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PROS AND CONS OF ERROR CORRECTION IN TEACHING STUDIES

Students' written and spoken errors constitute subject of the study. The article deals with the problem of lecturer's correcting students mistakes in writing and speaking activities. Three main stages in the process of students' understanding of their mistakes are outlined. Types of correction of both spoken and written errors according to S.P. Corder are under consideration. Fedorenko and Sukhorolska's ideas for correcting students' written errors are examined. Signs that the lecturer corrects not enough or too many errors are provided in the article.

Key words: error correction, spoken error, written error.

While studying the language students make many errors which sometimes the lecturer does not take into account or corrects them the way which offends student. Thus it is significant to know advantages and disadvantages of correcting errors so that the learning process will have some use. The error correction has not been studied for a long and it is to S.P. Corder [3] that Error Analysis (EA), which also studies the correction of both spoken and written errors, owes its place as a scientific method in linguistics. Before Corder, linguists observed learners' errors, divided them into categories, tried to see which ones were common and which were not, but not much attention was drawn to their role in second language acquisition. It was Corder who showed to whom information about errors would be helpful (teachers, researchers, and students) and how.

But not only Corder devoted himself to the study of EA, such linguists as R. Ellis, M.R. Freiermuth, C. Hagege and many others made an invaluable contribution.

The purpose of this article is to illustrate advantages and disadvantages of error correction in students' spoken and written language during the classes of English.

Applied Linguistics theory commonly distinguishes between errors (which are consistent and based on a mis-learned generalization) and mistake (occasional, inconsistent slips). It is known that a mistake can be made even by a native speaker. Usually, language teachers perceive a mistake intuitively: something sounds or looks "wrong". It may actually interfere with successful communication, or simply 'jar' – produce a slight feeling of discomfort in the reader or hearer. Mistakes may be seen as an integral and natural part of learning: a symptom of the learner's progress through an 'interlanguage' towards a closer approximation to the target language. When a student makes a mistake the teacher has to tell him that he is wrong. The teacher does not need to specify in what respect.

When it comes to error correction we are dealing with one individual's reaction to a student's piece of writing or utterance. This inevitably means that there will be some disagreement among lecturers about what, when, and how to correct.

According to Hagege [6:30], it is important to treat errors in a positive way. In his article "The teacher as a good listener" he notes that it is useless, if not harmful, to treat errors as if they were "diseases or pathological situations which must be eliminated, especially if this treatment becomes discouraging, as occurs when lecturers lose their patience because of student's numerous errors. This, of course, does not mean that corrections should be avoided; after all it is the lecturer's duty to teach the rules of the second language. But the correction of every error as soon as it occurs is not recommended. The justification that Hagege offers is the following: the linguistic message that the student tries to produce is a sequence of elements which are interdependent; immediate corrections which interrupt this message tend to produce negative consequences, even to the less sensitive students; such consequences include anxiety, fear of making error, the development of avoidance strategies, reduced motivation for participation in the classroom.

The ability to correct – sensitively, efficiently and effectively – is a skill that takes time to perfect.The lecturer should aim to maintain a co-operative working atmosphere and not to let students think they are being picked on – correction may seem threatening if done badly. The lecturer should not try to "echo" the errors, even in a mocking, astonished way. The basic principle is that

students learn more effectively if they are guided in such a way that they eventually correct themselves rather than if they are given the correct version of something straight away. The struggle to get it right also helps them to understand why they were wrong.

Three main stages in the process of students' understanding of their mistakes according to A.A. Leontyev:

1. The student must know that something is not accurate. But first let him or her finish the utterance. Students find it disconcerting to be interrupted mid-stream. Make a gesture, like a wave of the finger, or give some not-too-discouraging word like nearly. Black looks or shouts of No! will only serve to reduce the students' desire to try out the language.

2. The student must know where the error is. So the lecturer needs to isolate for the student the part of the utterance that is wrong. If the student says "My wife come yesterday" but meant "My wife came yesterday", then telling him to try again might be of no use. He has put the word yesterday in to indicate past time so he may think he has made a correct utterance. What he needs to know is that the word come is incorrect. There are a number of things you can say: 'the second word; not 'come' but...?'

3. The student must know what kind of error it is. The student will need to know whether the problem is grammatical, syntactical (for example, a missing word), or phonological (for example, a wrongly stressed word). The lecturer can say, for example, Verb? Tense? Word stress? Wrong word. Or can also use appropriate gestures (finger correction etc). However, it is important that the students understand those gestures and that the lecturer uses the same gestures each time to represent the same thing. The one who corrects the mistakes can also use the board. So if the student says She buy some apples, the teacher can write the word buy in the board, cross it out and/or write up the word past and elicit the correct form [1:258].

