BENEMÉRITA UNIVERSIDAD AUTÓNOMA DE PUEBLA

FACULTAD DE LENGUAS

LICENCIATURA EN LA ENSEÑANZA DEL INGLÉS

RESEARCHING LEI TEACHERS' ERROR CORRECTION STRATEGIES IN STUDENTS' ORAL PRODUCTION

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF LANGUAGES FOR THE DEGREE OF:

LICENCIADA EN LA ENSEÑANZA DEL INGLÉS

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PUEBLA, PUE. DECEMBER 2019

Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla

Facultad de lenguas

Licenciatura en la enseñanza del Inglés

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Autumn 2019

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly I would like to thank my mother for the constant support and encouragement she has given to me, for all the persistance and patiance she had over all this time so I could finish my studies.

I also want to thank my sister for being my biggest motivation to be the model and example of life she would like to follow.

Finally, I would like to express my deepest gratitud to my husband, who had the patience and gave me the support when I needed it.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

LEI.- (Licenciatura en Enseñanza del Inglés)

ELT.- (English Language Teaching) the teaching of English specifically to students whose native language is not English.

SLA.- (Second Language acquisition):

L2.-(Second Language) is any language that a person uses other than a first or native language (L1).

L1.- First Language

EA.- Error Analysis

TL.- (Target Language) a language that someone is learning, or a language into which a text has to be translated.

MT.- (Mother Tongue) the first language that a person learns and the language used in that person's home country.

FLA.- First Language Acquisition

IL.- (Interlanguage) The type of language produced by non-native speakers when learning another language.

CF.- Corrective Feedback

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ABSTRACT

The main objective of this research is to explore language teachers' opinions about the strategies they follow when correcting students' speaking errors and find out which of the different strategies used to treat errors in spoken practice is the most common used by teachers. The participants were teachers from the Faculty of Languages at BUAP. These teachers were teaching the subject of target language 3 or 4 while the research was carried out so they could answer the instrument applied with fresh answers and experiences from their students. The research took place at the Facultad de Lenguas of the Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla. This faculty offers the programs of English Language Teaching and French Language Teaching, therefore the participants were easy to find because the majority of the teachers are engaged in English teaching. The instrument used for the data collection was a questionnaire. This type of instrument was chosen due to the age of the participants and the time they had according to their activities.

Findings showed that pronunciation takes an important place in error production, and one of the most common strategy used by teachers is repeating what the student said but in the correct way. In addition, conjugation is also a common problem that affects the process of learning. If a student does not know how to conjugate an irregular verb, he will not be able to pronounce correctly and sending the correct message. Findings are expected to help the language teachers to become aware of the actual context about correcting errors strategies to compare their own strategies with their colleagues and improve their correction skills and abilities. In addition the results may help to do some further research in this field.

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Teaching English is a process where teachers face different types of challenges related to the subject they are giving. The majority of teachers perceive that the main objective of teaching English is to make students develop certain skills in order to achieve a common goal which is “effective communication”. These skills are divided into productive (writing and speaking) and receptive (listening and reading), this research is focused on the productive ones, specifically in speaking.

This thesis presents a problem that exists in every classroom where English is taught as a foreign language. The problem can be located when a student commits an error and the teacher has to deal with the best strategy or technic to correct that error.

On the one hand, teachers evaluate the knowledge of the students correcting them when they commit an error, but on the other hand, sometimes teachers do not know how to treat students’ errors because they do not know the difference between “error” and “mistake”. A probable consequence of this lack of teachers’ understanding could be an obstruction to the students’ learning process which can play a crucial role in the students’ learning.

In this thesis some of the most common errors that take place in the classroom are discussed as well as the most frequent correction techniques or strategies followed by LEI teachers, in addition some of the students’ perceptions about the error correction strategies used by their teachers will be discussed as well as the definitions and differences between “error” and “mistake”.

1.1 Problem

This research may have a huge impact in our actual context due to the importance that has been given to teaching English as a foreign language. Teachers are still trying to find the best way to teach and get the best results meanwhile they asses what students have learned. However, in terms of error correction, many teachers can agree on the fact that in some classes there are students that commit certain errors. The main issue here is when the teacher has to deal with error correction. Teachers may not have specific strategies to correct students' errors.

All the teachers have to deal with students' errors during the class, and every teacher has a different reaction to them. Some teachers think that it is not necessary to correct the error immediately and they just go on with the class, others correct the error immediately emphasizing the wrong part and others give an explanation of the error and the correct way. However the majority of these techniques are not the appropriate way to correct the students' errors.

At the beginning when a teacher corrects the error, the student can show a positive reaction when he or she immediately produce the sentence or word in the right way, however the problem comes when the next class or even in the same class just minutes later the student commits the same error again as it would never been corrected.

This repetition of error production can produce several consequences for students and teachers not only in the learning process. The lack of knowledge about error treatment can also produce a serious feeling of frustration which could lead to drop out a course.

1.2 Research questions

The questions that guided this study are stated as follows:

1. How important is error correction in English Language Teaching?
2. What are teachers' perceptions about how error correction strategies help them improve students´ oral production?
3. What are LEI teachers' most effective error correction strategies?

1.3 Participants

The participants of this research were English teachers from a Faculty of Languages at a public university in Mexico. These teachers were in charge of the English language courses, referred in this work as target language courses in a pre-intermediate level which is number 3 or 4. Some of the teachers were teaching classes at the CELE courses which are also English classes but with different audience.

1.4 Context

The place where this research took place was the Facultad de Lenguas of the Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla. The thesis is focused on English Teaching career, which is the option of higher demand between the two careers available from the Facultad de Lenguas.

1.5 Purpose of the study

This study explores language teachers' opinions about the strategies they follow when correcting students' speaking errors. As it was mentioned before, some of the teachers

do not have specific strategies to treat errors, so this study exposes how teachers deal with it and the most common strategies followed by them.

1.6 Justification of the research

Error production is a common issue while teaching a foreign language because it is part of the process itself. Nevertheless, the constant repetition of this error production can be a significant obstruction of the students' learning process.

We as teachers or future teachers have to take into account the barriers that the students face while they are learning another language in order to facilitate the process of learning and this research can give a little thought, so teachers can use it to increase or refresh their knowledge about errors' treatment.

1.7 Conclusion

This chapter gave a wide perspective of what is this research about. The topic can be quite interesting and useful if you as a teacher want to avoid as much as you can some frustrating experiences related to correcting students' errors.

If teachers know how to treat students' errors and they correct them at the right moment, the process of learning and teaching will get easier and more rewarding.

In the following chapter the most important concepts that have to be known will be explained in order to understand the process that was carried out to get the results and the conclusions.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to show the background of the study and the previous investigations related to the topic. We need to know some basic and important concepts that have to deal with English teaching as a foreign language, and then in the following pages those concepts will be briefly explained in order to match them with the results of the instrument applied.

2.1 Differences between error and mistake

In order to understand how to correct an error or mistake in an English class, the difference between these two concepts must be known. According to Pit Coder (as cited in Tafani, 2009, p. 49), errors are caused by ignorance of the appropriate rule or structure in the foreign language, that is, when students does not know what is correct. However a mistake is a problem not of knowledge but of application, for example: slips of tongue and confusion.

Related to the previous information, teachers could be able to identify in their classroom if the students are producing errors or mistakes.

Summing up what a mistake is, it can be said that a mistake occurs when the students can understand the rule but they have not memorized the form and as a result, they are vulnerable of producing a wrong answer, so it can be said that they are producing a mistake.

Many teachers agree that every student has committed a mistake in spite of the previous knowledge they already got and when the teacher repeats the question the

student realizes that he is wrong in something, so he quickly rephrase his answer now with the correct form because he knows how to do it.

Espinosa (2016) claims that a student who knows the correct grammar form, but makes a mistake anyway, can otherwise be stated as having declarative knowledge (knowing about doing something, but not necessarily being able to perform it). In contrast, when someone performs something without consciously thinking about it, this is known as procedural knowledge. “Procedural knowledge is basically acting without consciously thinking because the person has committed a skill to memory” (p. 15).

