

Implication of Concrete Materials for Error Correction to Develop Oral Accuracy among Young Middle School EFL Learners

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Abstract

In the processes of teaching and learning in general and correction of errors in particular, middle school EFL teachers are expected to focus on what Piaget calls “*concrete operations*” by offering clear and simple explanation of the target linguistic knowledge through the utilization of visuals (e.g., colored papers, pictures, flashcards), and the aim is principally to foster better understanding, memorization, and retention. This study undertakes to explore the nature of the strategies the middle school EFL teachers utilize in their correction of errors, and their immediate effects on the pupils’ ability develop the overall oral accuracy. The final results reveal that the observed teachers of English (n=3) from Bachir Ben Nacer Middle School in the Wilaya of Biskra (from the three grade levels): (a) provide verbal correction on the air without using board work or flashcards; (b) offer difficult and incomprehensible corrective input, which seems to be beyond the pupils’ capacities; and (c) correct via interruption. As for stimulated recall interviews, the findings indicate that those procedural techniques do not appear to sit well with the pupils’ cognitive abilities and even their wants, which undermines the viability of corrective feedback.

Résumé

Dans les processus d'enseignement et d'apprentissage en général et correction d'erreurs en particulier, les enseignants devraient se concentrer sur ce que Piaget appelle «opérations concrètes» en offrant explication claire et simple de la connaissance linguistique cible grâce à l'utilisation d'éléments visuels (par exemple, papiers colorés, des images, des fléchards), et le but est principalement de favoriser une meilleure compréhension, la mémorisation et la rétention. Cette étude entreprend d'explorer la nature des stratégies que les enseignants de Cem utilisent dans leur correction d'erreurs, et leurs effets immédiats sur la capacité des élèves à développer la précision orale. Les résultats définitifs révèlent que les enseignants observés de l'anglais (n = 3) à partir du Cem Bachir Ben Nacer dans la wilaya de Biskra (à partir des trois niveaux scolaires): (a) fournir une correction verbale sur l'air sans utiliser le tableau ou fiche de vocabulaire; (B) offrent entrée correctives difficile et incompréhensible, qui semble être au-delà des capacités des élèves; et (c) correcte via interruption. Quant aux interviews de rappel stimulées, les résultats indiquent que ces techniques de procédure ne semblent pas bien asseoir avec les capacités cognitives des élèves et même leurs besoins, ce qui compromet la viabilité de rétroaction corrective.

Introduction

Errors are inevitable in language learning. They can help EFL teachers to diagnose the learning difficulties that prevent their learners to perform correctly. They also may help learners to comprehend target linguistic knowledge accurately when they are pointed out and corrected. Nevertheless, Teacher's correction may appear inappropriate to his or her learners. To illustrate, El khabar, Algerian daily newspaper, published on Saturday, September 28th, 2013 in its people social state division news entitled, "**Female Teacher Breaks Schoolgirl Pupil's Arm**" in Algiers. This pupil fails to conjugate the verb "Allér" [French translation of the infinitive verb "to go" in English]. So, the teacher breaks the arm of the pupil. As a result of such an inappropriate teaching behavior, the EFL learners may not achieve the required linguistic and academic levels. For this, EFL teachers' correction of oral errors is expected to be closely tailored to the category of the learners' (i.e., young or adult) psycholinguistic capacity and linguistic requirements.

1. Language errors

An error is defined as an unwanted linguistic form or content by teachers. This unwanted form at phonological, morphological, syntactic, or lexical level is supposed to be different from the type of language native speakers produce. Allwright and Bailey (1991), in their definition of language errors, indicate that an error has to do with "the production of a linguistic form which deviates from the correct form." (p. 84). That's why; FL teachers in the classroom settings point out any error their learners make to be corrected.

2. Accuracy Errors

A learner may often blurt out inaccurate verbal language, and this can be characterized by *wrong grammar*, *abnormal pronunciation*, or *unwise selection of vocabulary* that no one can understand. These three types of linguistic errors automatically lead to misunderstanding, and impede the development of the overall oral accuracy.

2.1. Wrong Grammar

EFL learners are taught grammar much more than any other language aspect, and the aim is to help them attain effective access to it. Nevertheless, learners, irrespective to their first language in speaking in the foreign language, commit common grammatical errors, such as lack of subject-verb agreement, countable and non-countable nouns, incorrect or missing articles, prepositions and so on (Anis, 2013). Oral grammar errors require correction for accurate production of language, and meanwhile to facilitate development of oral grammar accuracy to be successful both academically and socially.