All errors both spoken and written are made because of lack of knowledge. There are two types of the students' errors: spoken (oral) and written ones and it is significant to know who is responsible for correcting errors. Stephen Pit Corder, a linguist who was studying the significance of learning errors, says that there are three types of correction the spoken errors according to the subject of correction:

1. Self-correction. The teacher should always give the students the chance to correct themselves. If they are going to become more accurate they must learn to monitor themselves. They may have just made a slip and will welcome the opportunity to put it right. Sometimes they need some assistance from the teacher in knowing where the mistake is and what kind of mistake it is, before they can self-correct. The linguist claims that learners can self-correct between 50 per cent and 90 per cent of their own errors, given time and encouragement.

2. Student-student correction. If the students still can get it right, it is probably because they don't know how to. So with a gesture, the teacher can hold her attention and get another student to help out. This has the advantage of: involving all the students in the correction process; making the learning more co-operative generally; reducing student dependence on the teacher; increasing the amount the students listen to each other; giving the better students something to do.

Student-student correction must be done carefully. "Not Oh, no! Wrong again, Juan. Go on Sami, tell him". But "Not quite, Juan. Do you know, Sami?" It is even better to do the whole thing by gesture. Indicate not quite with the face or hands and gesture to another student to help. The teacher can try to choose a student who looks eager to help and not always resort to the class know-all! And the last thing in this case is to return to the first student and let him or her say the correct version.

Student-student correction is so effective and non-threatening because the teacher doesn't single out individual students and makes an example of them, as if they were wrongdoers in the pillory, they give another students a chance to try their knowledge.

3. Lecturer correction. If neither self-correction nor student-student correction is effective one must assume that either the student hasn't understood what the lecturer is getting at or doesn't know what a correct version should be. If it is an important point and the others don't know it either, the lecturer may have to stop and teach it to the whole class. If not, and the meaning of the item is clear, the lecturer's simply saying it and getting the students to say it should be enough. No matter how the lectur-

er has done the correction, the student who made an error must be given a chance to say the correct version, if possible in its original context. This is a vital part of any correction process. The teacher can do this by the gesture or saying something like OK, again. The whole thing. [3:151-160].

According to Jeremy Harmer [7:240], errors are usually made only by individual students, so correction often has to be on the individual basis too. The problem for the lecturer is how to spend enough time on any error with any one student without slowing down the pace of the lesson and boring the other students. To reduce that likelihood, involve the whole class as much as possible in the correction process; also spend less time correcting what is only a problem for one student and more time on problems common to the whole group. Also J. Harmer says that there is such a thing as over-correction. That is, the more the lecturer tries to correct something, the worse the student gets. So often it is worth spending a short time correcting some items only and not trying to get everything perfect in one go, and coming back to others on another day. Correction of major errors is perhaps best considered as something that should be done as quickly as possible, but it is likely to be a long-term process over a series of lessons.

Looking at different types of activities, J. Harmer suggests the following guidelines:

– Presentation of new language and controlled practice. For example, repetition practice (drilling). The lecturer must insist on accurate production from his students. He must judge what he considers to be an acceptable standard of pronunciation. Aim for a high standard at this stage as the standard will inevitably drop during less controlled and freer production.

– Structured speaking practice in pairs or groups which means monitoring by moving round the class and listening to the students. The lecturer must either correct errors as he hears them, remembering to include the other students in the group, or make a note of errors, then give feedback on the errors with the class after the activity.

– Guided or freer speaking activities. For example, an exchange of personal views on a topic. The teacher shouldn't interrupt the activity and expect complete accuracy but monitor and give feedback after activity. During feedback he shouldn't comment only on grammatical accuracy. Then there must be a discussion whether the students managed to achieve their communicative aim [7:139]

According to J. Harmer, feedback given after an activity can be done in a number of ways:

1) making a note of errors and focusing on common ones, or ones of general interest, after the activity. The teacher doesn't need to say which student made which error;

2) recording the activity (either on audio or video cassette) and
   a) going through the cassette with the group (though this can be very time-consuming and boring if done too meticulously and too often);
   b) selecting parts of the cassette to examine (in this way common errors can be dealt with or particularly good instances of language use highlighted);
   c) transcribing all or part of a cassette and indicating the errors made. The students – usually in groups – play the cassette and, referring to the transcript, discuss the errors. This is very time-consuming for the teacher, but it is usually appreciated by the students.

