (2015) asserts that "understanding the relationship between beliefs and emotions can help us understand how together these influence teachers' and learners' actions" (p. 304). One of the most recent definitions of corrective feedback has been provided by Nassaji and Kartchava (2017), in which it is described as the "utterances that indicate to the learner that his or her output is erroneous in some way" (p. ix). The emphasis placed on beliefs and corrective feedback in language settings has led researchers to refer to *beliefs about corrective feedback* as "attitudes, views, opinions, or stances learners and teachers hold about the utility of CF in second language (L2) learning and teaching and how it should be implemented in the classroom" (Li, 2017, p. 143). Overall, these definitions provide the theoretical framework within which this study was carried out.

Corrective feedback is considered "one of the most powerful influences on learning and achievement" (Hattie & Timperley, 2007, p. 81) and "one of the major classroom instructional responsibilities for second language teachers" (Mori, 2011, p. 451). For these reasons, the study of OCF is of great significance for the field of second and foreign language (L2) teaching and learning. In addition, many researchers have stressed the importance of studying teachers' beliefs in relation to OCF (Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2005; Lyster & Mori, 2006; Mori, 2002; Sheen, 2004), and they have also suggested that looking for additional information can provide more depth to the understanding of OCF practices in the classroom context. As important as teachers' beliefs about OCF are those held by students, since they are a fundamental gearing of this complex machinery that is the EFL classroom. In consequence, students' beliefs about OCF should also be considered (Cohen & Fass, 2001; Da Silva & Figueiredo, 2006; Farahani & Salajegheh, 2015; Kartchava, 2016; Schulz, 2001) in order to determine whether students and teachers' beliefs about OCF converge or are in conflict. Being cognizant of this, teachers would have a better chance at guiding their students to successful language learning; otherwise, mismatches could create potential conflicts in the processes of L2 teaching and learning (Brown, 2009). Even though it has been recognized that teachers and students' beliefs have an important impact on the teaching and learning processes, research studies are still scarce. In the following, a summary of previous studies about the comparison between EFL teachers and students' beliefs about OCF in EFL classrooms is provided.

Several studies have focused on teachers' beliefs about OCF and their relationship with classroom practices (e.g., Carazzai & Santin, 2007; Farrokhi, 2007; Junqueira & Kim, 2013; Kamiya, 2016; Mori, 2002, 2011; Sánchez Centeno & Ponce, 2019; Sepehrinia & Mehdizadeh, 2016; Sepehrinia et al., 2020), while others have concentrated on students' beliefs about OCF (e.g., Kartchava, 2016; Kartchava & Ammar, 2014; Martínez Agudo, 2012; Zhang & Rahimi, 2014). However, not many studies have compared EFL teachers and students' beliefs about the provision and reception of OCF in EFL university classes. Garcia-Ponce and Mora-Pablo (2017), Farahani and Salajegheh (2015), Da Silva and Figueiredo (2006), Cohen and Fass (2001), and Schulz (2001) are among the few researchers who have dealt with the issue.

In their exploratory study, Garcia-Ponce and Mora-Pablo (2017) investigated the interplay between teacher and peer provision of OCF and the effects of their beliefs during classroom interactions at a Mexican EFL university context. They collected data by recording classroom interactions, administering teacher interviews and implementing learner focus groups. The results confirmed that the amount of OCF was scarce or absent during classroom interactions despite the high number of errors that were identified in the interactional data. In addition, it was found that the teachers' and learners' beliefs about OCF were in conflict. In general, the three teachers and 63 learners valued the role of OCF, but it was perceived by both parties as inhibiting learners and limiting their oral production. Even though teachers and learners believed that the provision and reception of OCF was of considerable importance for L2 development, this belief was not reflected in the classroom because both groups also believed that the provision of OCF on learners' erroneous utterances may be perceived as face-threatening. These conflicting beliefs deter teachers and peer learners from providing OCF. The researchers highlight the need to reflect upon the importance of OCF in the EFL classroom to find the way to develop a positive attitude towards and reaction to initiating and receiving CF.

Farahani and Salajegheh's (2015) study aimed at investigating teachers and students' beliefs regarding the provision and reception of OCF, the frequency for offering and receiving spoken error correction, and the types of spoken errors that need to be corrected. The results showed an agreement between teachers and students on most of the questions. However, there were some discrepancies between teachers and students' beliefs specifically related to the frequency of OCF. Farahani and Salajegheh inferred that these discrepancies might be evident when different teaching methodologies are employed in the language classroom. The findings indicated that to select an appropriate OCF strategy in the correct moment, teachers should consider the social and situational context and take into account the factors that may play a role in the teaching–learning processes, such as students' level, age, needs, skills, time, materials, etc. This is because students' L2 learning can be hampered if their beliefs about the role of error correction are not heeded and their expectations cannot be met. These authors affirmed that it is the teacher's responsibility to examine his or her students' beliefs about OCF to improve language learning and to ascertain whether student preferences or pedagogical practices were to be changed to prevent conflicts. Furthermore, the researchers concluded that if students' expectations are not met, there might be a decrease in student motivation and teacher credibility since

they perceive the teacher as a specialist whose role is to teach the language and provide feedback.

