The Distribution of Junior High School Students’ Language Awareness Across English Oral Proficiency and Oral Corrective Feedback Preference

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ABSTRACT

Language awareness is crucial in language learning. It entails how language is perceived and used by the students. Language awareness cannot be separated from teaching learning process since there are many interactions between teacher and students in the class including performing oral competency, learning from mistake, giving and taking oral corrective feedback. Thus, it still uncovered yet that language awareness is really matter in junior high school. This research tried to investigate the level of language awareness of junior high school students across their oral proficiency level. The study also aims to find out whether students’ level of language awareness is significantly different or not in their English oral language proficiency. In addition, the study also carried out to find out students type preference in receiving oral corrective feedback based on their language awareness level. This research is quantitative in nature. The data was collected from teacher archive in the form of students score and questionnaire. Then, the data was analyzed with the help of SPSS 20. The result showed that from 92 junior high school participant 35% of participants are in low level of language awareness; 32% in moderate level and 31% in high level. Based on the result, it can be concluded that majority of junior high school student are in low level of language awareness followed by moderate, and high. The analysis also showed that it retains the hypothesis of students’ language awareness level is similar across different English oral proficiency. Student with low, moderate, and high proficiency shows relatively similar level of language awareness level. Thus, the majority of students prefer explicit correction for oral corrective feedback type.

Keywords: English Oral Proficiency; Language Awareness; Oral Corrective Feedback

INTRODUCTION

Language awareness includes knowledge of grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and pragmatics, among other things. It entails a deeper grasp of how language works and how it may be utilized successfully in various communicative settings, rather than just memorizing vocabulary lists and grammar rules (Bourke, 2008). Students that are language-aware are more likely to notice patterns and regularities in language, which leads to improved language processing and production abilities.
Language awareness is generally acknowledged in research and practice as being important in language learning. A research has found that students with a greater level of language awareness do better in terms of vocabulary acquisition, grammatical accuracy, and communicative competence (Svalberg, 2012). Language awareness also promotes metacognitive abilities, allowing learners to watch and govern their own language usage (Huda, 2020). They become more aware of their language learning strengths and limitations and can use effective learning tactics to increase their competence. Language awareness also promotes learners to participate in self-reflection, which allows them to detect and correct their language problems, resulting in more accurate and proficient language production (Ba & Lu, 2020; Rassaei, 2015). Thus, language awareness also comes with multilingualism in term of learner’s background knowledge. Various pedagogical actitivities in classroom setting would be preferable to be adapted to foster classroom language awareness in multilingual environment (Putjata, 2018).

While the link between language awareness and language competency has been widely researched in numerous educational contexts (Awalin et al., 2021; Piper, 2003), little study has particularly focused on relationship between secondary students’ language awareness and English language oral proficiency. A study from (Kennedy & Trofimovich, 2010) showed that there is a link both language awareness and students’ pronunciation skill. Secondary education is an important stage in language development since it allows students to improve their language abilities and prepare for further education or future employment. As a result, knowing the function of language awareness in shaping English competence at this level is critical (Rahmi & Erlinda, 2014). While the importance of English proficiency is widely acknowledged, variations in oral communication skills among junior high school students persist.

There are two types of corrective feedback form in English, written and oral. Oral proficiency itself cannot be separated from oral corrective feedback since it is one form of interaction. Oral corrective feedback (OCF) takes place in the interaction between students and teacher in classroom setting. The interaction between teacher and students comes up in the form of oral. The way teacher giving feedback orally is as important as the student response to teacher feedback itself (Roothooft & Breeze, 2016). As a result, spoken corrective feedback helps students improve and polish their speaking abilities. There are 6 categories of oral corrective feedback used in the classroom; explicit correction, recast, elicitation, metalinguistic, clarification, and repetition (Lyster & Ranta, 1997). Oral corrective feedback in the classroom can take numerous forms, depending on the educational goals, the learners' ability levels, and the nature of the flaws being rectified. Students believe that the value of corrective feedback stems from its consistent correction of defects and mistakes throughout the learning process. It is also beneficial in boosting the learning process and improving both speech and spelling (Gholami, 2021; Munfadilila et al., 2019). It is crucial to highlight that the efficacy of oral corrective feedback might vary based on factors such as learners’ particular style of learning and desires, the environment of the classroom, and overall teaching strategy (Mahvelati, 2021). One of the factors in maximizing feedback value is language awareness. Student language awareness means, they are aware to the environment that they are interacting in it. Thus, this awareness awareness helps learners gain a better understanding of language rules and structures, supports autonomous error correction, and promotes the development of metalinguistic awareness (Lyster et al., 2013).

