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Foreign Language Teachers' Perceptions of Error Correction in Speaking Classes: A Qualitative Study

Nuriye Değirmenci Uysal

Balikesir University, Balikesir, Turkey, nuriyedeğirmenci@balikesir.edu.tr

Selami Aydın

Balikesir University, Balikesir, Turkey, selami.aydin@medeniyet.edu.tr

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Abstract

Limited studies have been conducted on the effects of error correction on acquiring oral proficiency and the teacher's role as error corrector. Thus, the present study aims to investigate English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers' perceptions of error correction in their speaking classes, reasons and types of errors they correct and their error correction strategies. The sample group in the study consisted of 15 English instructors working at a state university in Turkey. The data collection instruments consisted of a background questionnaire, reflections, interviews and essay papers. Results showed that EFL teachers seem to make corrections to improve learners' accuracy during speaking, grammar and vocabulary knowledge and pronunciation skills and that EFL teachers believe that error correction may contribute to habit formation in terms of self-correction among students, pragmatic and appropriate use of the target language, learners' accuracy and fluency. Another conclusion was concluded that teachers concentrate on pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary errors that directly distort meaning while speaking, and that they seem to use various strategies to correct errors. It was recommended that the curricula of teacher training programs should include topics to raise awareness of the issues such as reasons to make corrections, situations that require corrections, error types and correction strategies.

Keywords

English as a Foreign Language, Speaking, Error Correction, Teacher, Qualitative Research

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Foreign Language Teachers' Perceptions of Error Correction in Speaking Classes: A Qualitative Study

Nuriye Değirmenci Uysal and Selami Aydin
Balıkesir University, Balıkesir, Turkey

Limited studies have been conducted on the effects of error correction on acquiring oral proficiency and the teacher's role as error corrector. Thus, the present study aims to investigate English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers' perceptions of error correction in their speaking classes, reasons and types of errors they correct and their error correction strategies. The sample group in the study consisted of 15 English instructors working at a state university in Turkey. The data collection instruments consisted of a background questionnaire, reflections, interviews and essay papers. Results showed that EFL teachers seem to make corrections to improve learners' accuracy during speaking, grammar and vocabulary knowledge and pronunciation skills and that EFL teachers believe that error correction may contribute to habit formation in terms of self-correction among students, pragmatic and appropriate use of the target language, learners' accuracy and fluency. Another conclusion was concluded that teachers concentrate on pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary errors that directly distort meaning while speaking, and that they seem to use various strategies to correct errors. It was recommended that the curricula of teacher training programs should include topics to raise awareness of the issues such as reasons to make corrections, situations that require corrections, error types and correction strategies. Keywords: English as a Foreign Language, Speaking, Error Correction, Teacher, Qualitative Research

To communicate effectively in the target language, mastering four basic language skills is important. Receptive skills of listening and reading allow recognition of language input and help comprehension, whereas productive skills of speaking and writing provide production of language forms to convey messages (Cobb, 2001). A great deal of attention is increasingly devoted to spoken interaction, as speaking is essential in the communication process. Learning to how to speak in a foreign language means knowing about its grammar and semantics and how to interact like a native speaker in communication process. Speaking proficiency requires using specific skills and strategies in communication. Therefore, EFL learners should be explicitly instructed and practiced to speak fluently and appropriately (Shumin, 2002). Among those instructions and practices, reducing errors constitutes a considerable place in speaking skills.

