

**Feedback and Error Correction in ESL Classrooms**

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## Table of Content

<b>Chapter 1: Introduction</b>	<b>01</b>
<b>1.1 The New School, Dhaka</b>	<b>03</b>
<b>Chapter 2: Literature Review</b>	<b>05</b>
<b>2.1 Classroom management</b>	<b>05</b>
<b>2.2 Teacher role</b>	<b>05</b>
<b>2.3 Feedback</b>	<b>06</b>
<b>2.4 Error correction</b>	<b>06</b>
<b>2.4.1 Self correction</b>	<b>07</b>
<b>2.4.2 Student- Student correction</b>	<b>07</b>
<b>2.4.3 Teacher correction</b>	<b>07</b>
<b>2.5 How different methods view errors</b>	<b>08</b>
<b>2.6 Audiolingualism</b>	<b>08</b>
<b>2.7 Communicative language teaching method</b>	<b>09</b>
<b>Chapter 3: My internship</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>3.1 My role as a teacher</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>3.2 My experience on error</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>3.3 Error correction</b>	<b>12</b>

<b>3.4 Recommendation</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Chapter 4:Conclusion</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Works cited</b>	<b>15</b>

## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

English is one of the most widely spoken languages of the world and it is considered as an international language. Through English we can communicate and express our feelings effectively to the people of various cultures. The importance of English is growing day by day in our country. This language has become essential for our academic and career needs. For adapting to the global world, people are posing interest to learn this language.

Because of the increasing need to learn English, our schools, colleges and universities are putting a great emphasis on teaching this language properly. Therefore, day by day the role of language teachers is becoming very challenging. Language teachers are responsible for managing the classroom, making lesson plans and observing learners' performance. Also to improve learners' skills and make lessons effective, teachers' job is to check learners' errors and give proper feedback. Learners often make errors, as it is a natural outcome of development. In this situation the role of a teacher is very crucial, because the teacher has to monitor learners' conditions, check errors and help them by giving effective feedback.

I completed my internship as a teacher in The New School, Dhaka and it was a great experience for me. I have seen that students make errors while both speaking and writing. There is a misconception that English medium students are very good in English and they make few errors. But during my internship I have observed that though they are quite good in English, they do make a lot of errors in writing and speaking. Specially, the beginners make errors a lot more than the adults do.

Whatever the errors are, students need instant correction and feedback; otherwise they forget about the errors they had done.

In my internship I have observed that students often make very silly errors, but when the teacher gives feedback, instantly learners are able to correct those. Moreover, they are able to correct their friends' errors as well. I also observed that even after correcting their errors, sometimes they continue making similar errors. All these things made me curious to work on error correction and feedback. In my report I want to discuss error correction as a classroom technique and relate it to my experience during the internship.

## **School profile**

### **The New School, Dhaka**

The New School, Dhaka (NSD) has been founded with the vision to make it one of the top quality institutions of the country. The school is situated in Banani. The school provides a unique learning environment based on the British Curriculum with a focus on national culture and heritage. It is a forward-looking co-education school offering General Certificate of Education in 'O' Level and 'A' Level under Edexcel, London.

The philosophy of the school is 'Learning Living Leading'. It believes that every child has the ability to learn and schools should take the responsibility to produce responsible citizens. Along with the academic rigor, NSD emphasizes on moral and citizenship education.

The school has a committed and sincere group of faculty. Most teachers have the experience of teaching at leading English medium schools for years. The 'O' Level and the 'A' Level teachers are among the very best in the country. All of them have taught their students for years to achieve the best results and they have attended the Edexcel training sessions regularly. The school believes in continuous upgrading of quality, so teachers also get in-house training from time to time.

Apart from providing good education, the school has rich co-curricular activities such as debate, drama, music, community services and sports, which help the students become the leaders of tomorrow. The different extra curriculum activities of the school facilitate the students to become successful team players, public speakers, hard workers, thinkers and compassionate individuals. The school feels

proud and honored because of its dedicated faculty members and facilities meant for a holistic education. The school has a proactive, transparent and approachable management team.

NSD has well-equipped physics, chemistry, computing and biology laboratories. The school library is a pleasant place to be at for the book-lovers. Advanced Level students are allowed Internet access in school under the supervision of the librarian. The classrooms are fully air-conditioned in order to lessen the intolerable heat and humidity. The school has a relationship of trust and mutual respect with the parents. It believes that there should be an effective partnership between the school and the parents/guardians in order to achieve the desired goals for the students. Therefore, NSD arranges quarterly parent-teacher meeting to discuss children's overall performance.

The New School has started its journey very recently and it has already excelled in education. Since is it still in the stage of developing, the number of students is not very high. But, with a vision for success and quality it tries very hard to give the best education to the students and make them the ultimate winners in their lives.



## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

#### **Classroom management:**

Classroom management is very important to make language teaching and learning successful. It involves a positive classroom environment, appropriate standards of behavior for students, student engagement and effective management of routines and transitions. The aim of classroom management is to encourage and establish students' self-control through a process of promoting positive student achievement and behavior. The concept of classroom management is also closely associated with learners' academic achievements and teachers' efficiency. Also, engaging the students throughout the lesson is essential for effective classroom management. There are different definitions of classroom management. "It can be defined as the teacher's ability to cooperatively manage time, space, resources and student roles and student behaviors to provide a climate that encourages learning" (Alberto & Troutman, 1986). Here the role of a teacher is to teach the lesson and engage the students in different activities and also to deal with students' errors and providing feedback.

#### **Teacher role:**

The teacher plays a vital role in classroom. Creating protective environment is an important role of a teacher. It is also the teacher's responsibility to know his/her learners' levels in the classroom and teach them accordingly. A teacher always has an important role to play in evaluating learners' performances. Teacher's feedback and error correction help students see their strengths and weaknesses and thus improve

skill. The role becomes even more crucial according to the traditional approaches, which say, "The teacher is supposed to be the ultimate source of all knowledge and authority to provide suitable feedback and correct learners' errors." (Richard and Rodgers, 1986).

**Feedback:**

Giving proper feedback is very important in any learning process. Effective learning requires proper error correction and feedback. According to Penny Ur (2002) "feedback given to learners has two main distinguishable components: assessment and correction. In assessment, the learner is simply informed how well or badly he/she has performed and in correction, specific corrections are provided on aspects of the learners' performance". Proper feedback and on-time error correction always help students to do better in the academic progress and it also helps to clear learners' concepts. According to Keller (1983) "teacher feedback to be most efficiently utilized, it needs to be provided not only at the end of the activity, but also at the onset of a similar subsequent activity".

The aim of feedback is to bring about self-awareness and improvement. "Feedback can be either positive or negative and may serve not only to let learners know how well they have performed but also to increase motivation and built a supportive classroom climate" (Richards, Charles Lockhart, 1996).

**Error Correction:**

Error is a natural out come. All the learners inevitably commit language errors during learning. By making error students are "testing out their ideas about the language also they are experiencing" (Gower, Phillips and Walters, 1995).

Appropriate feedback helps students gradually getting to know the differences between correct and incorrect use of language. Learners should be given chance to correct their error precisely. According to Richard and Rodgers there are three ways of correcting errors.

### **1. Self correction:**

Self-correction is when learners correct themselves instead of a teacher doing it. Teachers can involve learners in self-correction to different degrees, by giving learners more or less guidance as to the location and nature of their errors, and examples of good use of language to compare their own to. For the learners “if they are going to become more accurate they must learn to monitor themselves” (Gower, Phillips and Walters, 1995). Self-correction makes learners more confident which helps the learning process easy for the teacher as well as for the learners.

### **2. Student- Student correction:**

Student- Student or peer correction is a classroom technique where learners correct each other, rather than the teacher doing this. “If the student cannot get it right it’s probably because he/she does not know how to. So with a gesture, hold her attention and get another student to help out” (Gower, Phillips and Walters, 1995). Peer correction helps to involve more students in the classroom.

### **3. Teacher correction:**

If neither self-correction nor student correction is effective, then the teacher has to do the error correction. “If it’s an important point and the other students do not know it either, teacher has to stop and the teacher will teach it to the whole class”

(Gower, Phillips and Walters, 1995). Students have more faith in their teachers and therefore, teacher correction helps the learners to correct their errors without any doubt.

Error correction is a very important part in language teaching. Because, though in one sense errors are good as learners learn from errors but if the teacher does not correct the errors on time then those might get 'fossilized' and learners might never overcome those.

#### **How different methods view errors:**

Methods are very important in any language teaching. Some methods make the learning and teaching more effective. Error correction and giving feedback have been viewed differently in different methods. Some methods believe that error correction should be done immediately and some methods believe that it should be done later.

#### **Audiolingualism:**

According to the Audio-lingual method the teacher is the center of the classroom and everything is controlled by the teacher. This method believes in habit formation and therefore, the teacher drills the students in the use of the target language. In this method the teacher wants students to be able to use the target language. In order to do this, the students are made to over-learn the target language. This method suggests correcting errors immediately otherwise it will be part of the habit and eventually those will be fossilized. "Students errors are to be avoided if at all possible through the teachers' awareness" (Diane Larsen-Freeman, 2004). Immediate error correction helps the students utter the correct language. As this

method believes in habit formation, so there is no scope given to the learners for making errors.

**Communicative language teaching method:**

Communicative language teaching is an approach which emphasizes interaction as both the means and the ultimate goal of learning a language to the teaching of a second or a foreign language. In this method one of the teacher's major responsibilities is to establish situations which are likely to promote communication. Also students should be given an opportunity to express their ideas and opinion using the target language. Therefore, "errors are tolerated and seen as a natural outcome of the development of the communication skill" (Diane Larsen-Freeman, 2004). In this approach the teacher ignores the error because "this approach is working on fluency; the teacher did not correct the students error, but simply noted the error, which he will return to at a later point" (Diane Larsen-Freeman, 2004).