Summing up the classification of errors and mistakes, we can find more authors that agree with this classification. Bartram and Walton (1999) stated that mistakes must be categorized into errors, slips, lapses, and mistakes. Their causes are diagnosed like interference from the mother tongue, hypothesis making within the target language, tiredness and also treatments devised like finger techniques, correcting codes, and writing workshops.

In the same way Brown (as cited in Hanafi, 2014, p. 32) stated that error is defined as "noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of a native speaker, reflecting the interlanguage competence of the learner" in contrast with mistake, "performance error that is either a random guess or a ' slip, ' in that it is a failure to utilize a known system correctly”.

Another type of errors’ classification is the one given by Jiménez (2004) who suggests that different types of errors have been classified in lexical (word choice), phonological

(pronunciation), semantic (meaning), syntactic (grammar), and pragmatic (content) errors (p. 177).

Error and mistake were previously defined, however it has to be mentioned that there is also a phenomenon called slip, which is a misuse of language caused for example by tiredness, carelessness and nerves, but that is a mistake that does not belong to the category of wrong language caused by interference of the mother tongue or something related to language acquisition.

This differentiation of error and mistake can give an idea of why students commit them, however, it is important to know that there is a phenomenon which causes that an error could never be corrected which is fossilization. In the following lines it will be explained what fossilization is and the main consequences it brings to the students.

2.2 Understanding *Fossilization*

There is an important concept that has to be taken into account for a better understanding about the phenomenon of correcting errors with a non-effective response from the students, this concept is fossilization. This situation occurs when an error becomes a habit of speaking in a second language learner, especially when the error does not interfere with communication, and hence, the speaker does not get corrective feedback. The person who commits the error does not experiment the necessity to correct something because he transmits what he wants to transmit without a problem, as well as the other people who do not think necessary to correct him because the message is clear.

Whether fossilization is inevitable, very likely or avoidable, it has long been discussed in Second Language Acquisition (SLA), while some scholars have argued that native-like fluency in an L2 is not possible beyond a certain age (the critical period hypothesis) (Banerjee, 2013), others argue that fossilization is a result of a learning environment that is far from ideal or a mind that has reached subconscious conclusions that are difficult to unlearn, meaning that a native-like level of ultimate attainment is possible in the right conditions. The estimated proportion of learners able to master an L2 in such a way as to be indistinguishable from a native speaker appears to have increased over the years.

2.3 Language acquisition vs language learning

Haynes (2005) suggests that there is an important distinction made by linguists between language acquisition and language learning. Children acquire language through a subconscious process during which they are unaware of grammatical rules. This is similar to the way they acquire their first language. They get a feel for what is and what is not correct. In order to acquire language, the learner needs a source of natural communication.

The emphasis is on the text of the communication and not on the form. Young students who are in the process of acquiring English get plenty of practice. They readily acquire the language to communicate with classmates.

Language learning, on the contrary, is not communicative. It is the result of direct instruction in the rules of language. And it certainly is not an age-appropriate activity for young learners. In language learning, students have conscious knowledge of the new language and they can talk about that knowledge, however, knowing grammar rules

does not necessarily result in good speaking or writing. A student who has memorized the rules of the language may be able to succeed on a standardized test of English language but may not be able to speak or write correctly.

Of course, this thesis is focused on language learning due to the context is the classroom, where students are induced to learn a language not as the native speakers do. However, is very important to know how this process is carried out in the classroom.

2.4 Teaching at LEI

The Faculty of Languages at the BUAP hosts the B.A. (Bachelor of Arts) called Licenciatura en lenguas Modernas (LEMO) and since 2009 known as Licenciatura en Enseñanza del Inglés (LEI). It also has the B.A. called Licenciatura en Enseñanza del Francés (LEF). Since 2016, the curricular plan and the period of those majors have changed, but both curricular programs have a subject called target language (Facultad de Lenguas, 2017). Today, this faculty is focused on the initial education of languages teachers for all educational levels.

2.4.1 Target language subject

According to the BUAP curricular program, professors that teach this subject must have at least an M.A. of Language teaching, Applied Linguistics or Higher Education. Moreover, the professor must have an English language certification level C1 according to the Common European Framework of Reference of the Language. (Facultad de Lenguas, 2009). Also, according to the Educative Program of the Minerva University Model, the teacher must “know broadly the subject to be taught and the area in which it

is located. In addition to having sufficient command of the English language, which will be used in the development of the corresponding course".

As it was mentioned before, this study was focused on the LEI subjects of Target Language III and IV. These courses use the book: "Empower" by Cambridge English, according to the level, different books are used. As this book is edited and published by the University of Cambridge, a British university, the grammar and speech is, for instance, British English.

Even when the levels are different, some topics presented during both target languages are pretty the same (Doff, et al., 2015). The most outstanding topics are:

- Present (all aspects)
- Past (all aspects)
- Future Simple
- Conditionals
- Modal Verbs
- Reported Speech
- Passive voice
- Common vocabulary

2.5 Language skills

Language in communication is not a simple skill, it is divided into four areas; Listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Army Public Schools & Colleges System Secretariat, 2017).

According to SIL International (1999), the four basic skills are related to each other by two parameters:

- The mode of communication: oral or written
- The direction of communication: receiving or producing the message

Clausen (2009) represents the skills using the chart reproduced below:

Table 2.6 Skills in language communication

	Oral	**Written**
Receptive	Listening	Reading
Productive	Speaking	Writing

Most teachers try to incorporate these skills in their classes; sometimes they may focus more on one set of skills due to their students' needs (Oxford, 2001).

2.6 Teaching speaking

As it was said before, in the process of language acquisition, memorizing the grammar rules is not enough if someone wants speak well, so in this case it is important to focus on some principles and theories about the best way to teach speaking in order to know the most common oral errors and the best treatment to them.

It is important to mention the present situation in our country about teaching speaking. In some schools teachers try to choose the teaching method that best fits with their goals and students' necessities, however, some teachers do not care about this and prefer to choose the easier method, so they just focus on one single skill or subskill using old-fashioned techniques that affect students' learning.

A research made in Bangladesh revealed that the local teachers in that country draw on deductive methods that focus only on grammatical structures instead of paying attention to any type of communication (Huq, 2014, p. 72). Unfortunately, it can be said that the same situation is faced here in Mexico when some teachers just care about memorizing some grammar rules and not paying attention to the main goal that is achieving the communication in the foreign language.

Huq (2014) stated some problems that teachers may perceive from their students, for example shyness of the learner, pronunciation, limited vocabulary and syntax, influence of Grammar Translation method and low or uneven participation. (p.72)

In addition, there are other problems that could interfere with the learning process that do not necessarily depend on the students' performance, for example overcrowded classrooms, lack of audiovisual equipment, and duration of classes.

Maybe some problems are out of the possibilities to resolve, however, we can make an effort to improve the teaching process by changing the method used.

The communicative approach has been considered as an effective method to teach speaking through communication nowadays.

According to Hymes in 1972 one of the characteristics of this communicative view of language is that "the primary function of language is to allow interaction and communication" (as cited in Huq, 2014, p. 71). If students are pushed to communicate in certain activities, students may take greater responsibility for their own learning and use a wide range of language learning strategies.

When students have to use their knowledge to communicate, they give a real meaning to what they have learned and they may perceive knowledge as significant and useful, and not just as a bunch of grammatical rules that they will not use in a real-life situation.

If it is wanted to lead the students to practice as much as possible their communicative competence, it is needed to implement some classroom activities for speaking like communication games, formal debate, simulation and role play. All these activities can be performed in the classroom without spending money or using expensive equipment, there is no excuse to teach in an efficient and entertained way.

Another important issue that has to be taken into account while teaching speaking is the different variations of the English language pronunciation. In the following paragraphs the impact of this differentiation has while teaching English will be explained.

