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## FEEDBACK AND ERROR CORRECTION IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

*Error correction and feedback are important parts of teaching English as a second language. Errors are a natural part of the learning process and each teacher deals with errors on a daily basis. Learning a foreign language means making mistakes and errors, hence feedback and error correction is an integral part of any foreign language classroom. The crucial thing for the teacher is to find the right balance and provide the right feedback for the student. The key is to approach the correction process in a patient and supportive manner, while also being persistent and consistent in making corrections. Teachers need to be extremely sensitive about the way they give feedback and correct errors. Constructive feedback helps build relationships based on trust and promotes effective work in the classroom.*

*The article presents a theoretical and practical overview of error correction and feedback in English language teaching, analyses different types of errors and feedback, and provides the best ideas and effective practices to be implemented in an English language classroom. The difference between the term 'mistake' and 'error' is explained. Various techniques for providing positive feedback are considered. A clear explanation of what 'fossilized errors' are, why they occur, and what can be done to correct them has been given. A delayed error correction as a valuable approach in teaching English as a second language has been described. While it is important to address errors, delayed error correction provides a more effective and efficient way to do so. By allowing students to focus on the content of the lesson, reducing interruptions, and improving motivation, it can lead to improved language development and memory retention as well as help to create an atmosphere of trust and cooperation in the classroom.*

**Key words:** *feedback, mistakes, error correction, fossilized errors, delayed error correction.*

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## ВИПРАВЛЕННЯ ПОМИЛОК ТА ЗВОРОТНИЙ ЗВ'ЯЗОК У ВИКЛАДАННІ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ

*Виправлення помилок і зворотний зв'язок є важливою частиною навчання англійської мови. Помилки є природною частиною процесу навчання і кожен викладач має справу з помилками щодня. Головне для викладача – знайти правильний баланс і забезпечити правильний зворотний зв'язок для студента. Важливо підходити до процесу виправлення з терпінням і підтримкою, а також бути наполегливим і послідовним у внесенні виправлень. Конструктивний зворотний зв'язок допомагає побудувати відносини, що базуються на довірі та сприяє ефективній роботі на занятті. Десятиліття досліджень на тему зворотного зв'язку підтвердили думку про те, що зворотний зв'язок є одним із найважливіших елементів сприяння успішному навчанню студентів.*

*У статті подано теоретичний і практичний огляд виправлення помилок і надання зворотного зв'язку у викладанні англійської мови, аналізуються різні типи помилок і зворотного зв'язку, а також представлені ідеї та ефективні практики для впровадження на занятті англійської мови. У рамках цієї статті ми зосереджуємося на позитивному зворотному зв'язку та виправленні помилок як цінних стратегіях для покращення якості викладання та навчання. Пояснюється різниця між терміном 'mistake' та 'error'. Розглянуто різні техніки надання позитивного зворотного зв'язку. Дано чітке пояснення того, що таке 'завчені помилки', чому вони виникають і що можна зробити, щоб їх виправити. Проаналізовано метод відкладеної роботи над помилками як цінного засобу у викладанні англійської мови. Хоча помилки важливо виправляти, відкладена робота над помилками забезпечує більш ефективний спосіб як втілити це на занятті. У статті наведено докладні кроки для забезпечення успішного впровадження даного методу. Дозволяючи учням зосередитися на змісті уроку, зменшуючи переривання та покращуючи мотивацію, метод відкладеної роботи над помилками заохочує студентів вдосконалювати знання з англійської мови, допомагає створити атмосферу довіри та співпраці на занятті.*

**Ключові слова:** позитивний зворотний зв'язок, помилки, виправлення помилок, "завчені" помилки, відкладена робота над помилками.

**Introduction.** "Mastering a foreign language involves making mistakes and errors, hence feedback and error correction is an integral part of any foreign language classroom" (Bakan et al., 2020: 9). Giving feedback and correcting errors is a crucial aspect of teaching and learning, especially in an English language classroom. Providing meaningful and constructive feedback can help students make improvements, increase their motivation, and boost their confidence. At the same time, giving ineffective or harmful feedback can cause students to become discouraged or demotivated. "It is important, therefore, to make sure that the feedback we give is appropriate to the students concerned and to the activity they are involved in, and that we recognise feedback as a crucial part of learning process" (Harmer, 2011: 137).

