An Analysis of University Students' Attitudes towards Error Correction in the EFL Context

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Diplomski studij engleskog jezika i književnosti – nastavnički smjer i mađarskog jezika i književnosti – nastavnički smjer

Inka Malešević

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Diplomski rad

Mentor: izv. prof. dr. sc. Tanja Gradečak – Erdeljić

Osijek, 2016.

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Summary

Learning is a crucial part of every educational process, but together with learning, error making occurs, which is nowadays no longer perceived as something that should be avoided under all circumstances. Error making is nowadays viewed as a valuable indicator that the process of foreign language acquisition has happened. Together with error making comes the necessity for reacting to errors. The ways in which a teacher will react to errors which appear in foreign language acquisition are various and depend on numerous factors. Students' beliefs and attitudes toward error correction are of major importance, because those discoveries have a massive impact on the teacher's work improvement. The bigger the correlation between students' and teacher's attitudes and beliefs about a certain error correction method, the more successful the effect of error treatment will be.

The participants in the study presented in this paper are the students of the second year BA Programme of the English language and literature at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Osijek, and the main aim of the research was to find out more about their general attitudes and beliefs when it comes to error treatment of the learner talk in English.

Key words: error treatment, foreign language acquisition, English language, attitudes, beliefs

Sažetak

Dio svakog nastavnog procesa je učenje, ali zajedno s učenjem pojavljuje se i pojava pogrešaka, koja se danas više ne smatra nečim što u svakom slučaju treba izbjeći. Pojava pogrešaka danas se smatra dragocjenim pokazateljem da dolazi do procesa usvajanja stranog jezika. S pojavom pogrešaka javlja se I neizostavna potreba za reagiranjem na iste. Načini na koji će nastavnik reagirati na pogreške koje se javljaju prilikom usvajanja stranog jezika su raznoliki I ovise o raznim čimbenicima. Veliku važnost imaju i stavovi učenika prema tretiranju pogrešaka, jer saznanja toga tipa uvelike doprinose boljitku rada samog nastavnika. Što su stavovi nastavnika I učenika o određenoj metodi tretiranja pogrešaka više u korelaciji, to će sam ishod tretiranja pogreške biti uspješniji.

Sudionici istraživanja provedenog u ovom radu su studenti druge godine preddiplomskog studija Engleskog jezika i književnosti na Filozofskom fakultetu u Osijeku, a svrha istraživanja jesu saznanja o njihovim stavovima i uvjerenjima kada se radi o tretiranju pogrešaka u govoru na nastavi engleskoga jezika.

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Ključne riječi: tretiranje pogrešaka, usvajanje stranog jezik, engleski jezik, stavovi, uvjerenja

1. Introduction

There are many definitions provided by various authors in order to explain error treatment and its benefits, and researchers sometimes do not share the same opinion. Error treatment is described on a continuum ranging all the way from ineffective and even possibly harmful (Trucott, 1999, as cited in Loewen, 2007), to beneficial (Russel and Spada, 2006, as cited in Loewen, 2007) and even possibly essential (White, 1991, as cited in Loewen, 2007). In the past, not many studies regarding learners' beliefs and attitudes were conducted (Čurković-Kalebić, 2001), but nowadays, since teaching and language acquisition has never been more focused on learners, things are changing in their favor.

In the first part of the paper all the terminology related to the error treatment is explained. The theoretical framework necessary to understand the process of error correction is provided. The author goes in details when it comes to terms related to errors, error correction, error analysis and the history of error treatment, together with some fundamental questions and anwers provided by authors, educators and researchers through the past couple of decades.

The second part of the paper deals with the studies of error treatment conducted over the years in order to become familiar with students' attitudes and beliefs toward error correction. It offers a variety of conclusions, and some of them are proved in the last part of this paper.

The third part of the paper is practical, and it presents the aims, procedure and the results of the study conducted with the help of the students of English language and literature - in order to find out more about their general attitudes toward error correction.

2. Terminology and Definitions

2.1. Errors

According to Pawlak (2014), there is no agreement among specialists on how to define the term error itself, and all the existing definitions on the notion that have been put forward over the past years in the analyses of learners' inaccurate production of utterances are far from being satisfactory (cf. Allwright and Bailey, 1991; James, 1998; Ellis and Barkhuizen, 2005; Roberts and Griffiths, 2008). In order to define the term error, which refers to inaccuracy, it might be helpful to define the opposite notion – accuracy. As Aliakbari and Toni (2009: 100) mentioned "the Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics (1992) defines accuracy as the ability to produce grammatically correct sentences. Therefore, the emphasis on accuracy deals with the production of structurally correct instances of second language. On the other hand, inaccuracy is a sign of erroneousness and results in the production of structurally wrong sentences which violates the goals of any language curriculum."

According to Ellis (1994), an error might be defined as a deviation from the norms of the target language, but since this attempt at a definition is not completely precise, it raises a number of questions, as for example – which variety of a language serves as a norm. A more precise definition is offered by Ferris (2011), who defines errors as „morphological, syntactic, and lexical forms that deviate from rules of the target language, violating the expectations of literate adult native speakers" (Ferris, 2011: 3).

The definition which Lennon (1991: 182, as cited in Ellis, Barkhuizen, 2005) used in his research on errors is slightly more precise and therefore more useful. He believes that error should be defined as a form or a combination of linguistic forms, which would not be produced by native speakers in the same context or similar condition. Pawlak (2014) agrees with Lennon's interpretation about comparing the learners' utterances with native speakers' and determining to which extent produced forms deviate from the expected." James (1998, p. 64, as cited in Pawlak, 2014: 3) also leans towards this characterization, pointing out that "[o]ne of the strengths of this definition is the way it sidesteps the problem of semantic intention and formal intention: what learners wanted to communicate, and the means they deployed to achieve that end".

Pawlak (2014) also presents the definition offered by Chaudron (1986), who views errors as (1) linguistic forms which differ from the ones produced by native speakers and (2) any other produced content which teacher conciders erroneous. George (1972, as cited in Pawlak, 2014) argues that sometimes it is completely up to the teacher whether something will be considered erroneous because even if a given utterance is completely grammatically correct, it may be unexpected or brake the rules of classroom discourse (speaking in turn of failure to produce a complete sentence). „Ignorance of target language norms should be judged according to the criteria of grammaticality (i.e. adherence to pertinent rules), acceptability (i.e. suitability in a particular situational context), correctness (i.e. compliance with prescriptive normative standards), and strangeness and infelicity (i.e. purposeful breaches of the code and problems connected with pragmatics)." (Pawlak 2014: 3).

2.1.1. Types of Errors and Their Significance

Corder (1974, as cited in Ellis, 1994) makes a distinction between three ways of describing errors according to their systematicity:

1. Presystematic errors are random and occur when the learner is not aware of the existence of a rule in the LT (target language); the learner cannot explain why a particular form is chosen;

2. Systematic errors are the ones which occur when the learner has discovered a rule before, but it is the wrong one in the particular case; the learner is not able to self-correct, but can explain the incorrect rule used;

3. Postsystematic errors occur if the learner knows the rule but does not use it in the correct way; in this case the learner can explain the rule normally used in that particular case.

When it comes to the significance of errors, it is known that errors play an important role in the learning process, they are accepted by both teachers and learners, they are known to be inevitable and even necessary. Since learning a language does not happen over night, errors are accepted at every stage. „It is through students' errors that we can see what they are struggling to master, what concepts they have misunderstood and what extra work they might need (Lavery, 2001). Therefore, errors are often a sign of learning in language acquisition process." (Hamouda, 2011: 128).

To all learners, language learning is a process of discovering the rules, categories and systems, and not only acquiring a set of automatic habits. The process of discovering happens in stages and one of the most important factors in all stages is error making. According to Corder (1967, as cited in Ellis, Barkhuizen, 2005), errors are significant in three ways:

1. They show teachers what learners have learned and what not – pedagogic purpose;
2. They provide evidence about how languages are learned – research purpose;
3. They act as devices by which learners can discover the rules of the target language – learning purpose.

Zhu (2010) goes in more detail when it comes to the purpose of error making, clarifying that by analyzing the errors, teacher discovers what the learner still has to learn, how close to the goal he has progressed, and what remains to be learned. Errors help researchers discover strategies and procedures employed in language learning.