Similarly, Da Silva and Figueiredo (2006) sought to identify beliefs related to oral and written error correction provided by two Brazilian public school EFL teachers and compare them to some of their students' beliefs. Amongst the conclusions reached, they reported that the teachers' prior experiences as EFL students influenced their daily classroom practices, as well as the ways they dealt with error correction. The participant teachers believed that the best way of providing OCF on their students' mistakes was direct correction, without giving any extra explanation. Such beliefs were shared by some of the students, but conflicted with some others, who were convinced, for example, that they should be given the opportunity to find and produce a correct utterance before being given the right answer. The results highlighted the importance of offering teachers opportunities to get to know, reflect on, discuss and question their beliefs in general, not only those about error correction, in order to improve the teaching and learning processes.

Cohen and Fass (2001) carried out research at a private Colombian university with the purpose of examining the beliefs and practices of 43 teachers and 63 students of EFL regarding the teaching, learning and assessment of the speaking skill. Data revealed that pronunciation and grammar were the most frequent aspects of the language that teachers considered when assessing students orally. Moreover, there was no prevalent method among teachers for giving feedback; instead, they preferred using the assessment tasks provided in the textbook. The researchers concluded that the beliefs held by teachers and students did not reflect the communicative approach to L2 teaching which the teachers reported following in their classroom practices. In consequence, they proposed that teacher training programs should incorporate tools and strategies aimed at helping teachers to enact their beliefs in the classroom and match their students' beliefs to avoid incongruity.

Schulz (2001) investigated teachers and students' beliefs about grammar instruction and error correction across US and Colombian cultures. In relation to error correction, students from both cultures expressed strong expectations concerning their teachers' provision of oral error correction and most of them expressed a preference for their teachers to correct their oral errors in class. With respect to teachers' perceptions, there was a discrepancy between the Colombian and US groups about the desirability of providing feedback on oral errors. Only half of the teachers from both cultures believed that oral errors should be corrected in class, which reveals a mismatch between students and teachers' expectations regarding OCF. Schulz concluded that it is the teachers' responsibility to tap students' beliefs and expectations to either help modify what students believe or to adjust their own instructional practices to meet the students' expectations.

The investigations carried out by Garcia-Ponce and Mora-Pablo (2017), Farahani and Salajegheh (2015), Da Silva and Figueiredo (2006), Cohen and Fass (2001), and Schulz (2001) emphasized the importance of studying teachers' and students' beliefs about OCF. They highlighted the importance of providing students with the opportunity of getting to know and reflecting upon their beliefs about OCF to improve the EFL teaching and learning processes. Most of the researchers emphasized that it

is teachers' responsibility to find a common ground between their students' beliefs and actual classroom practices in order to meet learners' expectations. The results provided by these studies call for further research on these critical issues. Therefore, the present study attempts to gain insights into the interplay between students' and a teacher's beliefs about OCF in uncontrolled EFL classroom interactions to enhance the opportunities to provide students with better learning opportunities.

3   Method

This study falls under the qualitative paradigm. Data come from an MA titled *A teacher and her students' beliefs about oral corrective feedback in the EFL classroom at university level: A case study* (Sánchez Centeno, 2016), which was written by the first and supervised by the second author of this paper. It documented OCF beliefs of a teacher and seven students collected by means of a semi-structured interview, stimulated recall and video-recordings of classes (see Sánchez Centeno & Ponce, 2019). In this article, data from the semi-structured student interview, the semi-structured teacher interview and four videotaped classroom observations are presented.

3.1   Context of the Study and Participants

The present study took place at the National University of Río Cuarto (hereafter UNRC). This is a medium-sized public university located in the province of Córdoba, in the central part of Argentina. Among the academic programs offered by the Language Department at the Faculty of Humanities we find *Tecnicatura en Lenguas Inglés – Francés*,[2] a three-year program which aims at preparing professionals competent in communicating in English and French as foreign languages. During the course of studies, students attend Spanish, French and English language courses, among others. As regards the English language, they attend three successive courses (English Language I, II and III) which take students from a pre-intermediate level to an upper-intermediate level (or from B1 to B2, according to the Council of Europe, 2018).

This study was conducted in English Language III course. This is a 26 week-long course taught eight hours per week during the whole academic year in the third and last year of the program. The course syllabus informs that its general aim is to form competent students who can effectively communicate in English to understand and produce oral and written texts in the following genres: expositive, descriptive, narrative and argumentative. In addition, students are made conscious of the degree

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[2]For more information about this program, visit the website: https://www.unrc.edu.ar/unrc/carreras/hum_tecnicatura_lenguas.php.

of formality and principles of politeness expressed in the English language. The teaching approach adopted in this course is a combination of communicative and intercultural approaches in which students become aware of their own culture to be able to compare it to the target culture under study (Byram et al., 2002; Puren, 2004).