According to Lennon (1991), an error is defined as "a linguistic form or combination of forms which in the same context and under similar conditions of production would, in all likelihood, not be produced by native speakers' counterparts" (p. 182). Richards (1971) classifies errors into three groups: (1) Interference errors that are caused by the effect of first language on second language, (2) intra-lingual errors like overgeneralization or ignorance of rules restriction, and (3) developmental errors that occur when learners attempt to build up hypotheses about the target language on the basis of limited experiences. On the other hand, researchers distinguish errors as performance errors and competence errors. Performance errors are easy to tackle with, as they mostly occur because of poor learning conditions such as limited time and anxiety. Competence errors, on the other hand, show the insufficiency of learners'

competence (Touchie, 1986). Errors provide evidence of students' learning and needs. This allows us to focus on *teaching the learners* rather than merely *teaching the course*. The errors show learners' needs to address them effectively. In other words, when treated effectively with constructive feedback, errors lead to better learning. In this context, it is essential to avoid negative assessment, and to provide a non-judgmental atmosphere. Once teachers regard errors as a natural part of learning, learners feel more encouraged to speak. At this point, effective oral correction works well if the teacher reacts positively to errors.

The role of the teacher as error corrector is identified in accordance with the roles of controller, assessor, organizer, prompter, participant, resource, tutor, and investigator. Thus, the teacher needs to correct errors depending on the roles in speaking class. The teacher as a controller and as an investigator takes in the opposite parts in the amount of error correction. Relatively, gentle correction can be seen gentle correction in classes where the teacher is assessor, organizer or prompter. The teacher's role as participant, resource, and tutor are mostly facilitative and less controlling. Last, the teacher as investigator is more likely to investigate her own teaching behaviors and enrich her knowledge and experience on learning and teaching. Therefore the roles of teachers are the key part of error correction process (Harmer, 1991).

It seems that most of the researchers agree with the importance of teachers' role in error correction, while the amount, time, and type of corrective feedback differ in various situations. It is the teacher who evaluates how significant the error is, and takes necessary actions (Akhter, 2007). In this process, the teacher uses a variety of corrective feedback strategies such as asking questions, offering to the student/class for correction, pausing and giving another chance and repeating the error with rising intonation. It is also effective to use delayed feedback like writing mistakes on the board or hand-out and providing further practice such as diagnostic homework. Another way to make error correction effective is to discuss options with colleagues and classes. Before correcting, the teacher should also analyze what kind of error is made. For instance, some questions that can be asked to decide the error type are about whether they are intelligible frequent, important and level-specific or not. In this sense, teachers act as a corrector and lead learners to correct themselves or each other. This action is also compatible with the modern educational ideology of learner-centeredness (Ellis, 2009). Although Krashen (1982) asserts that "error correction only assists the development of *learned knowledge* and plays no role in *acquired knowledge*" (p. 75), there is evidence to suggest that promoting self-correction is effective in acquisition (Ferris, 2006). Harmer (1991) discusses the limits of correction, and advises teachers not to interfere with communication by emphasizing on accuracy and asking for repetition too much. In addition, Burt (1975) suggested focusing on *global* rather than *local errors* that impair communication. As a result, all errors should not be inclined equally serious by the teacher with the notion that *an error is an error* (Vann, Meyer, & Lorenz, 1984).

Error correction was one of the main concerns of language teaching in the 1950s and 1960s. In the Grammar-Translation method, students are expected to have the correct answer and if students make errors, the teacher acts as a corrector (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). As Brooks (1960, p. 58) put it, "like sin, error is to be avoided and its influence overcome, but its presence is to be expected." However, when once the effect of audio-lingual approach decreased in foreign/second language, the rigid rules on error correction began to be questioned (Oladejo, 1993). The Direct Method focuses on self-correction of students by using different techniques (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). It is highly important to provide a secure environment where the teacher is counselor and has a supportive role (Richards & Rodgers, 1986). Errors are seen as natural part of the learning process. Thus, fluency rather than accuracy is important in Communicative Language Teaching. (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). Krashen (1982) advocates unconscious learning by means of comprehensible input but in the acquisition process, *noticing* is inevitable. According to the Noticing Hypothesis, there is a need for noticing of language

input. Thus, corrective feedback plays a crucial role as it gives abundant opportunities to notice of gaps in the language learning process (El Tatawy, 2006). Below, given that the teacher's role seems significant in a foreign language learning context, a brief review of literature is presented on teachers' perceptions of error correction in speaking classes.