3) giving individual students notes of errors they have made with instructions on how to correct them;

4) providing the class with remedial sessions based on errors common to the majority. The teacher must make it clear that the lesson was planned as a direct result of the activity done earlier. This is particularly useful for monolingual groups.

As with correction of written work S.P. Corder distinguishes three types of correction according to the subject of correction:

1. Self-correction. The teacher can aid self-correction by underlining errors and putting symbols in the appropriate place in the margin and/or giving appropriate page references in grammar books. The students correct as many errors as they can and submit the work for marking. Before submitting the work they can show it to another student for comments.

2. Peer editing. The teacher can give the students the opportunity to read and comment on each other's work either before you see it or after you have indicated the errors.

3. Teacher correction. The teacher must judge when students can't correct their work by themselves and give them the correct version – with an explanation if necessary. The teacher can also note errors that are common to the group and prepare a remedial lesson for them [3:165].

Unsystematic errors occur in one's native language, Corder calls these "mistakes" and states that they are not significant to the process of language learning. He keeps the term "errors" for the systematic ones, which occur in a second language. Errors are significant in three ways: to the teacher: they show a student's progress; to the researcher: they show how a language is acquired, what strategies the learner uses; to the learner: he can learn from these errors. When a learner has made an error, the most efficient way to teach him the correct form is not by simply giving it to him, but by letting him discover it [3:120].

Fedorenko and Sukhorolska suggest the following ideas for correcting written errors:

1)   training students to edit. Even though they have invested time in doing a writing task, students don't spend a few more minutes checking their writing. The following activities not only help to develop students' editing skills in a fun way, but also enable the teacher to focus on key errors without individual students losing face.

Grammar auctions: Students receive a number of sentences taken from their written work. Some are correct, some wrong, students in groups have to try to buy the correct ones in the auction. They have a limited amount of money. The team with the most correct sentences wins.

2)   correction techniques. It can be difficult to decide on what and how much to correct the student's piece of writing. Students can develop a negative attitude towards writing because their teacher corrects all their errors or if the teacher only corrects a few, they might feel that the teacher hasn't spent sufficient time looking at their work. The teacher should evaluate the following techniques and decide which would be appropriate for his teaching situation: using a different colour from above, underline examples of appropriate language; correcting errors by writing the correct forms in their place; putting crosses in the margin for the number of errors in each line. Students then try to identify the errors and make corrections; putting students into pairs/groups. They correct each other's work using one or more of the techniques above; from time to time the teacher should give students an individual breakdown of recurring problems in their written work [2:90].

There are some signs which show that the lecturer is correcting too many students' errors. For example, students are losing their fluency when they speak because they are scared of making mistakes. The accuracy of their speaking is improving much more quickly than their fluency, use of complex forms, speaking strategies etc. Many of the errors the lecturer corrects are things that will not come up in their classes for a long time or even until the next level. Many of the errors the lecturer corrects are things the students knew but were just slips of the tongue; Furthermore, most of the errors the teacher corrects are things the students would have stop making errors with anyway eventually once their subconscious had fully dealt with the language. Students who think they have done well at a speaking or writing task get depressed when the teacher does error correction and they realize how many errors they have made.

Additionally, feedback after a speaking or writing task means mainly error correction, with a lack of suggesting more complex language, making encouraging comments etc. Sometimes the lecturer corrects the same language over and over, even though students' accuracy hasn't improved at all since the first time he corrected them; The teacher is correcting because he feels he must, even though he has no confidence that it will have an effect on accuracy with that group of students. In addition, students don't note down most of the errors the teacher corrects. Students who particularly lack fluency and/or confidence don't get less correction than other students. Most of the errors the teacher corrects are ones that we know persist naturally in all kinds of people learning English, such as third person –s; The teacher's only idea on how to improve student accuracy is to correct their errors [4:129].

However, there are also some sings which show that lecturers are correcting not enough students' mistakes. Firstly, students complain about the lack of error correction and they don't see the value of speaking activities or just see them as games. Secondly, students' fluency or use of more complex language is improving much quicker than their accuracy; Accuracy is what is holding students back from reaching the next level or getting a higher score in an exam. The lecturer's mistake is when students keep on making the same mistakes and the lecturer has never tried correcting those ones. The teacher should never correct the piece of grammar that he hasn't studied in a class yet, even when students try to use it all the time. The lecturer usually skips the error correction stage that is suggested in the teachers' book; The teacher usually corrects errors when students are speaking but rarely use them in an error correction stage. Students who need more accuracy such as someone giving an important business presentation or writing a job application cover letter do not get more correction than usual classes [5:165].