The participants of this study were an EFL teacher in charge of English III and seven students attending the course during the year 2015. Patton (2015) defines this sampling strategy as a complete *target population* since it "involves interviewing and/or observing everyone within a group of interest" (p. 639). Raquel (pseudonym), the 38-year-old EFL teacher was an experienced full-time teacher with more than 15 years teaching EFL. The seven participating students volunteered to take part in this study. They were all female and their ages ranged from 21 to 60 years old. It is important to mention that the teacher and her students shared Spanish as their mother tongue.

3.2 Instrument and Data Collection Procedure

Qualitative case study methodology was adopted to inquire into the stories of individuals to capture and understand their perspectives (Patton, 2015). Two types of data were collected: perceptual data (i.e., a semi-structured student and teacher interviews) and interactional data (i.e., videotaped classroom interactions). The semi-structured interviews were designed for the purpose of gathering demographic information and exploring student and teacher beliefs about OCF, and consisted of four demographic questions and ten guiding questions (see Appendix A and B). The teacher interview was designed and administered in English, whereas the student interview was conducted in Spanish so that participants could express themselves fluently and confidently. All the responses were transcribed verbatim and in their original language and translated into English by the authors of this article. The videotaped classroom observations captured teacher-student interactions, the types of OCF strategies employed by the teacher, the teacher's and students' body language, the tone of their voices, teacher-student rapport and classroom environment, with the ultimate aim of determining whether the teacher's and her students' beliefs and emotions were reflected in the language classroom.

A pilot study was conducted to ensure the clarity and effectiveness of the questions and statements in the teacher and student semi-structured interview before the final implementation. This further enhanced the validity of this study. It is also important to highlight that the purpose of this study was not completely disclosed to the participants until the data collection process had finished to avoid any possible behavioral changes in Raquel's teaching practices and the students' spontaneous oral participation in the observed classes. Instead, they were informed that the research goal was to examine general teaching techniques, as was previously done by Junqueira and Kim (2013) and Mori (2002, 2011). For this reason, the data collection phase started with the videotaped classroom observations. Four lessons were observed and videotaped during the months of May and June 2015, constituting a total of approximately 12 h.

After the last videotaped session took place, the semi-structured student interview (SSSI) and the semi-structured teacher interview (SSTI) were administered. Data collection took place during scheduled class time in June 2015. The interviews were administered individually and audio recorded.

3.3   Data Analysis Procedures

Once the participants' answers to the semi-structured interviews were fully transcribed, the qualitative data obtained was analyzed using content analysis. The purpose of content analysis was to identify the students' and teacher's beliefs and emotions towards the provision and reception of OCF. The themes identified will be highlighted in bold and italics so that it is easier for the reader to follow the data analysis.

The data obtained from the students' answers was organized in order to carry out a cross-case analysis. Whereas the teacher's answers were arranged by specific cases for in-depth study and comparison, which is defined as case analysis (Patton, 2015). In relation to the data obtained from the videotaped classroom observations, interaction analysis (McKay, 2006) was carried out (see Sánchez Centeno & Ponce, 2019, for the results of the interaction analysis). During the process of data analysis, we constantly kept an open mind to be alert to the emergence of new categories. This enabled us to gain a holistic interpretation of the data and a comprehensive understanding of the influences of the context on the teacher and students' beliefs about OCF.

4   Results and Discussion

4.1   What Are the Beliefs Held by EFL University Students About OCF and Their Emotional Reactions to It? (RQ1)

The answer to the first research question was drawn from the student's semi-structured interview data. The results were arranged according to the following themes: 1) students' beliefs about the role of errors and OCF in language learning, and 2) students' beliefs about the most effective OCF strategy.

As regards students' beliefs about the role of errors and OCF, the following examples illustrate the students' beliefs in relation to making mistakes and receiving feedback:

Excerpt 1

I have always liked being corrected because in that way I try to find a better way of expressing my ideas and I learn at the same time. [Siempre me gustó que me corrijan porque de esa

forma uno intenta buscar otra forma para decirlo y una mejor forma y va aprendiendo]. (Lucía, SSSI)

Excerpt 2

*We **learn from mistakes**… one should always find a way to improve. If it is wrong, **we are corrected** so that we can **get our meanings through.** [De los errores viene el aprendizaje, siempre hay que buscar una manera de mejorar. Si está mal, nos corrigen para que lo digamos bien].* (Ana, SSSI)

Excerpt 3

*If you do **not make mistakes**, you **won't learn** [Si uno no se equivoca no aprende].* (Valentina, SSSI)

When analyzing these data, we observed that the students hold the following beliefs: a) making mistakes was inherent in the language learning process, and b) receiving corrective feedback helps students progress: "We learn from mistakes (…) If it is wrong, we are corrected so that we can get our meanings through" (Excerpt 2); "If you do not make mistakes, you won't learn" (Excerpt 3). These interrelated beliefs are two inseparable aspects of learning. Errors are inevitable and the presence of a more knowledgeable other, in this case the teacher, is necessary to provide OCF. The students' voices led us to consider that their beliefs may prompt them to assume a positive attitude towards their mistakes and the provision of OCF. This might put them in an advantageous position where they learn from their mistakes rather than just avoiding them and feeling frustrated (cf. Ayedh & Khaled, 2011; Martínez Agudo, 2012).