There are some studies that discussing language awareness as followed. (Piper, 2003) found out that 358 students in rural and urban of Nova Scotia are already having many kind of language awareness including growing awareness about language. This study implies that in the future, there is a need to examine real language awareness in certain communities. Other study by (Kennedy & Trofimovich, 2010) found out that there is a relationship on students’
pronunciation rating and qualitative language awareness comment. In their study suggests that more research on how individual learner characteristics affect language awareness is required. (Svalberg, 2012) stated that Language awareness studies should also address the complexities of the classroom setting. Study by (Audriyan & Putri, 2021) on language awareness of students of English department found out that 76.5% of students have good language awareness. Other most recent study by (Gustiani & Irwandi, 2024) found out that Language awareness is highly valuable for language acquisition as it entails knowing how language works and how it is used. From those recent studies, only study by (Piper, 2003) that has been conducted in secondary school setting while the other are mostly in higher education setting. This study suggests that there is a need to address language awareness from other point of view which is secondary school setting. The level of language awareness found in junior high school students is valuable data that further research can carry on. In summary, this study tries to fill the gap of the research setting which is in junior high school and the area of language awareness level that has not been researched comprehensively in recent years.

This study aims to investigate the of Language Awareness (LA) level distribution across English oral proficiency of junior high school student. This study is also carried out to find out whether any significance difference or not between junior high school students language awareness level on their oral proficiency. In addition, it is also aimed to find out the aspect which type of oral corrective feedback the students mostly want in adjusting their awareness of language.

This study comprises three primary research questions.
1. What is the level of Language awareness of junior high school students?
2. Are there any significance differences in English oral proficiency among Junior high school students with varying Language Awareness?
3. What are oral corrective feedback preferences of junior high school student based on their level of language awareness?

METHOD

This research is quantitative in nature. The focus of this study is to investigate the relationship between language awareness, students’ English oral proficiency, and the preference of oral corrective feedback type in the context of English language learning. It used descriptive statistic analysis in finding the distribution of language awareness level across oral proficiency level. In addition the significance difference of students’ oral proficiency and language awareness level is analysed with the help of digital application namely SPSS 20. The oral corrective feedback preference is also analysed by categorizing the preference into each level of language awareness. To gather data, a questionnaire will be utilized as a commonly employed tool in correlational research.

The participants in this study were junior high school students from three classes ranging from age 12 – 13 years old. Thus, the sample size for this study was 100 participants. The sample size is sufficient to provide a reasonable estimate of the population parameters with a 95% confidence level and a margin of error of 5% (Cohen et al., 2017).

For measuring students’ language awareness, data collection for this study will involve the utilization of a self-administered questionnaire presented in a Likert-scale format (Ary et al., 2010). It concerns the aspect of language awareness based on the definition from (Svalberg, 2009). The researcher also provide questionnaire about ten questions containing cognitive knowledge about language, affective aspect, and social side of the use of the language. Through google form, students were asked to fill the questionnaire by choosing the option that best suited to them. Likert scale was used for the questionnaire and provided five options for each statement; strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, or strongly agree (Cohen et al., 2017). The distribution of the questionnaire took place during the participants'
regular class sessions. Prior to its distribution, participants received a comprehensive explanation regarding the study's objectives and procedures, and each participant's informed consent was obtained. Participants were requested to complete the questionnaire anonymously and return it to the researcher.

For collecting data of students’ oral proficiency level, researcher asked the data from English teacher. The teacher has employed an oral test for the competency that the learner trying to achieve at that time. The objective of the test was describing things around the school orally in a simple paragraph. The teacher scored the students performance by using adapted speaking rubric that consist of three speaking aspects; performance, fluency, and pronunciation. Then the raw score is used from English competency exam employed by the English teacher. The decision to use raw score is that it represents the real ability from the student in English subject. The data students’ oral proficiency was collected before giving Language awareness questionnaire to make sure that students filled in the questionnaire naturally. In addition the students were informed that their score would be used in the research. The data then transferred into excel and divided into three groups which are low, moderate, and high level of students.

For collecting data of students’ oral corrective feedback preference, questionnaire consisted of 5 options is shared to the students. It concerns to the students’ preference of receiving oral corrective feedback in the class. There are six options related to oral corrective feedback type in the questionnaire to be chosen by the student. They only need to choose one of six listed question to see most preferred type of OCF (Lyster & Ranta, 1997). The questionnaire is distributed only one time and after the teaching learning process of English subject is ended.

