Beliefs and Attitudes of High School Learners toward Peer Correction in Foreign Language

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Znanstveno područje humanističke znanosti, polje filologija, grana anglistika

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Osijek, 2016

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Summary

On the basis of the outcomes of numerous prior researches, there has been an inconclusive debate about who should be responsible for correcting learners' errors in a foreign language. Much attention has been devoted to the claim that teachers should not exclusively bear the responsibility for correcting learners' errors.

Up to the present time, there has been a rapidly growing tendency to abandon the traditional teacher-centred correction, but rather to educate, stimulate, and actively involve learners in the process of learning a foreign language. The main argument supporting this tendency emphasises that learners are supposed to complement their teacher's role as a corrector with the hope to create a positive, supporting, and cooperative learning environment.

In this study, the most important question under discussion is what are high school learners' attitudes and beliefs toward peer correction in a foreign language. The results suggest that learners strongly appreciate the correction provided by the teacher, but still, seem to acknowledge the beneficial impact of peer feedback. However, the preference for teacher over peer correction should not come as a surprise, especially because the analysed data revealed seldom or even non-existent implementation of the peer correction techniques in foreign language classrooms. On these grounds, another important question can be raised: Would learners estimate correction by their peers as more valuable, if they were offered more opportunities to conduct it in class?

Keywords: error correction, teacher-centred, cooperative, attitudes and beliefs, peer correction, high school learners

Sažetak

S obzirom na ishode mnogobrojnih prethodnih istraživanja, pitanje odgovornosti za ispravljanje grešaka u stranom jeziku je nezaobilazno. Mnogo pažnje posvećeno je tvrdnji da učitelj nije isključivi nositelj odgovornosti za ispravljanje grešaka svojih učenika.

Sve do danas, izražena je velika težnja za napuštanjem tradicionalnog ispravljanja gdje učitelj predstavlja centralnu ulogu. Umjesto toga, učitelj bi trebao educirati, stimulirati i aktivno uključiti učenike u proces učenja stranog jezika. Kao glavni argument za ovakvu težnju možemo naglasiti očekivanje da učenik nadopuni učiteljevu ulogu u ispravljanju uz nadu da će tako stvoriti pozitivnu i kooperativnu klimu u svom razredu.

Najbitnije pitanje u ovom istraživanju je kakvi su stavovi i vjerovanja srednjoškolaca prema vršnjačkom ispravljanju u stranom jeziku. Analizirani rezultati ističu da učenici naglašavaju iznimnu važnost ispravka od strane učitelja, ali također cijene pozitivni utjecaj vršnjačkog ispravljanja na njihov proces učenja. Kako god, snažna orijentiranost prema učiteljevom ispravku ne čudi zbog činjenice da se, prema analiziranim rezultatima, tehnike vršnjačkog ispravljanja rijetko ili nikad primjenjuju u nastavi stranog jezika. S obzirom na to, možemo postaviti drugo bitno pitanje: Bi li učenici smatrali vršnjačko ispravljanje korisnijim, da češće imaju priliku provoditi ga na satu stranog jezika?

Ključne riječi: ispravljanje grešaka, usmjerenost na učitelja, kooperativan, stavovi i uvjerenja, vršnjačko ispravljanje, srednjoškolci

1. Introduction

It is worthwhile to consider that many aspects of teaching nowadays rest on the need to make students the pivotal figures in learning a foreign language. In order to enhance and encourage learning, an important point is to create a motivating and stimulating atmosphere in the foreign language classroom. Since the emphasis is laid on student-centred teaching, it is desirable to conduct a research regarding students' attitudes, beliefs, and preferences.

The first part of this paper presents the theoretical background concerning the topic. First of all, the theory focuses on the explanation of an error in the context of SLA. Furthermore, the significance and steps of error analysis, as well as the definition and crucial questions of error correction, are investigated in this part.

Next, much of the debate in the theoretical part revolves around the question of who should take responsibility for correcting learners' errors. The further discussion centres on isolating advantages and disadvantages of possible EC sources: self-, teacher, and peer correction.

The theory and the previous studies on peer correction in a foreign language are the centre of the discussion in the second part of the paper. This chapter summarises the findings and evidence gathered in the prior research on learners' and, eventually, teachers' attitudes toward peer correction. Furthermore, the chapter is concerned with providing available evidence portraying advantages and disadvantages of peer involvement in EC.

The last part of the paper explains the experimental study concerning high school learners' attitudes and beliefs toward peer correction. The section investigates aims, participants, instruments, procedures and the analysis and results of the research.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. The Definition of an Error in SLA

In order to conduct a successful analysis and correction of an error, one must firstly understand what should be treated as an error in Second Language Acquisition. Throughout the history many linguists tried to define this phenomenon by offering a number of explanations considering the root, cause and circumstances of an error in SLA.

One of the early accepted definitions views errors as: "(1) linguistic forms or content that differ from native speaker forms or facts, and (2) any other behaviour which is indicated by the teacher as needing improvement." (Chaudron 1986, as cited by Pawlak 2014:3) A similar, yet more concrete explanation was proposed by Lennon (1991), who describes an error as "[a] linguistic form or a combination of forms, which, in the same context and under similar conditions of production, would, in all likelihood, not be produced by the speakers' native speaker counterparts." (Lennon, 1991: 182, as cited in Pawlak, 2014:3) With attention to both definitions, one can conclude that an error in SLA is actually defined as a form that a native speaker would under no condition use in the same situation.

Even though often regarded as an unwanted form of one's language, Corder (1967) lays emphasis on the significance and benefits of learners' errors because:
"(1) they serve a pedagogic purpose by showing teachers what learners have learned and what they have not yet mastered;
(2) they serve a research purpose by providing evidence about how languages are learned; and
(3) they serve a learning purpose by acting as devices by which learners can discover the rules of the target language (i.e. by obtaining feedback on their errors)." (Corder, 1967, as cited in Ellis, Barkhuizen, 2005:51).

Furthermore, errors made by L2 students represent different levels of linguistic knowledge depending on various factors. Ferris (2011) argues that SLA occurs in stages and concerns multiple elements such as vocabulary, morphology, syntax etc. Learners are expected to make errors as they go through various stages and it is then seen as a reflection of different

SLA processes. Ferris (2011:10) also explains that "these errors may be caused by inappropriate transference of L1 patterns and/or by incomplete knowledge of L2." The explanation emphasizes that errors in SLA will vary across student L1s, their level of proficiency and other student characteristics that influence SLA. Therefore, Truscott (1996) points out that it is important to differ between types of errors in order to provide suitable treatment while performing error correction.

The treatment of various types of learners' errors in SLA will be examined more closely in subsequent sections dealing with error analysis and error correction.

2.2. Error Analysis

Since the term of an error in SLA has been interpreted above, it is important to explain which method is used to analyse learners' errors. Ellis and Barkhuizen (2015) state that Error Analysis is a study occupied with learners' errors made in speech or writing. The authors go on to say that "Error Analysis (EA) consists of a set of procedures for identifying, describing and explaining errors." (Ellis and Barkhuizen 2005:51)

The method of EA gains importance for being one of the oldest methods used to analyse learner language and, what is more, it still appears to be attractive nowadays. The reason is that teachers are invariably occupied with the analysis of learners' errors. James also emphasises the merits of conducting EA by defining it as "the process of determining the incidence, nature, causes and consequences of unsuccessful language." (James 1998: 1)

However, Ellis (1994) educates on the importance of EA for having a long history as a branch of applied linguistics and for taking over the place that once belonged to Contrastive Analysis (CA). The main difference between EA and CA can be summarised by concluding that the mother tongue does not play a significant role in EA. The common assumption proposed by CA is that errors in SLA are the result of interference of L1. EA, on the other hand, analyses and describes the errors within the target language without attributing the cause of an error to learners' L1. Ellis (1994) also states that since 1970 EA has been

acknowledged as a branch of applied linguistics thanks to Corder's work, which will be explained further in the next section dealing with the steps of EA.