There are several techniques that can be used to correct errors effectively in the classroom. However, teachers should keep in mind that giving feedback and correcting errors can be the most delicate aspects of foreign language teaching. Hence, it is vital for teachers to establish a set of principles that will help them decide on types of errors and situations that require corrective feedback as well as techniques that can be used (Bakan et al., 2020).

**The insights into the latest research.** "Feedback in educational contexts is information provided to a learner to reduce the gap between current performance and a desired goal" (Sadler, 1989: 119). Decades of research on the topic of feedback have supported the view that feedback is one of the most important elements for promoting successful student learning and one of the most effective methods for improving student achievement (Bransford et al., 2020). Feedback is considered by researchers as vital for improving not only knowledge acquisition but learner's motivation and satisfaction (Espasa & Meneses, 2009). Dweck and Leggett (1988) state that feedback can be a major factor to significantly

influence students' goal orientations. Harmer (2011) stresses that one of the teacher's roles is to encourage students by praising them for work that is well done. "Praise is a vital component in student's motivation and progress. A combination of appropriate praise together with helpful suggestions about how to improve in the future will have a much greater chance of contributing to student improving" (Harmer, 2011: 138). Williams and Burden (1997) also point out to the ineffectiveness of blame in the learning process.

Harmer (2011) suggests a number of ways in which we may give feedback on students' work: through commenting on students' performance, marks and grades, and reports, emphasizing that corrective feedback can be written and oral. Feedback can be very helpful during oral work, but the decisions about how to react to student's performance will depend on the stage of the lesson, the activity, the type of mistake made and the particular student who is making a mistake. Harmer (2011) stresses the need to make a clear distinction between accuracy and fluency in feedback during oral work. During communicative activities generally, the teachers should not interrupt students in mid-flow to point out a grammatical, lexical or pronunciation error, since it interrupts the communication. Teacher's intervention in such circumstances can raise stress levels and stop the acquisition process. Lynch proposes that "...the best answer to the question when to intervene in learner's talk is: as late as possible" (Lynch, 1997: 324). Teachers usually do not correct errors in fluency-based tasks, such as open-class discussions, when learners are expected to make longer and more complex statements and require more concentration (Bakan et al., 2020).

**The purpose of the article.** Within the scope of this paper, we focus on positive feedback and error correction as valuable strategies for improving the quality of teaching and learning. The article

also outlines different types of errors as well as techniques for correcting them. We also examine the phenomenon of ‘fossilized’ errors. The article aims to define ‘fossilized errors’, examine causes and most importantly recommend ways of correcting them. Delayed error correction is outlined as one of the main strategies for correcting errors in the ESL classroom. Advantages of implementing this method include reduced interruptions, improved focus, increased motivation, better memory retention and more time for correction. All of these will be examined in depth. Lastly, the article aims to provide guidelines for utilizing the method of delayed error correction in the classroom. Detailed steps are provided to ensure the method is implemented with a degree of success.

**The main layout.** It is important to distinguish between an ‘error’ and a ‘mistake’ in the learner’s language. Edge (1989) suggests that we may divide mistakes into three categories: ‘slips’ – mistakes which students can correct themselves once the mistake has been pointed out to them; ‘errors’ – mistakes which students can’t correct themselves and which need explanation; ‘attempts’ – when a student tries to say something but does not know the correct way of saying it.

H. Douglas Brown claims that “a mistake is a performance error that is either a random guess or a ‘slip’...which is the result of some sort of temporary breakdown or imperfection in the process of producing speech. These hesitations, slips of the tongue, random ungrammaticalities, and other performance lapses in native-speaker production also occur in second-language speech. An error, a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of a native speaker, reflects the competence of the learner” (Brown, 2000: 205). An error can not be self-corrected, while mistakes can be corrected if they are pointed out to the speaker.

There are several techniques that can be used to correct errors effectively in the classroom. One technique is to wait for the student to self-correct. This technique involves giving the student time to think about and correct their own mistakes without immediate intervention from the teacher. Another technique is to use gestures or facial expressions to indicate that an error has been made. This type of correction is non-intrusive and can be less intimidating for students. Another technique is to provide positive feedback before correcting the error, such as “You’ve made a good attempt at expressing yourself, but let me help you with the grammar”. This type of feedback helps to maintain the student’s motivation and confidence while still addressing the error. Additionally, providing clear and concise corrections, such as “In English, we say “I have a

headache”, rather than “I am headache”, can help the student understand and remember the correction. Overall, the choice of error correction technique will depend on the student’s level, personality, and the context of the error.