2.7 Differences between English pronunciations

Even when the English language is spoken in the United Kingdom, the United States of America and many other countries there are differences in pronunciation, spelling and terms of some words (Oxford English Dictionary, 2017).

"Linguists agree and insist that all languages and all varieties of particular languages are equal" (Wardhaugh, 1986), but many people prefer one variety than other. Some teachers insist on teaching British English while rejecting American English as less pure. The variety of language chosen to be taught or learnt must be suitable for the learner to facilitate communication (Shahheidaripour, 1997).

As it was mentioned previously, the books used during the course are focused on British English. Mexico is located next to the United States of America, due to its closeness, not only geographically, most people are influenced by the American culture, at the same time in the pronunciation (The Lariat, 1997).

To continue explaining how to teach speaking, it is time to mention some methods in order to correct the errors committed by the students while learning English.

2.8 Correcting errors in different methods

It is known that in English Language Teaching (ELT) there exist several methods which have a specific way to teach the language. Every method has unique techniques to deal for example with activities related to pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary. In addition, every method has specific ways to deal with mistakes while students are producing the language. But, how can we know what the best technique to do an efficient mistake correction is?

In order to get a better result from this question, this thesis will focus only on oral production mistakes, specifically the ones related to the past tenses, including regular and irregular verbs. Also this research will be focused only on the communicative approach because of the great impact this method has had in time.

According to Richards and Rodgers (2001), several roles are assumed by the teacher when using the Communicative Language Teaching. Next Breen and Candlin (1980) describe in more detail the teachers' role:

> The teacher has two main roles: the first role is to facilitate the communicative process between all the participants in the classroom, and between these participants and the various activities and texts. The second role is to act as an independent participant within the learning-teaching group… A third role for the teacher is that of researcher and learner, with much to contribute in terms of appropriate knowledge and abilities, actual and observed experience of the nature of learning and organizational capacities. (p.77)

When speaking, students are prone to produce more mistakes than in writing. It might be attributed to the fact that speaking provides students with less processing time. On the other hand, when writing, students can consult dictionaries; they can use even the so-called low-frequency words. In case of writing, grammar can be reviewed carefully before handing in the final version of an essay or any other type of text.

After this distinction between oral and written errors we can now focus on oral errors, however, there is still a question without an answer. What kind of errors should be corrected? Do all the errors have to be corrected? or only the crucial ones? After making these questions it has be taken into account what a crucial error for teachers is. In order to generalize all the perceptions, it can be said that teachers have to correct mainly the errors that have a repercussion in the communication process. This kind of correction is focused on a functionalist approach; nevertheless, almost all the public schools have a structuralist approach where all the errors, even the little ones are perceived as crucial to be corrected. That is why this thesis will be focused on this kind of little mistakes that the students commit in oral production.

2.9 Treatment of errors

Error treatment strongly concerns in the subject matter of this research. The teacher will decide which type of errors are manly important to correct. As Jimenez (2004) states:

> It is my belief that all types of errors need to be treated at some time. However, whether the teacher decides to treat a certain type of error or not largely depends on the type of group and the seriousness of the error. Pronunciation errors, for example, would seem insignificant in a reading class whereas they would be of great importance in a conversation or pronunciation class. Similarly, in a conversation class, the educator might decide not to treat any errors except for those that interfere with communication. (p. 126)

As it is stated before, errors must be previously analyzed in order to decide which are the most significant according to the goals of the subject. If teachers decide to correct all the errors it would be quite exhausting because only one student can produce more than 3 errors, so in a group of 20 students, there will be not enough time to correct all the errors in a class of 2 hours and also giving the class.

In order to analyze the different issues on error correction, I will present corrective feedback (CF) when to use it, the different types of CF strategies and the type of errors that may be corrected in oral practice.

2.10 Corrective feedback

In order to have a better understanding about error correction, we have to know what corrective feedback is. According to Calsiyao (2015) “Corrective feedback is a means of

offering modified input to students which could consequently lead to modified output by the students.” (p.395)

When teachers correct a student’s error, they do it with the intention of having a different output from him, expecting that the error may be solved or corrected. However, we as teachers may have to know that not all the errors are the same and there is not an only strategy to give CF, so in the following lines the different types of errors will be described, then the different strategies or methods to give CF and finally the best moment to give CF.

2.11 Error types

As I said before, teachers cannot correct every error committed by the students in one single class, so it is important to know which error deserves higher attention according to the goals of the class or the main objectives from the course. This task may be easier if we know how to classify these errors so we can focus only in those which are directly related with the subject matter or the skill or subskill that we want to improve.

In 2000 Mackey, Gass and McDonough made the following error classification (as cited in Hernández and Reyes, 2012):

- Morphosyntactic error: Learners incorrectly use word order, tense, conjugation, and particles.
- Phonological error: Learners mispronounce words including stress and intonation.

- Lexical error: Learners use vocabulary inappropriately or they code-switch to their first language because of their lack of lexical knowledge.
- Semantic and pragmatic error: The misunderstanding of a learner's utterance, even if there are no grammatical, lexical or phonological errors.

If we are able to classify the types of students' errors, we may help students in their process of becoming successful learners by choosing the indicated errors to correct.

Now that it has been already presented the types of errors, it would be necessary to include the different ways that teachers may implement when CF is given focusing on oral practice.

2.12 Types of oral corrective feedback strategies

Every day, teachers face a huge amount of errors made by their students during their classes; as a result, teachers have to provide the necessary feedback in order to improve the learning process.

In order to clarify this process, a classification of corrective feedback strategies with examples will be explained in the following lines.

It is important to say that this classification was a result of an exhaustive lessons' observation made by Lyster and Ranta in 1997 which results gave an important contribution in terms of giving CF.

Tedick (1998) cited the six different types of feedback given by Lyster and Ranta which are:

- Explicit correction
- Recast
- Clarification request
- Metalinguistic clues
- Elicitation
- Repetition

However, a more recent work made by Zhao (2009) in a Chinese primary school added three more strategies which are:

- Repetition request
- Invitation to other learners
- Use of L1

If these two categorizations are put together, a better classification will be obtained. In order to explain each of these strategies some examples will be given below taken from Zhao, B (2009).

1) Recasts: teacher implicitly reformulates all or part of the learner's utterance:

S1: … On the afternoon* A learner error

T: In the afternoon. Recasts

S1: In the afternoon, xx played football with his friends. Uptake (repair)

2) Repetition: teacher repeats an error, adjusting intonation to highlight it:

S2: I was very grateful to the him* A learner error

T: To the HIM? Repetition

S2: The dog. Uptake (repair)

3) Elicitation: teacher directly elicits a reformulation from students by asking questions or by pausing to allow students to complete teacher's utterance, or by asking students to reformulate their utterance:

S3: … I go to school at by car* A learner error

T: Say it again. Elicitation

S3: I go to school at 07:30. Uptake (repair)

4) Explicit correction: teacher supplies the correct form and clearly indicates that what the student had said was incorrect:

S4: On the Sunday, Wuyifan* A learner error

T: Not on the Sunday, on Sunday. Explicit correction

S4: On Sunday, Wuyifan played football with his friends. Uptake (repair)

5) Clarification requests: teacher uses phrases such as 'pardon'?

S5: You go camping last weekend. A learner error

137. T: Pardon? Clarification requests

S5: Go camping? Uptake (needs-repair)

6) Invitation to other learners: teacher invites another pupil to correct the nominated pupil's error, such as "who will try?"