When the students were asked about what they considered the most effective OCF strategy, the majority were puzzled as they were not aware of the different ways that teachers could use to provide OCF. Therefore, they were guided with prompts like: "Think about what your teacher does or says when you make a mistake." They made the following comments:

Excerpt 4

*I prefer that **the teacher makes me think about my mistakes** so I **can discover them and self-correct**. [Que te hagan pensar, entonces uno mismo, a partir de los conocimientos que ya viene teniendo puede realizar su propia corrección].* (Lucía, SSSI)

Excerpt 5

*I believe it is great **to be given the chance to think about our mistakes**, because if the teacher gives you the right answer straight away, **we might make the same mistake over and over again**. [Creo que está bueno que nos hagan pensar para recordar ¿no? Porque si ahí nomás la profe nos da la respuesta, a lo mejor otra vez volvemos a tener el mismo error cuando pasa el tiempo].* (Carolina, SSSI)

Excerpt 6

*I like when the teacher provides OCF **on common mistakes** produced by many students in the class. I also like when **she uses the blackboard** to explain. I like when the teacher provides the **phonemic transcription** instead of the **repetition of the correct way** of pronouncing a given word. [Me gusta cuando se corrige al frente de todos y me gusta mucho que usen el pizarrón, no que sea tan al aire. Me gusta que escriba la fonética de una palabra que no entendí o no sé cómo se pronuncia, más que me la repitan].* (Ana, SSSI)

As can be seen from the excerpts, the students believed that the teacher should not provide the right answer immediately after the mistake is made but make them think about it: "I believe it is great to be given the chance to think about our mistakes, because if the teacher gives you the right answer straight away, we might make the same mistake over and over again" (Excerpt 5). Besides, they believe that the teacher should provide longer and more detailed explanations. For example, Ana believes that the teacher should take her time to gather all the common mistakes produced by the class and then write them on the blackboard so that students will be able to see the mistakes and work on them. Ana emphasizes that she likes when the teacher "uses the blackboard to explain." On the basis of the students' comments, it could be inferred that they believed that output-prompting types of OCF (Ellis, 2009), such as clarification requests, elicitations, repetitions, metalinguistic explanations and paralinguistic signals, were the most effective. This can be seen in their eagerness to be given the opportunity to self-correct and produce the right form, instead of being given the answer directly without any explanation. It is important to highlight that none of the students could verbalize any of the OCF strategies.

Continuing with the students' beliefs about the most effective way in which OCF should be handled in the EFL classroom, the participants agreed that OCF should be provided after the student has delivered the message, thus avoiding interruptions. Their comments were as follows:

Excerpt 7

*I prefer **the teacher to let me finish**, even if what I'm saying is wrong. Otherwise, I forget what I was saying or I get **confused**. [Prefiero terminar lo que estoy diciendo aunque lo diga mal, porque si no me voy del hilo y me olvido lo que voy a decir o me empiezo a confundir]. (Vanina, SSSI)*

Excerpt 8

*When I am speaking, I **wouldn't like to be interrupted** every time I make a mistake because it is **tedious**, **I would like to finish my idea**. [Cuando estoy hablando, no me gustaría que me interrumpan cada vez que digo una palabra porque es un poquito tedioso, pero si es posible al finalizar oraciones]. (Lucía, SSSI)*

Excerpt 9

*When we are reading a text aloud and the **teacher keeps interrupting to provide feedback**, sometimes it's a bit **frustrating**. [Cuando estamos leyendo un texto y ahí no más nos van corrigiendo sobre la marcha a veces esto es medio frustrante]. (Carolina, SSSI)*

As the comments show, the students believe that they should not be interrupted to receive OCF so that they will not lose their train of thought and they can express their whole idea. It seems that students interpret the teacher's interruption as not being favorable for their L2 learning. This finding goes in line with Tasdemir and Yalçın Arslan (2018), who concluded that "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" (p. 12).

As can be seen, this group of students believed that errors are inherent in learning, that OCF helps students to progress, that the teacher should give students the opportunity to self-correct, that they should not be interrupted with OCF while speaking,

and that teachers should provide detailed explanations about their mistakes. The beliefs about the most effective types of OCF held by this group of students might also put them in an advantageous position where they can learn the target language through discovery and self-awareness. These findings are consistent with the results reported by Martínez Agudo (2012), Yoshida (2008) and Lasagabaster and Sierra (2005). Martínez Agudo (2012) found that most of the EFL students interviewed believed that they should be corrected after delivering their message. In addition, Yoshida (2008) stated that students considered self-correction to be more effective for learning than the provision of correct forms, and Lasagabaster and Sierra (2005) found that students preferred the teacher to take more time, provide longer explanations and use different types of OCF, so they could get more time for self-correction and engage in more effective learning.

