

THE ROLE OF CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK STRATEGIES AND LEARNER UPTAKE IN DEVELOPING COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

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Abstract. This study examines how corrective feedback influences learner uptake in English as a Foreign Language classrooms. Six types of corrective feedback are identified and discussed: explicit correction, recasts, clarification requests, metalinguistic feedback, elicitation, and repetition, alongside corresponding categories of learner uptake, ranging from successful repair to needs-repair. The analysis draws on foundational research in second language acquisition to explore how different feedback strategies vary in their effectiveness at prompting learner engagement and error correction. Particular attention is given to the role of learner motivation and individual variation in shaping feedback outcomes. The paper concludes by considering how corrective feedback can be integrated strategically into communicative classroom practice to support both linguistic accuracy and communicative competence, positioning feedback not as a source of anxiety but as a meaningful driver for language growth.

Keywords: corrective feedback, learner uptake, explicit correction, recast, clarification request, metalinguistic feedback, elicitation, repetition, communicative competence

Annotatsiya. Ushbu maqola korreksion fikr-mulohazaning (corrective feedback) ingliz tilini xorijiy til sifatida o'rganuvchilar (EFL) sinfxonalarida o'quvchilarning o'zlashtirish jarayoniga (learner uptake) qanday ta'sir ko'rsatishini o'rganadi. Korreksion fikr-mulohazaning oltita turi aniqlanib muhokama qilinadi: aniq tuzatish (explicit correction), qayta ifodalash (recast), aniqlashtirish so'rovi (clarification request), metalingvistik fikr-mulohaza (metalinguistic feedback), yordamchi savol (elicitation) va takrorlash (repetition), shuningdek, muvaffaqiyatli tuzatishdan to yakunlanmagan tuzatishgacha bo'lgan o'quvchi javoblarining mos kategoriyalari ham ko'rib chiqiladi. Tahlil ikkinchi til o'zlashtirishiga oid fundamental tadqiqotlarga asoslanib, turli fikr-mulohaza strategiyalarining o'quvchi faolligini rag'batlantirish va xatolarni tuzatishdagi samaradorligi qanday farq qilishini o'rganadi. O'quvchi motivatsiyasi va individual farqlarning fikr-mulohaza natijalariga ta'siriga alohida e'tibor qaratiladi. Maqola korreksion fikr-mulohazani kommunikativ sinfxona amaliyotiga strategik tarzda qanday kiritish mumkinligi, til aniqligi va kommunikativ kompetentsiyani qo'llab - quvvatlash haqida mulohazalar bilan yakunlanadi hamda fikr-mulohazani tashvish manbai sifatida emas, balki til rivojlanishining muhim rag'batlantiruvchisi sifatida taqdim etadi.

Kalit so'zlar: korreksion fikr-mulohaza, o'quvchi o'zlashtirishi, aniq tuzatish, qayta ifodalash, aniqlashtirish so'rovi, metalingvistik fikr-mulohaza, yordamchi savol, takrorlash, kommunikativ kompetentsiya

Introduction

Among the many tools available to language teachers, feedback stands out as one of the most effective tools of student progress. Feedback is not just about pointing out

what went wrong, it's about guiding students to what they can do better, and how. Hattie (2009) mentioned that "The aim of feedback is to reduce the gap between current and desired performance". In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) settings, where learners encounter English primarily within the classroom rather than through daily immersion in an English-speaking environment, how teachers respond to learner errors takes on even greater significance. Unlike ESL contexts where learners can have exposure outside the classroom, EFL learners in countries such as Uzbekistan, China, or Brazil rely heavily on instructed input and teacher interaction as their main source of language development. In this environment, corrective feedback becomes a critical mechanism for building both linguistic accuracy and communicative confidence.

Despite its recognized importance, many instructors remain uncertain about which corrective feedback strategies most effectively foster learner response and language development (DeKeyser, 1993, p. 501). This uncertainty points to a critical gap between theory and classroom practice that demands a closer examination of the relationship between feedback type and learner uptake.

Lyster and Ranta (1997) situate their study within the context of previous research on corrective feedback, demonstrating how different methodological approaches have shaped our understanding of error correction. The analysis identifies six major types of corrective feedback, examines categories of learner uptake, and considers how feedback can be integrated strategically to support communicative competence.