Errors are of a special importance to the teachers, because „errors provide them with feedback on the effectiveness of their teaching materials and their teaching techniques“ (Zhu, 2010: 127). On the basis of errors and information teacher gets from the errors, the teacher makes the decision whether to change the strategies, materials, pace etc. Dulay and Burt (1974, as cited in Zhu 2010) stated that error making is a clear sign that the process of developing the rules of the language is happening and that it is the most important source of information about the nature of the knowledge.

2.1.2. Other Important Terms

One of the important terms when it comes to error making is mistake. Mistakes are often confused with errors in everyday speech, but a mistake, unlike error, does not occur as a result of the lack of knowledge, but rather as an inability to perform according to the possessed competence. As Ellis (1994) discusses, it is the result of processing problems which prevent learners form reaching the knowledge of a language rule and cause them to fall back on some non-standard rule which in that particular moment they find easier to access. Mistakes happen as a result of memory limitations or lack of automaticity.

Other frequent terms connected to errors are global and local errors. These terms as a result of an attempt do distinguish communicative and non-communicative errors. Hendrickson (1978:

391) mentions that „Burt and Kiparsky (1972) classify students' second language errors into two distinct categories: those errors that cause a listener or reader to misunderstand a message or to consider a sentence incomprehensible (global errors), and those errors that do not significantly hinder communication of a sentence's message (local errors)." A local-to-global hierarchy of errors might be built according to the degree of comprehensibility. Hendrickson (1978) defined a global error as a communicative error which causes a proficient speaker to misinterpret a message, whereas a local error is considered a linguistic error which makes a structure appear awkward, but does not cause difficulty in understanding the meaning.

Other terms that require explanation are treatable and untreatable errors. „A treatable error is related to a linguistic structure that occurs in a rule-governed way. It is treatable because the student writer can be pointed to a grammar book or set or rules to resolve the problem. An untreatable error, on the other hand, is idiosyncratic, and the student will need to utilize acquired knowledge of the language to self-correct it" (Ferris, 2011: 36). As Ferris (2011) explains, some examples of treatable errors are article usage, verb tense, plural endings, punctuation, spelling etc., while untreatable errors include pronoun and prepostition usage, word order and word choice errors.

Another interesting term which requires attention is fossilization (see Chapter 4.2.). There is some evidence, according to Ferris (2011), that adult learners may get stuck and fail to make progress at some point. Although many errors may be resolved over time, not all of them will, and that particular phenomenon is called fossilization.

2.1.3. Errors in Acquiring the First Language

Errors are not only made by the learners of the second language. Children learning their first language often make errors as well. Corder (1967, as cited in Ferris, 2006) argued that errors which inevitably occur in L2 learning is a natural developmental stage, similar to children's stages in acquiring the L1. Here are some of the examples of children's 'errors' (Ellis, 1994: 47):

*I goes see Auntie May. (=I went to see Auntie May.)

*Eating ice cream. (=I want to eat an ice cream.)

*No writing in book. (=Don't write in the book.)

Adult speakers also sometimes make ‘errors’ while speaking. Ellis (1993: 47) offers the example of omitting the grammatical morpheme: *My father live in Gloucester. (=My father lives in Gloucester.). Ellis (1994) concludes that the difference among errors made by learners of the second language and those made by children is that generally, L2 learners’ errors are ‘unwanted’, whereas the child’s are considered transitional. In the similar way, adult native speakers’ errors are viewed as ‘slips of the tongue’.

2.2. Error Correction

Error correction is way too often perceived as a phenomenon which occurs only in the L2 classroom, because learners produce incorrect and teachers have to deal with them in some way. „Error correction is a response either to the content of what a student has produced or to the form of the utterance (Richards and Lockharts, 1996: 188). When the focus is on forms, it is supposed to help learners to reflect on the wrong forms and finally produce right forms (Krashen, 1987, as cited in Jimena & Tedjaatmadja & Tian, 2016: 2).

Pawlak (2014) emphasizes that error correction can be either planned or spontaneous. It can be purposeful in the sense of developing the knowledge of rules and the ability to use them in real-world communication. Hedge (2000, as cited in Pawlak, 2014) distinguishes error correction focused on speaking from the one which deals with writing. The main difference is that when it comes to speaking, after recognizing and understanding errors, learners have the opportunity to try and try again. To conclude, “the term error correction now generally refers to the pedagogical activity of providing feedback for learner errors“ (DeKeyser, 2007: 112).

2.2.1. Error correction vs. Feedback

Majer (2003, as cited in Pawlak, 2014: 5) notes that „Error correction is part of language teaching, whereas feedback belongs in the domain of interaction (…)Therefore all error correction is feedback, much as its actual realization may depend on a particular pedagogic goal“. There are cases in which authors do not make any distinction between the two terms, and some do make a difference but without clearly explaining the reasons. „James (1998, p. 235), for example, describes correction as “(…) a reactive second move of an adjacency pair to a first speaker’s or writer’s utterance by someone who has made the judgment that all or

part of that utterance is linguistically or factually wrong", but reserves the term feedback only for its subset, namely a situation in which a learner is merely informed that an error has been made and it is up to him or her to fix it.". (Pawlak, 2014: 5).

When it comes to erroneous utterances, teachers are not really concerned with the terminology, but rather with methods of correction and their consequences. That is why authors use various terms for almost the same notion – error correction can be found under the term „corrective feedback, error treatment, corrective reactions, corrective moves" (Pawlak, 2014: 6).

2.2.2. Implicit and Explicit Learning and Knowledge

An example which clearly presents the difference between implicit and explicit knowledge is a child learning the first language. It is described by Ellis (2009) that a child engages in automatically acquiring knowledge of the language, but without knowing how to describe that knowledge. „This is a difference between explicit and implicit knowledge—ask a young child how to form a plural and she says she does not know; ask her "here is a wug, here is another wug, what have you got?" and she is able to reply, "two wugs", (Ellis, 2009: 1).

Similarly, there are differences among implicit and explicit learning, which are described by Hulstijn (2005: 131, as cited in Pawlak, 2014), who gives an overview by claiming that explicit learning as input processing happens with the conscious intention to find out if the input information contains regularities and to realize the rules by which these regularities are captured; whereas implicit learning is defined as input processing without that type of intention, and is taking place subconsciously.

Some authors (Schmidt 2001; DeKeyser 1998, 2003, 2010) claim that learning a language has to include noticing, while some disagree with the idea (Williams 2005; Ellis 2005). The acquisition of grammar is implicit and extracted from experience rather than only from explicit rules; no explicit instruction is needed, only exposure to input (Ellis 2009). However, Ellis (2009: 7) concluded that „explicit and implicit knowledge of language are distinct and dissociated, they involve different types of representation, they are substantiated in separate parts of the brain, and yet they can come into mutual influence in processing".

2.2.3. Selective Error Correction

Selective error correction differs from comprehensive error correction in a way that, according to some authors, it refers to not paying attention to all the errors, but rather some error patterns. „…any effective feedback policy should take into account the students' psychoaffective reactions. In this respect, treating errors selectively is a better option than comprehensive error correction." (Lee, 2005: 2). Pawlak (2014) argues that teachers choose whether they will react to a specific error according to the learner's proficiency and by determining if the erroneous utterance is within the learner's grasp. On the other hand, the teacher may select to ignore exactly the same problem in the speech of a less proficient learner since the output of a more advanced is usually treated as a model.

But the teacher's perception of the learner's proficiency may not be the only reason for selectieve error correction, which Pawlak (2014: 116) explained by writing „as the case might be with a Polish beginner saying 'I know her for a long time'* instead of 'I have known her for a long time', since he or she has not been taught the present perfect tense and neither have his or her classmates." In the case presented, when the learner is trying to say something and the structure that shoud be produced is completely unknown to him, it is called an 'attempt' (Edge, 1989: 11, as cited in Pawlak, 2014).

2.3. Error Analysis

The study of errors is carried out by error analysis. In theory, errors can occur in both comprehension and production, but according to Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005), comprehension errors are difficult to detect because of the inability to locate the source of error. That is why EA is the study of errors learners make in speech and writing. „An example of a comprehension error is when a learner misunderstands the sentence 'Pass me the paper' as 'Pass me the pepper', because of an inability to discriminate the sounds /ei/ and /e/." (Ellis, 1994: 47). As stated in Ellis, Barkhuizen (2005), error analysis consists of a set of procedures which include identifying the error, describing it and afterwards explaining the error.

2.3.1. History of Error Analysis

As declared in Ellis, Barkhuizen (2005), the study of so called 'bad' language found in the speech of native speakers of a particular language dates back in the 18th century. It was being approached by the prescriptive grammarians and was shown in publications such as *Fowler's The King's English* (1906). „This early approach to the analysis of errors was essentially proscriptive and prescriptive – it was directed at showing what linguistic forms not to use and which ones to use." (Ellis, Barkhuizen, 2005: 51).