Literature Review

Results from related studies on error correction show types of feedback and their implications, how to handle error correction and inconsistencies in teachers' stated beliefs and practices. Subsequent studies are mostly related to the obstacles in oral proficiency and overcoming oral mistakes, the relationship between oral correction and anxiety level and the teachers' and students' expectation. Research also focused on the effect on learners' written work and how teacher and student correct errors and the request for teacher assistance. While there are a few studies on how teachers response to errors and their effects, different classroom techniques for error correction and teacher's role, there is one study that suggests oral correction does not work. In addition, it should be underlined that the topic has not drawn much attention in both global and local research contexts in recent years.

Having analyzed the types of feedback and their implications in his study, Tsang (2004) found that teachers mostly used recast and explicit correction in error correction but they did not necessarily lead students to repair while repetition was the most frequent types of feedback which resulted in repairs. He suggested that negotiation worked most for the grammatical errors while the phonological errors were frequently repaired through the recast and explicit correction. Two implications can be drawn accordingly: Using different types of feedback may be more beneficial than giving the correct forms; and while grammatical repairs are likely to follow negotiation, the recast and explicit correction promote the phonological repairs. On the other hand, Lasagabaster and Sierra (2005) aimed to find out whether the error correction strategies facilitate students' learning and whether the students find these corrections effective. The study showed that the students did not recognize a significant number of teacher corrections. The teachers and the students in the study stated that error corrections were more efficient when sufficient time and explanations.

The researches give some opinions about teachers' and students' perceptions on error correction. In their study, Basturkmen, Loewen, and Ellis (2004) explored the teachers' perceptions about communicative language teaching. The researchers compared the practices and beliefs about the role of form in communicative activities. They concluded that the perceptions that the teachers stated and the practices they did in communicative tasks were not consistent as they tended to use error correction related to the form. The findings suggested a weak relationship between the teachers' perceptions and practices concerning focus on form. Moreover, Ancker (2000) and Duff and Li (2004) compared teachers' and students' perceptions on error correction. According to the results, the teacher inclined to encourage students for peer-interaction and not to use redundant error correction, repetition, or modeling. However, the students were less enthusiastic about peer interaction and preferred more error correction, modeling and repetition, instead. Additionally, Stones (2013) indicated that students favored a variety of error correction techniques from single-word corrections to the whole-sentence reformulations.

Magilow (1999) examined the role of error correction in foreign language classroom. The project investigated the teachers' attitudes and motivations and how they utilized corrective feedback. Magilow (1999) showed that the interaction of theory and practice was necessary to enhance classroom performance. On the other hand, Williams (1999) investigated the learners' attention to form by observing the corrective feedbacks, repetitions, recasts, and clarifications. Williams (1999) presented that the learners tended to attend to form, but rather

infrequently. The learners mostly utilized requesting for assistance from their teachers and the attention to form raised significantly with the increasing proficiency and throughout specific activities. Unlike the findings in previous research, Truscott (1999) asserted that the correction of grammatical errors was not verified and suggested that teachers and students who favor excessive error correction may face serious problems regarding teaching and learning. The research also pointed out that grammatical fluency could not be possible by the help of oral correction.

There has been very little classroom research on corrective feedback in EFL classroom situations with non-native teachers. Kubota (1991), for instance, examined EFL teachers' error correction strategies regarding error type and the effects of the error correction on students' learning. The results showed that: (1) the teachers ignored one-third of linguistic errors, repeated less than one-third of incorrect utterances of the students, and treated high-frequency errors often; (2) teachers used more explicit than implicit feedback; (3) other-correction predominated over self-correction; (4) phonological and morpho-syntactic errors were likely to trigger a side explanation sequence than lexical errors; (5) both global and local errors resulted in a side sequence more frequently than a main sequence; and (6) reduced repetitions with emphasis on a key word, repetitions without change of error and explicit feedback were likely to result in success in modification of the student's previous utterance.