An emergent theme were the emotions reported by the students when receiving OCF, some reporting favorable and some reporting unfavorable emotional states. This can be seen in the extracts from excerpts previously mentioned. In Excerpt 7, Vanina mentioned: "I prefer the teacher to let me finish, even if what I'm saying is wrong. Otherwise, I forget what I was saying or I get **confused**." In Excerpt Lucía commented: "When I am speaking, I wouldn't like to be interrupted every time I make a mistake because it is **tedious**." Carolina in turn said that when "the teacher keeps interrupting to provide feedback, sometimes it's a bit **frustrating**." Other comments were as follows:

> Excerpt 10
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> **I don't feel bad**, *it is better to get CF so that I can learn from it; otherwise, I will continue repeating the same mistake. It is better for me to get CF. [No me siento mal, es más, mejor que me lo marque así yo lo aprendo, si no lo voy a seguir repitiendo mal y voy a seguir con el mismo error, por eso, es mejor que me lo corrija]. (Micaela, SSSI)*

> Excerpt 11
>
> **I don't feel bad at all**. **I don't mind being corrected**, *because I am here to learn. They are supposed to do so to help me improve my English.* **If I were upset about receiving CF, I would have to stop attending classes**. *[No, no me siento mal, digamos. O sea, no me molesta que me corrijan porque yo vengo a aprender, o sea que, se supone que están para eso, para ayudarme a progresar a corregirme. Si me molestara que me corrigieran… bueno, tendría que ahí nomás dejar de venir]. (Mariana, SSSI)*

> Excerpt 12
>
> **I don't feel bad**, *I like improving. Sometimes* **I feel a bit frustrated** *when I forget and make a mistake that it has been marked before. I have one word that I keep saying it wrongly all the time. [No me siento mal, digamos, o sea. Me gusta siempre avanzar, me veo tal vez un poco frustrada cuando me olvido, porque muchas veces tengo una palabra que la digo mil veces y las mil veces la digo mal]. (Ana, SSSI)*

As we can see from the excerpts, some students experienced unfavorable emotions when receiving OCF, such as confusion, frustration and tediousness (Excerpts 7, 8, and 9). These emotions derived from the way the teacher provided OCF by, for example, interrupting students. In other cases, the emotional response was originated by the students' realization that the form in focus had not been incorporated yet (Excerpt 12). Other students consider feedback an integral part of L2 learning and

therefore experience joy and comfort in response to the ways in which the teacher provides feedback. For example, Micaela, Mariana and Ana did not report negative feelings associated with the provision of OCF (Excerpts 10, 11 and 12).

Previous studies have shown that students' beliefs and emotions intertwine in a non-linear way (Barcelos, 2015). Many authors have explained that emotions caused by OCF are dependent on how OCF is provided in the classroom (Ellis, 2017; Smith, 2010; Yoshida, 2010). Students sometimes find the criticism associated with OCF difficult to handle, which makes them resist or reject it (Ayedh & Khaled, 2011). In this study, students' unfavorable emotions were related not so much to this aspect, but rather to the teacher's interruptions when offering OCF. According to Mendez López (2016), OCF is one of the most influential causes of emotional experience in the language classroom. In this same vein, Ellis (2017) claims that corrective feedback "needs to be undertaken with care and tact to avoid negative affective response in students'" (p. 13). Therefore, being able to let our students express their beliefs and emotions about OCF can help us adjust our OCF practices and foster students' positive attitude towards them, which can help them capitalize on such pedagogic intervention.

4.2 What Are the Beliefs Held by an EFL University Teacher About OCF? (RQ2)

The answer to the second research question was based on the teacher's semi-structured interview data. The results from the teacher's interview were arranged in accordance with the following themes: (a) beliefs about the role Raquel attributes to the provision of OCF, (b) beliefs about the most effective ways of providing OCF, and (c) beliefs about the emotions OCF arouses in her students.

As regards the role Raquel assigned to the provision of OCF in L2 learning, she believed that providing OCF on students' mistakes was an important stage in this process. She expressed this idea as follows:

Excerpt 13

*I think that **if you don't correct, you might have productions that do not improve** in a way, because **you need to be corrected**, I think that **correction is part of learning**. (Raquel, SSTI)*

Raquel believed that not providing feedback implied that there would be less learning on the students' part since, as she comments, "correction is part of learning." This finding mirrors the ones reported by Garcia-Ponce and Mora-Pablo (2017), who found that the three participating EFL teachers "embrace the value of CF as a strategy for teaching and learning the target language" (p. 139).