#### *What are Fossilized Errors*

In the field of second language acquisition, ‘fossilized errors’ are a well-known phenomenon and have been the subject of much research. ‘Fossilized errors’ are persistent mistakes that students make in their second language, even after they have received instruction and correction. These errors can persist for a long time and can be difficult to correct. They are a common challenge faced by English as a Second Language teachers and students alike. In this context, ‘fossilized errors’ refer to errors that are ingrained in the learner’s language system and continue to appear in their speech or writing despite repeated corrections and attempts at improvement. These errors can range from pronunciation problems to grammatical errors, and vocabulary mistakes. ‘Fossilized errors’ can also be a result of overgeneralization, which occurs when a learner applies a rule they have learned to a situation where it does not apply.

#### *Why do Fossilized Errors Occur?*

‘Fossilized errors’ occur for a variety of reasons. One reason is that students may lack sufficient exposure to the target language. For example, if a student has only had limited exposure to native English speakers, they may have difficulty with pronunciation and intonation. Additionally, students may be using their first language as a reference point, which can lead to the persistence of errors.

Another reason that ‘fossilized errors’ occur is due to a lack of an input-rich environment. In order for language to develop and improve, learners need to be exposed to large amounts of input from native speakers. This input helps to expose them to the rules and patterns of the target language, allowing them to develop a better understanding of the language. If a student does not have access to this type of input, they may not have the opportunity to learn the language in a natural way, and as a result, their errors may persist.

#### *How to Correct Fossilized Errors*

Correcting ‘fossilized errors’ can be a challenging task, but it is possible with the right approach. The key is to approach the correction process in a patient and supportive manner, while also being persistent and consistent in making corrections.

Here are some techniques that can be used to correct ‘fossilized errors’ in the classroom:

**Focused Practice:** This technique involves targeting the specific errors that the student is making and working to correct them through focused practice

exercises. This can involve repetition, reading and writing exercises, or other activities designed to help the student internalize the correct form of the language.

**Feedback:** Feedback is a crucial aspect of correcting ‘fossilized errors.’ It is important to provide clear and specific feedback, focusing on the error and explaining how it should be corrected. This type of feedback helps the student to understand what they need to work on and provides them with a clear plan for improvement.

**Input-rich Environment:** Creating an input-rich environment for the student can help to correct ‘fossilized errors.’ This involves exposing the student to large amounts of input from native speakers, such as through watching English-language media or listening to English-language podcasts. The more exposure the student has to the target language, the more opportunities they have to learn and improve their language skills.

**Conscious Learning:** Encouraging the student to focus on their language learning and to be aware of the errors they are making can help to correct ‘fossilized errors’. This can involve setting goals, monitoring progress, and engaging in self-reflection.

**Reflection:** Encouraging students to reflect on their language learning and to think about their errors can help to correct ‘fossilized errors.’ This can involve asking the student to reflect on the errors they made during a lesson and to think about what they need.

*Delayed error correction* is a technique used in teaching English as a second language where the teacher waits to correct students’ errors until a later time, rather than immediately correcting them during class. This approach is in contrast to immediate error correction, where the teacher corrects the error as soon as it occurs. There are several reasons why delayed error correction can be beneficial in language teaching, and it is an approach that has gained popularity in recent years.

#### *Advantages of Delayed Error Correction*

**Reduced Interruptions:** Delayed error correction allows for a more natural flow of communication in the classroom, as it reduces the number of interruptions and corrections made during class time. This can help to maintain a positive and engaging classroom atmosphere, allowing students to focus on what they are learning.

**Improved Focus:** When error correction is delayed, students are able to focus more on the content of the lesson, rather than worrying about making mistakes and being corrected. This improved focus can lead to a deeper understanding of the material and better retention of information.

**Increased Motivation:** Immediate error correction can sometimes be discouraging for students, leading to a decrease in motivation. With delayed error correction, students are able to engage in class and complete activities without worrying about being corrected. This increased motivation can lead to improved language development.

**Better Memory Retention:** When error correction is delayed, students are able to think about the error and reflect on it before being corrected. This reflection can help students to internalize the correction and remember it more effectively.

**More Time to Correct:** Delayed error correction allows the teacher to correct multiple errors at once, rather than addressing each one individually. This can be more efficient and can also help to avoid overwhelming students with too many corrections at once.

#### *Implementing Delayed Error Correction*

There are several steps that can be taken to implement delayed error correction in the classroom:

**Record Errors:** During class, make a note of the errors that students make, but wait to correct them until later. This can be done by making notes on a piece of paper or using a recording device.