There are many studies on written correction while only few studies have been conducted on spoken correction. To begin with, Morra and Asis (2009) conducted a study on error correction in written essays. They examined the impacts of two different types of teacher feedback: notes on the margins and recorded feedback. The results showed that both types of feedback seemed to effect the students' essays in a positive way. On the other hand, Sato (2003) investigated the difficulties that Japanese students encountered in acquiring speaking skills and the role of error correction. In the study, he presented the problems and suggested teachers two teaching techniques to deal with these obstacles. Sato (2003) aimed to reduce the students' anxiety and ensure meaningful interaction in classroom tasks. To reduce anxiety by means of creating a positive atmosphere, selective error correction was offered as it did not disrupt the fluency and the flow of communication. In addition, to ensure the meaningful interaction among students, Sato (2003) suggested the group work as it provided students more opportunities to participate in communicative activities.

There is dearth of studies on the teacher's role as error corrector. For example, Kennedy (2010) observed two groups of students in accordance with their proficiency levels. In the study, a total of 15 students received corrective feedback from an ESL teacher. The findings indicated that the students in two groups produced different error types and the teacher provided different types of feedback for each group. The results suggested that the corrective feedback the teacher provided was determined according to the learners' proficiencies. In a study on different classroom techniques for error correction and teacher's role, Fujioka and Kennedy (1997) investigated college student attitudes toward different classroom techniques for error correction in second language instruction. They reached three conclusions: (1) teacher correction of errors is the dominant type; (2) self-correction is perceived as having a different nature than peer or teacher correction; and (3) class status (freshman, sophomore, etc.) and class size are key factors in preference for self-correction or teacher correction of errors.

Overview of the Study

Error correction has various implications in different approaches by offering teachers a wide range of roles and choices. The balance, quality and quantity of error correction are bound to the teacher. However, limited studies have been conducted on the role of the teacher as error corrector. Thus, the current study was conducted under the guidance of three reasons. Firstly,

the focus has mainly been on writing tasks as in the study of Morra and Asis (2009) and there are only a few researches on spoken interaction. Secondly, the types of errors, correction models and strategies as in the studies of Tsang (2004), Lasagabaster and Sierra (2005) and Magilow (1999) have been studied so far, but it has been observed that there is a lack of systematic approaches to student errors. Last, there is an ambiguity in the teacher's role as error corrector in speaking classes, although the teacher has the key role of error correction in most of the studies. Limited studies have been conducted on the effects of error correction on acquiring oral proficiency and the teacher's role as error corrector, whereas no studies exist on the role of the teacher as error corrector in speaking classes. To conclude, the present study seems to contribute to the relevant literature on the effects of teacher correction on spoken interaction in EFL speaking classroom context, and seeks answers for the following research questions:

1. Do EFL teachers believe that learners' errors should be corrected in speaking classes? Why or why not?
2. When do they think that learners' errors should be corrected?
3. According to EFL teachers, which errors do they think should be corrected?
4. How do they think that learners' errors should be corrected?

The first author of this paper has been doing her Ph.D. in the Department of Foreign Language Education. The author also teaches English courses such as listening, speaking, reading, writing and grammar in preparatory classes and various faculties. The author is interested in teaching and boosting different receptive and productive skills as well as the treatment of testing and test anxiety. In addition, the author is fully aware of the importance of the perceptions of teachers and students and focuses her studies on their perceptions and attitudes to improve teaching and learning EFL. The second author of the paper who completed his Ph.D. dissertation on the effects of computers on testing writing skills has been mainly interested in foreign language testing, technology in language learning and teaching and affective states. The author teaches pre-service teacher training courses research skills, academic writing, linguistics and testing. As the authors noticed that teachers' perceptions of error correction are directly related to learners' achievement and motivation, they focused on how EFL teachers perceive error correction. In other words, the topic of the study seemed significant to the authors, as teachers' perceptions of error correction may have an influence on learners' achievement and motivation in the target language, perceptions of and attitudes towards learning a foreign language. Thus, the outcomes of this research are related to the improvement and engagement in the learning process and will lead new research issues.