2.2. Abnormal Pronunciation

In the field of foreign language teaching and learning processes, little attention has been paid by studies to pronunciation as an important aspect in language in order to be taught adequately on the one hand, and to solve learners' problems of mispronunciation on the other. Khajavi and Gordani (2010), in their study on a sample of high school EFL learners in Iran, found that the targeted participants make pronunciation errors due to the following

reasons: (a) negative language transfer on the speech sounds of English; (b) overgeneralization; (c) inadequate teaching; and (d) spelling pronunciation problems (i.e., slips). As a result of this, FL teachers are advised to conduct contrastive analysis, and then figure out the similarities and the differences at sound system level between L1 and L2. The aim of this procedure is mainly to prevent phonological problems in the classrooms.

2.3. Unwise Selection of Vocabulary

Teaching and learning foreign languages may appear incomplete unless learners are taught vocabulary. In that sense, Silivia (2012, p. 9) determines that the FL learner needs to have at least 2000-3000 words to understand the meaning of texts and to be able to communicate in authentic language contexts successfully. Kaouli (2007) indicates that the unwise selection of vocabulary is the result of “*vocabulary gap*”. Differently stated, when foreign language learners are not capable to express their thoughts in English due to poor register, they borrow words from their L1 (e.g., Arabic) or L2 (e.g., French) in the Algerian context. This unwise selection of vocabulary can be attributed to so many different factors, such as: (a) confusion; (b) misunderstanding; (c) overgeneralization; and (d) lack of focus on one’s speech. The problem of confusion, for example, according to Jong (2008, p. 75) is caused by phonological similarities that exist between words (e.g., life is the most **precise** [should be **precious**] thing and nobody should be able to decide who will live or die). All in all, these problems of confusion, misunderstanding, overgeneralization, and lack of focus on one’s speech have strong negative effects on the development of oral vocabulary.

3. Definition of Correction

Generally speaking, the term correction refers to the reconstruction of the ill-formed output through deleting, adding and or substituting certain items. According to Ur (1999), correction implies any specific information teachers provide to their learners on the aspects of their performance. This process is accomplished in the following way: (a) explanation by stating how and why the utterance is wrong; (b) provision of better or other alternatives; or (c) elicitation from the erred learners. The main purposes of correction are to help the learners understand target knowledge rules, and to eradicate the production of the same errors.

4. Goals of Error Correction

Regardless the controversy among researchers about the role of correction in language learning, Ur (2012) states that correction would: (a) make learners aware of the wrong form and how the correct form should have been; (b) prevent the production of the same errors over and over again; and (c) prevent errors becoming fossilized as a result of interference of L1 system on the target language system, or as a result of some difficult rules in the foreign language system itself. Due to all these goals and benefits of correction, it is believed that if there is one thing less effective than correcting, it is not correcting.

5. Correction of Young EFL Oral Errors

Although it has been indicated that adult learners and young learners are totally different in the areas of learning activities and information processing, teachers may not change or widely vary their instructions, materials, methods or strategies for teaching or correction according to the cognitive ability of their learners.

The age of young FL learners is problematic. Phillips, Burwood and Dunford (1999) mention that young learners are “children from primary to early secondary school age, from five to fourteen” (p. 5). However, the term young learners, as Nunan (2010) figures out, “covers a large chronological age span: from around 3 years of age to 15” (chapter.1). Some other researchers have indicated that age of young learners is strictly around 6- to 16-years-old. Despite these controversies, it is commonly believed that young learners can exhibit markedly different mental, emotional, and social characteristics from adult learners. Additionally, the constructivist Piaget mentions that during the concrete operation (between 7 to 12 years old) children mental operations become more logical with respect to the real context and actual (i.e., concrete) objects and materials.

Departing from the aforementioned traits associated with young learners, Brown (1994),

building on Piaget (1896, 1980) theory of cognitive development, recommends FL teachers to: (a) focus on what Piaget calls “concrete operations” by providing young learners with concrete materials and using authentic language to facilitate comprehension of information; (b) arrange a set of patterns and then have them to repeat the patterns for couple of minutes to anchor learning; (c) use a sense of humor to please the learners, to decrease or avoid boredom emerging from their short-span attention and to engage them in the activities to do them correctly; and finally (d) pepper the lesson with visuals and physical movements. Furthermore, the natural approach to language learning, which has been developed in the late of 1970’s and the beginning of 1980’s by Stephen Krashen and Tracy Terrell, emphasizes that comprehensible input alone is not sufficient to promote learning outcomes. According to this approach, as Gordon (2007) reports, young learners process information and intake input when grammar rules and vocabulary aspects of English language are practiced from “*non-bookish*” situations, that is, from naturally occurring context because they highly depend on noticing while learning.