2.2.1. Steps in EA

As Ellis (1994) points out, it is inevitable to acknowledge Corder's contribution to the development of EA. At the time being, many of the researchers, including Corder himself, tried to widen their scopes of inquiry about conducting successful error analysis. Their aim was to improve their pedagogical skills and become more professional when it comes to understanding and dealing with learners' errors. As a result, Corder describes the procedure of error analysis by presenting the implementation of the five important steps. Ellis (1994) lists the steps in EA research:

1 Collection of a sample of learner language
2 Identification of errors
3 Description of errors
4 Explanation of errors
5 Error evaluation.

Within the first step in EA research one must decide which samples to collect and how to collect them. When it comes to the identification of errors, Ellis (1994) comes up with several questions one must deal with when trying to identify an error, the most important questions being: How to recognize what is an actual error produced because of the lack of knowledge, and what is a mistake? The third step insists on explaining the descriptive taxonomies that are usually based on various linguistic categories. The explanation of errors can take place if one has already succeeded in identifying and describing an error. The sources of learners' errors are individual and they vary across the learners. This is supported by Taylor's explanation, as follows: "(...) the error source can be psycholinguistic, sociolinguistic, epistemic, or may reside in the discourse structure." (Taylor 1986: as cited in Ellis 1994: 57) The last step centres on the evaluation of learners' errors, by investigating how, when, and who should perform the evaluation.

2.3. Error Correction

As previously mentioned, errors are an integral part in learner's natural development within Second Language Acquisition. What is more, it is certainly expected that learners commit errors depending on the varying level of their linguistic knowledge. Therefore, the error correction plays an important role in avoiding the recurrence of unwanted and incorrect structures in a foreign language.

Error correction (EC) is early defined by Chaudron as: "any reaction of the teacher which clearly transforms, disapprovingly refers to, or demands improvement of the learner utterance". (Chaudron, 1977 as cited in Mendez, Cruz 2012: 64) In other words, error correction can be plainly defined as a teacher's response to learners' errors. On the other hand, Hedge emphasizes the importance of error correction from the aspect of learners: "[f]or learners, classroom error correction is part of a wider process of recognizing and understanding their errors and then having opportunities to try and try again." (Hedge, 2000: 292)

According to Pawlak (2014) error correction is an integral part of SLA and can be seen as "one of the main hallmarks of foreign language teaching in the vast majority of instructional settings". (Pawlak 2014: 6) The author goes on to say that error correction plays an important role in the EFL classroom for both teachers and learners. As a matter of fact, teachers feel responsible for reacting to learners' errors while learners expect to be corrected in order to benefit from their errors.

However, there have been many different attitudes toward correcting learners' errors in oral and written production. Several questions emerged especially concerning the oral grammar correction. Pawlak (2014) lists a number of challenging issues that teachers and learners come across in oral grammar correction such as: identifying the nature of an error, presentation and correction of an error with an individual approach to learners with respect to their different characteristics, focusing on oral production instead of turning it into a grammar exercise, etc. Therefore, Truscott firmly claims that "[o]ral correction poses overwhelming problems for teachers and for students; research evidence suggests that it is not effective; and

no good reasons have been offered for continuing this practice. The natural conclusion is that oral grammar correction should be abandoned." (Truscott 1999: 453).

Finally, regarding the pedagogical aspect of error correction, it is the teacher's responsibility to provide the learners with feedback, to facilitate the acquisition of L2, and to give guidelines which serve to the improvement of SLA. Pawlak (2014) clearly states that no beneficial outcome can occur if instructors disregard learners' errors. On the contrary, he fears that the negligence of learners' errors in the target language will result in constant incorrect production of linguistic structures. If the learners believe that their utterances are correct, by constant repetition, they will eventually acquire incorrect patterns of the target language. What is more, as Schachter (1988, as cited in Pawlak: 85) corroborates: "erroneous output may serve as input both to the speaker or writer and to the listener or reader, which may be responsible for retention of formulation of incorrect hypothesis, thus pulling a brake on the development of explicit and implicit knowledge." In contrast to Truscott's evidence, Pawlak's and Schachter's alternative perspective illustrates that there are numerous reasons for regarding error correction in the foreign language classroom "as an ally rather than an enemy of second language acquisition". (Pawlak 2014: 85)

To conclude, for many years there has been an inconclusive debate whether error correction should be avoided regarding the oral practice in a foreign language. According to the results presented, error correction has firmly paved its way into every foreign language classroom. As an integral part of the foreign language instruction it is very improbable that it would be eagerly abandoned by both, learners and instructors. Error correction in the foreign language classroom is a pivotal element that encourages the development of proficiency in the target language and as such, it undoubtedly plays an important role in the process of SLA.

2.3.1. Crucial Questions of Error Correction

Hendrickson (1978) explains the lack of universal, specific norms concerning error correction in the foreign language classroom. It means that there is no clear, accepted agreement on how, when and who should correct learners' errors. For that reason Hendrickson comes up with five questions that teachers need to take into consideration when faced with learners'

errors. According to the author this should guarantee the positive outcome of error correction in the foreign language classroom:

1. Should learner errors be corrected?
2. If so, when should learner errors be corrected?
3. Which learner errors should be corrected?
4. How should learner errors be corrected?
5. Who should correct learner errors? Hendrickson (1978: 389)

The author explains that even though learners seem to expect and value error correction, not all errors in the target language need to be revised. A teacher is seen as a facilitator, but also as a decision maker when it comes to foreign language teaching, meaning that his responsibility is to select an error that needs correction. Similarly to Hendrickson, Pawlak (2014:113) analyses the difficulties for teachers who "have to decide on a course of action to take in response to an inaccurate utterance generated by a particular learner, using a particular linguistic feature in a particular context."

"The issue of the timing of error correction" is to be observed within the next question. (Pawlak 2014: 117) While it is pretty clear that learners' written work is always corrected after completing, oral correction seems to cause a great deal of trouble when talking about the right time for the teacher's reaction. According to Pawlak, there are three possibilities for correcting inaccuracies in oral production: "immediate correction, delayed correction and postponed correction." (Pawlak 2014:17) Plainly said, it is the teacher's responsibility to decide whether to correct an error without delay, at the end of the activity or after a longer period of time.

Much of the debate concerning error correction in the EFL classroom revolves around Hendrickson's next question: "which errors should be corrected?" (Hendrickson 1987: 389) Therefore, he classifies the errors that are top priority regarding error correction as follows:

"(1) errors that impair communication significantly;
(2) errors that have highly stigmatizing effects on the listener or reader;
(3) and errors that occur frequently in students' speech and writing." (Hendrickson 1978: 392)

With attention to this classification, the utmost importance for SLA is seen in correction of errors that have a negative impact on global understanding of learners' utterances and those errors that appear repeatedly and therefore cannot be treated as mistakes.

The next step questions the importance of making a decision on which method should be used to correct learners' errors. According to Pawlak (2014), it depends mostly on whether one is dealing with an error in oral or written production. Furthermore, many factors influence choosing the most appropriate method for correcting an error in the foreign language classroom, as presented: "this decision hinges upon the production mode (i.e. oral vs. written), the type of activity in hand, the nature of the error, the timing of error treatment, and the source of the corrective feedback. On top of all of this, it is possible to classify the techniques of error correction in a multitude of ways." (Pawlak, 2014:126)

The most important question under discussion in this paper is: who is responsible for correcting learners' errors? Therefore, the following chapters will point out the different sources of error correction and describe teachers' and learners' attitudes towards error correction in the foreign language classroom.

3. Who Should Correct Learners' Errors?

3.1. Sources of EC in the Foreign Language Classroom

Numerous studies have attempted to answer Hendrickson's last question: "Who should correct learners' errors?" Pawlak (2014) suggests that teachers are given three options when it comes to error correction in the foreign language classroom: self- correction, peer correction, and of course, teacher correction.