Method

Participants

The sample group of the study consisted of 15 English instructors working in School of Foreign Languages at Balıkesir University. The mean of the participants' age, with the range between 24 and 63, was 33.1. Eight (53.3%) of the participants were female and seven (46.7%) were male. Fourteen of the participants graduated from Foreign Language Education Department while one of them studied English Language and Literature at university. The sample group of the study stated that they taught students at the levels of beginner, pre-intermediate and intermediate.

The research was carried out qualitatively as it attempted to identify EFL teachers' perceptions of error correction in speaking classes. The researchers informed the participants

before, after and during the research process on the purposes and outputs of the study. For this purpose, the researchers informed the participants about the role of researcher, significance and purpose of the study, research tools and methodology. As the study involved qualitative research tools, the researchers also presented a claim for exemptions. An approval that was sought from the School of Foreign Languages of Balikesir University was granted. The researchers stated that the participation was voluntary and that they respected participants' privacy. In addition, the researchers stated that there was no risk in participation in the study and that the study was conducted within the bounds of respect for the participants (Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest, & Namey, 2005). Last, the researchers carried out the study after delineating the research ethics to the participants.

Tools

The data collection instruments consisted of a background questionnaire, interviews, reflections and essay papers. The background questionnaire interrogated the instructors about their gender, age, department, degree, and the level they teach. In the interviews, the authors asked the participants about their opinions on error correction in speaking classes. In addition, the participants were inquired about how, when and which errors should be corrected in the interviews. Speaking specifically, the questions aimed to interrogate whether EFL teachers believe that students' errors should be corrected, when they correct the errors, what kind of errors they focus on and how they correct the errors. The questions were also asked and given to the participants as a topic to construct essays and reflections on error correction in speaking classes. In sum, the background questionnaire aimed to present a number of subject variables; and the qualitative research was conducted to gather data from the participants using different techniques such as interviews, reflections and essays.