To sum up, while the lecturer corrects students' errors he should first of all take into account the way he corrects those errors and how it may influence the further study. Not all the students like being corrected and the task of the teacher is to make correction as sensitively as possible in order not to insult and discourage the student. The teacher is first and foremost good psychologist and only then a teacher.

It is true that correcting students while they are trying their best to use the language can often discourage them. The most satisfactory solution of all is make correction an activity, correction can be used as a follow-up to any given class activity. However, correction sessions can be used as a valid activity in and of themselves. In other words, lecturers can set up an activity during which each error (or a specific type of error) will be corrected. Students know that the activity is going to focus on correction, and accept that fact. These activities should be kept in balance with other, more free-form, activities which give students the opportunity to express themselves without having to worry about being corrected every other word.

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Р.С. Саврук

ПЛЮСИ І МІНУСИ ВИПРАВЛЕННЯ ПОМИЛОК

Предметом статті є усні і письмові помилки студентів. Стаття присвячена проблемі виправлення викладачем помилок у студентів під час письмових і усних завдань. Виокремлено три головні стадії в процесі розуміння студентом власних помилок. Розглянуто типи виправлень усних і письмових помилок згідно з С.П. Кордер. Досліджуються ідеї Федоренко і Сухорольської щодо виправлення письмових помилок у студентів. У статті подано ознаки, які демонструють, що викладач виправляє недостатньо або забагато помилок.

Ключові слова: виправлення помилок, усна помилка, письмова помилка.

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ПЛЮСЫ И МИНУСЫ В ИСПРАВЛЕНИИ ОШИБОК

Предмет исследования – устные и письменные ошибки студентов. Статья посвящена проблеме исправления преподавателем ошибок у студентов во время письменных и устных заданий. Намечено в общих чертах три главные стадии в процессе понимания студентом ошибок. Рассмотрены типы исправлений устных и письменных ошибок согласно з С.П. Кордер. Исследуются идеи Федоренко и Сухорольской по исправлению письменных ошибок у студентов. В статье представлены знаки, которые демонстрируют, что преподаватель исправляет недостаточно или слишком много ошибок.

Ключевые слова: исправление ошибок, устная ошибка, письменная ошибка.

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1. Self-correction. The teacher can aid self-correction by underlining errors and putting symbols in the appropriate place in the margin and/or giving appropriate page references in grammar books. The students correct as many errors as they can and submit the work for marking. Before submitting the work they can show it to another student for comments.

2. Peer editing. The teacher can give the students the opportunity to read and comment on each other's work either before you see it or after you have indicated the errors.

3. Teacher correction. The teacher must judge when students can't correct their work by themselves and give them the correct version – with an explanation if necessary. The teacher can also note errors that are common to the group and prepare a remedial lesson for them [3:165].

Unsystematic errors occur in one's native language, Corder calls these "mistakes" and states that they are not significant to the process of language learning. He keeps the term "errors" for the systematic ones, which occur in a second language. Errors are significant in three ways: to the teacher: they show a student's progress; to the researcher: they show how a language is acquired, what strategies the learner uses; to the learner: he can learn from these errors. When a learner has made an error, the most efficient way to teach him the correct form is not by simply giving it to him, but by letting him discover it [3:120].

Fedorenko and Sukhorolska suggest the following ideas for correcting written errors:

1)   training students to edit. Even though they have invested time in doing a writing task, students don't spend a few more minutes checking their writing. The following activities not only help to develop students' editing skills in a fun way, but also enable the teacher to focus on key errors without individual students losing face.

Grammar auctions: Students receive a number of sentences taken from their written work. Some are correct, some wrong, students in groups have to try to buy the correct ones in the auction. They have a limited amount of money. The team with the most correct sentences wins.

2)   correction techniques. It can be difficult to decide on what and how much to correct the student's piece of writing. Students can develop a negative attitude towards writing because their teacher corrects all their errors or if the teacher only corrects a few, they might feel that the teacher hasn't spent sufficient time looking at their work. The teacher should evaluate the following techniques and decide which would be appropriate for his teaching situation: using a different colour from above, underline examples of appropriate language; correcting errors by writing the correct forms in their place; putting crosses in the margin for the number of errors in each line. Students then try to identify the errors and make corrections; putting students into pairs/groups. They correct each other's work using one or more of the techniques above; from time to time the teacher should give students an individual breakdown of recurring problems in their written work [2:90].