Hendrickson (1987) emphasises that teacher correction is the most frequently used and, according to learners' beliefs, the most covetable and necessary option. On the contrary, he also proposes self- and peer correction to be result- producing strategies of error correction as shown: "Peer correction or self-correction with teacher guidance may be a more worthwhile investment of time and effort for some teachers and learners." (Hendrickson 1987: 396)

The choice of a provider of EC in SLA is of the utmost importance for this research. In this respect, each of the three possible error correction sources will be closely examined and explained in greater detail in the following sections.

3.2. Self- Correction

Mendez and Cruz (2012) claim that self- correction can take place if a learner himself realises that his utterance is incorrect and corrects it. To further understand the importance of self-correction, the author introduces the idea that it is the most privileged option by learners because: "it is face- saving (…), allows learner to play an active role in the corrective event, (…) and it plays a central role in the promotion of autonomous learning nowadays." (Mendez and Cruz, 2012: 68) In short, by implementing self- correction in the foreign language classroom, the learners are actively involved in the whole process of SLA, and inspired to act more independently when it comes to EC..

Therefore, self- correction should be encouraged by the teacher who "guides, controls, and provides some hints." (Kayum, 2015: 128) Kayum (2015) develops the idea that the teachers' guidance helps learners to successfully correct committed errors, and the learners will thus memorise it and become able to prevent the recurrence of the same error. The author supports his theory by giving a closer look at the results when using teacher correction and self correction in his own classroom. When confronted with teacher correction, learners felt scared and unwilling to continue speaking because they were not given a chance to correct themselves. On the other hand, learners who were given a chance to self-correct their erroneous utterances remembered and correctly answered the same question a few days later. His theory is also supported by the following conclusion: "once students are made aware of their errors, they may learn more from correcting their own errors than by having their teacher correct them." (George 1972, Corder 1973, and Ravem 1973: as cited in Hendrickson, 1978: 396) Pawlak (2014) further explains that the learning will take place if learners become aware of the source of their error and therefore try to correct them.

Even though there are plenty of benefits of self-correction in the foreign language classroom, Pawlak (2014) emphasises that it also "suffers from shortcomings". (Pawlak 2014:150) In reality, it is actually a difficult task for a teacher to provide every learner with the opportunity to self-correct because it is time-consuming. An equally important weakness of this method is also learners' lack of necessary linguistic knowledge that assures successful error correction. Next, according to previous research one cannot neglect "preference for teacher correction on the part of learners". (Pawlak, 2014:150)

All things considered, despite some drawbacks, the data appear to provide strong evidence concerning positive effects of self-correction. This method of EC serves as an encouragement to learners' self-confidence and provides teachers with the opportunity to make an independent learner the central person of a learning process.

3.3. Teacher Correction

Despite different possibilities on the sources of error correction in a foreign language, as already mentioned when defining EC, one of the oldest definitions suggests that EC is: "any reaction of *the teacher* which clearly transforms, disapprovingly refers to, or demands

improvement of the learner utterance" (Chaudron, 1977 as cited in Mendez, Cruz 2012: 64) In essence, the author answers Hendrickson's question by making teachers responsible for EC in the foreign language classroom. Even though this may be one of the earliest definitions, up to the present time there have not been many changes when it comes to choosing the source of EC, as supported by Pawlak's claim: "As documented by the available empirical evidence and as most practitioners would undoubtedly attest, (…) [teacher correction] predominates in the majority of classrooms." (Pawlak, 2014: 149)

Pawlak (2014) advances many reasons that influence the popularity of teacher correction in the EFL classroom. Teachers possess linguistic and methodological skills that appear to guarantee saving time and more successful dealing with learners' errors. Furthermore, L2 students seem to expect and value teacher correction, perceiving it as a teacher's job: "[i]n many foreign language situations, where there is little exposure to English or practice available in the community, error correction is an expected role for the teacher". (Hedge 2000:288) As has been noted, teacher correction should improve and quicken the process of error correction in foreign language learning. Teachers are supposed to be acquainted with various methodological approaches in EC and, unlike some learners, teachers are believed to possess the sufficient linguistic knowledge that results in successful correction of learners' errors.

Although it may be true that teacher correction is undoubtedly significant for learners and SLA, further evidence suggests that there are numerous disadvantages and pedagogical issues when it comes to that EC source. Mendez and Cruz (2012) summarise the most important drawbacks listed in many earlier research concerning teacher correction: "inconsistency; ambiguity of teachers' corrections; random and unsystematic feedback on errors by teachers; acceptance of errors for fear of interrupting the communication; and a wide range of learner error types addressed as corrective feedback." (Allwright, 1975; Chaudron, 1977; Long, 1977; Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Lyster & Mori, 2006: as cited in Mendez and Cruz, 2012: 74)

According to the analysed data and the presented results, it is crucial that teachers decide which errors to correct, when and how. Mendez and Cruz (2012) suggest that it is important for teachers to constantly improve their knowledge concerning EC in order to successfully deal with learners' errors with regard to their individual differences. In addition, the authors

advise teachers to "put into practice new and more effective strategies; to organize and systematize corrective feedback; and to set clear and feasible goals in this respect." (Mendez and Cruz, 2012:74) All things considered, teachers should control the error correction processes and make clear which formations need improvement. Still, according to the individual differences and preferences of their learners, teachers should set well- defined objectives in EC and be able to use different strategies in order for learning to take place.

However, Hendrickson (1978) develops the claim that a teacher should not be the leading person when it comes to the correction process, but should rather insist on encouraging the students to use the advantages of self- and peer correction. Ellis (2009) supports the previously presented idea and suggests that teachers should: "give students the opportunity to self-correct, and, if that fails, to invite other students to perform the correction (…). Such advice can be seen as part and parcel of the western educational ideology of learner-centeredness." (Ellis, 2009: 7)

To sum up, according to the presented data, one can conclude that correction provided by teachers is still the most frequent choice in foreign language teaching. In comparison to other sources, teacher correction has many advantages, with correctness, precision and knowing of different linguistic and methodological processes being the most important. Despite that, teachers are firmly advised to make space for self- and peer correction within SLA. Because, as Allwright and Bailey describe: "[n]o matter how hard a teacher tries to correct errors, only the learner can do the learning necessary to improve performance, regardless of how much treatment is provided". (Allwright, Bailey 1991:99) With respect to presented evidence, teacher guidance and correction are covetable in the foreign language classroom only if self- and peer correction failed to result in successful correction of learners' errors.

3.4. Peer Correction

As already mentioned, learner-centeredness in the foreign language classroom plays an important role for SLA nowadays. Except for self-correction, peer response has also become an important source of EC in a foreign language. Mendez and Cruz (2012) define peer correction as an EC strategy that occurs when learners correct each other's false utterances in speaking or writing. Sultana (2009) also confirms that peer correction is gaining popularity in

ESL classes, because it encourages students to work as a team in order to get answers and improve their foreign language skills.

According to the studies concerning error correction, many instructors often choose peer correction as an alternative to teacher correction, "aware or not aware of the theories of learning." (Sultana 2009: 12) In order to better understand what is regarded as peer correction, Harmer (2007) suggests asking learners whether they agree with the utterance or ask them to comment on learners' written work. Therefore, Harmer (2007) implicates that peer correction can be applied in both oral and written production of foreign language in class. Peer correction in speaking occurs if another learner or the rest of the class were asked to help the learner who was not able to provide the correct answer. An example of peer correction in speaking was provided by Harmer:

Monica: Trains are safer planes.
Teacher: Safer planes? (with surprised questioning intonation)
Monica: Oh… Trains are safer than planes.
Teacher: Good, Monica. Now, 'comfortable' …Simon?
Simon: Trains are more comfortable. Planes are.
Teacher: Hmm. Can you help Simon, Bruno?
Bruno: Er… Trains are more comfortable than planes.
Teacher: Thank you. Simon?
Simon: Trains are more comfortable than planes.
(Harmer 2007: 97)

In summary, this is a practical example of peer correction in oral practice in the EFL classroom. Instead of correcting the learner himself, the teacher nominated another student to make the necessary improvement. On the other hand, peer correction in writing occurs "when students' written works are given to their friends for checking". (Sultana, 2009:12)

According to the presented data, it is clear that teacher correction is not an imperative when it comes to correcting errors in the foreign language classroom. What is more, it is strongly recommended to encourage other sources of correction, with the emphasis on peer correction. According to many researches, peer correction undoubtedly plays an important role in achieving learners' responsibility and more independent learning and, finally, it sets them in the centre of the learning process. Even though proven to be beneficial to learners, the

question that emerges is whether they believe in correction by their colleagues. Therefore, the next chapter will closely examine the previous studies concerning general beliefs and attitudes toward peer correction, and analyse its advantages and possible disadvantages.