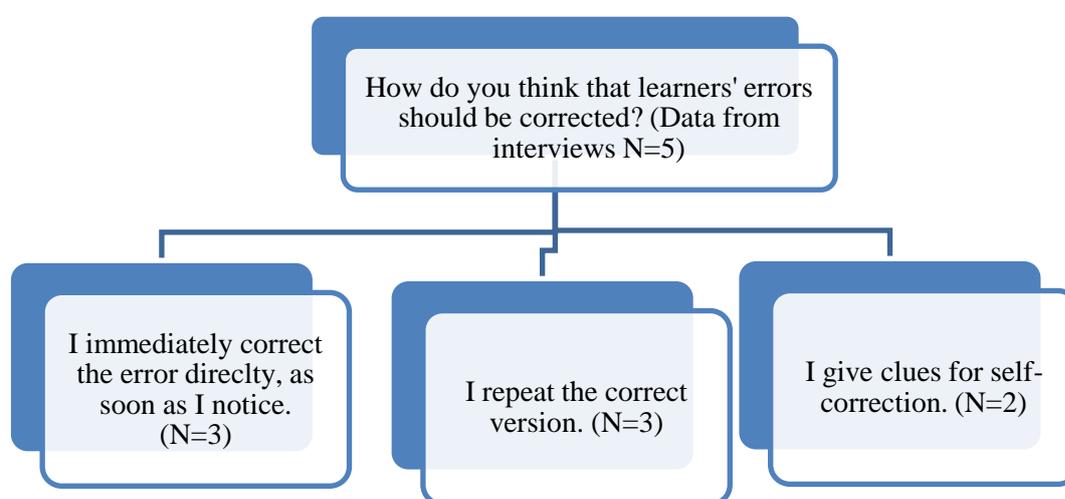
Procedure

The study employed a two-step procedure: data collection and data analysis. In data collection, three instruments were used to ensure the validity of the obtained data: interviews, essay papers and reflections. Participant selection is a component of external validity; therefore, they were selected randomly to ensure generalizability. Participant assignment is a component of internal validity; thus, the researcher assigned the subjects to three groups. In other words, each group consisted of five instructors. The first group wrote their reflections on error correction after their speaking classes. For the second group, the researcher interviewed the participants without any intervention and interruption. As for the last group, the subjects wrote essays that focused on how, which and when errors should be corrected if they believe it is necessary. The reason why three instruments was to ensure validity of the data. Thus, all the data were limited to EFL teachers' perceptions of error corrections in their speaking classes. First, one of the researchers interviewed with five teachers to interrogate EFL teachers' perceptions of error corrections, when and how they correct errors and what kind of errors they focused on. The researchers took notes during interviews and saved the raw data in accordance with the questions. Their responses were also sought in their essay papers written by five EFL teachers and reflections that were written by another five EFL teachers. The researchers did not conduct any pilot or field test as the natural flow of data directed them inductively. As the effectiveness of the questions asked was ensured by the data obtained from three data sources, it was assumed that the saturation of the data was achieved to meet the purpose of the research (Law, Stewart, Letts, Pollock, Bosch, & Westmorland, 2007). The process including data collection, saving and analysis was carried out by the researchers.

In the data analysis, the data obtained from each source were analyzed separately by

the researcher, and transferred into three concept maps after the data collection process. For this purpose, one concept map was used for each data source. In other words, the researchers did three concept maps from three data sources in the order of interviews, essay papers and reflections. Then, the data obtained from three concept maps were synthesized in tables. A sample of the concept maps is given in the following figure below (see Figure 1). In the concept mapping process, the statements were included related to the research question that aimed to interrogate on error correction. In addition, the data was carefully checked before and during the transfer into the tables. The analysis process included a three-step check to ensure whether the data from different sources seemed similar. As a result of the comparison of the statements in each concept map, similar data were obtained from different sources indicating that the data ensured validity. Finally, the data were transferred into four tables in accordance with research questions, and presented in the following section.

Figure 1. Sample Concept Map



Results

Results reached in the study indicate that EFL teachers correct learners' errors to contribute to accuracy, self-correction, appropriateness and meaning making. Findings also demonstrate that teachers mainly focus on repetitious and meaning distorting errors. In addition, teachers deal with pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary errors, whereas they prefer various error correction strategies. Below, findings are presented in relation to reasons to correct errors, situations in which they correct, error types they focus and their error correction strategies.

Table 1 shows the reasons why EFL teachers make corrections. According to the table, there exist four main reasons to make corrections. First, EFL teachers seemed that they wanted to contribute to accuracy in terms of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. Second, they implied that students needed to have habits regarding self-correction and that teacher corrections might be a way to encourage self-corrections. Third, EFL teachers stated that teacher corrections and the pragmatic use of the target language are interrelated, as seen in the following excerpt. Thus, they needed corrections to guide learners in terms of contribution to appropriate use of the target language. Last, EFL teachers believed that corrections contribute to not only accuracy but also to fluency. In this sense, they thought that corrections are necessary for making the meaning clear.

I believe that learners' errors should be corrected because the main purpose of speaking classes should be to make the learners use the language appropriately and accurately. Correction is necessary. They are supposed to be taught correct English; that is why they attend the English classes. Otherwise, they would probably surf on the internet to have a chat.