5.1. Learners’ Age and Related-Correction Studies

Since correction is an integral part in teaching, the following research studies show the impact of age on foreign language teaching, and this may help us to understand its effects on the correction process following oral errors. In the study conducted by Hendricks (1999) who tries to investigate the influence of maturity on language learning, the results demonstrate that adult learners rely on previous learning experiences to understand and make use of the new linguistic functions. Conversely, young learners grasp the linguistic functions indirectly on highly phrasal referential level. Differently stated, children learn better in touch with the surrounding physical and concrete world. This result is also consistent with what Halliwell (1995) has said about the characteristics of young learners’ age; in which they have a capacity for indirect learning.

6. Concrete Materials for Error Correction

In the language learning field, some strategies for error correction are proposed to facilitate the development of oral accuracy. In so doing, Calvé (1992) comments, “*To correct or not to correct is not the question*” (cited in Duquette, 1995, p.108). In other terms, the role of teachers is not to correct and to control the production of accurate language forms, but greater importance has to be given to the use of most efficient methods and adequate strategies. Actually, learning a foreign language at an earlier stage in life may be difficult for children of age 7-15 years old who: (a) are still beginner in the process of studying their native language; (b) have immature cognitive capacity to understand difficult or meta-explanation of linguistic knowledge; (c) are very sensitive toward teachers’ criticisms on their erroneous output; and (d) are more interested in how they are treated rather than in what they learn. Thereby, a teacher’s input is expected to be closely tailored to their young language learners’ psycholinguistic and linguistic requirements in their selection of correction strategies.

6.1. Visual Reminders Strategy

It has been acknowledged that the introduction of visual literacy in the teaching methods, learning process, and course planning becomes essential in order to effectively understand the form, meaning, and use (FMU) of words or rules. In FMU, the Form refers to the mechanism of the language features that includes grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary (e.g., the form of the vocabulary ‘banana’ is its shape and color; the *form* of words for pronunciation is achieved by showing how sounds are uttered). *Meaning* refers to the meaning of vocabulary items or grammar rules, which can be achieved by using pictures or gestures to aid comprehension and retention. Lastly, the term *use* explains how rules function and vocabulary either concrete or abstract are selected and used depending on the context. Herein, Burmark (2008) reports that people are more apt to remember a person’s face than that of a person’s name. Thus, the use of visual reminders, according to him, can help young FL learners to understand the provided input and to store information not only in the short-term memory, but in the long-term memory.

Several studies that investigate the effects of color visuals on individual learners’ performance and achievement found that: (a) color visuals increase willingness to read up to 80 %; (b) the use of colors can increase motivation and participation by up to 80 %; (c) color enhances learning and improves retention by more than 75 % (Burmark, 2008, pp. 15). The duty of teachers is to make sure that each learner notices and sticks color visuals used in correcting grammar, pronunciation, or vocabulary oral errors in his or her “mind’s eye”. The following two examples demonstrate how FL teachers can employ visual reminders in correcting oral errors produced by young EFL learners in the classroom situation.

6.2. Color Visuals

Visual correction of oral error is an idea which has been developed by Puchta, Arnold and Rinvolutri in 2007. In this strategy, oral errors are corrected in discreet and comfortable manners without causing offense but in a memorable way. The aforementioned researchers state that the implication of visual stimulus in FL classrooms takes the following procedure:

1. Bringing two papers or cards of the same color measured (10 cm x 10 cm) (6" x 6") plus to a thick highlighter or marker pen;
2. Taking a piece of colored paper and draw a symbol or write a letter of the word, so that it is clearly visible. The aims are to provide the erred learner with visual anchor to remember the targeted correct linguistic form, and to prevent the production of the incorrect linguistic form again and again;
3. Signaling out, for instance, the omission of the third-person-singular "S" and immediately drawing a large "S" on the card, and then, sticking it up on the wall, so that the erred learner and the rest can easily see the card;
4. Asking the erred learner to repeat saying his or her utterance, once the incorrect linguistic form is heard, immediately the teacher can point at the sign that is drawn on the colored paper, and smile at the learner. Waiting for the erred learner to self-correct his or her error;
5. However, if the erred learner fails to make the correction, the teacher has to whisper the correct form to him or her, and then, ask the learner to repeat saying the utterance as an effort to make correction effective and learning better;
6. The next time the same error occurs, the tutor is required to follow the same pattern. That is stopping the erred learner, pointing at the sign on the wall, smiling, and waiting for the learner to self-correct his or her utterance.
7. The tutor can proceed like this for some time. Then take the card off the wall;
8. The next time the same error occurs, we need to take a card of the same color, but we do not write anything on it, and stick it on the same spot on the wall where the previous card had been. At this moment, we need to wait for the erred learner to self-correct his or her error;
9. Carrying on like this for some time then taking the card off. When the same error occurs after some time, it is usually enough to point at the same spot on the wall (where there is now no card any more). *And remember to smile.* (p. 78)

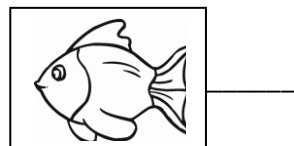
Color visual for correction of oral errors send to young FL learners of English "message" and "meta-message". As Puchta, Arnold and Rinvoluceri (2007) explain, message is a statement that informs that something goes wrong with the produced utterance. The meta-message is demonstrated in the teacher friendly smile, which tends to confirm the following statement, "You're okay! - it is just the sentence created that needs a little correction". Such a procedure can be applied not only in correcting grammar errors, but also in dealing with vocabulary as well as pronunciation problems.