S6: … I read a books at * A learner error

T: Stop, who will try? Invitation to other learners

S7: I read books… Uptake (repair)

7) Repetition requests: teacher ask pupils to read after her when an error (generally a phonological error) occurs, such as “read after me”

S8: Tongue twisters* A learner error (students did not pronounce correctly)

T: Tongue twisters. Read after me. Tongue twisters… Repetition requests

S8: Tongue twisters… Uptake (repair)

8) Use of L1: teacher use pupils’ L1 (Chinese) to explain the error:

S9: … I eat breakfast at 6:30 o’clock * A learner error

T: 注意，騀里不能o’clock. 大家關住，我们可以阛6 o’clock, 或者7 o’clock, 但是我们不可以阛 half past six o’clock，明白吗? Use of L1

S9: I go to school at 7 o’clock. I eat lunch at half past eleven… Uptake (repair)

After seeing the different strategies used in other countries to give feedback, some of them will be taken into account to measure the frequency they are used at Facultad de Lenguas BUAP.

2.13 Research in the Field

There have been abundant studies related to error correction techniques in spoken practice. For example a study made in Iran explored the preferences of EFL students about being corrected directly by their teacher or having peer corrective feedback, and the result was that the students prefer to have teachers’ corrective feedback despite

having more confidence with their classmates (Ebrahimi, 2016). Another case study made in Bandung, Indonesia showed through class observation and interviews that “recast” is the most frequent strategy used by teachers to give corrective feedback in spoken errors (Pranita, 2014).

As can be seen above, error correction is a topic in the interest of teachers in other educational settings around the globe.

Conclusion

Concluding chapter 2, the necessary concepts are already exposed in order to have a better understanding of the research and the process that was carried out which will be explained in chapter III.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

In this chapter the process of applying the instruments previously designed will be described in order to collect enough meaningful data for achieving the objective of getting the knowledge about how LEI teachers confront the situation of correcting students' errors in ELT. The participants implicated in this study will be also described in detail as well as the context where they develop their daily activities, especially teaching. At the end of the chapter, the results will be carefully analyzed with the aim of obtain real, updated and trustful results which would help us to get a conclusion.

First of all, subjects will be described in the following section in order to know what kind of participants they are.

3.1 Subjects

The participants of this research were teachers of the Facultad de Lenguas of the Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla. At the beginning the sample was intentioned to be of 12 teachers, 8 would be teachers of LEI career and 4 teachers at CELE (Centro de Lenguas Extranjeras) courses. However the final sample was only of 9 teachers, 7 of them were LEI teachers and the 2 left were CELE teachers. This was a result of some difficulties confronted in the data collection process which will be discussed afterward.

All teachers have a Master's Degree except one of them who only have a BA. LEI teachers where chosen according to the subject they were assigned in summer period which is Meta III or IV or teachers who are commonly assigned to that subject in another period like spring or autumn.

3.2 Context

The context where the participants were involved was the Facultad de Lenguas of the Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla. They were teachers of different subjects according to the specialties they acquired in their master's degree and their Ph. Degree.

The University has a lot of demand in many programs for example medicine, laws and administration, but when we take a look at the languages school, the demand is not as high as the others, so the students that apply to this career manage to be accepted with a low score in their admission exam which causes the existence of students with low general preparation.

In this program the intention is that the students accepted have a previous knowledge of the language they are going to teach when they get their degree, however, sometimes students do not have a minimum instruction of the language which means a higher effort to work with these students with the intention of making them future language teachers.

This problem remains to the aim of this research, the presence of committing errors or mistakes while teaching a second language is very common because of the students' knowledge. The university has a lot of resources to improve the acquisition of the second language in an independent way; however, the lack of interest from the students is a huge problem for the teachers.

This research was done during the summer period, which means that target language and workshop classes are doubled because of the short amount of time before the fall period begin.

3.3 Instruments for data collection

In this research, the instrument to collect data was a questionnaire. This instrument was chosen due to the facility the teachers have to answer it quickly while they are giving a class or in their free time instead of having an interview which can disturb or interfere in their daily activities.

3.3.1 Description of the questionnaire

Sometimes questionnaires can have serious limitations because of their numerous disadvantages like obtaining simplicity and superficiality answers, unreliable or unmotivated respondents, respondent literacy problems and fatigue effect (Dörnyei, 2010). However, the participants of this research are teachers who have enough experience, age and abilities to take this instrument in a serious way avoiding the disadvantages previously mentioned.

Instead of choosing another type of instruments like tests or interviews, questionnaires fits better with the information required to this research. As Dörnyei (2010) states, questionnaires can produce three types of data about the respondent:

1. Factual questions
2. Behavioral questions
3. Attitudinal questions

These three types of data are the indicated to analyze the opinion and experiences of the teachers in terms of correcting errors in ELT.

The questionnaire applied was divided into three sections to facilitate the classification of the data obtained. The beginning of the questionnaire includes a little section about personal information which will be used to describe in a deep way the participants in the research.

The first section was about teaching grammar. It only includes two multiple choice questions about the importance the teachers give to teaching grammar and what kind of errors they face when they teach it.

The second section had the intention of measure the knowledge of the teachers about the difference of errors and mistakes and ask them to identify at which level are more frequent the speaking errors of the students, lexical, semantical or syntactical.

The last section is about the techniques the teachers use to correct speaking errors. They were asked to express what kind of effect they think their way of correcting errors can affect to their students' learning. Then they had to identify the frequency they use certain strategies to correct errors and finally they are asked to fill a chart when they have to include the errors they face and the treatment they personally use.

These three sections of the questionnaire were created with the firm intention of answering the research questions of this research.

3.3.2 Piloting

Before applying the questionnaire to the teachers, the instrument was piloted by two teachers which gave useful feedback in order to obtain a clear and concise instrument.

The feedback was only about a misspelling of a word at the end of the questionnaire, out of that everything was fine in the questionnaire so I had not to correct many things of the instrument

3.4 Data collection

On the first day the questionnaire was delivered to four teachers who are teaching target language at intermediate level, and the teachers were told that the questionnaire had been ready for the next day so they could finish their activities without interruption.

The next day when I had to collect the questionnaires answered, only one teacher answered. I could not find two of them and other told me that she had not enough time to answer it so she decided to answer it in three minutes while I was waiting. The result was disappointing because teachers did not care about the answers or reading the instructions of some questions.

The next day I still could not find two of the teachers I gave the questionnaire but I could deliver the instrument to seven more teachers, two of them are target language teachers too but four of them are teaching English at CELE and one more is not giving any English class in this period but generally in fall and spring periods she is assigned to these subjects.

Finally, I obtained only nine out of eleven questionnaires I delivered. I gave the teachers a week to answer and I insisted almost a whole week asking for the questionnaires, however, I could not wait more time because I had to analyze the data so I decided to work only with the nine answered questionnaires.

3.5 Data analysis

The data was analyzed in two different ways because of the type of questions in the questionnaire: which were multiple choice questions and questions so that a qualitative analysis must be performed.

In order to analyze the multiple choice questions, there was created a table where the data was classified in different categories, also all the answers were concentrated and added together to get the results and use the total of each answer to create figures.

The main objective of the figures is to facilitate the visualization of the results and get a better analysis of the data obtained.

The open questions were analyzed separately because of the lack of pattern between the answers of the teachers. All the open questions will be transcribed in the chapter four and will be described and compared with the rest of the answers to get a qualitative analysis.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter was a description of the whole process that was carried out in order to obtain the necessary data to analyze the most common techniques used by LEI teachers to correct students' errors.

This process was quite frustrating because it was not as easy as I thought and also I learned something important, no matter how old or young the participants are, there will be always obstacles and barriers that you can face during the delivering and collection of the instrument.

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of the data obtained through the questionnaires. In order to get a better understanding of the results, each question is followed by an interpretation of the results using tables and figures.

4.1 Analysis of results

As it was mentioned before, the questionnaire was applied to twelve teachers but I only obtained nine answered questionnaires back. The results of the multiple choice questions will be explained with figures and the open questions will use tables comparing the different answers of the teachers trying to do a qualitative analysis.

4.1.1 Teaching grammar

Question 1.1 was about the importance of grammar in language teaching. Teachers had to choose how important is teaching grammar in their classes.