The data collected from the questionnaire and the students’ oral proficiency score were analyzed using descriptive statistics and correlational analysis. Descriptive statistics was used to summarize the data and provide information on the frequency and distribution of the responses. Correlational analysis was used to examine the relationship between language awareness and student’s English proficiency. The analysis was conducted with the help of (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) SPSS software version 20 (Pallant, 2020).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Language Awareness Level of Junior High School Students

To answer RQ 1 about the level of Language Awareness of junior high school student, it is obtained by analysing the data using descriptive analysis in SPSS. The analysis is shown in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Awareness Level (Binned)</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>low</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>35.9</td>
<td>35.9</td>
<td>35.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>moderate</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>32.6</td>
<td>32.6</td>
<td>68.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>high</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table 1 above showed that from 92 participants of this research, there are 33 students who have low level of Language Awareness, 30 students in moderate level, and 29 students in high level of Language awareness. From the table above, indicating that there is no significant difference in the distribution of students across different levels of language awareness. The proportion of students classified as having low, moderate, and high levels of language awareness did not show statistically significant variations.
The sample characteristics might explain why there are no significant differences in language awareness levels. Participants in this study were drawn from certain demography of secondary school students, which may have influenced the distribution of language awareness levels. Prior language learning experiences, socioeconomic backgrounds, and educational contexts may all have contributed to the homogenization of language awareness levels throughout the student sample. The result is different to (Audriyan & Putri, 2021) where 76.65% of students are categorized good language awareness, while this study found only 31.5% students is categorized a high level of language awareness.

**Differences of English Oral Proficiency Among Junior High School Students with Varying Language Awareness**

Results of homogeneity test shows p value 0.435 >0.05 means the data of students’ oral proficiency is homogenous. While, the results of normality test shows sig value <0.05 means the data is not in normally distributed. Thus, the study used nonparametric test to find out differences of language awareness level across student oral proficiency level. Below is the result of the nonparametric test.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis Test Summary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Null Hypothesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The distribution of LANGUAGE AWARENESS LEVEL (Binned) is the same across categories of PROFICIENCY (Binned).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.

**Figure 1.** Nonparametric Analysis Result of Compared Means of Level of LA to Oral Proficiency

From the figure above, the results of Kruskal-Wallis Test show p value=0.069, which means that there is no significant differences among level of LA among oral proficiency level. Moreover, there are three aspects of language awareness (LA) that can be dissected and analyzed deeper from students’ questionnaire. They are cognitive, affective, and social aspect of language awareness.

Cognitive aspect is dominated with neutral answer for Q1 and Q2 followed by mostly disagree answer for Q3 and Q4. The thing that needs more attention is that for Q3 and Q4 about English mastery in structure and vocabulary it is found most students Q3 (27%) and Q4 (47%) chose strongly disagree which indicates students did not confident enough about their English mastery.

For affective aspect mostly dominated by neutral answer. Based on this, the researcher came to the conclusion that students might still confuse in involving with language. It is normal for motivation to learn to grow when feelings are favorable, while in this case students are found lacking of motivation dealing with language.

Social aspect of LA showed positive attitude in students’ questionnaires result. The mean mostly dominated with neutral to agree. It implies that the students understand how they would view the link between language and society: how the language is utilized, how people use language, and what attitudes are held in language, particularly English.

The result of aspects of language awareness level is opposed a study by (Audriyan & Putri, 2021) that they found mostly positive attitude toward the question for every aspect. However, in this study the students mostly still unsure about their English ability (cognitive). The similiraty is showed in social aspect that the students’ eigerness to contact with other people using English is positive. This is also similar to (Dooly, 2017; Rahmi & Erlinda, 2014) that social emotional aspect of people plays great role in creating language awareness.
Junior High School Students’ Oral Corrective Feedback Preferences

Table 2. Student’s OCF Type Preference

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Awareness Level</th>
<th>Oral Corrective Feedback Type</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Language Awareness Level</th>
<th>Oral Corrective Feedback Type</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Language Awareness Level</th>
<th>Oral Corrective Feedback Type</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Explicit Correction</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Explicit Correction</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Explicit Correction</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recast</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Elicitation</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>Elicitation</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elicitation</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Metalinguistic</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>Metalinguistic</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clarification</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Clarification</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Clarification</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Repetition</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Repetition</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>Repetition</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the table 2, it can be seen in total that majority of Junior high school students as participant prefer Explicit correction (67 students) followed by recast (12 students), Metalinguistic (9 students), Clarification (3 students), repetition (1 student), and Elicitation (0 student). This study also divided the group of participants into three which are low, moderate, and high level of Language awareness.

The table 2 showed that majority of low language awareness students as participant prefer Explicit correction (25 students) followed by recast (7 students), amd metalinguistic (1 student). The students did not choose elicitation, clarification, and repetition as their preference. While moderate language awareness level of students’ row showed that majority of moderate oral proficiency students as participant prefer Explicit correction (22 students) followed by recast and Metalinguistic (3 students), and clarification (2 students). Elicitation and replication showed no data. High language awareness level of students’ row showed that majority prefer Explicit correction (20 students) followed by metalinguistic (5 students), recast (2 students), clarification and Repetition (1 student). The only OCF type that has no data for high level students is Elicitiation.

