Corrective Feedback in Classroom Oral Errors among Kalinga-Apayao State College Students

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Abstract: **This study sought to investigate the mindsets or attitudes of students toward corrective feedback in classroom oral errors. A total of 365 students of Kalinga-Apayao State College provided data on their preference toward corrective feedback on classroom oral errors. The questionnaire was the main instrumentation. The mindsets of KASC students on the statements on corrective feedback point out their desire of correction for all their spoken errors; they favor teacher correction; peer correction and self-correction when given hints; and correction of errors that interfere with communication. They are uncertain when these errors should be corrected. On the frequency of corrective feedback, the students want their grammatical errors to be always corrected and all other errors to be often corrected. On the techniques used by teachers for grammatical errors, the students prefer recast, explicit, and explanation method; for pronunciation errors, they favor explicit and explanation. They regard No correction as poor method for both grammar and pronunciation errors.**

Keywords: **corrective feedback, classroom oral error, attitude, mindset, preference.**

I.   INTRODUCTION

Though errors are a natural part of language learning, Filipinos face great challenges in their language acquisition because of copious Filipino dialects present in the country. For an *Ikalinga* alone, he needs to learn other Kalinga dialects simultaneous with Ilocano before he goes to school. In school he is required to learn Filipino and English with equal level of proficiency.

Why do language learners commit spoken errors of the target language? One cause is interference from the native language, or an incomplete knowledge of the target language, or its complexity. Spelling is often problematic for nonnative speakers of English. Another cause is fossilization. This occurs when a language learner reaches a satisfactory level of competence in the target language.

There are also several reasons why teachers need to correct oral errors. First, correction permits the learner to comprehend completely how much they have improved in learning the target language. Second, when a learner gets corrected, he can grasp a better understanding how the target language works. Last, the confidence of the student is strengthened by corrective feedback because they know that they can rely on the teacher to check their expressions (www.scribd.com/doc/36828945/Correcting-Oral-Mistakes. Retrieved on June 9, 2012).

The effects of error correction are far from conclusive. The expectations of the teachers and the students toward error correction found to be contradictory. This is because the nature of error correction is dependent on the teaching styles of the educator and the learning styles of the student. This is why the reactions of students to corrective feedback are varied.

Conceptual Framework:

There are few researches on the mindsets of learners and educators on corrective feedback. This is the part that needs to be explored in order to have a scientific basis on answering the issues on corrective feedback.

In a paper entitled "The correction of Students' Oral Error" discussed how to respond to students' oral errors and he recommended that "…in order to ensure that students are receptive to error treatment, it is necessary to find out their

preferences and attitudes towards correction and feedback, as well as how sensitive or resilient they are to the same." This has encouraged this researcher to conduct a study on the mindsets of students toward corrective feedback in classroom oral errors.

This study theorized that since students' feelings and other sort of distraction in addition to his attitude in accepting the corrections prevent corrective feedback to aid him in his language acquisition, there is a need to study the student's attitude and preference toward corrective feedback. It has been previously mentioned in this study that results of researches on the subject matter do not give conclusive answers to the issues on corrective feedback might be due to variables surrounding second language acquisition. Hence before corrective feedback is exercised, the teacher must be knowledgeable of the mindsets of the learners toward corrective feedback before the teacher uses it as an ally to teaching the target language.

Purpose of the Study:

The issues on error corrections: what errors should be corrected, who should do the correction, and when should the correction be made are covered in this study have been given inconclusive answers by language researchers. Finding answers to these questions in the point of view of the learners may be able to guide the teacher how to handle corrective feedback in a manner beneficial to the language learners.

This study seeks to determine the mindsets of students toward corrective feedback in classroom oral errors among Kalinga-Apayao State College (KASC) students and whether the mindsets toward corrective feedback in classroom oral errors would differ among different courses enrolled and ethnicity. It is hypothesized that there is no difference in the mindsets toward corrective feedback on classroom oral errors among students enrolled in different courses and ethnic affiliation.

II.   REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Corrective Feedback:

Corrective feedback is a means of offering modified input to students which could consequently lead to modified output by the students. Corrective feedback may be referred to as negative feedback, negotiated help or error correction. The output can be manifested in the form of learner uptake which Long (1985) described as the relationship of input, interaction, and acquisition as a) interaction modification makes input comprehensible, b)comprehensible input promotes acquisition, and c) interactional modification promotes acquisition. It can be seen that corrective feedback and learner uptake are effective processes for language development.