4. Why Peer Correction?

4.1. Previous Studies

Prior research concerning peer correction has undoubtedly suggested the importance and benefits of peer correction when it comes to foreign language learning. Further research in this area also includes teachers' and learners' attitudes and beliefs toward peer correction. To better understand the role of peer correction as seen by instructors and learners this section explores the results of previous studies concerning the topic.

Lee (2005) gives an interesting viewpoint on teachers' and learners' attitudes toward the source of correction. According to the data presented in his research, the majority of both teachers and learners showed strong preference for teacher correction in the EFL classroom. Furthermore, 35% of his participants expressed a strong dislike for peer correction. Lee (2005) listed a number of explanations given by learners such as the limitations when it comes to necessary knowledge of a foreign language, the difficulty it may cause for a peer, and in the end, the duty of a teacher as a reliable source of EC.

Furthermore, similar results were presented in the research conducted by Mendez and Cruz (2012) regarding learners' and teachers' attitudes toward EC. All things considered, they come to the conclusion that peer correction is not seen as a positive activity in the foreign language classroom by 86, 7% teachers who took part in the study. On the other hand, they rated teacher correction to be the most important source of EC, followed by self-correction, and describing peer correction as the least effective source. What is more, they reported the negative effect of peer correction, describing it as harmful for relationships between classmates.

Saito (1994) examined adult students' and teachers' preferences for the source of EC in the classroom. Similarly, he states that the students are familiar with peer correction, but still do not appreciate it. Among many reasons the author lists that learners believe that they are only students, and not teachers. They find that reading other peers' written work is a useful experience, but do not see the point in correcting it, they rather see it as a teacher's responsibility.

Opposed to their data, Katayama (2006) found out that 50, 6 % of his participants answered that they wanted their peers to correct their oral errors in group work because they would benefit from it. Katayama previously assumed that learners in Japan would rather negatively perceive peer feedback, but in fact, only 5, 5% of his respondents answered that they felt uncomfortable if corrected by their colleagues.

Oladejo (1993) analysed learners' preferences when it comes to the source of EC and made an interesting conclusion that cultural background of learners must be taken into consideration when analysing their preferences. He goes on to explain that in Singapore and China peer correction is considered to be a negative experience of "losing face". (Oladejo 1993:83) According to the gathered data, he claims that the majority of students expressed preference for teacher correction, especially the more advanced students. Oladejo (1993) sees tendency for more independent and reliable learning as a reason why advanced students do not favour peer correction.

Similar to Oladejo's research, Zhu (2010) investigates the preferences of Chinese college students toward the source of EC. According to his results, students in China are accustomed to teacher correction and he says that "This may be due to the deep-rooted teacher-centred teaching approach in China." (Zhu 2010:3) Only 16, 7% of his respondents showed preference for peer correction in their EFL classes. According to the author, learners do not show appreciation for correction techniques that could result in being laughed at in front of the others which would lead to losing their self-confidence.

Furthermore, Kavaliauskienė and Anusienė (2012) offer an interesting viewpoint of learners' preferences toward EC in Lithuania. According to their study, only 35% of their participants find that peer correction is beneficial, which means that the other half of the contestants either disagree or are not sure about the benefits of peer correction. The authors emphasise being afraid of public criticism as the main reason for their negative attitude.

To sum up, according to the presented results from numerous research conducted from 1993 to 2012 it is apparent that the vast majority of learners and teachers show bias toward teacher correction before self, and peer correction. Even though some learners take peer correction to be beneficial, they still show strong and undeniable preference for a reliable teacher correction to take place in their EFL classrooms. By analysing the data of their research, the

authors listed a great number of reasons influencing their preferences such as: teacher correction becoming a matter of habit in the foreign language classroom, poor acquaintance with peer correction techniques, different cultural background, and finally, fear of public critique which causes low self-esteem.

4.2. Advantages of Peer Correction

As previously mentioned, a need for setting the learner in the centre of the learning process has evidently increased. The emphasis is placed on making learners aware of different benefits of other EC sources in order to achieve independency when it comes to learning a foreign language. As a result, the technique of peer correction finds its place more often in foreign language classrooms, and "it has been backed by a lot of theories of language teaching, such as Humanism, Communicative Language Teaching and Learner-centered Teaching." (Sultana 2009:12)

First, there are many arguments that can be advanced to support the benefits of peer correction when it comes to face-to-face interaction between learners. To understand the importance and need for peer involvement, Paul Rollinson (2005) summarises the most important advantages of this teamwork activity. In the first place, he describes peer feedback as a more relaxed correction technique when compared to teacher correction. To put it differently, he puts forward the claim that learners feel more comfortable and less anxious when corrected by their colleagues than by the teacher. Furthermore, Rollinson (2005) emphasises the need to make learners more active and willing to participate in class, and abandon their role of passive listeners. Peer correction, therefore, insists on learners' interaction and independency, rather than the authority of a teacher. The author also suggests that under those circumstances the classroom atmosphere becomes more supportive, closer and friendlier.

Furthermore, Rollinson is not alone in his view that peer correction has a positive effect on relationships within the foreign language classroom. Yang (2013) describes the first implementation of the peer correction technique in her classroom and the unexpected positive reactions of her learners. According to her data, students were willing to participate in different tasks and activities, and felt more relaxed when it came to making errors. What is

more, the instructor claims: “Some students told me afterward that they felt the class was different. They felt they were learning by themselves rather than learning from others.” (Yang 2013, http://newsmanager.commpartners.com/tesolaeis/issues/2013-07-02/4.html) In summary, the author claims that peer correction techniques were gladly received by her students because they positively influenced relationships between learners, and improved the classroom atmosphere. She adds that peer correction “also enables them to use the four basic language skills in the process of correcting their peers' errors. Students are the centre of the class and are given power by the teacher to control their language learning process.” (Yang 2013, http://newsmanager.commpartners.com/tesolaeis/issues/2013-07-02/4.html)

Next, Pawlak (2014) also points out the positive effect of peer feedback in the foreign language classroom. Among many other advantages, he emphasizes that by conducting peer correction, learners are given a chance to actively participate in learning and a possibility to learn something from each other. In other words, peer correction offers a possibility for learners to help each other in order to complement their knowledge and assist in overcoming possible difficulties.

Similarly, Sultana (2009) shares the same premise by claiming that peer correction is necessary and beneficial to learners. Still, Sultana’s results gathered from the research on learners’ attitudes and beliefs toward peer correction do not appear to validate such a view. Even though the vast majority of his interviewees were not showing bias toward peer correction, he comes up with the recommendations for foreign language instructors. The author suggests making better use of peer correction techniques by training learners in correcting errors in order to avoid inconsistency and ambiguity. He also obliges the instructors to create a relaxed atmosphere to make sure that learners feel comfortable even if they make errors.

All things considered, there are numerous advantages of peer correction techniques in the EFL classroom. There is overwhelming evidence confirming the fact that peer correction makes learners less dependent on teachers’ authority and encourages them to learn from each other. By helping each other and working as a team, learners are able to create better relationships with their colleagues and, hopefully, create a comfortable learning environment. Moreover, it is worthwhile to consider that tasks and activities where learners correct each other seem to stimulate their motivation and willingness to participate more actively. In this

respect, there is a general agreement that peer correction is covetable and that it plays an important role as an EC technique because it facilitates learners' SLA. Given these points, learners should be made aware of these benefits and encouraged to use them, after they are given instructions and appropriate training on how to successfully perform this type of correction.