6.3. Picture Gap

Picture gap strategy was developed by Phillips (1993) in order to teach the FMU (i.e., Form Meaning and Use) of the linguistic aspects. Picture gap strategy is meant to stimulate imagination and to help the retrieval of the correct language features effectively and correctly. In order to employ picture gap strategy for correction of oral error in classroom of young FL learners of English, Phillips offers the following instructions. Teachers need to:

1. Bring either colored paper or picture;
2. Draw a nice image of concrete or less concrete word, such as apron, orange on colored paper using thick pen;
3. Get the erred learner to repeat the utterance once the incorrect word is heard, stick immediately the picture on the board and smile. Wait for the learner to self-correct his or her error. This process is illustrated in Figure 2 adapted from Phillips (p. 58).

Pupil says: My cat eats **meat** (interruption). Teacher:



A pupil continues saying: and drinks **water** (interruption) Teacher:

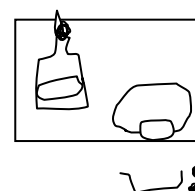


Figure 1. Picture-Gap Strategy for Correction of Vocabulary Oral Errors.

What is also very important to be mentioned here is that when utilizing picture gap strategy in correction of oral errors, teachers are responsible to first help young foreign language learners of English to self-correct their errors through the use of mime, gestures, whispers, performance and so on. However, if the erred learner and the rest of his/her classmates fail to correct the targeted error, herein, the teacher will offer the correct form and ask the learner to repeat the corrected form to reinforce it.

After correcting oral errors produced by young foreign English language learners via visual reminders (color visuals and picture gap), researchers belonging to the realm of TESOL (e.g., Bailey, 2006; Maxom, 2010) recommend teachers to ask Concept Checking Questions (CCQs). The purpose is to evaluate correction process. To begin with, teachers can check comprehension by re-showing the picture, which has been previously utilized, or they can provide orally the descriptions of certain concepts allowing the learner to offer their responses.

Furthermore, EFL teachers need to make use of CCQs technique after correction process in order to: (a) prevent incorrect interpretation of the provided corrective input because it may result into fossilization; (b) direct the attention of young FL learners toward the correct linguistic form; (c) to check that the learners are able to retain the meaning of rules and know how to use them correctly; and finally (d) develop the learners' linguistic

knowledge, reinforce comprehension, and promote positive attitude toward English language to speak accurately, clearly, and confidently.

7. Research Methodology

In order to meet the aim of the current study, which undertakes to explore whether the middle school EFL teachers utilize concrete materials for error correction, a *descriptive-interpretive* methodology seems to be more appropriate to attain accurate data and propose the most reliable findings as well as analysis. The basic aim of this method is to describe the strategies that are employed for error correction and interpret their effects on the pupils' comprehension of the provided corrective input and achievement of the overall oral accuracy.

The paper attempts to address the following questions:

1. Do EFL middle school teachers utilize concrete materials for correction of oral errors?
2. What are the immediate effects of correction on the young EFL middle school pupils' comprehension?

8. Research Tool

Correcting young learners' oral errors is not an easy mission in the EFL classes. It requires a special teacher who is capable to live in their world and work within it. The absence of efficacious strategies that correspond to the level of the pupils' cognitive capacities and the needs of this stage (i.e., concrete operational phase), hinders the development of the overall oral accuracy. For this, *classroom observation* of first, second, and third grade levels has been purposefully selected and used in this study by being physically present in the field, Bachir Ben Nacer Middle School classroom.

Overall, our observation takes two weeks period, respectively. A total of ten classes are observed in classrooms of experienced and novice teachers of English. The three teachers are males and female. They have taught EFL in the middle school from three to thirty-three years. In Bachir Ben Nacer Middle School, the English classes are somehow crowded, with ten to thirty eight pupils. The classes are divided according to the academic ability of the pupils. Class one is the best and class four is the poorest. This division, from pedagogical point of view, helps teachers to make the content of the English lessons, explanation and activities more suitable and comprehensible.