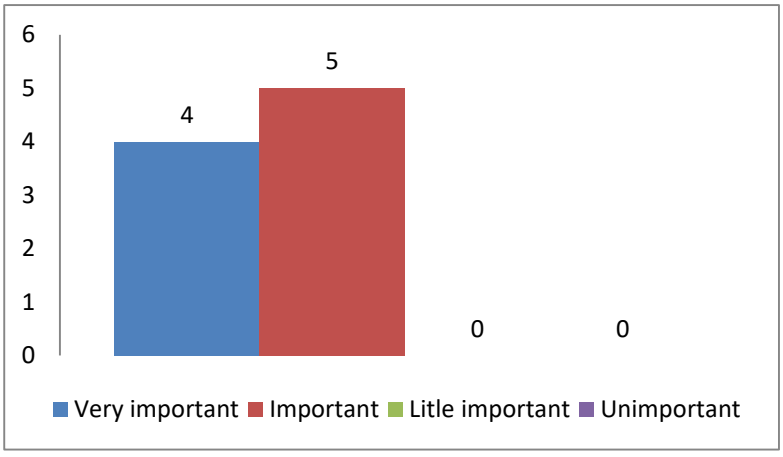

Figure 4.1 Grammar importance

In Figure 4.1 we can see that none of the teachers think that teaching grammar is an unimportant subskill to teach, however more than fifty percent of the teachers think that teaching grammar is just important so we can infer that they do not take grammar as their priority and there are other skills or subskills that take the first place in their classes.

This outcome demonstrates that the cause of this opinion may be the huge influence by textbooks have on teachers' behavior. As we know the majority of the textbooks are based primarily on grammar rather than another subskill. If teachers keep basing their language teaching on this type of books, the result will be the same as it was shown previously.

Question 1.2 was about the students' most common grammar problems when they are speaking. Teachers were given five of the most common speaking problems and they had to choose one of them as the most frequent.

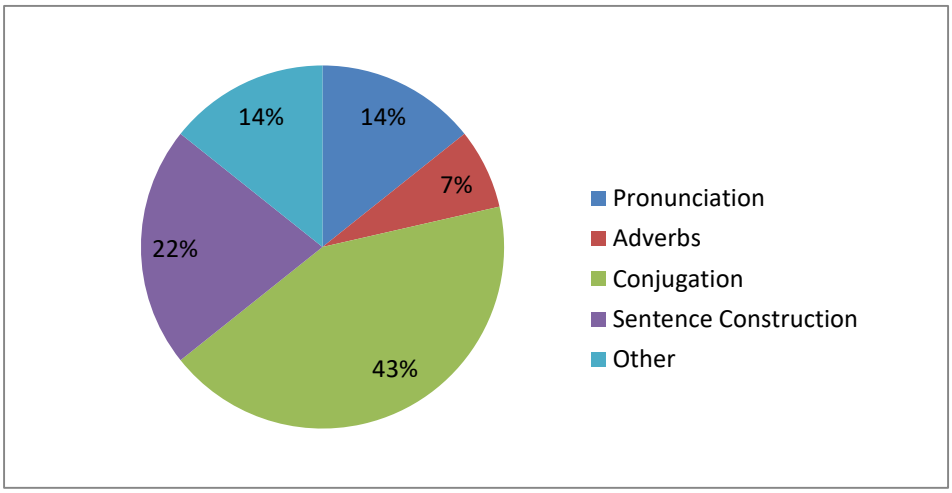

Figure 4.2 Students' most common grammar problems

Figure 4.2 represents the percentage of the students' most common grammar problems when they are speaking. The findings show that the most common problems include: pronunciation, use of adverbs, inflection, sentence construction, or another different from the options. We can also observe that almost fifty percent of the teachers indicated that their students had problems with conjugation rather than with the use of adverbs.

Nonetheless, almost fifteen percent of the teachers mentioned other grammar problems that were not mentioned in the options of the questionnaire. Some of these "other problems" are the use of pronouns, modals, and Spanish structure.

Findings shown in Figure 4.2 suggest that verb conjugation is an aspect which has not been practiced or emphasized in the language classrooms, so teachers could provide further practice to the students in this regard.

4.2.2 Knowledge about errors and mistakes

Question 2.1 asked the teachers the distinction between "error" and "mistake". This was an open question for teachers, so the answers were transcribed and afterwards analyzed.

Table 4.1 below shows teachers´ definitions of the terms "error" and "mistake".

In Table 4.1, we can state that more than fifty percent of the teachers agree that an "error" is when students are not aware when they are committing it and in addition, they do not know the rule so they cannot self-correct. However, just 4 out of 9 teachers could define what a mistake is, stating that a "mistake" is when the student is aware of the rule and even they can self-correct.

Table 4.1 Definitions of "error" and "mistake"

Number of participants	Error	Mistake
1	"Unreadable"	"Unreadable"
2	Students problems by not knowing grammar rule	It is a slip of the language known by the student
3	Misuse of language when you're not aware of it	Misuse of language when you're aware of it and you can correct it.
4	"N/A"	"N/A"
5	Ss do not know that something is wrong and they are unable to correct themselves	Ss are aware of the rule but they still commit the mistake
6	"N/A"	"N/A"
7	Something you can't self-correct, not aware or as wrong.	You can self-correct, slip of the tongue, etc…
8	When somebody doesn't know/notice it.	When somebody monitors him/herself
9	A student who acquires a wrong word for example: nowadays/actually	A student commits misunderstanding in a word or spells it incorrectly.

In the first questionnaire, I could not read the answer so I preferred to write "unreadable" instead of trying to write something that maybe is not the idea the teacher wanted to say.

There were two teachers who did not answer this question, so we can infer that they do not like being tested in that way or they do not know the difference between these two definitions.

The results from the table 4.1 indicate that teachers are not well prepared to treat this kind of problems because some of them could not write the difference between error and mistake, so this may cause a barrier in the students' learning process for not having the correct feedback when they commit an error.

Question 2.2 was related to the level of language where students commit more errors. Teachers had to choose one of three options available.

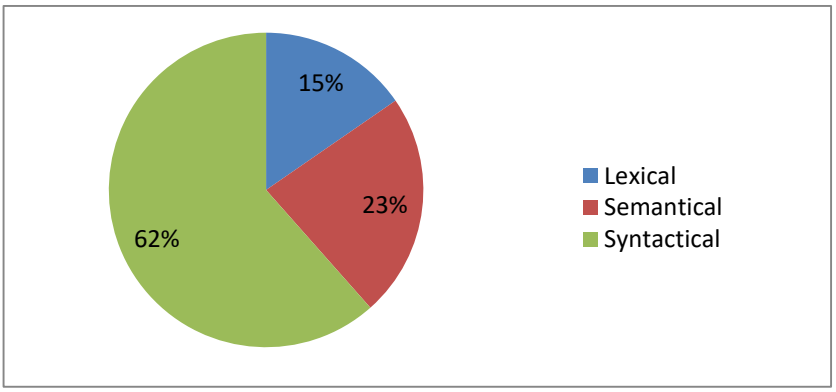

Figure 4.3 Errors in different levels.

In this question, I asked teachers to identify the level where students commit more errors: in lexical, semantical or syntactical level. Figure 4.3 shows that almost seventy percent of the teachers said that most of the students' errors are located in the syntactical level, which means that they commit errors when they try to construct complete ideas while speaking.

If we take a look back to Figure 4.2 we can distinguish that there is a contradiction with figure 4.3. If the majority of teachers claimed that the most common grammar problems are located in the conjugation of the verbs, in Figure 4.3 the higher percentage must have been the lexical level which is the production of isolated words.

These findings demonstrate that teachers may ignore the difference between the different levels of language so they could not match the answer from question 1.2 with the answer from question 2.2. Another possibility is that the students' problems go

beyond our expectations, so that is why teachers claimed more than one different type of problem.

4.1.3 Correction techniques

The Question 3.1 was related to how they think the strategies used by them to correct errors could impact in their students' learning process. In this open question as I did before the answers were first transcribed and then analyzed.