4.3. Disadvantages of Peer Correction

Although the research into effectiveness of peer correction in the foreign language classroom abounds with examples of advantages and benefits of this technique, there are also some drawbacks that should not be overlooked. Therefore, this section is concerned with the issue of what are those disadvantages and how they are perceived by instructors and learners.

However, Dana Ferris (2003) offers another angle on this debate and explains the possible issues with peer correction in greater detail. In contrast to evidence concerning peer involvement benefits, the author wonders whether "its benefits justify the time required to utilize it effectively." (Ferris 2003:70) In other words, Ferris indicates that peer correction is a time-consuming technique and it takes a lot of instructors' time to train learners with the aim of accomplishing the successful correction. Therefore, a lot of instructors find it much easier to correct learners' errors by themselves because it is more reliable and time-saving.

In the same fashion as Oladejo (1993), Ferris (2003) points out the importance of learners' cultural background. The central issue addressed here is that learners in mixed groups seem to have different "expectations and intercultural communication patterns." (Ferris 2003: 83) This conclusion builds on existing evidence based on prior research by Carson and Nelson (1996). The study tried to crystallise that students from different cultures have different attitudes toward their peer work, and classroom atmosphere in general. As a result, they concluded that students that are part of "collectivist cultures (e.g., Chinese, Japanese)" lay emphasis on positive classroom environment. (Ferris, 2003:83) In this respect, Chinese students avoided writing comments on their peers' written work in order not to endanger relationships with their colleagues. Given these points, Ferris (2003) assumes that peer correction is not always reliable and it can lead to "overly-positive or even dishonest" peer

feedback, meaning that the lack of constructive critique does not make place for learning. (Ferris, 2003:83)

As already mentioned, prior research provided overwhelming evidence that learners show undeniable preference for teacher correction up to the present time. At this instance, Ferris (2003) suggests that instructors must be acquainted with the preferences of their learners. In other words, the teacher is seen as a facilitator who should respect learners' attitudes and preferences when it comes to EC in order to create a comfortable, motivating, and anxiety-free classroom atmosphere. Leki (1991) emphasises the importance of respecting students' preferences: "Ignoring their request for error correction works against their motivation (…) It seems at best counter-productive, at worst, high-handed and disrespectful of our students, to simply insist that they trust our preferences." (Leki, 1991:210) On the contrary, the instructor should investigate his learners' attitudes, and analyse their feelings concerning error correction in the foreign language classroom.

Another aspect of this topic is presented by Wang (2010) whose interviewees showed dissatisfaction with peer correction technique for being unreliable, meaning that they can be provided with incorrect structures by their peers. The reason for this may be attributed to the fact that learners possess different linguistic knowledge and skills, and therefore sometimes cannot serve as a reliable source of information. With this in mind, teachers are not advised to neglect peer involvement, but rather to supervise learners' work and encourage more frequent practising of peer correction techniques.

Last, Pawlak (2014) also indicates that one of the most serious disadvantages of peer correction in a foreign language is humiliation in front of the class. In fact, he warns that learners sometimes recklessly correct and comment without realising that "being laughed at and ridiculed could do serious damage to their self-esteem, self-concept and self-efficacy." (Pawlak : 2014, 152) Under those circumstances, it is important to realise that peer correction can sometimes negatively affect learners' feelings and lead to much serious consequences such as low self-esteem, foreign language anxiety, etc.

In conclusion, although it may seem initially that peer feedback is beneficial for learners in each case, the point often overlooked is that this technique also has some shortcomings. Peer correction techniques in the foreign language classroom are time-consuming and cannot be

considered to serve every student equally beneficially. Different cultural background and norms among students play an important role when analysing attitudes toward peer correction and behaviour of students when asked to correct. However, students do not seem to highly appreciate and seek peer correction, especially in comparison to teacher correction. Possible reasons can be seen in learners' beliefs that peers are rather unreliable source of EC as well as in fear of public criticism or humiliation. Still, it is recommended that teachers encourage peer involvement in the EFL classroom, but with careful instruction, proper training, and as a supervisor who carefully monitors the learning process and the learners' feelings.

5. Attitudes and Beliefs of High School Learners toward Peer Correction in Foreign Language

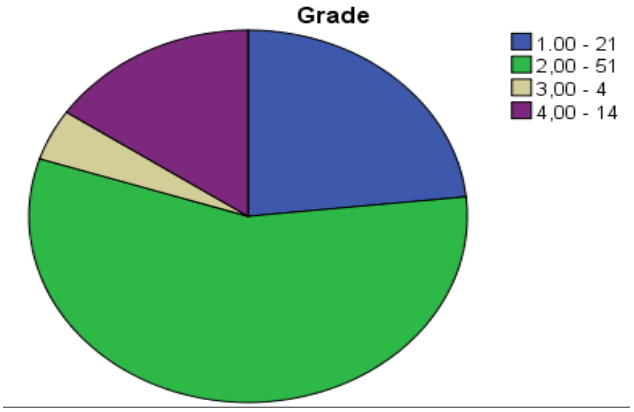
5.1. Aim of the Study

The aim of the study was to investigate the attitudes and beliefs of high school learners toward peer correction in a foreign language. The study was conducted in order to raise awareness about high school learners' preferences when it comes to the source of error correction, in the hope that it would positively educate instructors about learners' feelings and beliefs. In essence, the aims of the study were: 1) to investigate attitudes and beliefs of high school learners in Croatia toward peer correction, 2) to find out how often learners get a chance to conduct correction instead of their teacher, 3) what are their preferences when it comes to the choice between teacher and peer correction, 4) what are the causes and reasons behind their choices.

5.2. Sample

The study was conducted among the high school learners in Vinkovci, Eastern Croatia. 90 high school learners of Grammar School Matija Antun Reljković, Vinkovci participated in the study. In view of the more specific demographic data, 66 female and 24 male students participated in the study. They are the students from 1st to 4th grade of high school, ranging from 14 to 18 years of age, 16 being the average. The specific number of students according to their grade (from 1st to 4th) is presented in the chart below. The chart indicates that the majority of participants are 2nd grade students. (Chart 1) The majority, 77 out of 90 students learn English, and only 13 students learn German as a first foreign language. According to the data, most of them are graded as excellent or very good in the foreign language, with the average grade of 4, 32.

Chart 1: Number of participants from 1st to 4th grade



5.3. Instruments

Since there was no available source of a questionnaire investigating high school learners' beliefs and attitudes toward peer correction in the foreign language, a questionnaire was designed by the author, and finally checked and approved by the supervisor. The first part of the questionnaire consists of the demographic data concerning grade, age, gender, learners' first language, and grade in English.

The second part of the questionnaire is related to the topic and consists of 21 claims that are accompanied by a five-point Likert scale. The first five statements dealing with the frequency of implementation of peer correction are accompanied by possible answers ranging from 1= never to 5= always. The rest of the statements is accompanied by possible answers regarding their agreement or disagreement, and they range from 1= strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree. A more detailed preview of the scales will be elaborated within the tables that present results of the study in the following section.

The questionnaire can be grouped into three main categories concerning different fields of interest. The first five questions investigate the frequency of using the peer correction technique in the foreign language classroom. The aim is to question how often the interviewees are given a chance and encouraged to take the role of the corrector in their

classroom, whether in oral or in written production, in front of the whole class, or within a group.

The second group of questions (questions from 6 - 10) investigates learners' general attitudes and opinions on the significance of error correction in the foreign language classroom and analyses how it influences their participation in class. The aim is to find out whether learners appreciate error correction in general and whether they find it beneficial.

The last group of questions (questions from 11-21) analyses learners' preferences with the emphasis on possible different attitudes toward teacher and peer correction. Another significant question is what feelings they connect to peer correction, in comparison with teacher correction. Plainly, this part investigates in which case learners feel more relaxed, and in which more anxious, concerning both written and oral production.

A reliability test was carried out on the questionnaire, showing that it is acceptable, as follows from Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.657$.

5.4. Procedure

The questionnaire was administered to the learners in their English class by their English teacher in Vinkovci. The participants were answering the questions anonymously during their regular classes and the expected time for completing the questionnaire was approximately 10 minutes.