In order to better understand the immediate effects of correction on the observed middle school young FL pupils of English emotional, cognitive and behavioral attitudes, this study uses stimulated recall interviews. After classroom observation, the pupils, who have been corrected, are asked to make retrospective report on their feelings, thinking, and decisions on the way they have been corrected. This type of interview has been found to be more effective and less disruptive because the participants are isolated from the original environment that consists of many stimuli, which may affect their responses.

9. Population & Sample

The populations for the study include Algerian middle school EFL teachers and pupils teaching and learning at Bachir Ben Nacer Middle School in the west of the region of Biskra the southeast of Algeria. Besides, a sample of six (n=6) pupils (aged 11-15), from the three grades, has been purposefully interviewed for simulated recall. A sample of two-hundred and forty-seven (n=247) pupils (aged 11-15) across the first three grades, and a sample of three (n=3) teachers have been put under observation.

10. Research limitations

Although the Directorate for Education and Learning of Biskra allows the current study to be conducted at Bachir Ben Nacer Middle School, and the director of that school accepts it, one teacher rejects our presence for classroom observation. In addition to this, after four days, the director permits for two days only to finish the work; instead of nineteen days period because the teachers are busy; they need to cover the program for the exam. Furthermore, they feel uncomfortable to teach, or to deal with the pupils due to our presence. Besides, since the school closes its door at 16:00 PM, this hinders us to conduct interviews with the corrected pupils for stimulated recall about the immediate effects of teacher correction on their attitude.

11. Findings and discussion

11.1. Successful and Unsuccessful Strategies

In the following, we are going to present the strategies the teachers are observed using in their correction of oral errors. The reported success or failure of these strategies is discussed in the light of whether the EFL pupils understand the provided corrective input, or this knowledge seems vague and constantly leading to the reproduction of inaccuracies.

11.1.1. Immediate Correction via Interruption

It has been observed that the middle school teachers of English do not wait until the pupils finish their utterance to offer evaluations or to make comments. The observation reveals that these teachers stop their pupils at the error to provide in place of the incorrect form with correct language form immediately. We can see this in the following transcript taken from a recording of first year middle school English class lesson.

1. [The experienced teacher asks the pupils (n=25) to conjugate the verb (to go) in the future tense in the utterance, I (to go) to the zoo tomorrow].

[This teacher asks one pupil to go to the board to conjugate the verb "I'll go" in the futur.]

P: I will go to the //.

T: No. Ah... I'll.

P: I will //.

T: No. I'll [strong emphasis on the word] go.

☒→P: I'll go to the zoo tomorrow. You will //.

T: Tuh tuh, y'll.

☒→P: You'll go to the zoo tomorrow. She will //.

In example (1), the teacher rejects the answer given by the pupil because it is not in the correct form that this teacher wants (i.e., I'll instead of I will); therefore, this pupil has been frequently interrupted for correction. As the arrows show, interruption by the teacher for several times has no positive effects on the erred pupil's performance because this pupil is not able to notice the form and the meaning. Will is an auxiliary verb indicating the future tense, and I'll is also auxiliary verb indicating the future tense. However, the slight difference between will and I'll is that this latter is only a reduction of will. In this respect, Schmidt (1990) mentions that input necessarily does not become intake for language learning unless it is noticed, that is, consciously registered. Furthermore, it has been observed that the pupil has not been involved in the correction process to notice the gap and the modification of the output, so he learns nothing.

We have also noticed that the observed EFL teachers stop their pupils at the error to remind them about the usage of the grammar rules as an opportunity to encourage self-correction, as in examples (2) and (3).

2. [The experienced teacher recommends the second year middle school pupils of English (n=23) to ask questions on the underlined words in the following utterance: The mechanic is going to repair cars in his garage today].

T: ... Question number two: cars. Be careful! I did not underline the verb, Okay?

Ps: Yes, Madam.

T: Good. So, what do we say? Yes.

☒→P: What is [*sic*] going //.

T: What is?! Where is the subject?

☒→P: What is the mechanic going going to do to do [*sic*] [stuttering]? //

☒→T: Serrar, Be careful! I did underline the verb. Look [in the previous example] we underlined the verb so we put do. Yes?

P: Yes Madam.

T: So, what do we say? ☒

☒→P: What is the mechanic going to repair [*sic*] [means repair] [pause] to repair cars?

T: Just a minute, just a minute☒c repeat the question Serrar.

☒→P: What is what is [*sic*] [stuttering] the mechanic going [*sic*]? //

☒→T: Not Serrar! Double is! What is the mechanic is?! [Pause] Remaissa. Listen to your friend.

P: What is the mechanic going to repair in his garage today?

3. [The inexperienced teacher asks the third year middle school pupils of English (n=29) to construct comparative form utterance: “A peacock/ beautiful/ butterfly”].