Regarding Raquel's beliefs in relation to the most effective way of providing OCF on her students' L2 production, she honestly expressed not knowing which the most effective way could be. In fact, she admitted to never having considered this issue before and stated that she provided OCF in an intuitive way. She offered the following comment:

Excerpt 14

*I never thought about which would be the best way, **it is, like intuitively**. (Raquel, SSTI)*

The fact that Raquel was initially unable to articulate her beliefs about the most effective way of providing OCF might entail that she was unaware of them. This finding reinforces what Basturkmen (2012) claims, namely, that OCF can be characterized as an unplanned aspect of teaching, for which teachers tend to rely on automatic and generally unexamined behaviors. However, through the analysis of her answers to several other questions asked during the SSTI, it was possible to identify her beliefs. For example, Raquel believed that she should let students speak without interruption because, in her view, such practices could be counterproductive and discouraging for students. Despite this belief, she admitted that on some occasions she interrupted students to provide OCF while they were producing their oral messages:

Excerpt 15

*I know that sometimes **I interrupt, I try not to, but I interrupt**, as I've told you, I think that it can be […] **not productive**. (Raquel, SSTI)*

As Raquel continued reflecting on the most effective way of providing OCF, she stated that she should guide her students in discovering their mistakes. She expressed this belief as follows:

Excerpt 16

***They should correct themselves**and **[I should] guide them**to achieve that aim of correcting themselves. (Raquel, SSTI)*

In the same vein, Raquel also believed that she should give students the opportunity to self-correct. She pointed out that, in order to learn from mistakes, students are supposed to discover the error on their own, with the teacher's guidance. She expressed this belief in the following way:

Excerpt 17

*I think that my underlying belief might be that **I want them to realize by themselves**.*
***I think that in order to learn from an error**, I really think that you have to discover the error yourself. (Raquel, SSTI)*

However, she believed that if students cannot identify their mistakes by themselves, the right answer should eventually be provided. She commented:

Excerpt 18

***I try they discover [the mistakes] by themselves**, the first try is to give them the opportunity to discover or to change something, if they can't, **the last resource would be to tell them**. (SSTI)*

The results obtained through Raquel's verbalizations of her beliefs about the most effective way of providing OCF corroborated the findings of other studies involving EFL/ESL teachers. For example, Basturkmen et al. (2004) found that the three participants in their research believed that students' self-correction should be

promoted. In addition, Garcia-Ponce and Irasema-Mora (2017) also discovered that teachers perceived self-correction to be beneficial for their students' L2 learning. Furthermore, Tasdemir and Yalçin Arslan (2018) concluded that EFL university teachers should guide and assist students to improve their self-correction skills by providing students with opportunities to correct their own errors.

Regarding the beliefs about the emotional response OCF might produce in her students, Raquel took a strong stand that excessive provision of OCF could affect students' participation in speaking activities because of the unpleasant emotions that could be generated. Two of her comments were as follows:

Excerpt 19

I strongly believe it (correction) **may have an impact on (students') feelings** *[…] I think that* **if I corrected too much, if I was very demanding on their productions, they would quit***. (Raquel, SSTI)*

Excerpt 20

I think that if **I overcorrect, it might have a negative effect***. If you correct too much I think that* **they won't speak***. It can affect their confidence, especially when they are struggling to speak. Speaking relies a lot on* **confidence***, on being confident to speak (Raquel, SSTI)*

Such beliefs coincide with those identified by Martínez Agudo (2012) and Elsaghayer (2014) who acknowledge that teachers should know when and how to correct errors and, especially, should consider students' sensitivity and personality. Similar results were reported by Méndez et al. (2010), Mori (2011), and Yoshida (2010) who concluded that the participating teachers' main concern are the emotional reactions of students in response to OCF.

On the whole, Raquel believed that the most effective way of providing OCF was to give the students the opportunity to self-correct (i.e., output-prompting types of OCF strategies), and let them speak without interruptions. In addition, Raquel also believed that, in order for students to learn from their mistakes, teachers should guide them to discover their own mistakes because, in this way, students would advance in their learning. Furthermore, she believed that students' emotions could be affected negatively if OCF involved extensive interruptions. Given the nature of the speaking skill, she insisted on not being too demanding in her corrections and not correcting in excess because this might provoke students' negative emotions. Raquel said: "Speaking relies a lot on **confidence**, on being confident to speak."

4.3   How Do Students' and teacher's Beliefs About OCF Interplay in the EFL Classroom? (RQ3)

Throughout the four videotaped observations a holistic picture of the nature of this specific class emerged. They revealed that the classroom atmosphere was always warm, supportive and tension-free, and that the lessons involved varied activities involving the four skills in different interaction types. Raquel's interaction with the students was cordial and affable. Her tone of voice was modulated and kept the

students attentive during the observed lessons. As for the students, it was possible to detect from the beginning who had a leading and self-confident personality, or who was shy and had to be called on to participate in the speaking activities. Nonetheless, they were polite and able to listen to each other's interventions attentively. The teacher-student rapport was fluid and respectful and all the students were given the opportunity to participate in the class activities. Raquel had adequate classroom management skills and together with the students created a great working climate. As Sánchez Centeno and Ponce (2019) asserted, "this type of classroom context, in which students feel more comfortable to speak, would allow EFL teachers to listen to students' oral productions and give feedback on their errors" (p. 35). This contextual information provides us with insights in relation to the relevance that building rapport and creating a comfortable classroom atmosphere has in creating favorable conditions for the provision and acceptance of OCF.