Table 4.2 Teachers' strategies impact on students' learning

Number of participants	Answer
1	They improve little by little
2	I've seen the great result in their learning, using humor and drilling is a good strategy.
3	I try to be cautious when correcting and I think that helps.
4	I hope they are impacted positively.
5	Students become more aware of their errors which could be grammatical or related to pronunciation.
6	I don't because no matter how many times I rephrase and correct they say exact same things 2 minutes later.
7	Hopefully, I make students aware of key errors and with practice, they can remember and self-correct in future situations.
8	They improve I can see that in the following works.
9	I always correct my students, they usually talk about a specific topic, after he's done it I correct him/her.

In Table 4.2 we can observe that almost ninety percent of the teachers have a positive perception of the impact of their strategies on correcting errors and how these, in turn, impact their students' learning, in contrast just one of the teachers has a pessimistic opinion about correcting errors very likely because she may not perceive positive results of correcting student's errors. This may cause that in the future she might not correct her students' errors either.

With these results, teachers can create an instrument to evaluate the real impact of their strategies so they could improve them in order to have a better development.

In question 3.2 teachers were asked to indicate on a table (Appendix 1) the frequency, they used certain correction strategies. The table showed six strategies from which teachers had to make a choice about the frequency they used the strategies.

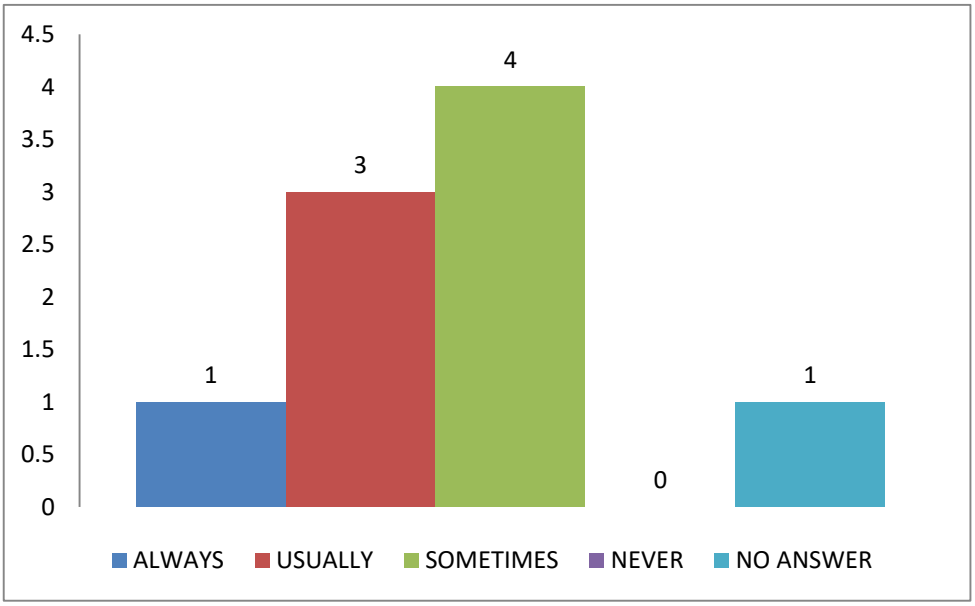

Figure 4.4 Correct errors for later

Figure 4.4 shows the frequency of “correcting errors for later” strategy, and as we can see, half of the teachers answered that they sometimes use that kind of strategy to correct students’ errors, however it is not their favorite because just one teacher always use that strategy.

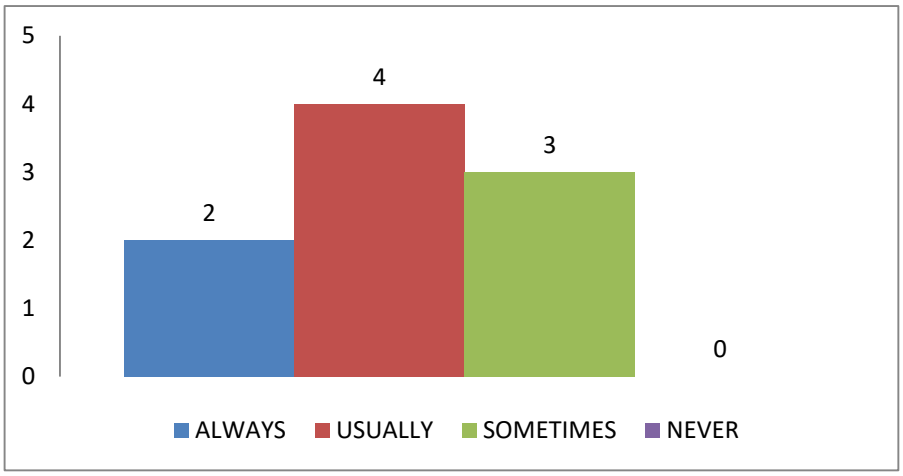

Figure 4.5 Body language / Facial expressions

In this case, we can observe that using “body language or facial expressions” to correct students’ errors is more used than the previous one in Figure 4.4. Figure 4.5 illustrates that almost fifty percent of the teachers usually use this strategy, and two of them always use it in their classroom.

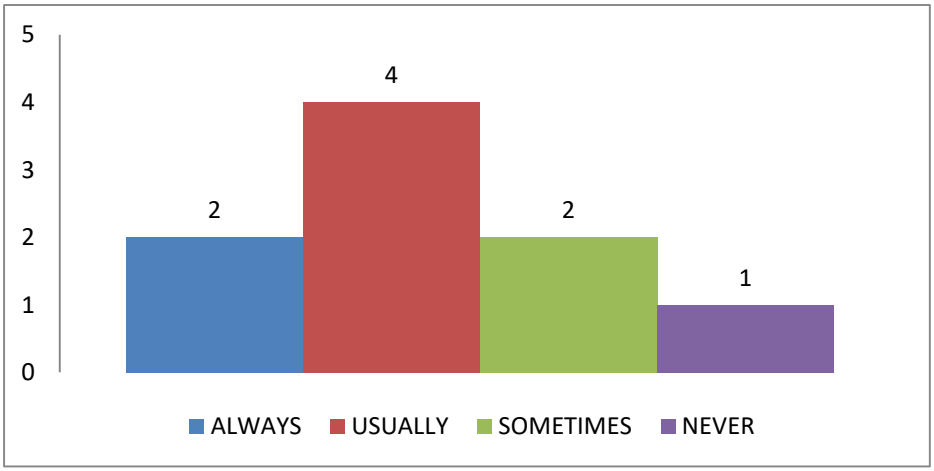

Figure 4.6 Repeat what they said

In figure 4.6 we can see almost the same frequency of use than the previous one with the little difference that in this strategy there is a teacher who never uses it because he or she does not like it or maybe he or she does not know how to use it in the classroom.

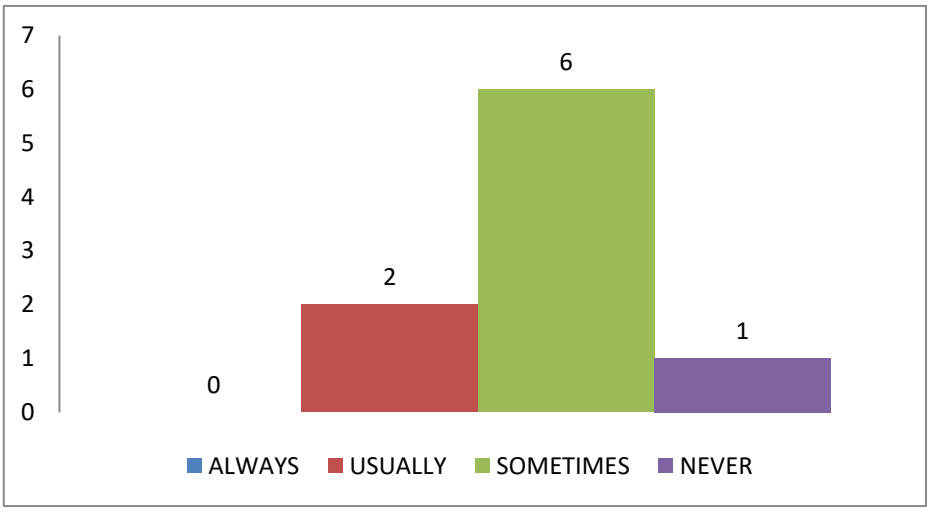

Figure 4.7 Give the rule

In figure 4.7 we can see that teachers do not like so much “giving the rule” of the error the students are committing, one said that never uses it and more than fifty percent said that they just use sometimes that strategy.