☞→P: A pea [pause] a peacock [hesitated] //.

T: Listen, where is the adjective here peacock or butterfly?

P: Beautiful.

☞→T: Try to count the syllables... one, two, three..., so in your mind this is long adjective.

Long adjective is what the rule is: more plus adjective plus than.

☞→P: A peacock is [sic] beautifuler [sic] than a butterfly.

T: Try to respond as what we did in few minutes left [during the explanation of the lesson].

☞ Another pupil: A peacock is more beautiful than a butterfly.

☞→T: Correct [your errors].

☞→P: [No response].

In these two instances, the teachers try to encourage self-correction via interruption. Nevertheless, the erred pupils, as the arrows show, do not understand the provided input, and they have failed to retain prior knowledge when they are stopped in the middle of what they are saying to eventually correct their own errors. Garcia (1999) explains that language learners do not easily shift from an oral activity to an explanation of language features which cause difficulty in both comprehension and usage. To illustrate, in the second transcript, the pupil is observed being unable to pay attention and incapable of concentrating with what his teacher is saying to understand how to correct his own errors successfully. Instead, the pupil gets distracted by the frequent interruptions accompanied by verbal stimulus. And this strategy results into the production of a very grave error as in, “What is what is [sic] [stuttering] the mechanic going? (Addition of unnecessary auxiliary is).

Similarly, interruptions by the teacher can discourage the learners to continue with the oral activity. This is well illustrated in the third transcript. Although the pupil has received instructions to formulate comparative form utterance with long adjective correctly, and although the errors have already been corrected by her classmate, she remains silent to self-correct the targeted errors (A peacock is [sic] beautifuler [sic] than a butterfly “ a peacock is more beautiful than a butterfly). Consequently, it is has been firmly established that immediate reactions to inaccurate performance can evoke negative effects, such as fear, embarrassment and frustration, which may inhibit the pupils to do thinking to self-correct or to intake the provided input more effectively.

11.1.2. Repetition with Change Lacking Visual Reminders

One other strategy the observed middle school teachers of English frequently utilize in their correction of oral errors is that of repetition with change, or correction with change. This can be seen in the following example taken from a recording of second year middle school English class lesson.

1. [The inexperienced teacher requires the second year middle school pupils (n=24)

to read dialogue from their school book]

A/ →P: I have got two tickets for the concert. Would you like to to [stuttering] /dʒeɪn/ [sic] [join] me? //

→T: [Loudly] /dʒɔɪn/.

→P: /d...n/ [join] me. Yes, I would love too! Thank you.

B/ T: [Tells another pupil to read]

→P: Would you like to / dʒæɪn / [sic] [join] me? //

→T: [Loudly] / dʒɔɪn / not/ dʒæɪn /... / dʒɔɪn /.

→P: /dʒæɪn/ [sic] [join] me.

→T: /dʒɔɪn/ /dʒɔɪn/... say /dʒɔɪn/.

→P: /dʒæɪn/ [sic].

→T: look at me /dʒɔɪn/.

→P: /dʒɔɪn/ /dʒæɪn/ [sic] [join] me.

→Ps: Sir, she has repeated the same error.

C/ T: [Tells another pupil to read]

P: Yanis: it is my birthday next Thursday, do you want to joinis [sic]? //

T: Join us.

→P: Join us. Linda: /su:ɪ/ [sic] [sure] //.

→T: [Loudly] /ʃɔ:/

→P: / ʃɔ:/ what time? Yanis: Three O'clock.

→T: /ʃɔ:/ [asks for repetition]

→P: /su:ɪ/ [sic] /su:ɪ/[sic].

T: /ʃɔ:/ certainly, effectively. Sure means.

D/ T: [Tells another pupil to read]

P: I [sic] got two two [stuttering] //.

→T: I've got two tickets. /wɔd/ / [would] you like to join us?

→P: I've got two tickets. /wɔld/ [sic] [would] you like to join us? //

→T: do not pronounce do not pronounce /wɔld/... /wɔd/. It is a silent letter /wɔd/.

In these four excerpts, the teacher not only interrupts the erred pupils to correct their mispronunciation of the words *join*, *sure*, and *would*; but also corrects in a passive way in the air without visual reminders or board work. As the arrows show, in A, B, C, and D instances, the teacher makes use of *repetition with change strategy* in correction of pronunciation errors, and that this appears to be fruitful at the time of correction. Indeed, once some time elapses, we have noticed that the erred pupils and the rest of their classmates go back making the same errors as in, /dʒæɪn /, /dʒɔɪn/. Moreover, this observation has shown that in the last instance (D), the teacher provides verbal phonetic explanation to evoke awareness that the sound [l] in the word (*would* → /wʊd/) is silent. This verbal explanation appears *vague* as well as *difficult* to the pupil. Therefore, she does not pay attention to the correction and continues reading incorrectly.