In making corrective feedback, certain questions need to be answered and teachers need answers. They are a) Should learners' errors be corrected? b) If so, when should learners' errors be corrected? c) Which learners' errors should be corrected? d) How should learners' errors be corrected? e) Who should correct the errors? Language researchers have looked into these issues and below are some of their results.

Whether or Not to Give Corrective Feedback:

The first issue is whether language teachers should provide corrective feedback for errors made by learners of language or not at all. Most researches made on this issue are more geared toward providing immediate or delayed corrective feedback. In the study of Coskun (2010), he suggested that teachers should observe the classroom behavior of their students and take into account the teaching context before making any corrective feedback. In the study conducted by Harmon (cited by Lightbown, 1990), he found that most students like immediate correction of their errors. Margolis (2010) studied and compared the works of Truscott, Allwright, Fanselow, Hendrickson, DeKeyser, Lyster, Lightbown, and Spada. He found contradicting results; however, on the issue at hand, all these language researchers agree that large majorities of students express a desire for receiving corrective feedback. Students look forward to the correction of their errors and they are frustrated or resentful when they are ignored or tolerated. Uncorrected errors will serve as an input model for the class which is very dangerous. Other students will acquire incorrect input; when errors are corrected, it hastens language acquisition by giving information about rules and the limits of language use.

Truscott (1999) found a mismatch on the perception of learners and teachers regarding corrective feedback. While majority of the students in his study believed that their teachers should correct their oral errors in the classroom, more

than 50 percent of the teachers believed that these errors should not be corrected. Truscott (1999) has a different finding about this issue. He does not encourage corrective feedback in grammar because to him it does not improve the learners' ability to speak grammatically. However, he did not mention if corrective feedback to other aspects of language learning is helpful.

Types of Errors to Correct:

The advice of current specialists in language is that teachers should not attempt to correct every error in oral communication, so which error should be given corrective feedback? Correcting all errors made by a student gives a real picture of the extent which the student need remediation. When the learner takes this seriously, he may be overwhelmed by the number of his errors and see his performance a failure. As an effect he may be disheartened and hurt or he may see the corrective feedback as overly critical; eventually, he may think that the teacher is biased against him personally. In contrast, teachers who give little corrective feedback may enable the student to focus improving in one or few areas, but the student might be led to perceive that he is not making errors at all, or that his errors are insignificant that he does not exert effort to learn the concepts involved in order to avoid committing them in the future.

Teachers should be more tolerant to errors that do not destroy communication. As explained by Hendrickson (1978) learners do not like to be corrected for each minor error they make. This practice ruins their confidence to use the target language. Decision that teachers should focus on should be that which will be most productive for the learners in future communication. The following are the types of errors that need corrective feedback as mentioned by Pierson (2005) and Karra (2006): a) errors that impair communication; b) errors that show misunderstanding of the current classroom focus; c) errors that have high "stigmatizing" effect; and d) errors that are produced the most frequent. The language teacher needs to be familiar with these types of errors in order to be able to provide suitable correction.

When to Give Corrective Feedback:

Determining the right time to give corrective feedback has been analyzed by researchers of language. Otavio (2010), in his ELT page and in another article in the net published by mcser.org discussed the effectiveness of error correction. Both papers say that delayed corrective feedback has positive effect on fluency and accuracy. Another researcher, found that postponement of corrective feedback until the end of the exchange or interaction could be a good idea. However, he explains that this is not applicable all the time. There are certain situations when immediate correction is necessary, and this is when communication has broken down because of both linguistic and sociologic difficulties.

Kavaliauskienė, Anusienė, Kaminskienė (2009) stress that during communication activities, teachers should not interrupt students just to give error correction because interruption may raise stress levels and hinder communication. These researchers recommend that "mistakes" should be dealt with later, after the activity has ended. The students errors may also be recorded or taken down and then presented to them outside of normal class activities. One disadvantage to this is the context on which the error was made is forgotten. Postponing corrective feedback may also encourage language learners to self-correct which in effect is more reliable than just pointing out the error.