According to various authors (Hendrickson, 1978; Oladejo, 1993), one of the major concerns of language teaching in 1950s and a part of 1960s was avoiding all errors. At that time, the audiolingual approach was considered to be the proper way to teach and learn L2. Learers had to memorize dialogs, as well as all kinds of grammatical generalizations and pattern drills because it was thought that „"practice makes perfect", and presumably some day, when students needed to use a foreign language to communicate with native speakers, they would do so fluently and accurately" (Hendrickson, 1978: 387). Most students could not transfer audiolingual training to communicative and they would soon forget most of what they had learned. The audiolingual approach dictated that all errors must be corrected immediately to prevent becoming a part of the habit system. „As Brooks (1960, p. 58) put it, "like sin, error is to be avoided and its influence overcome, but its presence is to be expected". (Oladejo, 1993: 71). Brooks suggested methods for producing error-free utterances.

In the late 1960s the support for the audiolingual approach finally declined, the emphasis shifted to fluency rather than accuracy, and instead of forcing error-free utterances, teachers began focusing on making the learners talk. „In the words of Chastain (1971, p. 249), "more important than error free speech is the creation of an atmosphere in which the students want to talk." (Oladejo, 1993: 70). This positive perspective is based upon the fact that children make 'errors' while acquiring ther first language, so obviously errors are to be expected when acquiring a second language as well (see Chapter 2.1.3.). „Because errors are signals that actual learning is taking place, they can indicate students' progress and success in language learning (Corder 1967, Zydatiss 1974, Lange 1977, and Lantolf 1977)." (Hendrickson, 1978: 388).

Linguists came up with another mechanism to help deal with errors, called contrastive analysis (CA), which is based upon belief that errors are mainly a result of interfering with the learner's first language. That is why linguists assumed that if teachers had the knowledge

about the learner's first language, it would prevent occurring errors in the second language. But this is only partially true, and in the 1960s, CA came under attack. It was shown, for example, that many of the errors predicted to occur by a CA did not in fact occur and, furthermore, that some errors that were not predicted to occur did occur" (Ellis, Barkhuizen, 2005: 52).

At some point, since both teachers and learners found focusing on ideas rather than accuracy more stimulating – errors became neglected, so „composition instruction entered a period of "benign neglect" of errors and grammar teaching (Ferris, 1995c)" (Ferris, 2011: 8). In 1980s a couple of authors (Eskey, 1983; Horowitz, 1986; as cited in Ferris, 2011) attempted to remind that the ability to correct errors is crucial at some point and that accuracy will not magically improve without error correction. Additional intervention was necessary and that is when L2 learning became oriented towards meeting individuals' interests and needs with methods turning into what they are nowadays.

3. Error Correction Treatment

3.1. Corrective Feedback

Different authors offer different definitions of corrective feedback. For example, the definition offered by DeKeyser (2007: 112) is that corrective feedback „refers to a mechanism which provides the learner with information regarding the success or failure of a given process. By definition, feedback is responsive and thus can occur only after a given process“. Harmer (2007b, as cited in Pawlak, 2014: 1) views feedback as "a crucial part of the learning process". Another interesting view is offered by Shaofeng (2013: 1) who explains that „Corrective feedback (CF) refers to teacher and peer responses to learners' erroneous second language (L2) production.“, while Li (2010: 309) offers a broader definition by saying that „Corrective feedback in second language acquisition (SLA) refers to the responses to a learner's nontargetlike L2 production.“.

More important than defining the term is the importance it has when it comes to SLA. Lyster, Lightbown, and Spada (1999: 457, as cited in Schulz, 2001: 245) offered several studies which demonstrate evidence that corrective feedback is „is pragmatically feasible, potentially effective, and, in some cases, necessary".

3.1.1. Corrective Feedback in the Framework of Form-Focused Instruction

Teachers appreciate concrete guidelines on dealing with learners' errors and that is why Pawlak (2014: 2) indicates that „the provision of corrective feedback is one of the options in form-focused instruction (FFI), understood broadly as any attempt on the part of the teacher to encourage learners to attend to, understand, and gain greater control over targeted language features“. According to Schmidt (1990, 2001, as cited in Li, 2010), SLA is, unlike L1 acquisition, conscious, and therefore learner's noticing of linguistic forms and structures should be enhanced by a provision of corrective feedback. Spada (1997: 73, as cited in Pawlak 2014: 20) defines form-focused instruction as "(…) any pedagogical effort which is used to draw the learners' attention to form either implicitly or explicitly (…) within meaning-based approaches to L2 instruction [and] in which a focus on language is provided in either spontaneous or predetermined ways“.

3.1.2. Effectivenes of Feedback

There is abundant research with completely different and even opposite results when it comes to the effectiveness of correctional feedback. According to Schulz (2001: 244) „there are those scholars who believe that grammar instruction and corrective feedback are necessary in adolescent and adult classroom language learning (Hammerly, 1985; Higgs & Clifford, 1982; Valette, 1991); there are those who believe that—if done appropriately—grammar instruction and error correction can be helpful in enhancing and accelerating adolescent and adult FL learning (Doughty, Williams, 1998; Lalande, 1982; Lightbown, 1998; Long&Robinson, 1998; Lyster, Lightbown,& Spada, 1999); and there are those who see little if any benefit in devoting valuable classroom time to the analysis and practice of particular grammatical patterns or to providing feedback to students' errors (Hammond, 1988; Krashen, 1985, 1999; Semke, 1984; Terrell, 1977; Truscott, 1999)".

Furtherly, Schachter (1991, as cited in Shulz, 2001) declares that the efficacy of corrective feedback depends on various factors – aspect of language, learner characteristics (age, aptitude, motivation, learning style) and instructional context. In the analysis made by Russel and Spada (2006), which included studies published between 1988 and 2003, it was found out that overall oral feedback had a smaller effect size than written feedback, although both were very big. Russel and Spada (2006) claim that there are L2 theorists who argue that feedback is not useful at all (Truscott 1996, 1999) or that it is useful only when it comes to temporary and superficial changes and not the overall competence (Schwart, 1993). Some researchers comment that teachers waste their time marking students' grammatical errors. Ferris (1995: 34, as cited in Simpson 2006: 97) points out that „research in both L1 and L2 student writing provides very little evidence that such feedback actually helps the students' writing improve".

Robb et. Al. (1986) conducted a study, described by Simpson (2006) as well, in which he found out that none of the feedback types used by writing teachers he examined resulted in long-term grammatical improvement. Simpson (2006) also mentions Hillocks (1986) and Truscott (1996), who both reviewed many studies but most of them resulted in proving that teacher's comments on grammar have little or no effect on student's writing. However, what does help student's writing, as revealed in a few studies, are comments about content and organization. Semke (1984) found out that comments on content made students write much more than comments on grammar (Simpson, 2006). „Hedgecock and Lefkowitz (1996) cite other authors (Sheppard, 1992; Kepner, 1991) who have come to the same conclusion: form-

focused feedback is not as effective as content feedback in terms of eventual attainment.“ (Simpson, 2006: 98).

„Investigations have been undertaken to explore a variety of factors that may influence the effectiveness of corrective feedback (CF) for second language (L2) grammar learning. These include the type of feedback (e.g., explicit or implicit) (e.g., Carroll & Swain, 1993; Lyster & Ranta, 1997), the amount of feedback (e.g., Havranek 1999), the mode of feedback (i.e., oral or written) (e.g., Doughty & Varela 1998), the source of feedback (e.g., Van den Branden 1997), learner proficiency level (e.g., Iwashita 2003; Lin & Hedgcock 1996; Mackey & Philp 1998), learners' attitudes towards feedback (e.g., Semke 1984), learners' aptitude, motivation, and anxiety (e.g., DeKeyser 1993), learner noticing and interpretation of feedback (e.g., Mackey, Gass, & McDonough 2000; Morris 2002; Ohta 2000), and learners' age (e.g., Havranek 1999).“ (Russel and Spada, 2006: 133).

3.1.3. Positive vs. Negative Feedback and Evidence

DeKeyser (2007) differentiates the positive from the negative feedback by saying that negative feedback is the one through which learners receive information about the failure or their utterance being somehow problematic regarding accuracy, content or communicative success. On the other hand, positive feedback, logically, contains information that the process was successful.