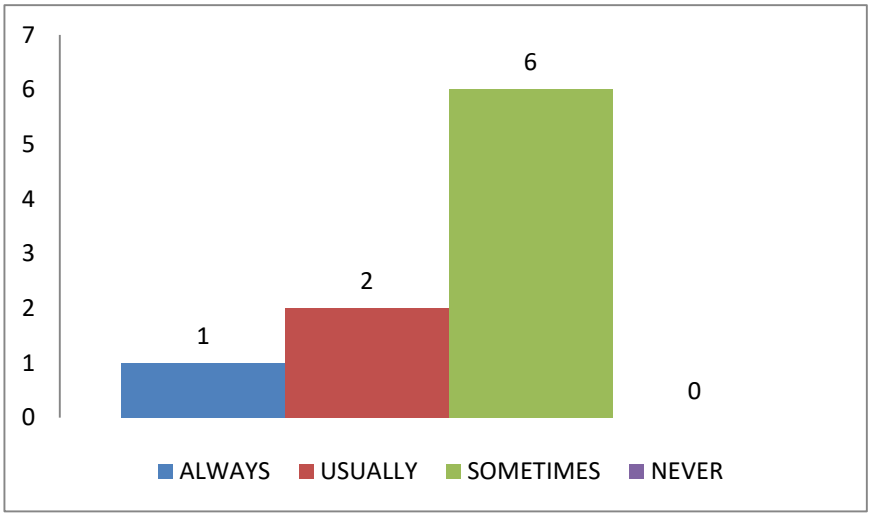

Figure 4.8 Tell them they are wrong (nicely)

Figure 4.8 shows teachers' opinions about "telling the student directly that he or she is wrong" in what he or she is speaking, but teachers do not use this kind of strategy much, we can infer that teachers prefer to deal with students' errors with other strategies rather than telling the students they are wrong maybe because they are afraid of hurting their feelings or having a counterproductive result.

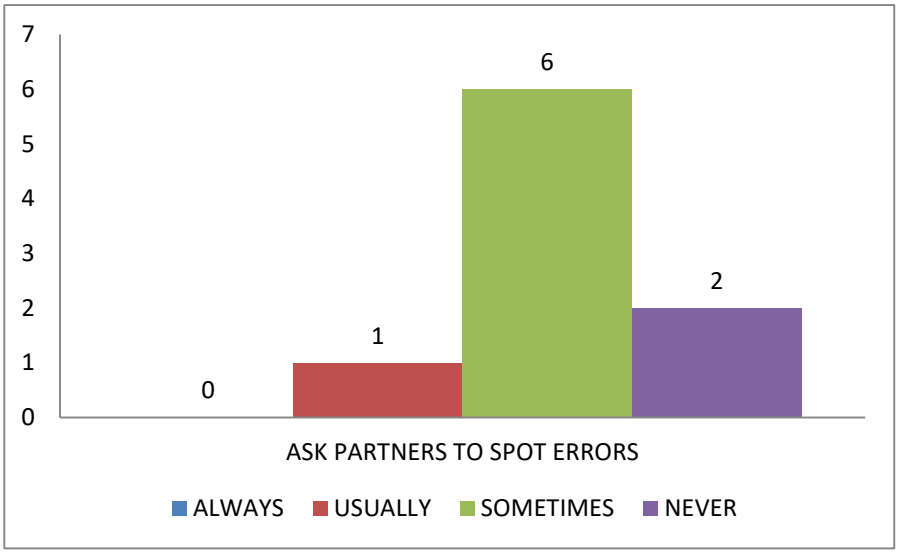

Figure 4.9 Ask partners to spot errors

In figure 4.9 we can observe that many teachers sometimes ask their own students to identify the errors of their partners, however, two of the teachers said that never use this strategy.

Generalizing the outcomes from this table, it showed that teachers prefer to make students aware of their errors by using body language instead of telling them directly that they are wrong. Nonetheless, we can notice that teachers did not show a clear preference for any of the options mentioned in the table.

In question 3.3, which is the last question, I asked teachers about their personal opinion about the most common errors they face in their classroom and the treatment they give to them.

This open question had the intention to get information about the personal errors the teachers face in their classroom and the strategies they personally use to treat them. As we saw before, there is no a strategy that almost all the teachers “always” use when they correct errors, so in this chart I gave them the chance to write which is their most common strategy used.

The teachers’ answers will be transcribed in order to analyze each of these answers. They wrote different answers so I could not summarize them in a figure.

Table 4.3 Frequent speaking errors and treatment.

Number of questionnaires	Errors	Treatment
1	1. Pronunciation 2. Fluency 3. Powerpoint presentations	1. Correct in the moment 2. We don't correct errors 3. We don't correct errors
2	1. Pronunciation of words 2. Lack of intonation 3.Grammar	1. Drilling, phonetic transcription 2. Listen to the transcript or dong 3. Explaining the rule and listen to a dialogue to check it.
3	1. Syntactical 2.Pronunciation 3. False cognates	1. Restating or repeating the word or sentence correctly 2. Right at the moment 3. Right at the moment
4	1. Mispronunciation 2. Verb Tense 3. Word order	1. Look up the right pronunciation in the dictionary 2. " " 3. Funny examples about me
5	1. Pronunciation 2. Grammar structure 3. Wrong use of a word	1. Repeat after modeling, look it up in the dictionary 2. Write down the sentence and ask Ss if it is correct. 3. T writes down the word. T provides extra information.
6	1. "Too" I like it too much 2. Are you agree? Yes I am agree 3. "used to" + gerund	1. Grammar explanation 2. Repetition and rephrasing 3. Repetition and rephrasing. Tell them they are wrong.
7	1. Pronunciation, word stress 2. Word form, lexis 3.Sentence stress, linking words	1. Drilling, repeat in sentences 2. Vocabulary work, dictionary 3. Drilling, showing the music.
8	1. Pronunciation 2. Grammar 3. Meaning	1. Echo 2. Echo 3. Clarification, contextualization
9	1. Conjugation of verbs 2. Pronunciation 3. Words	1. Writing sentences on the blackboard then I correct them 2. Repeat what they said in the correct way 3. Explaining meaning

In this last table, the strategies written by teachers coincide with the ones previously mentioned in Figures 4.4 – 4.9, nevertheless it is interesting to see that more that ninety percent perceive pronunciation as one of the most common errors students present in

their classrooms. We can find that grammar is the second most common error that students commit, and finally, in third place, it is located the word form.

The outcomes from this table show another different perspective from the teachers. If we compare the answers from the previous questions we can see that teachers changed their answer according to the students' most common errors, so this may indicate that teachers cannot generalize the students' most common errors in a single one, they can be summarized in at least three types of errors.

4.2 Conclusion

The previous tables and charts showed the findings that were previously analyzed in order to facilitate the comprehension of the obtained data. It is interesting to see that almost all the answers are summarized in the last table where teachers explained in their own words the most common errors and the treatment they gave to them. It was rewarding to see all the final figures finished in order to analyze them in an easier way.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

Error correction in English Language Teaching is an issue that must be taken in a serious way in order to achieve the general goal of getting competent students who are going to be English teachers in a near future.