The group of students shared the belief that making mistakes was part of their language learning process and attributed great importance to the provision of OCF. For example, Ana commented in Excerpt 2: "We **learn from mistakes**(…) one should always find a way to improve. If it is wrong, **we are corrected** so that we can **get our meanings through**." Raquel also believed that the provision of OCF affected learning. In Excerpt 13 she pointed out: "I think that **if you don't correct you might have productions that do not improve** in a way, because **you need to be corrected**, I think that **correction is part of learning**." The comparison between student and teacher beliefs shows that both parties had a positive stance towards the role of OCF in L2 learning, both considering OCF as a kind of "booster." Given the nature of the speaking skill, a friendly atmosphere may help amplify students' confidence and generate pleasant emotions. Furthermore, if students feel safe, they are encouraged to produce language, negotiate meanings and, if they make mistakes, feel confident enough to try to self-repair their erroneous utterances with the help of the teacher's OCF. The convergence of beliefs between students and the teacher in this class might lead to a process of empowerment: for students to face the reception of OCF with a confident attitude, and for the teacher to be assertive in her OCF provision.

In relation to the most effective OCF strategies, the students' and teacher's beliefs converged entirely. All the students believed that the teacher should give them the opportunity to notice their errors and to self-correct. In other words, students expected to be given time to discover and reflect upon their mistakes rather than to be provided with the right answer. Lucía commented in Excerpt 4: "I prefer **the teacher makes me think about my mistakes** so I **can discover them and self-correct**." Coincidentally, the teacher believed that she should guide students to discover their own mistakes. As Raquel put it in excerpt 16, "**they should correct themselves** and **[I should] guide them** to achieve that aim of correcting themselves."

Along the same lines, Li (2014) explained that encouraging self-correction is more motivating and makes classes more dynamic and interactive. However, contrasting findings can also be found in the literature. For example, Da Silva and Figueiredo (2006) discovered that the teachers in their study believed that the best way of providing OCF to their students was a direct one, without giving any extra explanation. The teachers believed that their students should repeat the right model to

promote effective language learning. Some of the students shared these beliefs, but others indicated that it was better to be given the opportunity to find the error and produce a correct utterance on their own.

Another shared belief about the most effective OCF strategies was that students should not be interrupted while speaking, because they might lose their train of thought. Most students believed that if they were interrupted, it may be difficult for them to recover what they wanted to express. Therefore, they preferred to be allowed to finish the idea they were conveying and only then receive OCF. Carolina expressed this belief in Excerpt 9: "When we are reading a text aloud and the **teacher keeps interrupting to provide feedback**, sometimes it's a bit **frustrating**." Moreover, the students highlighted unpleasant emotions aroused when they were interrupted by the teacher, such as frustration, tediousness and confusion (Excerpts 7, 8, 9). These results are in line with Martínez Agudo's (2012) findings, which pointed out that most of the interviewed students believed that they should be corrected after delivering their message. More importantly, he concluded that students' attitudes towards OCF should not be ignored, since it could have a potentially harmful effect on their emotional states.

As for the teacher, Raquel was aware that she interrupted her students to provide OCF, but she admitted she was working on this, since she believed it affected the students' flow of ideas and generated unpleasant emotions. She also believed that teachers should be sensitive when providing OCF in order not to threaten her students' face and consequently ignite unpleasant emotions. In addition, Raquel believed that in order to develop the speaking ability, students should have high self-confidence. In consequence, she was aware that an excessive amount of OCF might lower this confidence and at the same time cause uneasiness and even students' reluctance to participate in speaking activities. Smith (2010) claims that a teacher who is cognizant of the emotional impact that the provision of OCF can have on students' ability to process and concentrate on language learning will be able to provide appropriate OCF types so that students can benefit from them and increase their self-confidence.

The fact that Raquel's and her students' belief clusters regarding the most effective ways of providing OCF were congruent ensured a safe and secure classroom atmosphere conducive to language learning. Such a positive interplay of beliefs about and emotions towards OCF as well as the tension-free classroom atmosphere observed could lead to effective teaching and learning processes and increase students' motivation and teacher credibility. What is more, this can also lead to better outcomes as regards students' development of L2 speaking skills.

5   Conclusions and Implications

The present study aimed at exploring the interplay between the beliefs held by a small group of students and their EFL teacher at a university level. The analysis of the data revealed that the students' and the teacher's beliefs about OCF interrelated in a congruent way. The students and the teacher believed that making mistakes was

an inherent part of the L2 process but also that the most effective OCF strategies were the ones that allowed learners to notice their errors and to self-correct, that is, output-prompting strategies. The teacher believed that the provision of OCF should not trigger uncomfortable emotions and generate a tense classroom atmosphere. This belief matched the students' emotional responses and their preferred OCF strategies. For this reason, OCF strategies should be avoided which involve constant interruptions or might lower students' self-confidence. Similarly, Ellis (2017) suggests that teachers should refrain from using OCF strategies which are a source of anxiety or result in the arousal of unpleasant emotions, such as embarrassment, frustration or anxiety, especially in class-fronted situations (Kamiya, 2016; Martínez Agudo, 2012; Nilsson, 2019; Yoshida, 2010).