It is also important to emphasize that negative feedback “may contain either positive or negative evidence, or both” (DeKeyser, 2007: 112). Evidence as an emersion usually appears in theoretical discussions about the type of data learners can utilize, and is defined as „information about whether certain structures are permissible in the language being acquired“, (DeKeyser, 2007: 112). Positive evidence is the information or type of input (Li, 2010) concerning the possibility of the utterances in the target language, whilst negative evidence represents the opposite – a produced utterance is not acceptable in the target language.

Many researchers (Krashen, 1981; Schwartz, 1993; Truscott, 2007, as cited in Li, 2010) investigated whether SLA should, like L1 acquisition, depend only upon positive evidence and that negative evidence might even be harmful. However, authors (Swain, 1985, as cited in Li, 2010) realized through a research conducted in Canada that achieving L2 accuracy even after many years of exposure to target language was not possible due to unavailability of

negative evidence. When it comes to the phenomenon called negative evidence, there are distinct terms used for the same notion. „It has been examined in terms of negative evidence by linguists (e.g., White, 1989), as repair by discourse analysts (e.g., Kasper, 1985), as negative feedback by psychologists (e.g., Annett, 1969), as corrective feedback by second language teachers (e.g., Fanselow, 1977), and as focus-on-form in more recent work in classroom second language acquisition (SLA) (e.g., Lightbown & Spada, 1990; Long, 1991)“ Lyster and Ranta (1997: 38).

3.1.4. Direct vs. Indirect and Coded vs. Uncoded Feedback

As stated by Ferris (2002, as cited by Jimena & Tedjaatmadja & Tian, 2016: 6), direct feedback „requires the teacher's responsibility to offer the correct forms to learners, whereas indirect feedback involves both teachers and learners in the error correction process, in which teachers indicate the errors and it's learners who correct them“. „Direct, corrective, explicit or overt feedback occurs when the teacher identifies an error and provides the correct form.“, (Aliakbari, Toni, 2009: 100).

The teacher first identifies the error and then writes down the correct form. Less proficient learners find this method more helpful, but indirect feedback requires students to be more reflective and analytical. Also, when using the indirect, implicit or covert strategies, the teacher's duty is only to indicate that an error has been made leaving the student to correct it (Bitchener et. Al., 2005 as cited in Aliakbari and Toni 2009).

Various studies taken over the years indicate superiority of indirect feedback. As noted by Ferris (2006), all three longitudianal studies taken by Lalande (1982), Frantzen (1995) and Ferris (2006), point out that students who received indirect feedback outperformed those who received direct, who made no progress at all. But on the other hand, Robb, Ross and Shortreed (1986, as cited in Ferris, 2006) reported no significant difference among group which received direct and three groups of students which received indirect feedback, whereas all four groups showed improvement when it comes to accuracy.

Studies examining indirect feedback and its effects, made the distinction between coded and uncoded feedback. Coded feedback points the location of an error and the type of error is indicated by using a code. “For example, PSS means an error in the use or form of the past simple, or PRS indicates that an error has occurred in the use or form of the present simple

tense.“ (Aliakbari, Toni, 2009: 101). Uncoded error is the type of error correction in which the teacher marks or circles an error but it is on the learner to diagnose and correct it (Bitchener et. Al., 2005 as cited in Aliabari, Toni 2009).

Teachers and learners feel that explicit (coded or labeled) feedback is preferable (Ferris 2006; Ferris & Roberts, 2001 as cited in Ferris, 2006), but there is evidence which does not support their opinions. Besides the already mentioned study taken by Robb, Ross and Shortreed (1986), Ferris (2006) reported that students receiving uncoded indirect feedback were nearly as successful as those who received indirect feedback when it comes to self-correction. Another research done by Ferris and Roberts (2001) again provided the same results. Jimena, Tedjaatmadja and Tian (2016) claim that in order to grasp all the advantages of coded feedback and direct correction, teachers should combine the two methods.

3.1.5. Corrective Strategies

Choosing the appropriate method for correcting an error may not always be an easy job for teachers. „Selecting these strategies cautiously and knowingly can have great and positive effects on the improvement of the learners (Bowen et al, 1985; Dixon 1986; Xiaochun 1990; Broughton et al, 1994, as cited in Aliakbari, Toni, 2009: 100).

Shaofeng (2013: 1) brings out the six types of corrective strategies listed by Lyster and Ranta (2007), responding to the erroneous utterance ‘He has dog’ by:

1. Reformulating (recast): ‘A dog’;

2. Alerting the learner to the error and providing the correct form (explicit correction): “No, you should say “*a* dog”’;

3. Asking for clarification (clarification request): ‘Sorry?’;
4. Making a metalinguistic comment (metalinguistic feedback): ‘You need an indefinite article’;
5. Eliciting the correct form (elicitation): ‘He has …?’; or
6. Repeating the wrong sentence (repetition): ‘He has dog?’

Lyster and Ranta (2007) differentiate between recast and explicit correction on the one hand, and the other four types of feedback on the other, whereas the former reveals the error right

away and do not require an uptake, while the latter, called prompts, require an uptake because of the missing correct utterance. As Tedick and De Gortari (1998: 2) note, an uptake is defined by Lyster and Ranta (1997) as "a student's utterance that immediately follows the teacher's feedback and that constitutes a reaction in some way to the teacher's intention to draw attention to some aspect of the student's initial utterance", or in other words, uptake is what the learner attempts to do with the teacher's feedback.

DeKeyser (2007) claims that all corrective feedback is either reformulation or prompt. Reformulation includes recasts and explicit correction, and prompts all the other signals other than reformulation, which push learners to self-repair. What these four have in common is that „They withhold correct forms and instead provide clues to prompt students to retrieve correct forms from what they already know. Previously these moves were referred to as the 'negotiation of form'" (Lyster, 1998b; Lyster & Ranta, 1997) or 'formfocused negotiation' (Lyster, 2002)." (DeKeyser, 2007: 153).

Implicitness in correctional feedback is reviewed by Ellis (2001, as cited in Russel and Spada, 2006), who describes various types of feefback along a continuum between implicit and explicit. Recasts are more implicit, slightly more explicit is the negotiation of form, while confirmation checks and clarification requests are on the other side of the continuum. Carrol and Swain (1993, as cited in Russel and Spada, 2006) further expand the definition of explicit feedback by writing that it is the one that overtly states that the produced utterance can not be accepted in the target language.

„According to Schmidt's (1990) 'noticing hypothesis', in order to learn anything that is new (including grammatical forms in a second language), noticing is essential. For this reason, the degree of explicitness of CF that is necessary to promote noticing, without detracting from the communicative focus of instruction, is a core theme in current research on CF (see, e.g., Lyster, 1998a, 1998b.)" Russel and Spada, 2006: 137). Explicit correction refers to directly and clearly indicating what was incorrect. Recasts include teacher's reformulation of the utterance, minus the error. According to Lyster and Ranta (1997: 47), recasts are "generally implicit in that they are not introduced by phrases such as 'You mean', 'Use this word', and 'You should say'". Recasts also include translations.

Russel and Spada (2006) gave an overview of the research taken by Lyster & Ranta (1997), in which they were investigating the frequency of usage different feedback types. The results showed that the most frequently used was the recast.

Clarification request is a type which can refer to either accuracy or comprehensibility problems, or both, and it points out to the student that the utterance has been misunderstood, and that a reformulation is necessary. Metalinguistic feedback consists of comments and questions regarding the form of the utterance, but without directly providing it. Elicitation refers to several techniques used to elicit the correct structure – teacher can either elicit the completion of their own utterance, or can elicit correct forms or to reformulate their utterance. Repetition is the teacher's repetition of the student's erroneous structure by adjusting intonation in order to highlight the error. Lyster and Ranta (1997) presented one more type of feedback which is called multiple feedback, which is basically the combination of more than one feedback type. As Zhu (2010) states, it is very important for the teacher to switch types of feedback they use, because the repetitive use of the same method may become boring and may be the cause for losing the interest among learners in determining the reasons why errors occur.

As shown by DeKeyser (2007: 91), feedback does not occur only in L2 classrooms. This example is from the study taken by Gass and Mackey (2000) and shows the interaction between a native speaker (NS) and a non-native speaker (NNS). A feedback is provided on grammar by a repetition and clarification request („floors?"):

NNS: There are /flurs/?
NS: Floors? ← Feedback
NNS: /fluw'rs/ uh flowers.
NNS retrospective comments: I was thinking my pronounce, pronunciation is
very horrible.
(Mackey et al., 2000, p. 486)

4. Hendrickson's Five Questions

Hendrickson (1978) lists the five fundamental questions regarding error correction:

1. Should errors be corrected?

2. If so, when should errors be corrected?

3. Which learner errors should be corrected?

4. How should learner errors be corrected?

5. Who should correct learner errors?

Throughout the years, many authors attempted to provide adequate answers to these questions.