Table 1. Reasons of Error Correction

Statements	Number	Frequency (%)
1. Contribution to accuracy regarding grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation	5	41.7
2. Habit formation regarding self-correction	3	25.0
3. Contribution to the appropriate use of the target language regarding pragmatic use of the target language	3	25.0
4. Contribution to making meaning in the target language in terms of accuracy and fluency in the target language	1	8.3
Total	12	100.0

Table 2 shows that there are three situations that require error corrections. First, teachers seemed to correct common errors when the error was repeated, as one of the participants says. Second, they focused on the errors that distort meaning while communicating in the target language, as seen in the following excerpt. Last, they implied that they made corrections that seemed necessary to continue communication in the target language during speaking activities.

When students keep making the same mistakes, it means they did not understand the rules. Therefore, the common errors should be clarified at the beginning of the learning process and the teacher should not let the continuous errors. ... Errors that hinder communication should be corrected in speaking classes. Only errors which do not prevent understanding can be ignored.

Table 2. Situations That Require Error Correction

Statements	Number	Frequency (%)
1. Common errors repeated by students	5	50.0
2. Errors that distorts meaning during communication activities	4	40.0
3. Errors that hinder communication	1	10.0
Total	10	100.0

According to Table 3, EFL teachers mainly concentrated on three types of mistakes. First, they seemed to correct pronunciation errors, as one of the teachers states. Second, they made corrections in terms of errors in terms of grammar. Last, they believed that erroneous use of words might be corrected.

As the course is about speaking, naturally, pronunciation errors should be corrected by pointing the correct use of stress, pitch, and the intonation of the words.

Table 3. Types of Errors Corrected

Statements	Number	Frequency (%)
1. Pronunciation errors	9	45.0
2. Grammar errors	8	40.0
3. Vocabulary errors	3	15.0
Total	20	100.0

Table 4 indicates that teachers have several strategies to correct errors. To begin with, they seemed to prefer direct corrections. They also implied that they repeated the correct version of the incorrect statement and that gave clues to help learners correct errors, as seen in the following excerpt. What is more, they tended to use implicit corrections and to create discussion sessions with students. For teachers, another way of correction strategy was to ask questions to reach the correct version. In addition, they believed that asking questions was a way to correct errors. Teachers also stated that they classified the errors and informed students in accordance with the error types. Last, they believed that guiding learners to peer-corrections would be an efficient way of error correction. “When a student makes a pronunciation error, I correct it immediately. If the student makes a grammar error, I repeat his / her sentence in a correct way but show the error using intonation.”

Table 4. Error Correction Strategies

Statements	Number	Frequency (%)
1. Explicit / direct correction	7	23.3
2. Repetition	6	20.0
3. Giving clues	5	16.7
4. Implicit / indirect correction	4	13.3
5. Discussion	2	6.7

6. Asking questions	2	6.7
7. Classification of the errors	2	6.7
8. Peer-correction	2	6.7
Total	30	100.0

In summary, results show that EFL teachers aim to correct errors, as they believe that corrections contribute to the appropriate use of the target language, meaning making, self-correction and accuracy. Moreover, teachers mainly focus on repetitious, meaning distorting and conversation errors as well as pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary errors. The findings also indicate that they develop strategies to correct errors.

Conclusion and Discussion

Four main conclusions were reached through the research. First, EFL teachers seem to make corrections to improve learners' accuracy during speaking, grammar and vocabulary knowledge and pronunciation skills. They also believed that error correction may contribute to habit formation in terms of self-correction among students, pragmatic and appropriate use of the target language, learners' accuracy and fluency. Second, the study concludes that teachers focus on repetitious errors made by learners. What is more, they believe that they should concentrate on the errors that directly distort meaning while speaking. The third conclusion is that teachers perceive that pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary errors need to be corrected during speaking activities. Last of all, EFL teachers seem to use various strategies to correct errors such as explicit and direct correction, repetitions, giving clues to learners, implicit and indirect corrections, and discussion of the errors with students, asking questions to make correction, classification and explanation of the errors and guiding learners to peer-correction.