Middle school pupils will pay attention, concentrate and become capable to retain prior knowledge only if the teacher employs *mnemonic strategy* through repetition instead of repetition with change strategy. In this strategy, mispronunciation of English words are to be corrected in the following way: (a) writing each letter of the targeted word in different colored pens illustrated on either the board or colored papers; (b) helping the pupil to pronounce the letters as sounds and then as one word (e.g., w.o.u.l.d/ *would*) via repetition, using finger to direct their sight and familiarize them with the correct orthography (Daneil, 2001); or (c) utilizing drawing to enable the pupil notice the silent letter in the word *would* (see Appendix 6). These procedures, as Daneil explains, provide pupils with powerful memory stimulus to pronounce words correctly, retain them clearly, and know what to do when they are first learning to read.

11.2. Data Analysis of Stimulated Recall Interviews

11.2.1. Pupils Perceptions on the Teachers' Correction

The middle school EFL pupils (n= 6) address several comments on the ways their oral errors are corrected.

11.2.1.1. Vague Corrective Input

The interviewed pupils report that the teacher's explanation of grammar rules seems vague and difficult to be effectively understood. The provided incomprehensible input prevents them to do their classroom oral activities correctly or even to feel motivated to learn English. This vague corrective input has led to frequent error production. The following three excerpts illustrate this fact. The first excerpt is from first year middle school pupil of age 11 years old.

When the teacher presents the lesson, I do not understand it because this teacher works alone, writes the lesson without our participation, and explains violently not eagerly from his heart without care if we understand it or not.

Another pupil aged (14), in her third year English class, mentions that the difficult input and the inappropriate behavior of the novice teacher inhibit her to concentrate with what the teacher is instructing. This pupil reports,

When we make errors, my teacher shouts and easily gets angry and furious. This inappropriate behavior inhibits the pupils to learn. We want to understand the lesson effectively without being afraid. We want the lesson to be presented in a funny way. The activities need to be simple and fit our level to do them correctly. The teacher must love us in order to love his subject.

One other pupil aged (11), in her first year English class, reports,

Although the lesson is simple, the teacher complicates and makes it harder and harder. Therefore, we do not understand; we do not feel motivated to learn it, and we do not like English altogether. I prefer a kind of teacher who is kind, always cheerful, and loves to teach English from his heart and not like our teacher who does not care about us.

We can see from the already stated excerpts that the pupils are not able to intake the corrective input due to the following factors: (a) Teachers seem to work alone without collaborating with their pupils to take apart and participate in the classroom; (b) The novice teacher explains the lesson angrily without checking with his pupils if they understand the instructions; and (c) The novice teacher appears furious when an error is made. These factors, consequently, discourage the pupils to conceive the input because they are almost afraid. Cameron (2012) indicates that young FL learners lose interests quickly, and they are less able to keep themselves motivated on tasks they find *difficult*. They also, unlike adults, cannot process meta-explanation of grammar rules or concepts. As we observe, it has to be informed that young EFL pupils are found to be more interested in how they are treated, rather than on what they learn. To illustrate, one pupil says, *"I prefer a kind of teacher who is kind, always cheerful, and loves to teach English from his heart and not like our teacher who does not care about us."* Therefore, the interviewed pupils feel de-motivated to learn English and even hate it.

11.2.1.2. The Right for Modified Input

Concerning the learners' right for modified input, three interviewed pupils indicate that they never make a mistake to ask for clarification or modified input if they do not understand what the teacher has been saying or doing. Moreover, when the teacher wants to know whether the presented input is clear enough and well understood, the pupils either indicate that it is well understood or remain silent. The following excerpt from 1st grade level pupil of age (11) illustrates this problem.

Due to extreme fear, we cannot tell the teacher that we have not understood because he will embarrass or punish us saying, "Why do not you concentrate and follow?", "as if I am teaching herd of sheep!", "rassa morra" and so on. This behavior negatively affects our emotions, in which I feel worthless as if I resemble the chair. So, I hate the subject, and I do not feel eager to learn it.

The inexperienced middle school EFL teacher negative attitude to error production influences his choice of strategy. The pupils avoid to participate and to ask for clarification because of punishment, which is often used assuming to enhance positive performance. Herein, Coon (2005) and Coon and Mitterer (2008), not surprisingly, state that punishment either verbal or physical has the following serious consequences: (a) conditioning of fear and resentment; (b) can greatly increase aggression; and most importantly (c) encourages escape and avoidance learning. Evidently, because of fear to be blamed and punished if mistakes are made, pupils fail to do their activities correctly, and they do not speak in English at all.