**Address Errors in a Private Setting:** After class, set aside time to address the errors that were recorded during class. This can be done in a private setting, such as a one-on-one meeting with the student or a small group session.

**Use Clear Explanations:** When correcting errors, be sure to provide clear explanations and examples to help students understand the correction. This can help students to internalize the correction and remember it for future use.

**Provide Feedback:** After correcting errors, provide feedback to students on their progress. This can include compliments on areas where they have improved, as well as suggestions for areas where they can continue to work on.

**Monitor Progress:** Regularly monitor the progress of students to see if they are using the corrections made during error correction sessions. This can help to identify areas where additional support may be needed.

Delayed error correction is a valuable technique in teaching English as a second language. By allowing students to focus on the content of the lesson, reducing interruptions, and improving motivation, it can lead to improved language development and memory retention. While it is important to address errors, delayed error correction provides a more effective and efficient way to do so.

Providing effective feedback can be a significant challenge. Yet there are a number of simple and prac-

tical dos and don'ts supported by available research to improve the feedback in English language classroom.

To help you give effective feedback in an English language classroom, here are some tips and best practices to follow.

#### Make it timely

Providing feedback in a timely manner is important to ensure that students can use the feedback to improve their performance. It is best to provide feedback as soon as possible after the students have completed an assignment or taken a test. This way, the feedback will be fresh in their minds and they will be able to act on it right away. If you are unable to provide feedback in a timely manner, make sure to let the students know when they can expect to receive it.

#### Make it specific

When giving feedback, it is important to be specific and focus on a particular aspect of the student's performance. Rather than giving a general statement such as "You need to work on your pronunciation," focus on a specific issue, such as "You tend to drop the final sound in words, which makes it difficult for listeners to understand you." This type of specific feedback is more actionable and allows the student to see exactly what they need to work on.

#### Use positive language

It is important to use positive language when giving feedback, even if you need to point out areas for improvement. For example, instead of saying "You made a lot of mistakes in your writing," you could say "You showed good effort in your writing, but there are a few areas where you can improve." This type of positive feedback is more likely to boost the student's motivation and confidence, rather than discourage them.

#### Emphasize progress

When giving feedback, it is important to highlight progress as well as areas for improvement. For example, if a student has made significant progress in their pronunciation, you could say "I can hear a noticeable improvement in your pronunciation, well done! Keep up the good work." This type of feedback emphasizes the student's progress and encourages them to continue their efforts.

#### Balance criticism and praise

It is important to strike a balance between criticism and praise when giving feedback. While it is important to point out areas for improvement, it is also important to acknowledge what the student is doing well. For example, you could say "You showed

good effort in your writing, but there are a few areas where you can improve. Your grammar is improving, and your sentence structure is becoming clearer." This type of balanced feedback helps to keep the student motivated and encourages them to continue working on their English language skills.

#### Provide examples

Providing examples is an effective way to give feedback in an English language classroom. For example, if a student is making the same mistake repeatedly, you could write a corrected version of their writing or give them an example of the correct pronunciation. This type of feedback is more concrete and helps the student to understand what they need to work on.

#### Offer suggestions for improvement

In addition to pointing out areas for improvement, it is also important to offer suggestions for how the student can improve. For example, you could say "To improve your pronunciation, try practising by reading aloud or repeating what you hear in English-language media." This type of feedback not only helps the student to understand what they need to work on but also provides them with a clear action plan to improve.

#### Provide constructive criticism

Constructive criticism is a type of feedback that focuses on specific areas for improvement while also highlighting strengths.

**Conclusion.** Numerous studies have shown the importance of establishing and maintaining a positive atmosphere while correcting mistakes and providing feedback. Providing feedback that is above all else effective is a cornerstone of English learning. Teachers should give positive feedback with facial gestures, hand gestures or verbal comments. Mistakes and errors serve as the main tools for growth and learning both inside and outside of the classroom. Thus, developing strategies that help correct errors is vital to this process. Error correction is a highly complex process and in specific cases requires various strategies for correction. How to utilize it depends primarily on the types of errors. Fossilized errors for instance require a unique approach due to their nature and frequency. Delayed error correction is also an important technique to implement in the classroom as it helps reduce interruptions and increase focus. Ultimately, these strategies can be utilized to develop a more individualized approach to ensure students feel supported in their learning.

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