Error Correction in Online Classroom of Foreign Languages: Types of Error Correction and their Benefit

Sokhiba Zokirova[1][a], Ozodakhon Khasanova[2][b], Nargiza Sobirova[3][c]
Department of Primary Education Methods, Fergana State University, Fergana, Uzbekistan
Department of German and French languages, Fergana State University, Fergana, Uzbekistan
Department of Practical Englishs, Fergana State University, Fergana, Uzbekistan
szokirova1987@gmail.com xasanovaozoda51@gmail.com , nanoshsober@gmail.com

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Abstract: Errors and their correction are the main components of foreign language lessons.Correcting errors in traditional offline lessons can be challenging for teachers, and correcting errors in online foreign language lessons requires even more skill. Foreign language teachers must be able to correct errors effectively in both types of lessons.This article aims to investigate effective techniques for correcting errors made by language learners in online foreign language classes.

1 INTRODUCTION

The intensification of the educational process is changing in harmony with today's rapidly developing society (Yeh, S., Lo, J. J., & Chu, H. M. 2014). Having the ability to speak a foreign language fluently and flawlessly has risen to the level of demand for every professional. The development of a methodology for improving the skills of future German language teachers in dealing with errors is also of urgent importance.

Errors related to analysis, evaluation and correction, and language learning are frequently discussed topics in the didactics of foreign language classes. On the one hand, the spectrum of views on errors shows that errors are harmful to language acquisition. However, it should be remembered that they are evaluated as a necessary component of the language learning process. The belief that "We learn from our mistakes" is often repeated by language learners.

We want to analyze some concepts related to error correction. The most commonly used concept of error correction is task-based error correction, which is different from exam-oriented error correction. In task-based error correction, the error serves as a relearning opportunity for language learners. For this reason, the focus of learning is on the process of learning and progress in learning, not on measuring the level of learning.

German scientist Wulf (2001) stated that correcting errors is very essential for effective communication in a foreign language classroom. However, there are different opinions among scientists regarding the usefulness of error correction in language acquisition. Some scientist agree with the usefulness of error correction, but some scientist do not.

Gerlach, a German teacher at the Goethe Institute in Munich, notes in her article that "...there is no other difficult headache topic for German language teachers than correcting the errors of language learners. There is no recipe for when and how to correct an error because it depends on various factors."

During each lesson, the foreign language teacher hears many sentences that are incorrect. These sentences should be immediately analyzed and corrected. While it may be easy to correct written errors on paper in offline lessons or on the blackboard

[a] https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4026-8509
[b] https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4026-8509
[c] https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4211-5423

in an online classroom, correcting oral errors in language lessons can cause stress not only for the teacher but also for the language learners.

This article discusses ways of error correction in foreign classrooms with online backgrounds.

2 MATERIALS AND METHODS

Gerlach notes that her language learners like encouraging their teachers to correct errors with the help of facial expressions and gestures. It is possible for language learners to organize the correction of each other's errors in the process of checking homework. If the answer recommended by language learner A is still not considered valid by learner B, the teacher can come to help. In addition, the teacher can assign an "ERROR COLLECTOR" for each lesson. During the lesson, the language learner writes down the errors made by other group mates, and at the end of the lesson, s/he corrects and eliminates the errors with her/himself or the teacher. In the plenary, all language learners will have the opportunity to learn about their errors. It is beneficial in online classrooms, too.

Li and Hu stated that online, face-to-face peer and teacher correction influences the accuracy, fluency of speaking, and academic passion of language learners (Li, X., & Hu, W. 2024.). According to them, error correction strategies significantly influence the speaking fluency of EFL learners. Using different correction approaches helps teachers to teach more effectively.

Bannò and Matassoni wrote about the features of using grammatical error correction in their research. According to them, grammatical error correction can help language learners to speak more fluently (Bannò, S., &Matassoni, M. 2024.). Studies on the topic of text-based grammatical error correction have received significant attention, too (Bryant, C., Felice, M., Briscoe, T., 2017; Bryant, C., Yuan, Z., Qorib, M.R., Cao, H., Ng, H.T., Briscoe, T., 2022, Knill, K., Gales, M. J. F., Manakul, P., & Caines, A. 2019).

Our observations showed that foreign language teachers in Uzbekistan often use direct correction to correct language learners' errors.

In direct error correction, correct the teacher learner's inaccuracy as soon as the learner makes it. For example:

Language learner: Mein Vater hat nach Berlin gefahren.

Teacher: Mein Vater ist nach Berlin gefahren.

In indirect error correction, the teacher offers language learners a way to correct errors communicatively. This situation can take the form of a question or an answer. In this case, the language learner will have the opportunity to correct his/her error. For example:

Language learner: Mein Vater hat nach Berlin gefahren.

Teacher:Wohin ist dein Vater gefahren?

In this case, the teacher does not directly say that the verb “fahren”is used with the auxiliary verb sein. If the language learner is attentive, s/he can quickly realize and correct his/her error. For example:

Language learner: Mein Vater hat nach Berlin gefahren.

Teacher:Wohin ist dein Vater gefahren?

Language learner: Ohh, ja. Mein Vater ist nach Berlin gefahren.

In our opinion, when errors are corrected indirectly, language learners are less likely to make the same error again.

In online foreign language classes, language learners can correct such errors using paralinguistic signs without stopping their answers. If the grammatical topic of the lesson is Perfekt/Perfect, and the teacher explained to language learners which verbs are used with the auxiliary verb "haben/to have" and which verbs are used with the auxiliary verb "sein/ to be" in Perfect at the beginning of the lesson, the teacher can correct the language learner’s errors during the exercise by using following actions. However, it is necessary to give language learners an understanding of what these signs mean.