11.2.1.3. Noticing Corrective Input

The interviewed pupils mention that verbal correction does not help them to notice the gap between the correct form in the input and the incorrect form in the output. Noticing the corrective input is perceived as being very essential for effective comprehension and long-term retention. We can see this problem in the following two excerpts: The first excerpt is from the second grade level pupil aged (12); whereas, the second excerpt is from the third grade level pupil aged (14). They take interview rather than prose form.

1. Interviewer: What was your error that the teacher corrects?

Pupil: I have forgotten to add the singular auxiliary of the verb “to be → is”, in “What is the mechanic going to repair [sic] in her [sic] garage? [Reading the correct answer from his copybook]

Interviewer: Why do you commit that error?

Pupil: Due to the lack of attention and concentration.

Now, we are going to present the second excerpt followed by comments and conclusion.

2. Interviewer: What were your errors that your classmate corrects?

Pupil: I have added “than” which must not be added in the sentence, “A peacock is beautiful than butterfly”. However, I still do not know why my classmate has omitted “er” from the adjective “beautiful”.

Interviewer: Why do you make these errors?

Pupil: Because I did not understand the explanation the teacher provides.

Interviewer: How do you prefer your errors be corrected?

Pupil: I prefer the teacher to correct the errors and to explain for me why I must omit “er” from the adjective “beautiful” and add “than” in order not to repeat the same errors once again.

This stimulated recall shows that the pupils leave the school room with wrong knowledge. In excerpt (1), the pupil thinks that he forgets to add the auxiliary “is” only. By contrast, this pupil, as we have observed, fails to construct WH question sentence “The mechanic is going to repair cars in his garage”; in which he: (firstly) omitted the subject “what is [sic] going”; (secondly) added unnecessary auxiliary “to do” in “What is the mechanic going to do[sic]?”; (thirdly) included the direct object in the sentence saying, “What is the mechanic going to repair [sic] cars [sic]?”; and (fourthly) added double “is” to the question, “What is the mechanic is [sic] going?” Similarly, in excerpt (2), the third year pupil has: (a) added “er” to the long adjective “beautiful”; (b) omitted the word “more”; and (c) thought that the word “than” has to be omitted in constructing comparative form.

The interviewed pupils indicate that the lack of attention as well as concentration, in addition, the teachers input which seems difficult to understand and intake it effectively are the major factors behind error production. Teachers are not aware of these challenges; they instead create tremendous pressure on the pupils to give correct answers in order to feel good and bring themselves to the observation that their commitment to teaching is reinforced. Hence, input goes unnoticed, which is evident in the interviewee performance.

As we have been informed, our participants expected that their teachers will bring to their attention the difference between the incorrect and the correct forms to understand the provided corrective input more effectively. It should be noted that, once again, they prefer the use of visual reminders and not verbal correction to increase the rate of noticing and retention. Not surprisingly, statistics in instructional media research of E. P Zayas- Baya show that color visuals enhance immediate recall (after three hours) about 85 % and delayed recall (after three days) about 65 % (as cited in Hamilton, 2011). Ideally, the use of pictures, flashcards, drawing, color visuals helps FL pupils to stick information in their mind’s eye as well as anchor learning.

Conclusion

Classroom observations demonstrate that middle school teachers of English frequently utilize *interruption* and *repetition with change lacking visual anchor* techniques in their correction of oral errors, although a great majority of the pupils want their errors to be corrected through *visual colors* strategy. This strategy is not utilized due to the following reasons: (a) The teachers are not trained in how to employ it to improve pupils’ very low level in English; (b) This strategy seems to be time-consuming; in which teachers have long syllabus to cover; and most importantly (c) The teachers are de-motivated because they think that their pupils are not interested in learning English.

From purely cognitive and linguistic perspective, stimulated recall interviews with the corrected pupils’ oral errors findings demonstrate that the pupils do not understand the provided corrective input because of the following reasons: (a) the teachers correct so quickly; (b) they do not care if the pupils understand the content; (c) the pupils do not notice their error and what the correct form is; (d) the teachers correct in a complicated way; and (e) the pupils find English lessons difficult. Owing to pupils fear of being punished, intimidated, or abused if they indicate to their teachers and state that they have not

understood the input; evidently, they leave the school room with wrong linguistic knowledge and attitudes.

It has to be acknowledged that young language learners are supposed to be more dependent on their teachers to guide them toward the correct performance that they want. They seek explicit rather than meta-explanation of grammar rules due to their limited cognitive ability to process abstract (and complicated) linguistic input. In addition, they channel information through the teachers' use of authentic language, concrete examples, and simple style. Thus, whenever the young language learners notice the linguistic knowledge and understand what their teachers are instructing, they will memorize and recall prior knowledge for self- or peer correction better, efficiently, and explicitly.

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