A summary of the findings of this study is provided below. First, this study seems to find similar results with Tsang's study (2004) in terms of the types of correction and the strategies that the teachers use. The findings of this study were mostly consistent with the results of Kubota' study (1991), as he suggested that the teachers ignored linguistic errors and treated high-frequency errors often; and that teachers used more explicit than implicit feedback. On the other hand, the study of Lasagabaster and Sierra (2005) indicates that teachers and students mostly utilized error correction when sufficient time and explanations, and different correction strategies were provided in line with the findings of this study that the teachers expressed they used various strategies in error correction. Moreover, Duff and Li (2004) revealed that the teachers gave more opportunities for peer-interaction and practice without providing excessive error correction, repetition, or modeling. Similarly, the teachers in this study tended to oppose the excessive error correction; however, there was a contradiction in that they stated that they applied a high number of error correction, especially when the error distorted meaning. In addition, whereas Williams (1999) found that learner-generated attention to form increases considerably with rising proficiency and during specific activities, the results of this study showed that teachers did not use learner-generated strategies. Furthermore, although Truscott (1999) argued that language teachers should seriously consider the option of abandoning oral grammar correction, the teachers in this study believed that error correction could be useful in certain amounts and student groups. Whereas Sato (2003) focused on selective error correction, a number of teachers in this study offered several strategies to prevent errors in speaking classes. Last, although some teachers noted that they encouraged

students' peer-correction, the majority of the teachers seemed to provide error correction themselves, as found in the study of Fujioka and Kennedy (1997).

Some practical recommendations regarding the conclusions reached in the study can be noted. In the broadest sense, the curricula of teacher training programs should include topics to raise awareness of the issues such as reasons to make corrections, situations that require corrections, error types and correction strategies. In other words, EFL teachers need to be trained for what, why and how errors should be corrected in an EFL learning context. In the scope of the findings reached in the research, first, teachers should be instructed about why learners make errors. In other words, teachers should raise awareness of the relationship between the levels language competence and errors (Başöz & Aydın, 2011). Second, teachers should be informed about the situations that should be used to correct errors. For this purpose, teachers should give special attention to whether an error distorts communication or not. In other words, teachers should focus on the sources of errors such as first language interference and development in the target language. Moreover, they should notice the gravity of errors and its types. Third, teachers should be trained in terms of error correction strategies such as making positive comments, how to use grades for corrections and reporting about errors. In addition, teachers should be informed about developing self-, peer- and group corrections among students (Harmer, 1991). Fourth, EFL teachers should create a balance between accuracy and fluency and design activities to show incorrectness such as hinting, reformulations and repetitions. In conclusion, teachers should consider that errors are the natural parts of learning; thus, they should be gentle when they correct errors.

The study is limited to 15 English instructors working at a state university in Turkey. The scope of the study was confined to a background questionnaire, reflections, interviews and essay papers. The data collected in the study included Turkish EFL teachers' opinions about reasons to make corrections, situations that require corrections, error types and correction strategies. In other words, the data obtained from the study is limited to the issues noted above. Thus, qualitative studies include classroom observations should be conducted for a deeper and more comprehensible understanding of teachers' perceptions of error corrections in foreign language classes. In addition, further descriptive and experimental studies are necessary to contextualize to understand the demographic, internal and external factors that may affect teachers' perceptions of error correction.

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Author Note

Nuriye Değirmenci Uysal has been doing her Ph.D. in the Department of Foreign Language Education. The author also teaches English courses in preparatory classes and various faculties of Balıkesir University, Turkey. Correspondence regarding this article can be addressed directly to: nuriyedegirmenci@balikesir.edu.tr.

Selami Aydin is an associate professor at the Department of English Language Teaching at Balıkesir University, Turkey. His research has been mainly in EFL writing, language testing, affective factors and technology in EFL learning and teaching. His articles appeared in national and international journals. Aydin teaches ELT courses for pre-service English teachers. Correspondence regarding this article can also be addressed directly to: saydin@balikesir.edu.tr.

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