The study has clear implications for EFL teachers at all levels as they need to consider the beliefs and emotions about OCF that are at play in the EFL classroom. In this respect, Kartchava (2016) asserts that the advantage of being aware of students' beliefs about OCF is that teachers might better understand how to handle OCF effectively. Besides, when students understand their own beliefs about OCF, it "will help them recognize how CF may benefit them and what they can do to learn from the supplied feedback" (p. 20). Besides, Zhang and Rahimi (2014) point out that it is imperative to raise students' awareness of the purpose, significance and types of correction to help them form a positive attitude towards OCF, and avoid situations in which they find it threatening or anxiety-inducing. Ellis (2017) adds that OCF needs to be undertaken with care and tact to avoid negative affective response in students. A variety of corrective techniques are available for conducting CF and teachers should make use of them. Being able to identify students' and teachers' beliefs and emotions concerning OCF, as well as reaching an agreement on how to deal with oral mistakes in the EFL classroom is the teachers' responsibility.[3] This is a step forward towards better understanding how beliefs about OCF practices contribute to L2 learning.

Appendix A: Semi-structured Student Interview Regarding OCF

1. **Información demográfica**

   a. Edad:
   b. ¿Estudiaste Inglés antes de ingresar a la Tecnicatura en Leguas? ¿Dónde? ¿Por cuánto tiempo?

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[3]For a classroom proposal on how to deal with OCF in the EFL classroom, see Sánchez Centeno, A. (2021) http://www.uniricoeditora.com.ar/producto/beliefs-in-foreign-language-learning-listening-to-teachers-and-students-voices/

c.   ¿Cuántos años hace que estás estudiando la Tecnicatura en Lenguas?
d.   ¿Por qué estás estudiando esta carrera?

2.   **Creencias sobre las Acciones Correctoras a la Producción Oral ACPO:** Me gustaría saber qué piensan sobre la forma en que te corrigen los errores que cometes cuando hablas en inglés.

1.   ¿Qué tipos de errores te corrigen habitualmente en la clase de inglés?
2.   ¿Crees que hay otros errores que te deberían corregir además de los que acabas de mencionar?¿Por qué?
3.   ¿Cómo preferís que te corrijan los errores cuando estás hablando en inglés? ¿Por qué?
4.   ¿Crees que es mejor que te corrija la profesora o un compañero? ¿Por qué?
5.   ¿Cómo te sentís cuando la Profesora te marca un error cuando vos estás hablando en inglés? ¿Por qué?
6.   ¿Crees que hay alguna relación entre cometer errores y aprender inglés? ¿Por qué crees esto?
7.   ¿Cuál crees que es la mejor forma de recibir correcciones cuando estás hablando inglés?
8.   Has notado que en algunas ocasiones la Profesora no corrige algunos errores, ya sea a vos o a tus compañeros ¿Por qué crees que ella hace esto?
9.   ¿Crees que se debería negociar en el aula la forma en la que cada alumno quiere ser corregido? ¿Por qué?
10. ¿Algo que quieras agregar?

Appendix B: Semi-structured Teacher Interview Regarding OCF

1.   **Teacher's background**

a.   Age:
b.   How many years of teaching experience do you have?
c.   What's your teaching and academic background?
d.   Why did you become an ESL teacher?

2.   **Beliefs about OCF**: I would like to talk about your beliefs and classroom actions about the oral corrective feedback that you provide (or you do not provide) to your students in your lessons/ classes.

> We operationalized OCF as the teacher's reaction to a student's erroneous oral production. They can consist of: (1) an indication that an error has been committed, (2) provision of the correct target language form, (3) metalinguistic information about the nature of the error, or any combination of these (Ellis et al. 2006).

1. Do you provide OCF to your students? Why?
2. How do you usually provide OCF to your students? What does it depend on?
3. Do you believe that OCF enhances or hinders student's language learning process? Why?
4. What aspects do you believe that you should focus on when providing OCF to your students? Why do you think so?
5. In your opinion, which is the most effective way of providing OCF to your students? Why do you believe so?
6. Are you satisfied with the way you handle OCF in your classes?

3. **Beliefs about students' preferences on the provision of OCF**

   1. Do you believe that your students want to receive OCF? Why do you believe that?
   2. Do you believe that your students prefer to receive OCF in a particular way? (Provide the examples if necessary: Every time they make a mistake? Once they have finished expressing their idea? Or they want to be interrupted?) Why do you think so?
   3. Do you believe that the way you provide OCF affects or has an impact on students' feelings? Why do you believe so?
   4. Do you talk to them about how they prefer to receive OCF? Why?

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