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CORRECTING MISTAKES AS A PROCESS OF TEACHING ENGLISH

There is nobody who is able to learn a foreign language without making errors during the phases of language acquisition. That is why this field of study deserves a great deal of linguists' attention. Teachers are an essential part of this learning process, as they are usually those who help students to correct their errors and to avoid them in the future. However, in time students also become active participants in their own learning process.

The main **aims** of this article are to determine the role of different types of mistakes on the field of error correction and to highlight the most suitable approaches to correct students.

It may seem that error correction is a simple procedure which does not need to be examined, but it is the opposite of the truth. Error correction is a complex procedure which needs to be examined further. It is necessary that teachers were well informed about how students perceive error correction in order to teach effectively.

Error correction as an important part of teaching process was highlighted in different Second Language Acquisition Theories. One of them is Behaviourist theory. Behaviourist theory was the most prominent psychological theory in the 1950s. It saw language learning as a strictly mechanical process. Basically, this theory implies that language learning should be promoted by periodic repetition of the same structures. Perfect teaching method would produce no errors at all. This theory was supported by Ellis, Mitchell and Myles, Corder, Skinner. One of the main critics of this theory was Noam Chomsky. Language learning is a complex and abstract process that learners are more likely to learn when they study the rules of language instead of repeating individual sentences.

Communicative approach is nowadays the most widespread method of language teaching. Rather than a method, it is regarded as a universal approach to teaching. The approach began to gain importance as early as the late 1970s. The teachers are no more seen as a key aspect of the learning process. Instead they should appear to be nothing more than participants in communication, which should cause lowering of the tension and remove the barrier between a student and a teacher. CTL regards an error as something inevitable and natural in the process of language learning. Important factor in deciding whether something is an error is the extent to which it disrupts the flow of communication between subjects. This theory was described by Littlewood, Bartram and Walton, Doff.

Thought their studies, students make a lot of mistakes. It is an important part of the learning process. If they are not making mistakes, they will not be ready for more difficult topics, tasks and structures to work with. It is important to choose the material, which is challenging, but manageable for special class and then correct mistakes in positive ways. It is also necessary to know an approach for every student, because they are individual. It is not enough time on the lesson in order to pay

attention to every student, but it is also possible to divide them into groups and focus on different students each lesson.

Taking into consideration the deficiency of system development of methods and approaches to pointing out mistakes to students in the process of teaching English, the following scientific research is focused on scrutinising all sorts of possible solutions of the problem arising from the necessity to constantly deal with error correction. It seems fair to suggest that this issue is of top priority not only for technical higher educational establishment teachers. The problem is very common for all kinds of educational establishments as, firstly, some students tend to be psychologically vulnerable to being endlessly corrected in the process of learning foreign language, and secondly, students may differ significantly in the speed of acquiring knowledge, motivation, learning styles etc.

Teacher's attitude to student' mistakes. It is quite obvious that mistakes can be called an integral and essential part of any learning process. Moreover, it would not be an exaggeration to claim that it is mistakes that turn out to be an unmistakable indication to students of what needs to be improved. Without making mistakes one would not know what is necessary to work on. It proves by the quotation of supporter of Communicative Approach, Doff A. He claims that: "Students' errors are a very useful way of showing what they have and have not learnt. So instead of seeing errors negatively, as a sign of failure, we can see them positively as an indication of what we still need to teach. Obviously, if we try to prevent students from making errors we can never find out what they do not know [1, 188].

Classification of mistakes. Usually all mistakes that can be made in the process of learning foreign languages can be divided into three categories: slips, errors and attempts [3, 99]. The main task of the teacher before correcting is to find a positive ways and determine what is necessary to correct. The teacher should correct errors, but not attempts, if only they cause a breakdown in communication. Slips are mistakes which students can correct themselves, once the mistake has been pointed out to them by the teacher. They can be caused by fairly intrinsic and quite understandable factors such as lack of concentration, inattentiveness, excitement, nervousness, distraction etc. Errors are mistakes which students can't correct themselves and which, therefore, need further explanation. Attempts are mistakes that students make when they try to say something, though they have not known yet how to say it. The way we deal with correcting mistakes will depend on which different types of mistakes students are making. If a student hasn't managed to understand new information and as a consequence continues to make mistakes, we would identify such mistakes as errors. Another category of mistakes is often called developmental errors. Such errors occur naturally as the students' language knowledge develops, and are the results of the students making apparently sensible assumptions about the way language works [2, 96]. If a teacher works with a group of students for some period of time, it wouldn't pose a substantial problem for him to distinguish whether a student made a slip, an error or an attempt. Here we come to the point where a teacher is to answer the following question: "What is the most appropriate way to correct mistakes and how to give feedback on mistakes without damaging motivation, confidence, eagerness to learn etc.?"