If teachers do not mind about the best way to correct their students' errors, they may struggle to improve their language skills and so they may commit the same errors again and again which will cause that the wrong knowledge they have and could not be arranged by teachers, will be transmitted to their future students as a correct way of spoken English or in other cases, they will be corrected in an embarrassing way in front of important people or through an important situation.

Using the correct strategy to correct students' errors can be rewarding for students and teachers. If teachers get the best way to correct, they will get good results about correcting errors and achieving avoiding them almost totally. Teachers will save a huge amount of time avoiding the correction of errors that could be effectively corrected in previous classes, and in addition, students will not be frustrated about being corrected all the time about the same thing giving, as a result, the desertion of the subject and maybe the career also.

5.1 Findings

In the results presented in Chapter IV, it can be seen that the most common error that students commit is in pronunciation. The way that teachers face these errors are strategies that are used by other teachers such as echoing, modeling or repeating after the student with the correct form of pronunciation.

This strategy was not mentioned exactly as teachers did because the strategy used in the instrument was just repeating what the student said but not necessarily in the correct way, it can be repeated exactly in the same way the student did in order to make him aware that he is committing an error, however, teachers claimed that they repeat what the student said but rephrasing the sentence, which means that they said the sentence but in a correct way.

We could also be aware that some of the teachers do not know the difference between “error” and “mistake”, fortunately, it is a minimum number of all the teachers. With this finding, we can infer that if a teacher does not know the right definition or concept of what a mistake or error is, they won’t even know which the strategies to treat them are.

Finally, we can observe that the most common error that students commit is the conjugation of the verbs. This shows that a bad conjugation of many verbs, for example, irregular verbs in past tense can give as a result a bad pronunciation of them, which remain us to the most common error that teachers noted as pronunciation.

5.2 Answers to the research questions

As a reminder to the reader, the research questions addressed in this study are presented here:

1. How important is error correction in English Language Teaching?
2. What are teachers' perceptions about how error correction strategies help them improve students´ oral production?
3. What are LEI teachers' most effective error correction strategies?

I can affirm that the three questions were answered satisfactorily, however most of the findings concentrated on question 3.

The findings of this investigation were as the table shows:

Table 5.1 Summary of teachers' answers

Issue	Teachers' opinions
Q 1.1 Importance of grammar in language teaching.	5 out of 9 teachers think it is important and 4 out of 9 think it is very important.
Q 1.2 Most common grammar problems when speaking.	• The most common errors are produced when conjugating verbs (43%). • In second place, sentence construction is also a common speaking error (22%). • Pronunciation and other problems that were not mentioned occupy the same importance (14%). • While mistakes in adverbs use, occur less often (7%).
Q 2.1 Distinction between error and mistake	• 5 out of 9 participants agreed that an "error" is when students are not aware and do not know the rule. However a mistake is a slip or misuse of language known by the student. • 2 out of 9 did not answer. One of them claimed he did not want to take a test. • 1 out of 9 wrote an unreadable answer.

	• 1 out of 9 defined error as a wrong word acquisition, and mistake as a misunderstanding of a word or wrong spelling.
Q 2.2 Level of language that presents more errors.	• 62% of the participants stated errors are located in the syntactical level (constructing complete ideas). • 23% stated that are located in semantical level (meaning). • 15% stated that are located in the lexical level (isolated words).
Q 3.1 Impact of correction in students learning process.	• 8 out of 9 teachers have a positive perception of their strategies' impact on correcting errors. • 1 participant expressed that no matter how many times she corrects, they say exact same things 2 minutes later.
Q 3.2 Most frequent correction strategies.	• "Repeating what the student said" as well as "body language or facial expressions" are always used by 2 participants. • "Give the rule" is sometimes used by 6 participants. • "Ask partners to spot errors" and "tell them they are wrong" are sometimes used by 5 participants, however 3 participants said they never ask partners to spot errors. • "Errors for later" is always used by 1 participant, usually used by 3 participants and sometimes used by 4 participants.
Q 3.3 Frequent speaking errors and treatment.	• 8 out of 9 participants claimed that pronunciation is one of the most frequent speaking errors. • 6 out of 9 stated that "wrong use of a word" l also an important error when speaking. • "Grammar" and "Conjugation" were mentioned by 3 participants as frequent errors. • Vocabulary work, dictionary, contextualization, explanation of meaning and giving information are some of the treatments the participants use to face the speaking errors mentioned before.

5.3 Contributions of the study

This research can have a positive impact on the scholar community and contribute worthy issues with the aim of improve students' language acquisition.

This work helps to make teachers understand that the strategies used to correct students' mistakes play an important role in the students' learning process, which can cause a better or worse result in their language acquisition.

Some of the figures shown in Chapter IV give a wide perspective according to the most common strategies used by LEI teachers at BUAP, which can give an idea to teachers from other schools about what kind of strategies they can use with their students in order to achieve their personal goals remained to language learning.

In our actual context, we as teachers have to deal with students' errors all the time, and we have to understand that errors will be always present in the process of learning, so if we take as an example the experiences of other teachers we can avoid the repetition of these errors sooner than other teachers.

5.4 Recommendations for further research

This research focused on LEI teachers' strategies to correct students' speaking errors; however, this is just a minimum part of the huge universe of correcting errors. For a further research, it is recommended to investigate the opinion of the students about how they perceive the strategies used to correct their errors. Now it is known which strategies are preferred by teachers but for a better understanding of how the strategies

influence in the students' formation, it is suggested to research about the students' point of view according to the strategies that their teachers use with them.

This further research can be focused on their likes and dislikes about how their teachers correct their errors and maybe asking for suggestions of how they think would be the best way to correct them.

In addition another perspective from this research can be taken, it may contribute to measure the effectiveness of the most used strategies, observing how the students respond or react to them and get a conclusion of which is the "most effective" strategy to correct errors.

5.5 Conclusion

This research was made with the firm intention of investigating and acquiring significant knowledge from teachers' experiences of the Facultad de Lenguas. Up to now, every teacher thinks in a different strategy as the best way to treat errors, however every context is very different among them. We cannot apply the same strategies here in Mexico and to students from China or Egypt because the contexts are very different.

Those examples could seem almost impossible but we have to take into account that even in our country or state we can find many different contexts where we will have to explore and find not only the best way to correct errors, but the best way to teach.

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APPENDIX

CORRECTING ERRORS IN ELT SETTINGS

This questionnaire pretends to get information from LEI teachers about their experiences in correcting errors. Please read each instruction and write your answers. The results of this survey will be used only for research purposes. Thank you for your help.

Personal information

Degree of study: BA _____ MA _____ PhD _____ Date: _____
Subject: a) Lengua Meta ___ b) Workshop ____ c) Other _____
Number of students: _____ Experience in language teaching year's: _____

Section 1: Teaching grammar
Circle the option that best expresses your opinion.

1.1 In your opinion, how important is grammar in language teaching?
a) Very important b) Important c) Little important d) Unimportant

1.2 Which are the students' most common grammar problems when speaking English?

a) Pronunciation b) Use of adverbs c) Conjugation of the verbs
1. Sentence construction e) Other: _____

Section 2: Knowledge about errors and mistakes
Please provide the following information.

2.1In your own words define the concepts "error" and "mistake".

Error:_____
_____
Mistake:_____
_____

2.2 At what level do your students commit more errors?

a) Lexical (Production of isolated words) b)Semantical (Meaning)
c)Syntactical (Construction of complete ideas)

Section 3: Correction techniques

Please answer the following open question as you did before. In the last item please cross **(x)** the frequency you use the following strategies.

3.1 How do you think the strategies you use to correct speaking errors impact your students' learning?

_____

_____

_____

3.2 In the following chart indicate how often you use the following correcting mistakes strategies.

Strategies	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never
Correct errors for later				
Body language/Facial expressions				
Repeat what they said				
Give the rule				
Tell them they are wrong (nicely)				
Ask partners to spot errors				

3.3 Please fill the following chart with the most frequent speaking errors and how you treat them

ERRORS	TREATMENT
1.	
2.	
3.	

Thank you for your cooperation!