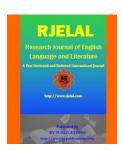# ERROR CORRECTION IN ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE CONTEXTS: FINDINGS FROM A SURVEY OF TEACHERS' OPINION

FREEDA RAJAKUMARI[1], PUSHPA NAGINI SRIPADA[2]
[1]Research Scholar, Sathyabama University, Chennai, India
[2]Professor of English& Placement Head (S&H), Sathyabama University, Chennai, India

ABSTRACT

Language teaching and testing always exist together and complement each other. The role of teacher feedback on learners' writing is mandatory to improve the written skills of the learners. Since effective feedback is very much essential in the process of teaching any language, the paper tries making suggestions to teachers of English on error correction in the classrooms. The teachers understand the difficulties faced by students during the process of writing while going through the written scripts of their learners. Hence, the paper looks at issues like the priority to be given by the teachers on the type of errors thereby to provide effective feedback in ESL contexts.

Key words: Second Language Teaching, Writing, error correction, Classroom task.

INTRODUCTION

Writing is an essential skill for communication in second language contexts. Both formal and informal writing skills are very essential for communicative purposes. Reid & Kroll (1995) opined that writing is an essential a social act. Salah (2009) defines writing as a craft that needs expertise in using mechanics and organization of ideas etc. Further, it is a process in which the writer involves in creating, exploring, organizing the content so as to present after reflection and revising the written material. Writing involves thinking, recollecting ideas, using language sentence structures and using right vocabulary. Raimes (1983) cited in Sattayatham&Ratanapinyowong (2008) point out that conclusion, correct language, punctuation mechanics, and logical content are considered important to communicate in written work.

Graham &Harris (1994) mention that in writing, text production skills, planning and revising are important in.

Since it involves such complex skills, it is very difficult to motivate ESL learners to write, and even giving feedback sometimes may discourage them from writing. Teachers need to motivate the students by creating suitable atmosphere in the classroom for task implementation, selecting interesting topics, materials and tasks relevant to real life contexts to motivate them to write. The writing tasks should be meaningful, varied and challenging to get learner's attention.

Teaching Writing Skills

Monaghan (2007: 4) notes that teaching writing includes writingstrategies, methods to impart necessary knowledge on written discourse, basison grammar, syntax and by various pedagogical methods. Eventually, teaching writing means guiding

students toward achieving the highest ability in communicating in words.

1. Teachers should realize the needs of the low English proficiency students to develop theirwritten skills.
2. Teachers should spend time and efforts with learners to get expected results.

The writing course holds a strong position in Indian curriculum and paper pencil tests are a norm in testing the knowledge of learners in both school and in college level.

Teachers' Role

Teachers have an important role to play in motivating the learners to write. They must do need analysis and involve the learners in individual, pair, and group activities to motivate them to write. Learners can be motivated to write 'journal writing, collecting survey based writing, collaborative writingand pyramid writing.While correcting too, sometimes teachers need to focus on meaning than on form. If not, students may tend to focus more on the language than on the content in the process of writing. For a student writing in a classroom, the audience is usually limited to one person i.e. the teacher, who designs, assigns and assesses that writing. But if the teacher is keen the written samples of the students can be posted in the class journal, made to be read by peer to create more audience.

The goals of writing classes are to promote learners performance in writing accurately across different genres. Since grammar is the foundation for effective writing, apart from teaching grammar and language, teachers should help the learners to identify errors in writing through peer feedback or through checklists, rubrics prepared by the teacher. An example of classroom task and rubric is given below:

Roles for group work report based on a discussion:

Team Roles and Tasks:

Facilitator	Relates the task, verifies roles, and facilitates colleagues participation in doing the tasks	Group Management Strategies
Manager	Keeps track of time and materials	-Time limits
Researcher	Checks in with the teacher and / or checks resources on team's questions	-Time signals -Numbered heads
Recorder	Records team's responses	-Shared resources
Editor**	Checks team's work for accuracy(use of phrases in writing and presenting	-Answer keys -Checklists
Presenter	Makes an oral presentation of the team's ideas to the whole group	-Rubrics
Designer/ illustrator	Plans and designs (or manages the designing of any visual elements for the team's presentation)	-Non verbal comprehension checks
Evaluator**	Evaluates group performance by using the rubric and involves others in the group evaluating	-Manage to report back -Other

*Restrict to 6 roles if possible, ** the facilitator decides on clubbing roles

1. Rubrics

Team work assessment	Exceeds expectations	Meets expectation	Does not meet expectation
Roles and responsibilities	All team members carried out roles without reminder	Most team members carried out roles with few reminders	Most team members did not carry out their roles or needed to be reminded several times
Participation	Most team members offered more than one idea and encouraged participation	All team members offered at least one idea	Most team members did not offer any ideas
Accuracy The group report / presentation was	Complete, accurate and eloquent use of phrases at least one or two	Complete and grammatically accurate	incomplete, or inaccurate or both

FREEDA RAJAKUMARI & PUSHPA NAGINI SRIPADA

2. Work on Task:

Steps	Lead	Notes	Completed
1.Pick up material			
2.Read task instructions			
3. Confirm understanding			
4. Assign roles/ delegate work			
5. Set a time limit for group			
6. Work on task			
7. Check group's work			
8. Turn in completed worksheet			

Work on task can be broken down into the steps of the task (e.g research XXX , prepare XXX, In the case of the 'Lead' column would cover the delegation process.

3. Team Discussion:

s.no	Team member	Role
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		

As a group, determine whether you agree or disagree with the statement given based on your experience in handling learners at various levels; and cite evidence from your reading.

"We should praise effort and strategy than praising intelligence.

When we praise, for example, a child's effort on learning something, the kid will understand that effort will lead to mastery and growth and will take on new tasks to progress further

Team Ideas

Idea	Contributor

Conclusion: What conclusions does your group reach?