Teacher's attitude to mistake correction. It is necessary to emphasize that sometimes it is rather complicated to give definite unequivocal advice whether to correct mistakes made by students practicing some language activities or not. The analysis of methodological literature on the problems of mistake correction during the class showed that there are different attitudes to this problem. Some scientists consider that correction doesn't help the language learning process of internalising rules, other scientists tend to be in favour of correcting all mistakes made by students as it seems more 'teacher-like' to do something about mistakes. Most researchers are in agreement that pupils should not be interrupted in their speech to correct an error made by that particular pupil. Especially, if it talks about fluency activity, teacher should not interrupt the student. If a teacher over-corrects during a fluency activity, the students might get frustrated, because they don't have the opportunity to express themselves without the teacher interrupting. The other situation when correction is not necessary: students make systematic errors or mistakes, which appear, when student hasn't learnt yet the rule (for example, " Yesterday I goed…").

If student makes non-systematic errors, teacher should correct the learner, because, these mistakes cause by forgetting already known materials and rules. And if the aim of activity is accuracy, teacher should deal with all mistakes in the target language immediately.

Teachers don't need to correct errors that are beyond students' current capabilities in English. Problems associated with error correction of students lacking confidence. It is important to remember that there is no use trying to force low-level students lacking speaking skills to talk, thereby provoking possible aggravation of the fear to make mistake and making them even less reluctant to speak in the future. It would be sensible to create amicable learning environment, where learners are not afraid of making mistakes and being ridiculed. The task of any foreign language teacher is to make students understand that mistakes made in the process of acquiring new language skills should be considered as an excellent opportunity to get knowledge or improve language skills. Moreover, students can react to numerous and inescapable mistakes as if they were learning steps without which it would be impossible to improve knowledge of the foreign language. Naturally, not all students are affected by the factors mentioned above. Basically, it is common for people with low self-esteem and high levels of anxiety, i.e. people experiencing psychological distress in all situations associated with the evaluation of their activities [4, 60-64]. Since learning a foreign language is associated with a large number of errors (that is surely inevitable when learning new skills), participation in speaking activities becomes a major stress for students who are seeking to meet the expectations of others and are afraid to fail (i.e. to make a mistake speaking foreign language), which is a consequence of low self-esteem and self-doubt.

Unfortunately, these psychological characteristics are inherent to a large number of students, which means that the main task of the lesson will not be accomplished and such students will not acquire communication skills, learn to use foreign language for its intended purpose, i.e. as a means of communication. Taking into consideration all the above mentioned factors, it is important to help the teacher find the necessary solutions so that the educational process might be carried out to the full extent, while minimizing stress factors arising in the process of foreign language communication.

In case we deal with shy students lacking confidence, improper correction could be quite embarrassing, thus leading to intimidation and wouldn't encourage such students to take active part in speaking activities next time. Moreover, if a student makes too many mistakes (grammar mistakes, vocabulary mistakes, pronunciation mistakes, etc.), constant interruption for correction would inevitably cause to lose the train of thought. What can be undertaken to avoid such unfavourable scenario? One of the possible ways to give feedback on mistakes in a sensitive way is to jot down mistakes on note pads while listening to speaking activities and afterwards point out the mistakes to the student who made them or explain the rules to the whole class without giving unnecessary details of whose mistake it was. If such strategy of mistake correction is applied during the lesson, students feel free to make mistakes and it should be considered as a great advantage since it is well-recognised fact that we all learn by making mistakes. The task of a foreign language teacher is to create friendly homelike atmosphere in which mistakes made by students are not taken for "criminal acts" for which you are going to be undoubtedly punished, but as the advantageous integral part of any learning process without which it would be just impossible to acquire knowledge and new skills as well as to work on and improve existing ones. Students should be aware of the fact that to avoid situations in which you can definitely make a mistake would become the biggest mistake of all [2, 97-99].

Peer correction and self-correction as one of appropriate ways of mistake correction. Students making mistakes in the process of acquiring new language skills in the majority of cases must be provided with some feedback on their work. It is quite possible for foreign language teachers to organize the class work in such a way that teacher-correction of mistakes is at least partially replaced by self-correction or peer correction. Though, surely, if a teacher identifies some errors that seem to be common for several students in the class, the task of the teacher is to focus on that problem, to provide an extensive explanation, to ask students to complete some additional tasks etc. [6, 32].