Based on another research, DeKeyser's (1993) study shows learners with low extrinsic motivation benefited more from error correction on oral tasks, whereas those with high extrinsic motivation performed better without correction. This suggests that error correction's impact is not uniform but depends on learner characteristics and context.

Main Body

Lyster and Ranta (1997) identified six different types of corrective feedback used by teachers in response to learner errors. Understanding these types is essential for making informed instructional decisions.

The first type, explicit correction, involves the teacher directly providing the correct form and clearly indicating that an error has occurred. For example, if a student says "He go to school every day," the teacher responds: "You should say He goes to school every day." This helps students understand their mistakes and correct them.

Recasts involves rephrasing the learner's utterance correctly without explicitly marking it as a correction. If a student says "She like pizza," the teacher might respond: "Yes, she likes pizza." Lyster and Ranta (1997) found that recasts were the most frequently used feedback type, yet the least effective at eliciting learner repair, as students often failed to recognize them as corrective (p. 42).

The third type, clarification requests, signal that the teacher has not understood the learner's message, prompting reformulation. A teacher might respond to "Yesterday I go to the park" with "Pardon? Yesterday you...?" This strategy encourages the learner to reconsider both meaning and form.

Metalinguistic feedback provides comments or hints about the grammatical properties of the error without supplying the correct form. For instance, "Remember, in the third person we say doesn't, not don't — can you try again?" This approach draws learners' attention to the rule underlying the error.

Elicitation involves prompting the learner to self-correct through strategic pausing or questioning. A teacher might say “My father...?” and wait for the learner to complete the sentence correctly. This technique positions learners as active agents in the correction process.

The sixth type, repetition, involves the teacher repeating the learner’s error with a rising intonation to signal that something is wrong. For example, responding to “I goed to the store” with “Goed?” draws attention to the error without directly correcting it.

Lyster and Ranta (1997) define learner uptake as the immediate response a learner produces following corrective feedback (p. 49). Uptake serves as a visible indicator of whether feedback has been noticed and processed. It is categorized into two types: repair and needs-repair.

Repair occurs when the learner successfully corrects the error following feedback. This may take several forms: simple repetition of the correct form, self-repair after a hint, peer-repair when a classmate supplies the correction, or incorporation, where the learner embeds the correct form within a longer utterance. Repair reflects active engagement with the feedback and suggests a degree of metalinguistic awareness.

Needs-repair, by contrast, occurs when the learner's response still contains an error or is otherwise incomplete. This category includes acknowledgement (the learner simply says “yes” or “ok” without producing the correct form), repetition of the same error, introduction of a different error, hesitation, off-target responses, or partial repair where only part of the mistake is corrected (Lyster & Ranta, 1997, p. 49).

The gap between repair and needs-repair outcomes carries significant consequences for teaching practice. When a specific feedback strategy consistently results in needs-repair, it may indicate either that the correction is not salient enough for learners to notice, or that they lack the linguistic resources to self-correct at that point. Noticing these allows teachers to adjust and improve their approach to error correction.

Conclusion

Corrective feedback is a powerful pedagogical resource that, when used strategically, can meaningfully advance second language development. The research of Lyster and Ranta (1997) demonstrates that not all feedback types are equally effective in promoting learner uptake and repair. Feedback strategies that require learners to actively engage in the correction, such as elicitation, metalinguistic feedback, and clarification requests, which generate higher rates of successful repair than the more commonly used recast. At the same time, DeKeyser (1993) reminds us that the impact of feedback depends on individual learner variables, including motivation and task context.

For educators committed to developing both linguistic accuracy and communicative competence, these findings point toward a more reflective and differentiated approach to error correction. Feedback should not be a reflexive response to learner errors but a deliberate instructional choice guided by an understanding of how learners process correction and what conditions most effectively support their growth.

Corrective feedback is not a mechanism for error elimination. It is a pedagogical act that communicates expectations, builds metalinguistic awareness, and supports learners in becoming more accurate, confident, and independent users of the target language. When feedback is integrated thoughtfully into communicative practice, it becomes not a source of anxiety but a driver for genuine language growth.

References

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