4.1. Should Errors Be Corrected?

As already discussed in Chapter 2.3., there had been opposed beliefs regarding this question a couple of decades earlier, while SLA was evolving from over-correction to completely neglecting error making. As Hendrickson (1978) states, all teachers provide some kind of oral and written feedback, just as parents correct their children learning L1. According to Kennedy (1973, as cited by Hendrickson, 1978: 389) „Correcting learners' errors helps them discover the functions and limitations of the syntactical and lexical forms of the target language". According to the SLA theory, as noted by Krashen (1982), when error correction 'works', it does so by helping to change mental representation of a specific rule. „In other words, it affects learned competence by informing the learner that his or her current version of a conscious rule is wrong"(Krashen, 1982: 102). Therefore, it implies that if a goal is learning – errors are supposed to be corrected (but not all the errors and not all the time).

Lee (2005) informs about the debate between Truscott (1996) and Ferris (1997, 2002) on whether teachers should correct errors in writing. „Although evidence exists to support the benefits of error correction in helping students improve accuracy in their writing (Fathman & Whalley, 1990; Ferris, 1997; Ferris & Helt, 2000; Lalande, 1982; Robb, Ross & Shortreed, 1986), contrary evidence that casts doubt on the effectiveness of error correction (Hillocks, 1986; Knoblauch & Brannon, 1981) is not lacking" (Lee 2005: 2).

On the other hand, when it comes to speech, Lyster and Ranta (1997: 41) argue about whether to correct or not – „If teachers do not correct errors, opportunities for students to make links between form and function are reduced; if teachers do correct errors, they risk interrupting the flow of communication".

As Pawlak (2014) explains, there is a problem at the very beginning of error correction of oral production since most of the teachers' mother tongue is not L2 which they are teaching, so it is possible that the error goes unnoticed. This is rare when it comes to grammar, but slightly more frequent with pronunciation, vocabulary, pragmatics and sociolinguistics. Another problem lies in the complexity of interaction within the classroom where things happen quickly or learners make too many errors to correct. After all, when the error is noticed after all the potential distractions, whether the teacher will decide to react or not, depends on a multiple variables as can be seen in Fig. 1.

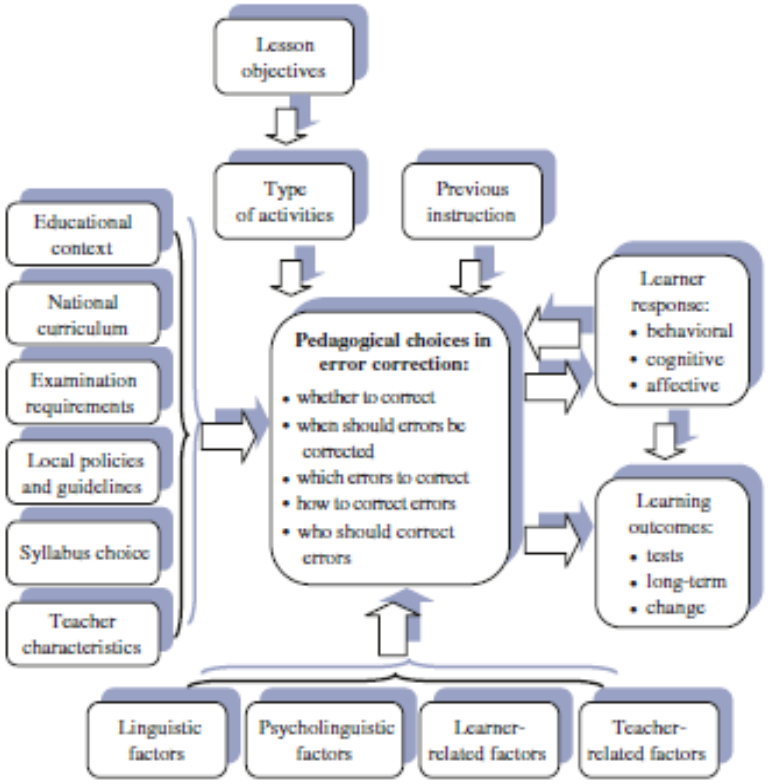


Fig. 1: Factors influencing pedagogical choices in oral and written corrective feedback (Pawlak 2104: 110)

An interesting study was conducted by Guntermann (1977, as described by Hendrickson, 1978). Native speakers of Spanish listened to a tape recording of American students' most frequently produced errors, and their task was to interpret what the speaker had attempted to

say. Most of the produced utterances were comprehensible, but the least comprehensible sentences were those containing multiple errors, especially those of the same subtype.

4.2. When Should Learner Errors Be Corrected?

The timing of corrective feedback is an important and sometimes even controversial question in teaching L2 (Ferris, 2006). There is a great discrepancy among the timing of error correction between oral and written feedback. As Pawlak (2014) explains, oral feedback can be both immediate and delayed, while written feedback is always given some time after the task has been finished. According to Shaoefeng (2013), it needs to be taken in consideration that some errors are developmental which means that they occur as a consequence of the internal language system development (similar to those 'errors' made by children acquiring their L1). Since „it takes time to internalize linguistic knowledge, it may be advisable to assist learners only with errors which are not repairable via their own internal resources and which persist over time" (Shaofeng, 2013: 2). There is another type of errors worth mentioning which are called fossilized errors (mentioned in Chapter 2.1.2.). Unlike developmental, which are a transitional feature of nonnatives' speech and writing ((Richards, 1973a, Valdman, 1975 as cited in Hendrickson 1978), fossilized appear to become permanent. These errors should be corrected based on the degree of unacceptability and incomprehensibility (Hendrickson, 1978).

Even more terms occur when approaching this problem at the more micro-level, and these are so called 'online' and 'offline' correctional feedback (Pawlak, 2014). Correctional feedback provided while performing the task is called 'online', and the one which occurs after the task is completed is called 'offline'. Long (2007, as cited by Shaoefeng, 2013: 2) argues that online CF (especially in the form of recasts) „serves as an ideal form-focusing device in task-based language teaching", as it involves immediate juxtaposition of both correct and incorrect forms. In the case of 'offline' CF, the teacher can note down some errors which will be discussed afterwards.

Pawlak (2014) further suggests differentiating between three options – immediate, delayed and postponed correction. "As Allwright and Bailey (1991, p. 103) explain, "[t]he teacher may deal with it [an error] immediately, or delay treatment somewhat (for example, until the learner finishes with the message she or he was trying to convey), (…) Alternately, teachers

may postpone the treatment for longer periods of time.“ (Pawlak, 2014: 118). The selection is based upon whether the activity is fluency-oriented or accuracy-based.

Another thing the teacher has to bear in mind is so-called ‘teachable moment’ (the term offered by Larsen-Freeman, 2003, as cited in Pawlak, 2014) which is a period when a learner’s attention is focused on the problem, so sometimes postponing intervention is not advisable because it takes risk of repetition of a particular error. According to Krashen (1982: 103) the teacher should focus the learners on form and therefore „correct their errors, only when they have time and when such diversion of attention does not interfere with communication“. That means that unlike written work and grammar exercises, in free conversation error correction should be left out.

4.3. Which Learner Errors Should Be Corrected?

Hendrickson (1978) reviews three hypotheses and accepts them all as plausible (Krashen, 1982: 103):

1. We should correct “global” errors, errors that interfere with communication or impede the intelligibility of a message (Burt and Kiparsky, 1972). Such errors deserve top priority in correction.
2. Errors that are the most stigmatized, that cause the most unfavorable reactions, are the most important to correct.
3. Errors that occur most frequently should be given top priority.

Zhu (2010) agrees that errors should be corrected systematically; the ones that hinder communication or lead to further errors are the ones to correct, as well as those which seem to be regularly repeated. „A number of language educators suggest that errors that stigmatize the learner from the perspective of native speakers should be among the first corrected (Johansson 1973, Richards 1973a, Sternglass 1974, Corder 1975, Hanzeli 1975, and Birckbichler 1977)“ (Hendrickson, 1978: 391).