All the data were analysed and described by using SPSS. This includes the descriptive analysis of the participants defining age, gender, school etc. In the same fashion, items were analysed in SPSS showing the data for minimum, maximum, mean and the standard deviation, and lastly, by analysing the percentages of students opting for different answers.

5.5. Results: Analysis and Discussion

Results of the study will be presented in percentages for each item particularly. Table 1 describes the results of learners' answers regarding the frequency of using peer correction techniques in greater detail.

Table 1: The frequency of using peer correction in a foreign language classroom

Survey Statements	always %	often %	sometimes %	seldom %	never %
1. *My peers are asked to pay attention and to correct errors I commit when speaking a foreign language.*	1,1	4,4	18,9	18,9	56,7
2. *If I commit an error in speech, my teacher nominates another student to correct it.*	1,1	2,2	17,8	30	48,9
3. *If I do not know the answer to the teacher's question, he names another student to answer it.*	33,3	34,4	17,8	5,6	8,9
4. *We read and correct each other's written works in our foreign language class.*	11,1	8,9	23,3	23,3	33,3
5. *If we speak within a group, we are asked to correct each other's errors in foreign language.*	5,6	11,1	20,0	23,3	38,9

Analysis: As has been noted, the first group of survey statements relates to the frequency of using and applying peer correction techniques in the foreign language classroom. As shown above, these results provide confirmatory evidence that peer correction is still an undiscovered phenomenon when it comes to learning a foreign language. Despite of countless suggestions that peer correction should be encouraged as an alternative to traditional teacher correction, the available evidence seems to suggest that peer correction still struggles to find its way into foreign language classrooms of the participants.

A closer look at the data indicates that peer correction is almost never an option when it comes to deciding on the source of error correction. What is more, 75, 6 % of high school learners who took part in the study, claim that their colleague is never or seldom asked to pay attention and listen carefully in order to correct an error in speaking. With this in mind, one can assume that the teacher does not practice preparing his learners to provide feedback nor does he try to increase learners' attention by involving them actively in class. Similarly, 78, 9 % of students support the claim that the other learners are never or seldom nominated to help them if they happen to make an error in oral production. In that case, one can conclude that little or almost no attention has been devoted to raising awareness on peer involvement benefits and instructing the learners to successfully participate in learner-to-learner interactions, at least regarding the oral production. The only situation when peer correction is a favourable option, according to the opinion of 67, 7 % participants, is apparently when one student cannot answer the teacher's question and the teacher nominates another student to provide the correct answer.

The last two statements question the frequency of applying peer correction techniques when it comes to correcting learners' written work and correcting within a group. Learners' answers serve as an almost unanimous evidence that peer correction techniques in writing and group work is rarely or never seen as a preferred option. In particular, 56, 6 % of the participants state that they never or seldom correct their peers' written works. Similarly, 62, 2% of the interviewees declares that there are never or seldom asked to correct their peers when working in a group.

Discussion: On the basis of the results given by 90 students from 4 different grades of the Grammar School in Vinkovci, one can get the point that peer correction does not seem to be promoted in foreign language teaching. There is overwhelming evidence corroborating the fact that students are never or seldom motivated to take responsibility in EC in a foreign language. Whether in oral, or written production, or when working as a group, peers seem to be a remarkably neglected source of error correction. On the other hand, the instructor seems only to insist on peer involvement when the nominated student is unable to provide an answer his or her question.

To portray the issue of such an approach, one can address a great number of reasons influencing teachers' choices. Instructors often give up on peer correction techniques because of the time constraints they must cope with. Therefore they are often forced to opt for a quicker and the more reliable teacher correction, which is already deeply anchored in the EFL classroom. Further reasons can be the insufficient cognition related to the theory of other EC sources, or even more, the teacher's negative attitudes toward benefits of peer correction techniques. In either case, it is important to mention that teachers' attitudes and beliefs toward peer correction were not investigated in this survey. Still, teachers' perceptions and reasons for denying peer correction techniques a chance to the EFL classroom more often can serve as a premise for the further research on the topic.

Table 2: Learners' general attitudes toward the benefits of EC and the influence on learning

Survey Statements	strongly agree %	mostly agree %	nor agree nor disagree %	mostly disagree %	strongly disagree %
6. *It is important to correct errors in foreign language*.	65,6	13,3	15,6	4,4	1,1
7. *I can learn a lot from my errors.*	60	-	23,3	15,6	1,1
8. *I can learn a lot when I correct my colleagues' errors.*	25,6	30,0	17,8	14,4	12,2
9. *Correcting my peers' errors in foreign language class represents a positive challenge for me.*	25,6	17,8	28,9	10,0	17,8
10. *When I am asked to correct my peers' errors, I pay more attention in class.*	15,6	21,1	34,4	10,0	18,9

Analysis: The second group of questionnaire statements was designed with the aim to obtain information considering general attitudes toward error correction in foreign language. This group comprises 5 questions questioning the importance of error correction, the beliefs on

benefiting from error correction, and the influence of attitudes on classroom atmosphere. Each item is particularly analysed, and all the data are presented in percentages.

First of all, learners' attitudes toward the importance of error correction in the foreign language came as the biggest surprise, especially after investigating into different prior studies where the importance of error correction was never agreed on by less than at least 90 % of the participants. In this survey, this does not seem to be the case. In general, 78, 9% of high school learners do strongly or mostly agree that it is important to correct errors in the foreign language. It may be true that they represent a large majority, but at the same time, 5, 5 % of learners strongly or mostly disagree, while 15, 6 % of learners are neutral when it comes to questioning the importance of EC in the foreign language.

The further statements (Statement 7 and 8) examine the perception of possible benefits from their and their peers' errors. In either case, errors are perceived as possibilities that can have a positive effect on learners' knowledge. The majority of learners (more precisely 60%) strongly or mostly agree that they can learn a lot from their own errors, as well as from their peers' errors (55, 6% of learners). Altogether, there is a general agreement by the majority of learners' that error correction is covetable, and that self- and peer correction positively influence their learning processes.

The last two statements in this part focus on how learners' beliefs toward peer correction impact their behaviour in the EFL classroom. In essence, 43, 4 % of the participants strongly or mostly agree that peer correction is regarded as a positive challenge they are exposed to. Not as many learners, precisely 36, 7 % of them, find that they pay more attention when asked to correct their peers. Then again, only 28, 9 % of the participants mostly or strongly disagree on the same statement. At the same time, 28, 9 and 34, 4 % of the participants show neutral opinion considering the merits of both self- and peer correction, which will be more specifically elaborated in the discussion.

Discussion: To further understand the attitudes toward peer correction, it is important to first investigate into learners' opinions and beliefs toward EC in general, without taking preferences for different sources of EC into consideration. With this intention, the learners decided on whether they find it important to correct errors in the foreign language. Generally, a great majority appreciates the usefulness of EC. Surprisingly, 15, 6 % of high school

learners did not make a decision, but rather stayed neutral. This can be regarded as an unexpected result, firstly because most of them are graded as excellent or very good in the foreign language. The possible reasons for such results can be appointed to the lack of interest in the field of foreign language or to the insufficient education on the benefits of this phenomenon.

Next, the data generated in this part of the survey provides evidence that learners see their own errors, and those committed by their peers, as valuable contributions to the enhancement of their knowledge. Seeing that, it is worthwhile to briefly remind ourselves of the results on the frequency of conducting peer correction, where the data suggested that peer correction is a rarely used technique in the EFL classroom of the same learners. Given all these points, one can raise a second important question: If learners' answers show confirmatory beliefs that they benefit from conducting peer correction, why are they denied an opportunity for more successful learning? As mentioned in the theoretical part of the paper, it is important that instructors take their learners' preferences into consideration in order to create a more positive learning atmosphere. The analysed data therefore depicts an obvious imbalance between learners' positive attitude toward peer correction and its rare practical use in the foreign language classroom.