There are some signs which show that the lecturer is correcting too many students' errors. For example, students are losing their fluency when they speak because they are scared of making mistakes. The accuracy of their speaking is improving much more quickly than their fluency, use of complex forms, speaking strategies etc. Many of the errors the lecturer corrects are things that will not come up in their classes for a long time or even until the next level. Many of the errors the lecturer corrects are things the students knew but were just slips of the tongue; Furthermore, most of the errors the teacher corrects are things the students would have stop making errors with anyway eventually once their subconscious had fully dealt with the language. Students who think they have done well at a speaking or writing task get depressed when the teacher does error correction and they realize how many errors they have made.

Additionally, feedback after a speaking or writing task means mainly error correction, with a lack of suggesting more complex language, making encouraging comments etc. Sometimes the lecturer corrects the same language over and over, even though students' accuracy hasn't improved at all since the first time he corrected them; The teacher is correcting because he feels he must, even though he has no confidence that it will have an effect on accuracy with that group of students. In addition, students don't note down most of the errors the teacher corrects. Students who particularly lack fluency and/or confidence don't get less correction than other students. Most of the errors the teacher corrects are ones that we know persist naturally in all kinds of people learning English, such as third person –s; The teacher's only idea on how to improve student accuracy is to correct their errors [4:129].

However, there are also some sings which show that lecturers are correcting not enough students' mistakes. Firstly, students complain about the lack of error correction and they don't see the value of speaking activities or just see them as games. Secondly, students' fluency or use of more complex language is improving much quicker than their accuracy; Accuracy is what is holding students back from reaching the next level or getting a higher score in an exam. The lecturer's mistake is when students keep on making the same mistakes and the lecturer has never tried correcting those ones. The teacher should never correct the piece of grammar that he hasn't studied in a class yet, even when students try to use it all the time. The lecturer usually skips the error correction stage that is suggested in the teachers' book; The teacher usually corrects errors when students are speaking but rarely use them in an error correction stage. Students who need more accuracy such as someone giving an important business presentation or writing a job application cover letter do not get more correction than usual classes [5:165].

To sum up, while the lecturer corrects students' errors he should first of all take into account the way he corrects those errors and how it may influence the further study. Not all the students like being corrected and the task of the teacher is to make correction as sensitively as possible in order not to insult and discourage the student. The teacher is first and foremost good psychologist and only then a teacher.

It is true that correcting students while they are trying their best to use the language can often discourage them. The most satisfactory solution of all is make correction an activity, correction can be used as a follow-up to any given class activity. However, correction sessions can be used as a valid activity in and of themselves. In other words, lecturers can set up an activity during which each error (or a specific type of error) will be corrected. Students know that the activity is going to focus on correction, and accept that fact. These activities should be kept in balance with other, more free-form, activities which give students the opportunity to express themselves without having to worry about being corrected every other word.

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Р.С. Саврук

ПЛЮСИ І МІНУСИ ВИПРАВЛЕННЯ ПОМИЛОК

Предметом статті є усні і письмові помилки студентів. Стаття присвячена проблемі виправлення викладачем помилок у студентів під час письмових і усних завдань. Виокремлено три головні стадії в процесі розуміння студентом власних помилок. Розглянуто типи виправлень усних і письмових помилок згідно з С.П. Кордер. Досліджуються ідеї Федоренко і Сухорольської щодо виправлення письмових помилок у студентів. У статті подано ознаки, які демонструють, що викладач виправляє недостатньо або забагато помилок.

Ключові слова: виправлення помилок, усна помилка, письмова помилка.

Р.С. Саврук

ПЛЮСЫ И МИНУСЫ В ИСПРАВЛЕНИИ ОШИБОК

Предмет исследования – устные и письменные ошибки студентов. Статья посвящена проблеме исправления преподавателем ошибок у студентов во время письменных и устных заданий. Намечено в общих чертах три главные стадии в процессе понимания студентом ошибок. Рассмотрены типы исправлений устных и письменных ошибок согласно з С.П. Кордер. Исследуются идеи Федоренко и Сухорольской по исправлению письменных ошибок у студентов. В статье представлены знаки, которые демонстрируют, что преподаватель исправляет недостаточно или слишком много ошибок.

Ключевые слова: исправление ошибок, устная ошибка, письменная ошибка.

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