Some authors (Hedge, 2000, as cited in Shaofeng, 2013; Corder, 1967, as cited in Pawlak, 2014) strongly believe that teachers should respond to errors which occur due to the lack of knowledge and therefor cannot be self-corrected, and not mistakes which occur as a result of fatigue or other similar factors. Another suggestion offered by Burt and Kiparsky (1974), Burt 1975 (as cited in Pawlak, 2014) is that teachers should pay attention to global errors which

affect the whole sentence organization, and not local ones which do not impact the understanding of a message because they affect only one element. Johansson (1973, as cited in Ellis, 2009) suggests to consider whether an error is comprehensible and whether it causes irritation. As Pawlak (2014) states, much depends on whether the lesson is accuracy-based or fluency-oriented. A decision as to which errors to correct may be based upon „contextual (e.g. previous instruction), learner-related (e.g. learning style or personality), psycholinguistic (i.e. developmental stage), as well as linguistic (e.g. inherent characteristics of the form responsible for the error“ (Pawlak, 2014: 125).

4.4. How Should Learner Errors Be Corrected?

„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“ (Pawlak, 2014: 126). Corrective strategies were explained in 3.1.5. Holley and King (1971, as cited in Hendrickson, 1978) emphasize the importance of avoiding correction strategies that might frustrate or embarrass students. Joiner (1975, as cited in Hendrickson, 1978) explains that correction techniques should resemble the behavior of parents trying to help their child express his ideas, or they should be similar to the person helping a non-native speaker communicate in a target language.

When it comes to written feedback, Wingfield (1975, as cited in Hendrickson, 1978: 395) lists five techniques for correcting written errors:

1. the teacher gives sufficient clues to enable self-correction to be made;

2. the teacher corrects the script;

3. the teacher deals with errors through marginal comments and footnotes;

4. the teacher explains orally to individual students;

5. the teacher uses the error as an illustration for a class explanation.

4.5. Who Should Correct Learner Errors?

As stated by Hendrickson (1978) most teachers take the responsibility for correcting errors, and according to Allwright (1975, as cited in Hendrickson, 1978) the teacher is expected to be the source of information regarding target language and therefore having the major role in correcting learners' errors.

Pawlak (2014: 149) lists options concerning what teachers can do:

1. they can correct the error themselves, thus engaging in teacher correction;

2. they can encourage the student who has produced the inaccurate utterance to do it, thus opting for self-correction;

3. they can ask some other student to supply the correct form, in which case peer-correction takes place.

There is much evidence that the first of these options predominates in the majority of classrooms because of the already mentioned teacher's responsibility to ensure quality otput (Pawlak 2014). Hedge (2000, as cited in Pawlak, 2014) comments that the error correction is an expected role for the teacher, especially in a community with little exposure to English.
Lately, as stated by Pawlak (2014), more significance has been given to self-correction and peer correction. Ellis (as cited in Pawlak, 2014) argues that teachers should give learners the opportunity to self-correct, and if it fails, other students should be offerd by the possibility to perform the correction. „Several language specialists propose that 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)" (Hendrickson, 1978: 396).
As explained by Pawlak (2104) the greatest argument for providing self-correction is that the learner must understand the nature of the error and make some effort in order to fix it so that the learning necessary to improve performance can occur, because regarding all the effort teacher makes in order to correct – the learning part depends only on the learner. Many authors emphasize the importance of self-correction, both in speech and writing, because it is „effective in promoting second language development and might in some situations work better than immediate provision of the accurate form by the teacher (cf. Lyster, 2004; Ferris, 2006; Hyland and Hyland, 2006; Lyster and Saito, 2010)" (Pawlak, 2014: 150).

When it comes to oral correction, it is advisable to practice it in accuracy-based activities. In the case of writing, self-correction often occurs when the teacher opts for indirect coded correction. Some of the problems that follow self-correction are students' preference for teacher correction, the fact that learners must posses a certain level of proficiency, and the danger of wrong interpretation of the corrective mode (Pawlak, 2014).

Beside self-correction, another method occasionally used is peer-correction, which is not equally benefical when it comes to oral and written production. When it comes to oral production, peer-correction is of a great use in accuracy based activities because in fluency-oriented it would be extremely disruptive (Pawlak, 2014). Peer-correction is therefore much more natural in the case of written production. „Edge (1989) points out that it involves students more deeply in the process of learning, reduces their dependence on the teacher, enables them to learn from each other, develops the skills of cooperation, and aids the teacher in better diagnosing students' problems.“ (Pawlak, 2014: 151). Witbeck (1976) did an experiment with four different peer-correction strategies (whole class correction, immediate feedback and rewriting, problem-solving and correction of modified and duplicated essays) through which he concluded that peer correction results in „greater concern for achieving accuracy in written expression in individual students and creates a better classroom atmosphere for teach-ing the correctional aspects of composition“ (Hendrickson 1978: 396). Hendrickson (1978) also concludes that although teacher correction is helpful, it may not be effective for every student, and with teacher guidence, self-correction and peer-correction may be beneficial investments of time and effort.

5. Learners' Beliefs and Attitudes

According to Chuang (2012, as cited in Salteh, Sadeghi, 2015), nowadays learners are no longer perceived only as empty vessels which are supposed to be filled with information, but rather as indivuals having opinions and understanding of the surrounding world. It is well explained by Diab (2006, as cited in Salteh, Sadeghi, 2015: 3): "if teachers and students have mutually exclusive ideas regarding correction techniques, the result will most likely be feedback that is ineffective and, in the worst case, discouraging for students". Feedback will be productive if both teachers and learners understand the purpose of a certain correction technique. Oladejo (1993) argues that the pace and effectivness of reaching the goal of learning depends on the matching of opinions and expectations of teachers and learners.

There are many studies concerning learners' preference differing in nationality, context, target language etc. which provide information of the importance of matching the learning styles of students in a class and the teaching style of the teacher. „The importance of learner beliefs lies in the fact that they underlie learner behavior to a large extent" (Horwitz, 1988, as cited in Loewen, 2009: 91).

When it comes to the techniques of error correction, learners' attitudes frequently differ from those of their teachers' (Lee, 2005; Wang, 2010, as cited in Hamouda, 2011). For example, it is often shown that students favor the overall correction, whereas teachers do not.

In a study taken by Hamouda (2011) various factors were examined. When it comes to the decision about who should correct learners' errors, both learners and teachers showed preference for teacher correction. Only a small number of learners expressed a strong dislike when asked about peer-correction, which is the same result as Oladejo (1993) got in his research. The results of the research conducted by Diab (2005) are similar to Hamouda's (2011) when speaking of self-correction, whereas the majority of students prefer self-correction in oral production, but teacher correction in written tasks. Other researched variables include techniques for marking errors in students' papers. At the highest rank was underlining or circling the errors. Speaking of preferences in terms of the emphasis given to different types of errors, the majority of learners agreed that the highest attention for correction should have errors connected to grammar. These results are similar to those from Halimi (2008), where students value error correction on grammatical, lexical and mechanical features. Hendrickson (1978) mentioned a research in which students at all levels of proficiency agreed that pronunciation and grammar errors are the most important to correct.

Both Radecki and Swales (1988) and Leki (1991, as cited by Ferris, 2006) found a strong preference for grammar feedback in written production.

There is an interesting and unexpected fact from Hamouda's (2011) research that students prefer negative feedback over positive, which shows they find constructive criticism more helpful than praise. When asked about direct and indirect feedback, 75 percent of learners favored direct feedback, which is the result similar to Wang's (2010) who explains it as understandable as it increases motivation in students.

In his work, Oladejo (1993) brings out the results of his research. In terms of peer correction, the majority feel that none of their errors should be corrected by peers, unlike learners studied by Lim (1990, as cited in Oladejo, 1993), who favor peer correction, but since they are secondary school pupils, it brings out the conclusion that the method is not equally successful with advanced and intermediate students. When speaking of techniques of error correction, in Oladejo's (1993) study the most preferred one is when the teacher provides comments and cues which enable learners to self-correct.

It is also known that learners generally disagree with the popular belief among educators and authors about the need for selective error correction in order not to frustrate the learners (Burt, 1975; George, 1975, as cited in Oladejo, 1993). Just as with most of the beliefs or assumptions, there is a study which shows the opposite. In that particular study, the results showed that students prefer not to be corrected for minor speaking errors because it influences their confiedence (Walker, 1973, as cited in Hendrickson, 1978). On the other hand, Burt and Kiparsky (1972, as cited in Oladejo, 1993) found out that learners mostly disagree with the view that constant error correction results in frustration. „Rather, they seem to want to be corrected more often and more thoroughly than language teachers sometimes assume" (Cathcart & Olsen, 1972, as cited in Oladejo, 1993: 82).