Furthermore, the study investigated into possible changes of students' attitudes in foreign language classroom when asked to pay attention and correct their peers. A considerable number of participants (43, 4 %) perceived peer correction as a positive challenge for them. Similarly, a little smaller number of learners (36, 7 %) admitted to pay more attention in class when asked to correct their peers. Still, the greatest number of students remained neutral, they do not agree, nor disagree with the statements, which is especially interesting. On logical grounds, one can dare to conclude that learners' indecisiveness is a product of their lacking acquaintance with peer correction techniques in practice. Realising that students are barely ever set in the centre of the learning process and given a responsibility for correcting their peers' errors, not having a clear opinion should not be surprising. In short, in order to appreciate various techniques that improve their SLA, the learners must be given an opportunity to practice it. All things considered, this is not the case with the participants from the Grammar School in Vinkovci.

Table 3: Attitudes and beliefs of high school learners' toward peer correction in comparison with teacher correction

Survey Statements	strongly agree %	mostly agree %	nor agree nor disagree %	mostly disagree %	strongly disagree %
11. *Teacher correction is useful.*	63,3	27,8	4,4	1,1	2,2
12. *My teacher is more professional and reliable when correcting my errors than my peers.*	53,3	24,4	13,3	5,6	2,2
13. *Peer correction is useful.*	18,9	25,6	23,3	17,8	14,4
14. *I feel useful if my colleagues learn something from me.*	54,4	23,3	14,4	1,1	6,7
15. *I am glad when my colleagues read my written work in order to identify and correct my errors.*	6,9	2,2	14,4	23,3	51,1
16. *I tend to be more permissive when correcting my friends' errors.*	21,1	25,6	25,6	11,1	16,7
17. *I feel more relaxed when my errors are corrected by my peers, instead by my teacher.*	11,1	8,9	23,3	10,0	46,7
18. *I feel nervous when a teacher corrects me in a foreign language class.*	8,9	11,1	17,8	26,7	35,6
19. *I feel embarrassed when my colleagues correct my errors.*	14,4	26,7	23,3	13,3	22,2
20. *I don't prefer colleagues correcting my written work because I don't want them to see my errors.*	13,3	12,2	18,9	27,8	26,7

21. *Peer correction cannot help me improve in a foreign language because my peers do not know the foreign language better than me.*	13,3	15,6	21,1	27,8	22,2

Analysis: The last part of the questionnaire comprises 10 statements concerning learners' attitudes and beliefs toward teacher correction, peer correction, and lastly, their preferences for the source of EC in the foreign language.

The first two statements examine learners' attitudes toward the benefits of teacher correction. Furthermore, the following statements (from 13.- 16.) aim to isolate learners' evaluation when it comes to peer correction techniques in speaking or writing, with the emphasis on what can be regarded as an advantage, and what as a disadvantage of peer involvement in the learning process. The remaining statements (from 17. - 21.) are supposed to examine if there are any differences in welcoming teacher feedback in comparison with peer feedback in the foreign language classroom. The emphasis here is laid on learners' appreciation for different sources in different tasks and on the feelings that the particular source of EC evokes.

As expected, the participants show a great appreciation for correction provided by their teacher. A vast majority of 91, 1 % of the interviewees strongly or mostly agree on the fact that teacher correction is useful. Only three participants mostly or strongly disagree on benefits they can gain from the feedback provided by their teacher. Furthermore, 77, 7 % of the participants favour teacher over peer correction because they consider the teacher to be more reliable and professional when compared to the peers.

At the same time, 44, 5 % of the high school learners rated peer correction as useful. Still, only 32, 2 % of them strongly or mostly disagree on the benefits of feedback provided by their peers. The rest of the participants (23, 3 %) neither agree nor disagree when it comes to the usefulness of peer correction in the foreign language classroom. Furthermore, 77, 7 % of them confirmed that they feel useful if they make contributions to their peers' knowledge of the foreign language. On the other hand, 74, 4 % of the learners do not show preference for

allowing their peers to become responsible for correcting errors in their written work. And, it is important to realise that learners do not hesitate to admit that they are usually more permissive when it comes to correcting their friends. 46, 7 % of the participants express bias toward their friends' language, and therefore, do not objectively correct or evaluate their works, when asked to.

When it comes to the learners' beliefs, attitudes and feelings when corrected by the teacher and by their peers, the results seem to suggest that learners are prone to teacher correction in the foreign language. In particular, 56, 7 % of the learners do not support the statement that peer correction induces the feeling of being more relaxed while they actively participate in the learning process. In addition, 62, 3 % of the learners do not seem to feel nervous if they are corrected by their teacher. Comparatively, 41, 1 % of the learners express strong or partial agreement with the fact that peer correction evokes the feeling of embarrassment. 35 ,5 % of the learners show strong or partial disagreement with the mentioned statement, and a significant percentage of 23, 3 % neither agree, nor disagree. Surprisingly, the majority of the learners (54, 5 %) mostly or strongly disagree with the statement that they do not fancy their written works to be corrected by their peers because they do not want their colleagues to see their errors. On the contrary, 25, 5 % of learners express their discomfort if their colleagues are given an opportunity to find out what kind of errors they commit. Exactly 50 % of interviewees show disagreement on the statement that their peers cannot provide useful feedback because they do not possess better linguistic knowledge than the interviewee. Still, 28, 9 % of the participants do not value peer knowledge due to the fact that they are not more proficient and therefore seen as incapable to provide significant and successful correction.

Discussion: The first thing to elucidate is that learners of the Grammar School in Vinkovci provided ample support for the assertion that the teacher is still the central person responsible for correcting their errors. The learners showed a noteworthy fondness for their teacher to be the person who carries out the process of error correction in the foreign language classroom. Furthermore, the learners seem to be concordant with the fact that the teacher is the most covetable option due to his or her reliability and professionalism. The results were expected to be such for many reasons. First of all, one of the reasons is the already mentioned time constraints that the teachers in the Croatian school system must cope with. Another key point is that the teacher is still perceived as a central figure in the learning process. In this context, learners are used to rely on teacher's feedback, and, as shown in the first part of the survey,

they are rarely offered a chance to conduct correcting together with their classmates. It is firmly suggested to make space for more independent learning by learners' cooperation with their classmates. In spite of that, the preference for teacher as a provider of EC expressed by almost all of the participants should not be neglected.

Still, the issue under scrutiny in this study is whether students' preferences for teacher correction arise from the negligence of peer involvement in foreign language classroom. In short, one can wonder whether the same percentage of learners would still opt for teacher over peers, if they were more frequently offered a chance to conduct peer correction in class.

Different from the attitudes toward teacher correction, less than half of the participants agree on the usefulness of feedback provided by their peers. An interesting phenomenon of not agreeing or disagreeing continues to show up when it comes to the statements regarding peer correction. 23, 3 % of the interviewees did not clearly opt for any of the options. As previously mentioned, one can conclude that their attitudes rest on the assumption that they lack the knowledge concerning the benefits of peer correction techniques. All things considered, teachers should make better use of peer correction techniques and present their merits to the students. After all, it has been noted that the overwhelming majority of participants feels helpful and useful if their correction results in successful learning by their peers. Therefore, the data yielded by the study lend support to the claim that greater independence of learners contributes to increasing their self- esteem. With this in mind, it can be concluded that learners are becoming more aware of the benefits of peer correction techniques, especially if their correction is regarded as beneficial by their colleagues.

At the same time, learners expressed strong disagreement on employing their peers to provide correction of their written work. An interesting viewpoint was offered by the participants later in the study, showing that they also do not mind if their colleagues see what their errors look like. The significant difference in learners' answers considering the fact that the statements are very similar was unexpected. Given this orientation, it is worthwhile to consider that learners do not prefer that their peers take responsibility for correcting their written work. The reason for that is obviously not to avoid embarrassment in front of their peers, but something else which was not a central issue of a more detailed analysis in this study. The possible assumptions are that learners do not believe in peer correction or that they do not want to share their written expressions with the classmates, but they rather prefer to keep it private.