Figure 1. Non-verbal signs to use error correction.

For example, the first sign can be used for the errors with "to have, "and the second one for the errors with "to be." Actually, such non-verbal signs are often used in traditional lessons, too. Next time, these signs can be used to correct other errors. The first sign is often used to remember verb position in sentences because it is like the letter V. When a teacher shows this sign, the language learner knows that s/he has an error in verb position. It is advantageous to use such signs because the language learner's answer does not stop in this case.

Today, the online platform HEMIS is used in almost all educational institutions in Uzbekistan. Through this online platform, teachers can accept students' independent work. In our opinion, correction of errors in independent works of students and to write feedback them is also important.

Here are some examples of how negative feedback can be turned into positive feedback:

Table 1: Turning negative feedback into positive.

Negative feedback	Positive feedback
Your text lacks structure at all.	You were required to focus on essential points, elaborate on given points, and pay attention to the boundaries between them.
...badly written.	You could write better!
You made many errors on this topic...	Next time, pay more attention to this topic!
We have learned this topic; you should have known that...	We have learned this topic with you; maybe you have an error here?
You did not pay attention to the task.	Try to read the task carefully next time.
You only used simple sentences.	Try to use more relaxed complex sentence constructions. This will make your text look better!

In the process of reading the given feedback, the language learner understands the same content, but both feedbacks affect them differently. For this reason, foreign language teachers should try to make the feedback given on written work as positive and constructive as possible.

Our observations also showed that many teachers limit themselves to grading online written works. As a comment, only words such as excellent, good, and average are written. In our opinion, it is appropriate that each error in the independent work submitted by the student should be analyzed in detail, and the feedback written to him/her should consist of at least five or six sentences. Of course, in this feedback, it is necessary to emphasize what the student did well and what his/her achievement was.

The use of blackboards in foreign language classes organized through ZOOM is very effective for error correction. For this, the teacher should provide everyone with the opportunity to use the blackboard. Students write their thoughts on the given assignment on the board. After completing the assignment, the teacher should analyze and correct the errors on the board. In the correction process, it is advisable to encourage students to find their errors and correct themselves.

After correcting the errors in the written work, it is advisable to rewrite the text, too. According to some German language teachers, a language learner should first check his/her own written work with a grammar book and a dictionary and find out which topic s/he makes the most errors in. After that, the subject of the error should be learned repeatedly if necessary. Of course, unclear parts can be asked of the teacher.

We used methods such as interviews, observations, and analysis in our research. Ten German language teachers of Fergana State University were selected for observation, and their attitudes towards errors encountered in the process of teaching the German language were studied. At the same time, their feedback on students' work on the HEMIS platform was analyzed. In addition, methods of correcting errors in additional online classes organized by them were determined.

Here are our research questions:

Which type of error correction do you often use in your online lessons?

How long do you write your feedback on the independent work of students on the HEMIS platform? Or do you give only a mark?

Do your students rewrite their work after your error correction?

3 RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Which type of error correction do you use in your online lessons?

Almost all teachers participating in the research noted that they use direct and indirect correction methods in their online classes. However, our observations showed that teachers mostly use direct correction of errors. In our opinion, many teachers are used to correcting errors directly. Indirect correction of errors requires more time than direct correction from the teacher. That may be why teachers rarely use this method of correction. While answering this question, some teachers commented that errors are corrected less often in online classes than in traditional classes. According to them, correcting errors in online classes is a little more complicated.

How long do you write your feedback on the independent work of students on the HEMIS platform? Or do you give only marks?

Seven teachers answered this second question, saying that they were limited only to grading, and three teachers graded and wrote feedback. The teachers who recorded both grading and writing feedback were asked about the order of their written feedback. They pointed out that the feedback mainly describes the grade given, for example, a grade of 5 is very well written and a grade of 4 is well written and etc.

Do your students rewrite their work after your error correction?

It was observed that teachers check students' independent work in many cases and evaluate it based on its content and the number of errors. We have come to the conclusion that the fact that the students are not interested in what errors they have received such a grade is the reason why they do not correct the errors in their work and rewrite them. It was observed that only some students expressed their desire to re-submit independent works to the teacher if they were not satisfied with the grades they received.

4 DISCUSSION

Special importance should be attached to the process of correcting the sentences of language learners who do not have confidence in themselves. Correcting them in a negative tone or in a loud voice can cause them to not respond at all in the future. For example, if a language learner is speaking on the topic of his/her interests (for example, My Hobby), it is often observed that if his/her speech is interrupted or corrected, s/he prefers not to continue his/her speech but to limit him/herself to expressing his/her one interest. Speech splitting can be considered the most unpleasant type of error correction.

Language learners also like to be corrected after they finish their speech.

In our opinion, 5 to 10 minutes at the end of each lesson should be spent analyzing, discussing, and correcting errors made by language learners. Then, language learners will get used to it. In addition, language learners try to make fewer errors because they know that their errors will be noticed. The teacher should analyze and correct the errors of all language learners. In many cases, the error is related to the new topic and acquires the same character. In this case, the teacher should repeat the names of the language learners who have made the same error and tell them that they all have the same error so they can give them another explanation.

5 CONCLUSIONS

Constantly using feedback in the form of "good, but..." does not work well. It is advisable for the teacher to come up with various cards and small prizes so that the motivation of language learners does not fall.

Working with errors made by language learners should not be seen as a rebuke given by the teacher, but as a tool that serves to advance the learning process. It should be detailed and creative, and not only the teacher, the language learner should also participate in checking and correcting errors. If working with errors organized as an exchange of ideas among language learners, the result will be even better. In addition, students begin to acquire the skills of working with errors, which are necessary for future activities.

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