The impact of Palestinian EFL teachers' attitudes toward oral errors on their students' attitudes and choice of error treatment strategies was studied by Firwana (2010). He found that it is important that the teacher should know the proper timing of doing corrective feedback. This can be done if the teacher knows the students' attitudes and preferences about corrective feedback in order for it to be effective.

To help teachers determine when to give and postpone corrective feedback to a more opportune time, Cohen, Allwright, and Krashen (cited by Pierson, 2005) suggest the following criteria in order that corrective feedback will have an impact: a) the learner is developmentally ready for the correction and he has adequate knowledge about the structure involved; b) the learner has time to digest the correction; c) the learner writes down the corrective feedback in a notebook; and d) the learner verifies the corrective feedback with a native speaker or language teacher.

Methods of Corrective Feedback:

In as much as the errors that need correction have already been identified, the next issue is how to correct them. Before the results of studies would be discussed, it is imperative that the different types of corrective feedback be understood. Corrective feedback was examined by Lyster and Ranta (1997). They categorized them into different types: explicit correction, recast, clarification request, elicitation, metalinguistic clues, repetition, multiple feedback.

Several studies on the types of corrective feedback have been made by language analysts and each of them found different strategies to be effective in different situations. Haghani (2012) probed into the effectiveness of different types of corrective feedback. He found that among the implicit corrective feedback, elicitation proved to be the most effective which is different from the results taken by Lyster and Ranta (1997) that recast is the most common form; however it is also the least effective. Russell (2009) evaluated recast after ten years Lyster and Ranta studied the same. He recommended that the instructional setting and discourse context of the classroom will dictate the best error correction type for the teacher to use. In this line, he advises teachers in highly form-focused classrooms to use recast and teachers in classroom that are more meaning-focused to use prompts.

III.   METHODOLOGY

Research Design:

This research employed the descriptive-survey method with a structured questionnaire as the primary research instruments for gathering the necessary data. This study was conducted at the Kalinga-Apayao State College (KASC), Tabuk City, Kalinga. The target respondents of the study were the undergraduate students of KASC enrolled in the 20 Bachelors' courses and three two-year courses in all year levels. The sample size of 365 students were taken at random.

Research Instrument:

The questionnaire was the main instrument of the study. It was patterned after the study of Katayama (2010) entitled "Japanese EFL students' preferences toward correction of classroom oral errors." Items were added in the correction of spoken errors in English which came from the questionnaire used by Islam (2007).

The questionnaire was subjected to reliability test with the use of the split half method. The reliability coefficient was computed to establish the reliability of the instruments. The coefficients of 0.98 for the attitude statements, 0.94 for frequency and 0.91 for techniques are all significant, indicating that these instruments are reliable.

The test questionnaire gathered data on the attitude of the respondents on the correction of spoken errors in English; the preference of the respondents on how frequent would they want corrective feedback be done; the preference of the respondents on the correction techniques teachers employ for pronunciation and grammar only.

Procedure:

Student respondents were requested to answer the mindset. The researcher personally conducted the floating and retrieving of the instruments in order to encourage the students to provide reasons or additional explanation to their answers. An informal interview with the respondents was also conducted to confirm the answers of the respondents. The researcher also convinced teachers to allow her to conduct classroom observation. This provided actual data how students respond to corrective feedback.

IV.   RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The first query involved the students' disposition on the statements about error correction. They were asked to give their attitude toward the statements that describe corrective feedback on classroom oral errors.

TABLE: 1. ATTITUDE TOWARD CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK ON CLASSROOM ORAL ERRORS OF THE KASC STUDENTS

Attitude Statements	Mean	Description
"I want teachers to correct my errors in speaking English."	4.55	Strongly Agree
"Teachers should correct all errors that learners make in speaking English."	4.43	Strongly Agree
"Teachers should correct only the errors that interfere with communication."	3.45	Agree
"Teachers should correct errors in the middle of a conversation."	2.92	Neither Agree nor Disagree
"I feel bad or angry when teachers correct my errors."	1.77	Strongly Disagree
"I want my classmates to correct my oral errors in group work."	3.93	Agree
"I want to do my own correction by asking hint from the teacher."	3.66	Agree

The results show that the students are desirous of having all their spoken errors in the classroom corrected by the teacher. They also have positive attitude toward peer correction and self-correction. As to the type of errors to be corrected, they are certain of having errors that hamper the communication process corrected; however, they are uncertain as to when the errors should be checked. The students are also definite that corrective feedback on spoken errors would not injure their sentiments.