Discussion

The result of students’ preference of OCF type is similar to (Zare et al., 2022) which Explicit correction is the most chosen type among students. The difference lies on the level of students, while study by Zare et al., (2022) found that high proficiency students prefer recasting, this study found that high language awareness level students prefer explicit correction in receiving OCF. Thus, the result of students’ feedback preference is also supported by Laeli & Setiawan (2019) which students prefer to receive explicit correction. The different aspect is on the setting of the study that this study done in junior high school while (Laeli & Setiawan, 2019) setting of study is in university. Explicit correction preference in this study is also supported by Van Ha et al. (2021) that high school student prefer to receive explicit correction. Teacher highly underlines the wrong part of student utterance and students will try to correct their own incorrect answer. The result indicates that most students agree to receive correction that directly pointed out to their mistake. Furthermore, all level of language awareness agrees in explicit correction to be the most preferred type of oral corrective feedback.

In summary, the three research questions have been answered in this study. The majority level of language awareness of junior high school student proves to be at low level.
It can be seen that mostly junior high school students does not yet develop language awareness in high level. This result is in contrast to (Audriyan & Putri, 2021) mostly that university students as participant are in good level of language awareness. In addition, the fact that there is no significant difference from language awareness level and oral proficiency means that there is no big difference in the level of language awareness in each level of oral proficiency. The participants of this study are 12-13 years old student that share common trait which is similar age and setting. In that case, students in same background and classroom environment will have quite similar language stage each other (Sang, 2017). Furthermore, junior high school students also share other similar preference in receiving oral corrective feedback which is explicit correction becomes the most preferred one. Students tend to prefer the correction to point out directly on their mistake to ease them in making better answer in the future. Age really does matter in the interaction of feedback phase. Junior high school students are in the range of 12 – 15 still in the between early to advance process of developing of language where they learn the form and how to use it in real practice (Vuono & Li, 2021).

CONCLUSION
The most common level of language awareness of participants is categorized low level followed accordingly by moderate and high. This suggests that the majority of junior high school pupils have a poor degree of Language Awareness. On terms of the degree of L.A for junior high school students, the fact that the majority of students answered neutral on the questionnaire also implies that they are still ignorant of their language. Language awareness is not a fixed trait that may be able to be taught and improved directly in short time via explicit teaching and linguistic exposure. The students in this study were most likely all at the same stage of language awareness development, resulting in a reasonably balanced distribution throughout the levels. Longitudinal studies for future research is favorable since it will follow the development of language awareness levels through time might provide insight on the individual trajectories and variations. It should also investigate using different measuring methodologies include a larger variety of student demographics. Language awareness is also valuable resource in language learning since it entails knowing background story of language and using it for adapting in various situations.

Although there was no significant difference of language awareness level across level of oral proficiency for for junior high school student, the probable influence of language awareness on English competence should not be ignored totally. Language awareness is still an essential component of language learning since it may lead to a better understanding of language structures, enhanced metacognitive abilities, and better language usage in a range of communication situations. Future research should look at additional traits and possible modifiers that might explain the complex interaction between language awareness and oral proficiency. Future studies that accommodate students’ timeline over time may provide a more comprehensive picture of the relationship between language awareness and English competence from the first until the certain time or the end of research. A more nuanced knowledge of the distribution of language awareness levels might be obtained by refining the classification criteria and using various ways to measure language awareness.

The majority of students prefer explicit correction in receiving oral corrective feedback because it is the simplest feedback for students to be understood. On the other hand, elicitation is the least corrective feedback type chosen by student for all language awareness level. It needs to be researched deeper in the future to see why this kind of phenomena is happened especially in junior high school setting.

The study's findings have ramifications for educators and curriculum makers. Language awareness is also part of priority for students, while not the only factor of English ability that should not be overlooked in language training. Even if there were no significant differences in
language awareness levels among the students in this study, language awareness should be promoted in educators’ instructional techniques by incorporating explicit language teaching, encouraging critical thinking abilities, and offering chances for two ways meaningful language usage. Educators should attempt to provide an inclusive and holistic learning environment that fosters language awareness as well as other important language learning variables such as student preference of the class environment. Integrating explicit metalinguistic teaching, encouraging open environment for sharing thought, and giving chances for realistic language usage can all assist students build a diverse range of language competencies.

There are certain limitations to this study that should be mentioned. For beginning, this study is only available to English language learners in a state junior high school. The findings may lack generalizability to varied populations or settings due to potential variations in factors such as school infrastructure and cultural background. Second, the study ignores other significant factors that may impact language learning, such as motivation and language exposure. Third, it is likely that the instruments to capture the data for this study did not capture the full complexity and intricacies of language awareness. Language awareness is a multifaceted notion that encompasses more than only grammar and vocabulary. Finally, there is lack of qualitative component in the study, which might give a more in-depth explanation of the link between language awareness, students’ English competence, and oral corrective feedback preference.

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