In the study taken by Leki (1991, as cited by Zhu, 2010) the results showed that 100 percent of students want all their written errors corrected. Zhu (2010) conducted a study with Chinese college students in which he found out that students prefer teacher correction, as oposed to self and peer-correction, which does not surprise at all because of the deep-rooted and well-known teacher-centered approach practiced in China. The majority prefer the teacher to correct every error that occurs. Another preference shown in several studies (Ferris, 2006; Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1994, 1996; Rennie, 2000 as cited in Ferris 2006) is about labeling and locating errors. Learners strongly favor errors to be labeled by

type. When speaking of timing of error correction, both teachers and students agree with the teachers' preference to provide feedback during two or more stages of the writing process (Hamouda, 2011).

„However, the following negative reactions frequently manifest in L2 writing correction, which need to be understood by writing teachers“ (Jimena & Tedjaatmadja & Tian, 2016: 11):

1. Discouragement (derived from fear of not knowing what to do with the correction provided from teacher);

2. Resistance (depends on the level of proficiency therefore the teacher must be acquainted with it in order to avoid it);

3. Passiveness (difficult reaction; various reasons possible)

Regarding error correcting in oral production, Katayama (2007) brings out the results of the study in which the majority of students agreed with the statemet that teacher should correct errors while speaking. Nearly half of the subjects disagreed with the statement that teacher should correct all errors in speaking. A total of 50.6 percent of students agreed with the statement “I want my classmates to correct my oral errors in group work” (Katayama, 2007: 288).

Semke (1984, as cited in Simpson, 2006) created a study in which he divided students into four experimental groups according to the type of correction provided: 1. comments only, 2. corrections only, 3. corrections with comments, and 4. student self-correction. The group that improved the least was group 4: self-correction. The group which improved the most in both fluency and accuracy is number 1: comments only.
The same form of study was used by Cardelle and Corno (1981, as cited in Simpson, 2006). They also had four research groups: 1. praise, 2. Criticism (grammatical correction), 3. criticism plus praise, and 4. no feedback. The group which improved the most is group 3: criticism plus praise.

6. Beliefs and Attitudes of College Students toward Error Treatment in Foreign Language Learner Talk

6.1. Aim of the Study

The study was conducted in order to investigate college students' beliefs, attitudes and feelings when it comes to treatment of the errors in the oral production of the English language. As noted in Chapter 5, the reason why students' attitudes are important is because the pace and quality of the progress is directly influenced by them. More specific aims of the study were 1.) to find out general students' attitudes and beliefs about error treatment in English language learner talk, 2.) to identify students' attitudes and beliefs toward various techniques of error treatment in oral production, 3.) to find out if there is a connection between how long the students have been learning English and their attitudes and beliefs about error treatment in foreign language learner talk, and 4) to compare the results of the same questionnaire with the primary school students.

6.2. Sample

The students of the second year of the English language and literature study programme at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Osijek were chosen as the participants in this study. Among 53 students, there are 14 male and 39 female students. Their age ranges from 19 to 24, and the average age is 20.6. The students' years of learning English language vary from 6 to 15 with the average being 11.4.

6.3. Instruments

Students' attitudes and beliefs toward error treatment in the oral production in the English language were questioned with the questionnaire by Sanja Kalebić Čurković. The questionnaire contains 14 I-statements (Kalebić Čurković, 2006). The items of the questionnaire are grouped according to general attitudes (items 1-3), error correction time (items 4, 5), error correction techniques (items 6-11), and self-correction (items 12-14). A five-point Likert scale is next to each statement (from 1= I completely disagree, to 5= I

completely agree). At the end of the questionnaire, students were asked for demographic data (age, gender and years of learning).

6.4. Procedure

The author of this paper administered the questionnaire to the participants at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Osijek with the help of the mentor. Students filled out the questionnaire before their regular lesson. Using SPSS for Windows a quantitative analysis was made, together with a descriptive analysis to find out more about each item.

6.5. Results

Table 1 shows results of each item from the questionnaire. The results show that the majority of students agree that the teacher should correct them if they make an error in oral production. Studens generally have positive attitudes toward correcting errors in speech, they prefer that teacher corrects all their errors but after they have finished with speaking. They are also positive about self-correction and appreciate the opportunity to self-correct.

Items in the questionnaire	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
1.When I speak in English, I expect my teacher to correct me if I say something incorrect.	53	1	5	4,4906	0,74994
2. I do not like when the teacher does not correct errors when we speak in English.	53	1	5	3,3208	1,18927
3. I think that teacher should correct all errors in speech.	53	2	5	4,0755	1,03495
4. I do not mind if the teacher interrupts me while I am speaking in order to correct my error.	53	1	5	3,8302	1,18866
5. I like when the teacher corrects my error after I stop speaking.	53	2	5	4,2642	0,94362
6. I like when the teacher explains to me in	53	3	5	4,6226	0,56249

English what I did wrong.					
7. I like when the teacher warns me of my error in speech, but without correcting it.	53	1	5	3,1509	1,23095
8. I do not like if the teacher asks some other student to answer when I fail to give the correct answer.	53	1	5	2,6981	1,38098
9. I do not mind when the teacher asks me to repeat after he/she had corrected me.	53	1	5	3,8491	1,24648
10. I like when the teacher gives me the possibility to self-correct my utterance.	53	1	5	4,0566	0,90756
11. I do not mind if some of the students correct my error in speaking.	53	1	5	3,0377	1,31504
12. If I notice I made a mistake, I tend to self-correct my error in speech.	53	3	5	4,6226	0,56249
13. When the teacher corrects me, I always repeat loudly the correction.	53	1	5	3,2453	1,19141
14. When the teacher corrects me, I repeat the correction „to myself“.	53	1	5	3,3208	1,34126

Table 1: Average results for each item of the questionnaire

Table 2 shows how many students gave which answer for every item in the questionnaire. More than 90 percent of the students prefer the teacher to explain in English what the student had mistaken (question 6), and tend to self-correct if they notice they had made a mistake (question 12).

Items in the questionnaire	N	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	5 (%)
1.When I speak in English, I expect my teacher to correct me if I say something incorrect.	53	1.9	0	3.8	35.8	58.5
2. I do not like when the teacher does not correct errors when we speak in English.	53	9.4	15.1	24.5	35.8	15.1
3. I think that teacher should correct all errors in speech.	53	0	11.3	15.1	28.3	45.3
4. I do not mind if the teacher inerrupts me while I	53	3.8	11.3	22.6	22.6	39.6

am speaking in order to correct my error.						
5. I like when the teacher corrects my error after I stop speaking.	53	0	5.7	17.0	22.6	54.7
6. I like when the teacher explains to me in English what I did wrong.	53	0	0	3.8	30.2	66.0
7. I like when the teacher warns me of my error in speech, but without correcting it.	53	11.3	18.9	28.3	26.4	15.1
8. I do not like if the teacher asks some other student to answer when I fail to give the correct answer.	53	28.3	15.1	28.3	15.1	13.2
9. I do not mind when the teacher asks me to repeat after he/she had corrected me.	53	5.7	13.2	11.3	30.2	39.6
10. I like when the teacher gives me the possibility to self-correct my utterance.	53	1.9	3.8	15.1	45.3	34
11. I do not mind if some of the students correct my error in speaking.	53	17.0	17.0	26.4	24.5	15.1
12. If I notice I made a mistake, I tend to self-correct my error in speech.	53	0	0	3.8	30.2	66.0
13. When the teacher corrects me, I always repeat loudly the correction.	53	9.4	18.9	22.6	35.8	13.2
14. When the teacher corrects me, I repeat the correction „in myself“.	53	11.3	17.0	26.4	18.9	26.4

Table 2: Results for each item of the questionnaire in terms of given answers on Likert-scale

Table 3 shows the results according to the group of items from the questionnaire. The results show generally neutral attitudes but lean toward positive, with the error correction time being the group of items for which students have the most positive attitudes.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
General attitude	53	2.33	5.00	3.9623	0.65261
Error correction time	53	1.50	5.00	4.0472	0.77375
Error correction techniques	53	2.33	4.83	3.5692	0.60397
Self-correction	53	2.33	4.67	3.7296	0.56257

Table 3: Average results for each group of items

Table 4 shows in which way students' general attitudes toward error correction depend on the years of learning. It shows that learners who have been studying English longer have a more positive attitude.