Self-correction implies that students are able to cope with correction of their own mistakes. In such cases it is quite obvious for the teacher that such mistakes were not made because of lack of knowledge, but because of quite understandable factors such as lack of concentration, inattentiveness,

excitement, nervousness, distraction etc. Thus, self-correction can be pushed forward if we are entirely sure that we deal with slips and mistakes, with the correction of which a particular student can cope successfully. Our observations showed that in case we deal with slips it is always much better not to correct them, but give a student the chance to do it by him/herself. Sometimes teachers can use a pause to show students that they have made a mistake and should try to correct themselves. Prompting self-correction can be helpful if we work with students who have low self-esteem as students are frequently in danger of losing their self-confidence when they get corrected. Students can be involved in self-correction to different extent, herewith the role of a foreign language teacher is shifting to an "observer", who is monitoring the whole process, though is always ready to give a helping hand to those students who can't manage on their own. It is necessary to note that teacher's help is not always to be explicit. If there is no doubt that we don't deal with attempts or errors that can never be self-corrected, we can provide more or less guidance to students who are trying to find their mistakes by giving some hints on the nature of mistakes or location in the text if we speak about self-correction of writing tasks. The categories above apply to correcting oral and written work.

As with oral work, teacher needs to consider the aim of the activity of written work. If it is controlled writing practice, e. g. a gap-fill exercise a recently-studied language point, teacher needs to correct all errors.

Thus, students make mistakes in oral and written work. According to this, teacher should consider some features of these works in order to know how, when and what to correct. Both in oral and written work, it is important to find the aim of activity. Secondly, know objectives, which can be used for every work.

What about a creative writing or extensive writing, it is possible to correct some, but not all errors. How to correct errors in a piece of creativity or communicative writing, it should be considered very carefully, because it can be very frustrated for students to have their work returned to them covered in corrections. To correct mistakes in written speech, teachers, as a rule, make special notes on the margins indicating the type of error.

When marking, indicate the spot at which there is a mistake and put the corresponding symbol in the margin. The students can attempt to correct the errors themselves. For high-level students or for errors which lower level students should be able to correct easily, teacher can put the symbol into margin without its indicating, where the error exactly is. The important feature is to give students a chance for self-correction. It also teaches students to review their works [4, 60-64].

After correcting any work, it is possible to give students time in order to review what they have done and to consider teacher's feedback. Feedback works well when students append time reflecting on it. This will also give students the opportunity to ask some questions if they are unable to find the correction themselves.

In all, it is essential to get the balance between oral and written correction. Teachers need to deal with errors sensitively and in a supportive way.

The research conducted doesn't encompass the comprehensive solution of all problems, the English language teacher's face, pointing out mistakes to the students in the process of teaching English in technical higher educational establishments. At the same time, its results definitely indicate that in spite of the fact that the problem of appropriate mistake correction tends to be quite vital and is one of the biggest and, we dare say, the most challenging teaching problems, it can still be successfully solved by applying strategies described above. The English language teacher dealing with mistake correction in class has to adopt a mixture of solutions meeting the needs of both advanced and average students, simultaneously facilitating favourable and friendly atmosphere among all members of the academic group. The involvement of peers in the process of mistake correction is to be implemented in supportive and encouraging way to create successful teaching and learning environment. The outcomes of the following scientific and practical research can be used to identify the perspective directions of studying this problem in the future. It would be appropriate to carry out in-depth analysis of psychological factors affecting the efficiency of students' progressing in acquiring language skills by applying different strategies of immediate or delayed mistake correction, that, supposedly, can be extremely helpful in solving the problem discussed above. Further research in this area may focus on

the detailed analysis of problems arising with the involvement of peers in the process of mistake correction and appropriate way of their solution or even evasion of the problem.

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CRITERIA FOR DEALING WITH SPOKEN ERRORS

Error seems as a natural process of learning. According to Fauziati: "Error is considered as an inevitable and positive part of that process". There is nobody who is able to learn a foreign language without making errors during the phases of language acquisition. That is why this field of study deserves a great deal of linguists' attention (M.Bartram, R.Walton, C.James, and P.Lennon). Teachers are an essential part of this learning process, as they are usually those who help students to correct their errors and to avoid them in the future. Every day in every English lesson, teachers perform error correction. Since no human learning is perfect, it comes as no surprise that students of English make a lot of errors in the process of acquiring the new language. In reaction to that, their teachers must often provide them with some kind of feedback, which often takes the form of correction. Although the process of correcting might seem straightforward at first sight, it is in fact a very complex issue that involves many decisions on the part of the teacher before any correction as such is actually carried out.

My bachelor work is devoted to error correction in oral practice during English language lessons. The goal is to map the circumstances of various errors that learners make during speaking as well as possible ways of correcting such errors. I will try to evaluate and analyse individual aspects of error and correction and try to come up with some conclusions that might help teachers in their decisions on error correction.

The bachelor thesis is divided into three chapters. The first chapter introduces several approaches towards error and correction that have been dominant in second language acquisition theory since the mid-20th century until today. These theories are introduced and analysed.

Second chapter discusses in detail error correction in oral practice. Firstly, it deals with various definitions of error. Than different error types and ways of categorizing of errors are introduced and analysed.

The last chapter discusses the results of my research. The research is shortly introduced, after which I present results and compare them both with each other and theoretical observations.

ЗМІСТ

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