Though the students expressed their desire for correction even from classmates, they still said that they want the teacher rather than other students to do the correction of their oral errors. This is consistent with the findings of Yoshida (2010).

There is inconsistency in the response of the students as to the types of errors that should be corrected. At the beginning they said that all their spoken errors should be corrected by teachers, but later they said that only those that impede communication should be corrected.

The timing of errors correction is vague to the students, but they explained that they do not mind if the teacher does the correction while they are reciting in the classroom. In the classroom observation that this researcher conducted, it was observed that most of the teachers do not correct oral errors of students while they are in the middle of a conversation.

The students support their strong positive attitude toward corrective feedback with the attitude of not feeling bad when teachers correct their errors. According to them they believe that abhorring correction does not help them in improving their learning English.

TABLE: 2. FREQUENCY OF CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK ON CLASSROOM ORAL ERRORS OF THE KASC STUDENTS

Elements of English	Weighted Mean	Description
Grammar	4.43	Always
Pronunciation, accent, and intonation	4.16	Very Often
Words or phrase usage	4.15	Very Often
Inappropriate expressions	3.66	Very Often
Organization of discourse	3.77	Very Often
Total Average Weighted Mean	4.04	

The students were also asked the how often they would want their errors rectified. Table 2 displays the solicited responses of the students on the frequency of error correction. Generally the students want the correction of their spoken errors to be corrected very often except for grammatical errors which is desired to be always corrected.

TABLE: 3. TECHNIQUES ON CORRECTING LANGUAGE ERRORS IN THE CLASSROOM PREFERRED BY KASC STUDENTS

Techniques	Mean for Grammar	Description	Mean for Pronunciation	Description
No correction	1.94	Poor	1.94	Poor
Recast	4.27	Very Good	4.17	Good
Explicit	4.24	Very Good	4.25	Very Good
Non-verbal Behavior	3.48	Good	3.48	Good
Repetition	3.97	Good	3.37	Barely Acceptable
Clarification Request	3.66	Good	3.72	Good
Giving hints	3.26	Barely Acceptable	3.99	Good
Elicitation	3.58	Good	3.68	Good
Indicating the Error.	3.59	Good	3.59	Good
Explanation	4.27	Very Good	4.27	Very Good
Total Average Weighted Mean	3.626		3.646	

The students strongly yearned recast, explanation why the error is incorrect, and explicit correction methods to be used by teachers to check their spoken errors. For the grammar errors they favor repetition, clarification request, indicating the errors and elicitation, but the giving hint as a method is not good enough to them. Under Pronunciation, the students are in favor of recast, giving hint, clarification request, elicitation, indicating the error, and non-verbal behavior. They think that repetition method is hardly acceptable.

IV.   CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, the KASC students favor corrections of language errors; however, not all language learners want all their oral errors in grammar and even errors in other areas of language learning corrected Some learners do not like to be corrected for each minor error they make. Though the KASC students desire that all their errors be corrected, the recent theory on language acquisition and teaching methodology discourage the correction of all errors. The students want to correct their own errors; they want to see if they are really learning the English language, and that they want to learn from their mistakes. Students want to be corrected in the middle of an interaction; however, it is better to postpone corrective feedback until the end of the exchange or interaction so that the flow of thought of the students will not be distracted and to avoid placing them in embarrassing situation.

Many of the students express their concern to learn correct pronunciation, accent and intonation. The phonology of the Filipino language is very much different from that of the English language; hence Filipino students would natural experience difficulty acquiring correct pronunciation. Very few English teachers can imitate the pronunciation, accent and intonation of native speakers. So whatever is taught to the learners from the elementary is carried over to the tertiary level. In the other elements of English, the students express their very often desire for correction. The students are consistent with their response that they are desirous of corrective feedback on classroom oral errors so they have negative attitude when their errors are tolerated by the teacher. The students are interested to improve their present proficiency.

The researcher noticed an inconsistency in the response of the students along the method giving hint. It is noted that the student first mentioned they agree with self-correction when teachers give them hints. Under the techniques involving grammatical errors, they now consider it as a method barely acceptable.

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