Years of learning	N	Mean	SD
6	1	3.0000	.
9	1	4.0000	.
10	14	3.8333	0.65044
11	19	4.1053	0.71191
12	6	3.6111	0.68041
13	2	3.6667	0.0000
14	6	4.2778	0.38968
15	4	4.1667	0.63828

Table 4: General attitudes about error treatment according to years of learning

Table 5 shows how attitudes toward the error correction timing depend on the years of learning. The results show that learners generally have neutral or positive attitudes, but there is no correlation between the years of learning and students' attitudes.

Years of learning	N	Mean	SD
6	1	5.0000	.
9	1	3.5000	.
10	14	3.9643	1.02777
11	19	3.9211	0.69248
12	6	4.5833	0.66458
13	2	4.0000	0.00000
14	6	4.2500	0.68920
15	4	3.7500	0.28868

Table 5: Attitudes about error correction time according to years of learning

Table 6 shows how years of learning depend on attitudes toward error correction techniques (teacher-correction, self-correction and peer correction). From the results shown, there is no difference in the attitude depending on the years of learning and students generally have neutral or positive attitudes.

Years of learning	N	Mean	SD
6	1	4.3333	.
9	1	3.3333	.
10	14	3.5238	0.49293
11	19	3.4737	0.66728
12	6	3.9444	0.57413
13	2	3.4167	0.58926
14	6	3.6944	0.64478
15	4	3.3750	0.76225

Table 6: Attitudes about error correction techniques according to years of learning

Table 7 shows how attitudes about self-correction depend on the years of learning. Learners who have been studying English for a longer period of time have slightly more positive attitudes, but nothing too significant.

Years of learning	N	Mean	SD
6	1	4.3333	.
9	1	4.3333	.
10	14	3.6905	0.49725
11	19	3.6842	0.53833
12	6	3.6111	0.38968
13	2	3.5000	1.64992
14	6	4.0000	0.42164
15	4	3.6667	0.86066

Table 7: Attitudes about self-correction according to years of learning

Table 8 shows the correlation between variables. It is noticable that the strongest correlation is found between error correction techniques and self correction. A correlation is also found between error correction techniques and time. When it comes to the years of learning, students' attitudes are not in strong correlation with any of the group of items. Years of learning are in positive correlation with general attitude about error treatment, and in negative correlation with other three groups of items (error correction time, error correction techniques and self-correction).

		General attitude	Errror correction time	Error correction techniques	Self-correction	Years of learning
General attitude	Pearson correlation	1	0.124	-0.164	0.140	0.202
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.376	0.241	0.316	0.147
	N	53	53	53	53	53
Error correction time	Pearson correlation	0.124	1	0.332*	0.258	-0.008
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.376		0.015	0.062	0.954
	N	53	53	53	53	53
Error correction techniques	Pearson correlation	-0.164	0.332*	1	0.364**	-0.034
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.241	0.015		0.007	0.807
	N	53	53	53	53	53
Self-correction	Pearson correlation	0.140	0.258	0.364**	1	-0.028
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.316	0.062	0.007		0.844
	N	53	53	53	53	53
Years of learning	Pearson correlation	0.202	-0.008	-0.034	-0.028	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.147	0.954	0.807	0.844	
	N	53	53	53	53	53

Table 8: Correlation between groups of items from the questionnaire and years of learning.

6.6. Discussion

The analysis of the results show that students generally have positive attitude toward error correction in English language oral production. It correlates with the many already mentioned studies undertaken over the years in different parts of the world. It seems that age has very little in common with general attitudes and beliefs, since the result from this study are similar to the ones from Čurković Kalebić (2006) although her participants were primary school students.

Students generally appreciate the information about error and teacher's reaction if the error had been made in oral production. More than 90% of the students prefer the teacher to explain in English what the student had mistaken, and as expected from the hypothesis, students prefer self-correction over peer correction. They like it when the teacher corrects them or points out the error after they have finished speaking, rather than teacher interrupting them. The same attitudes are shared by primary school students from study conducted by Čurković Kalebić (2006).

Since the ratio between male and female students in this study is not approximate, the dependence of gender could not be taken in consideration because the results would not be reliable. The age of the students does not differ that much in this study, so it would not provide any significant results, so the years of learning English had to be taken in consideration. Interestingly, students who have been learning English longer, tend to have slightly more positive general attitudes toward error treatment in oral production. When it comes to the dependence of years of learning and error correction time, there is no correlation, students of all age and years of learning prefer being corrected after they have finished speaking, no matter if they are college students or primary school students (from the results of study by Čurković Kalebić, 2006). Further, years of learning might have an impact on error correction techniques. Comparing the results of study conducted by Čurković Kalebić (2006), primary school students generally do not like when the teacher asks other student to respond if the student had failed in providing the correct answer, whereas college students do not mind it, or have neutral feelings about it. There is no great significance among the correlation between the years of learning and self-correction, both primary school and college students tend to self-correct if they notice they had made a mistake.

7. Conclusion

This study was conducted in order to help teachers or future educators understand attitudes and beliefs of students of a foreign language toward error treatment in oral production, in order to gain a clearer picture of what the students' preferences are. Knowing students' attitudes is beneficial in numerous ways since it serves as a feedback to the teacher's work and methods of teaching and thus error correcting. The focus of the study was primarly on the students' general beliefs about oral correction, their preferences and objections. Preferences were also addressed in accordance to the years of learning the English language, and compared to the results of the study conducted with the same instrument but among younger participants.

However, the reliability of this study should be taken in consideration because of the small number of participants and inadequate ratio of female and male students. Since the participants were college students and the author had access to the data only from the same research taken in a primary school, the results of the secondary school students' are missing in order to gain a full picture of students' attitudes toward error correction in the EFL class. Nevertheless, this study can still serve as a guidance to the teachers' correcting methods and techniques.

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9. Appendix – Questionnaire for Learners

Stavovi i mišljenja studenata prema tretiranju pogrešaka u govoru stranog jezika

Ovo istraživanje se provodi u svrhu pisanja diplomskog rada. Cilj upitnika je istražiti stavove i mišljenja studenata prema tretiranju pogrešaka u govoru stranoga jezika.

Ovaj kratak upitnik je anoniman i koristit će se samo u znanstvene svrhe. Za svaku od 14 tvrdnji možete zaokružiti jedan od ponuđenih odgovora:

1- uopće se ne slažem

2-djelomično se ne slažem

3-niti se slažem niti se ne slažem

4-djelomično se slažem

5-potpuno se slažem

Za rješavanje je potrebno 5 minuta. Molimo vas da budete iskreni, ne postoje točni ili krivi odgovori. Hvala! ☺

1. Kada govorim na engleskom, očekujem da me profesor/ica ispravi ako kažem nešto pogrešno.

1 2 3 4 5

2. Smeta mi kada profesor/ica ne popravlja pogreške kada govorimo na engleskom.

1 2 3 4 5

3. Smatram da profesor/ica treba popraviti sve pogreške u govoru studenata na engleskom jeziku.

1 2 3 4 5

4. Ne smeta mi ako me profesor/ica prekine dok govorim na engleskom kako bi me ispravio/la.

1 2 3 4 5

5. Volim kada profesor/ica popravi pogrešku u mom govoru nakon što prestanem govoriti.

1 2 3 4 5

6. Volim kada mi profesor/ica na engleskom objasni što sam pogriješio/la.

1 2 3 4 5

7. Volim kada me profesor/ica upozori na pogrešku u mom govoru, a da je pritom sam/a ne ispravi.

1 2 3 4 5

8. Smeta mi ako profesor/ica prozove drugog studenta kada ja ne uspijem točno odgovoriti na pitanje na engleskom.

1 2 3 4 5

9. Ne smeta mi kada profesor/ica nakon što me ispravio/la traži da ponovim ispravan oblik.

1 2 3 4 5

10. Volim ako mi profesor/ica da mogućnost da sam/a pokušam ispraviti pogrešku u svom iskazu.

1 2 3 4 5

11. Ne smeta mi kada netko od studenata ispravi pogrešku u mom govoru.

1 2 3 4 5

12. Kada primijetim da sam pogriješio/la, nastojim sama/a popraviti pogrešku u svom govoru.

1 2 3 4 5

13. Kada me profesor/ica ispravi, uvijek glasno ponovim taj ispravak.

1 2 3 4 5

14. Kada me profesor/ica ispravi, ponovim „u sebi“ taj ispravak.

1 2 3 4 5

Dob _____

Spol m ž

Engleski učim _____ godina.