This study portrays another issue concerning high school learners' attitudes toward peer correction. This study indicates that a significant number of participants admits to be permissive when correcting their friends' errors. With this in mind, one can conclude that peer correction does not appear to be the most objective type of correction, but still, it can be controlled by the teacher who supervises learners' evaluation. The reasons for permissiveness can be attributed to learners' effort to avoid jeopardizing their relationships with the classmates.

Even though suggested by prior research, the results of this study seem not to validate the view that peer correction encourages learners to feel more confident and relaxed. Exactly the opposite, peer correction, when compared with teacher correction, seems to be a more stressful event in the foreign language classroom. According to the data analysed, the participants generally do not feel nervous when corrected by teacher, but surprisingly, almost half of them feel embarrassed when corrected by a peer. The phenomenon was continuously described in prior research as typical for Collectivist cultures of Japan or China. Although, there has been relatively little research on peer correction attitudes in Croatia, results analysed in this study indicate that high school learners seem to confirm that they fear humiliation in front of their classmates. Teacher correction is therefore regarded as a reliable and familiar source, while peer correction still challenges learners' readiness to take risks, as a new, and, as shown previously, unpractised technique. With this in mind, the clear favouring of teacher correction gathered from learners' answers should on no condition be regarded as a shocking discovery.

The last statements to be discussed in this study show learners' disagreement on the statement that they cannot provide positive feedback because they lack necessary linguistic knowledge. With this in mind, it is worthwhile to mention that half of the learners apparently appreciate what their peers have to offer. This can be advanced as another argument to support the encouragement of peer correction training and instruction in foreign language classroom.

All in all, the data generated in the last table can serve as a ground for developing the claim that the learners still seem to appreciate peer correction. Despite the fact that they traditionally rely on feedback provided by their teacher, they do not neglect the benefits of peer correction. The pivotal issue of this study seems to be the frequency of allowing learners to take the initiative in correcting their errors. According to the presented data, peer

correction techniques rarely or never get a chance to enter foreign language classrooms of the Grammar School in Vinkovci. With this in mind, one can conclude that learners believe that peer correction in general positively influences learning processes and learners' self-esteem for feeling helpful. As suggested before, the role of a teacher is to facilitate the learning processes and to offer diversity as an answer to the question of who should correct. By emphasising the benefits of peer correction, proper training and more frequent practice of peer correction techniques, one can expect that learners' attitudes and beliefs would positively change toward peer correction.

6. Conclusion

In summary, errors in the EFL classroom may be viewed as an integral part of learners' processes of acquiring a foreign language. Therefore, errors in a foreign language are not perceived to be a negative occurrence, but rather a situation that can help students to learn from. In the light of successful dealing with learners' errors, the emphasis is laid on conducting error analysis and error correction. Error correction in the foreign language classroom is a reaction to learners' erroneous utterances, with the aim of providing the correct patterns in the target language.

First, error correction was exclusively the responsibility of a teacher. By a detailed investigation into learners' preferences and needs, other sources of EC gained importance. As a result, it is strongly recommended that teachers implement peer feedback techniques in the EFL classrooms. By employing learners as EC providers in written and oral tasks in class, they are offered a chance to feel important and learn independently, and what is more, to work as a team in order to get the right answers. Despite many suggestions to replace the teacher feedback by involving the learners themselves, it still seems to be an often neglected technique in the EFL classroom. The classroom practice in EFL should therefore emphasise the merits of peer correction, and educate learners on the benefits of EC correction sources, apart from the traditional, standardised practice. The study conducted with the aim to investigate high school learners' attitudes and beliefs toward peer correction, does not seem to validate that premise.

The most surprising fact provided by 90 learners of the Grammar School in Vinkovci is that they are seldom or even never encouraged to practice peer correction techniques in their EFL classrooms. Still, more than half of the participants feel that correcting their peers' errors would mean a lot for the improvement of their foreign language skills. Another key point in this study is that learners still show strong preference for teacher correction, seeing him or her as a central and reliable figure in the process of EC. The suggestion that peer correction induces less anxious classroom atmosphere does not seem to be supported by the high school learners' answers gathered in this study. What is more, one can conclude that the learners fear humiliation and embarrassment if corrected by their classmates. The reason for that can again be attributed to the neglecting of peer involvement in student-to-student interactions.

In essence, despite the fact that learners evaluate the teacher as a covetable source of EC, they seem to acknowledge the peers' contribution to the development of their foreign language skills. Therefore, there is an obvious need to widen learners' horizons by emphasizing the merits and benefits of peer correction techniques in the EFL classrooms. After all, the learners deserve to be given a chance to find their place in the centre of a relaxing and anxious- free learning environment.

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8. Appendix 1 – Questionnaire

Stavovi učenika prema vršnjačkom ispravljanju

Dragi učenici/ice,
ovo istraživanje se provodi u svrhu obrane diplomskog rada. Cilj upitnika je istražiti stavove i mišljenja učenika prema vršnjačkom ispravljanju grešaka u nastavi stranog jezika. Ovaj kratki upitnik je anoniman i koristit će se samo u znanstvene svrhe.

Razred: _____

Dob : _____

Spol: a) muški b) ženski

Prvi jezik: a) engleski b) njemački

Ocjena iz engleskog jezika: 1 2 3 4 5

Odredite koliko su često sljedeće tvrdnje istinite za vas. Zaokružite odgovarajući broj prema ovoj legendi:

1= nikad
2= jako rijetko
3= ponekad
4= često
5= uvijek

1. U razredu se često traži od mojih kolega da pažljivo slušaju kako bi mogli ispraviti moje greške u govoru.
1 2 3 4 5

2. Ako napravim grešku u govoru profesor često prozove drugog kolegu da me isprave.
1 2 3 4 5

3. Ako ja ne mogu odgovoriti na profesorovo pitanje, profesor izabire drugog učenika da ponudi odgovor.
1 2 3 4 5

4. Na satu stranog jezika čitamo i međusobno ispravljamo naše pisane radove.
1 2 3 4 5

5. Ako pričamo u grupi, od mene se zahtijeva da ispravljam greške svojih kolega.
1 2 3 4 5

Odredite koliko se slažete sa sljedećim tvrdnjama:
1=uopće se ne slažem
2= uglavnom se ne slažem
3= niti se slažem, niti se ne slažem
4= uglavnom se slažem
5= u potpunosti se slažem

6. Smatram da je važno ispraviti greške u stranom jeziku.
1 2 3 4 5

7. Mogu puno naučiti iz svojih pogrešaka.
1 2 3 4 5

8. Mogu puno naučiti ispravljajući pogreške svojih kolega.
1 2 3 4 5

9. Ispravljanje grešaka mojih kolega na nastavi stranog jezika smatram pozitivnim izazovom.
1 2 3 4 5

10. Kada se od mene traži da ispravljam greške kolega, više pažnju usmjeravam na nastavu.
1 2 3 4 5

11. Smatram ispravljanje grešaka od strane profesora korisnim.
1 2 3 4 5

12. Moj profesor je pouzdaniji i profesionalniji u ispravljanju grešaka nego moji vršnjaci.
1 2 3 4 5

13. Smatram ispravljanje grešaka od strane kolega korisnim.
1 2 3 4 5

14. Osjećam se korisnim ako kolega iz razreda nauči nešto od mene.
1 2 3 4 5

15. Drago mi je kada kolege iz razreda čitaju moj sastavak kako bi ispravili greške koje sam napravio/la.
1 2 3 4 5

16. Nastojim biti blaži u ispravljanju ukoliko ispravljam greške svoga prijatelja/ice.
1 2 3 4 5

17. Osjećam se opuštenije ako me ispravi kolega iz razreda umjesto profesora.
1 2 3 4 5

18. Osjećam se nervozno kada me profesor ispravi na satu stranog jezika.
1 2 3 4 5

19. Osjećam se posramljeno ako kolega iz razreda ispravi moju pogrešku.
1 2 3 4 5

20. Ne želim da kolege ispravljaju moj pisani rad kako ne bi vidjeli moje greške.

1 2 3 4 5

21. Smatram da ne mogu poboljšati svoje znanje ako me kolege ispravljaju jer oni ne znaju jezik bolje od mene.

1 2 3 4 5