Whatever method is used for teaching, error correction and feedback play an important role. Effective learning requires giving feedback and "giving feedback is one of the most important responsibilities of a teacher" (Gower, Phillips and Walters, 1995). To make any class effective, feedback and error correction is urgently needed since it helps "to increase motivation and built a supportive classroom climate" (Richards, Charles Lockhart, 1996). So, to develop learners' skills error correction and feedback are very important.

### **Chapter 3**

#### **My internship**

I completed my internship as a teacher in New School Dhaka. It was a great experience for me. Through this opportunity I got a chance to observe different levels of students, their activities, errors and the reaction after the feedback. During my internship period, I observed some of the classes, which were taken by some experienced teachers. After that, I took classes from standard one to standard six. New School Dhaka is an English medium school. Some of the students were very good in English even though they often made errors as a natural outcome of learning. So making errors may not be always bad. Students can learn from their errors. The teacher should understand what the students are trying to say or write. Teachers can treat errors as a part of the learning process. If the students make errors and the teachers give them feedback then the students can know the difference between the correct and the incorrect language. I think students should be given feedback immediately otherwise their errors can be fossilized.

#### **My role as a teacher:**

In any classroom teacher is a very important person. The main role of a teacher is to facilitate the communication process among all participants in the classroom. Through this process the teacher can observe the students' requirements and provide appropriate materials for the students. Teachers are also responsible for providing students good materials and they can help the learners to learn a language properly. Classroom environment is also very important for the learners. In the classroom, teachers' job is to create a friendly environment so that the learners can

feel comfortable. During my internship when I taught as well as observed classes, I always tried to observe the language level of the learners' and also their lacks. In the very first class the elementary level students were uncomfortable with the new teacher. But when they became comfortable with the environment and also with the teacher, they started participating in the class and also began expressing their ideas and feelings. Their discussion with the teacher and also among themselves helped me find out their errors. I think a teacher is also a researcher, so as a teacher I always noticed their errors and their gestures after giving them feedback. Their attitude and activities helped me to find out what sort of feedback was appropriate for which levels of learners.

**My experience on error:**

Error is a natural outcome in any learning process. Students of all levels make errors but the beginners make errors more frequently. In my internship I observed that errors in using the appropriate forms of nouns and verbs were the most common among them. Very frequently they did error of the following kind.

(The correct forms are put in the brackets)

1. There are three cat (There are three cats).
2. He like (He likes)
3. He go to bed (He goes to bed)
4. I will not go out if it is rain (I will not go out if it is rains)
5. Everybody love flower (everybody loves flower)

Another type of errors, which they often did in the class, was in using the correct form of verbs.

For example: (The correct forms are put in the brackets)

He gone home yesterday. (He went home yesterday)

The book was steal. (the book was stolen)

I got the work do by him. (I got the work done by him)

I see you long ago. (I saw you long ago)

He leaves home last night. (He left home last night)

### **Error correction:**

Error correction is very important for the learners. For the beginning level students, I applied Audio-lingual method because they needed immediate feedback otherwise they were in the risk of forgetting about their errors. But sometimes the adult learners did not like having immediate feedback in front of their classmates; they felt hesitant and anxious. Because of their anxiety and hesitation they might feel demotivated which could hamper their learning. So I found that for the adult learners' errors correction compatible with CLT was more appropriate. I noted down their errors during different activities with out interrupting their natural fluency. But I talked about these errors after the activities and taught them the correct form of language.

After observing the errors I corrected the errors in three ways. First, I applied self-correction. In this case I gave them the chance to correct their errors by themselves. Sometimes self-corrections made the learning process effective because it boosted up their level of confidence. I also applied peer correction but only for the beginning level students and they were happy with this. But the adult learners did not like this peer correction very much; they felt uncomfortable in front of the students.



When self-correction and peer correction would not work well, I applied teacher correction.

### **Recommendation**

Error correction is very important aspect of teaching. It is the teachers' role to correct students' errors on time effective correction can significantly reduce the number of errors of students.

According to me, the teacher can use the following techniques for effective correction-

- Use simple sentence so that the students can easily understand.
- Not to over correct the errors.
- Avoid humiliating students for making errors.
- Provide feedback in terms of students' levels.
- Observe learners' reaction after the feedback

## **Chapter 4**

### **Conclusion**

To learn a new language is very challenging for the learners as well as it is for the teacher to teach a language. Here the teachers' job is to create a congenial atmosphere where the learners can perform freely and comfortably, and learners also have to be interested in the language they are learning. In the learning process learners can make different kinds of errors as natural outcome of learning. Here, the teachers' job is to handle it very carefully and positively. Otherwise the learners' might feel uncomfortable and insecure in the class. Proper error correction and feedback help a learner learn a new language smoothly and fast. So, proper error correction and feedback are very important. But the teacher has to keep in mind that the corrections should be done in a way which has a positive impact on students and which encourages students.

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