We all think …. We agree that…. We agree to disagree that… some of us feel… while others expressed …

Error correction

Keh (1990) cited in Wen.Y (2013) mentioned that feedback is a fundamental element to process approach to writing. It may have input from a reader to a writer with the effect of providing information to the writer for revision, usually in the form of comments, questions and suggestions. It is essential to show global errors to the learners or it may lead to fossilization of errors. Wen, (2009) points out the marking needs to be done according to the proficiency level of the learners. When the LEP (Low English Proficiency) learners are unable to correct on their own, the teacher can help them by marking the errors with correcting symbols.Bates et al. (1993) differentiate error types into two groups, "local" and "other." Local errors are less serious than global errors in that, though distracting, they do not hamper understanding. This group includes: incorrect subject-verb agreement; incorrect or missing article; problems with the singular or plural of a noun; wrong word choice; wrong word form; and nonidiomatic expressions.

How to identify errors?

Ferris (2002) mentioned that teachers can give

- Direct/Indirect feedback
- Global/Indirect errors
- Treatable /Untreatable errors.

Teachers should enable the learners realize thatwriting is a difficult skill to master. It needs regular practice on different genres of writing. Indian student writers lack strong foundation in grammar and vocabulary as they lack reading habit. Also, systematic development of LSRW skills will pave the way for better learning. Moreover, teachers educate learner by teaching separate entities such as "tense", "relative clauses" etc, which add to the boredom in class. Lack of interesting

FREEDA RAJAKUMARI & PUSHPA NAGINI SRIPADA

tasks and opportunities hinder the learners in developing productive skills. In order to use effective writing to take place, teachers need to do error correction seriously. Besides, students don't know how to correct themselves and teachers' constructive feedback acts as a guide to correct their errors.

Bartholomae (1980) points out that all language learning is based on continual exposure, hypothesizing, and even with the correct hypothesis, testing and reinforcing the ideas behind them. In his study, he identified as analysis of errors.

In Oladejo's (1993) study, he found that the majority of (62.8%) of participants disagreed that comprehensive error correction can cause frustration and discourage learners from the target language. Error correction can be done selectively and the types of errors can be pointed out.

Keh (1990) cited in Weh (2009) recommends the ways of writing error correction.

The teacher should

- Note improvements : good , plus reasons why
- Refer to specific problem, plus strategy for revision
- Write questions with enough information for students to answer.
- Write summative comment of strengths and weaknesses
- Ask 'honest' questions as a reader to a writer.

There is a mismatch between teacher feedbacks on learners correction based on feedback. Therefore, the teacher can clearly mark selectively based on symbols which are clearly understood by the learners. Thesemarking or symbols which are otherwise known as proof reading symbols.

Bitchener.J, Young.S & Cameron. D (2005) mentioned that teachers makes two types of correction .1.points out the errors and provide the correct form,2.Identify the errors but leaving it to thestudent to correct it.

How to overcome errors?

Teachers can help the learners overcome errors by using codes asgrammatical errors.

Codes:

S.No	Code	Category
1	T	Tense
2	V	Vocabulary
3	Prn.	Preposition
4	At	Articles
5	RC	Relative clauses
6	Adv/Adj	Adverbs/Adjectives
7	Cn	Connectives
8	SS	Sentence Structures
9	Con	Concord
10	WH	Wh- questions
11	Sp	Spelling
12	WW	Word choice

Table :4Codes developed from (Darus& Kaladevi,2009)

Also, teachers can use selective marking, pair work and group work on error correction. Also, the teacher needs to help the learners to organize a paragraph or an essay coherently by concentrating on the global and local errors.

CONCLUSION

Error correction plays a definite role in improving students' writing. Therefore, teachers should do error correction seriously. There can be an understanding between the teacher and the students based on error correction symbols, comments and suggestions. Based on error correction, the teacher can briefly conduct interactive sessions to explain what he/she meant by the symbols or word expressions. Teachers' written and oral suggestions, comments would benefit learners to correct their errors, thereby developing them as autonomous writers. The error correction in the form of code can be further explained during the discussions with students. Students can alsobe encouraged to do self, peer review based on proper guidance and practice.

REFERENCE

Bartholomae, D. (1980). Study of Error. College Composition and Communication, 31, 253-269.

Bitchener.J. Young.S. & Young.D (2005): The Effect of Different Types of Corrective Feedback on ESL Student Writing: Journal of Second Language Writing: 14, 191-205.

Carol S. Dweck(2007): The Perils and Promises of Praise. Vol 25.,23.

Corder, S. P (1975). The language of second language learners: The broader issues. Modern Language Journal, 59, 409-413

Darus, Sarah & Subramaniam, Kaladevi (2009):Error Analysis of the Written English Essays of Secondary School Students in Malaysia: A Case Study. European Journal of Social Sciences: Vol.8:3

Judy M. Parr *, Helen S. Timperley(2010): Feedback to writing, assessment for teaching and learning and student Progress: Assessing Writing 15 (2010) 68–85.

Ferris. A(2002): Treatment of Error in Second Language Student Writing.Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Grami.A.M.G (2010): The Effects of Integrating Peer Feedback into University Level ESL Writing Curriculum: A Comparative Study in Saudi Context. Thesis:Newcastle University

Hull ,G. (1985) :Research on Error and Correction. In B. McClelland & T. Donovan (Eds.), Perspectives on research and Scholarship in Composition (pp.162-184). New York. The Modern Language Association of America.

Keh, C. 1990. 'Feedback in the writing process:a model and methods for implementation'. ELT Journal 44/4: 294-304.

Mahmud,N.MD (2012) : Investigation into Errors Committed by the Secondary Students (grade VIII)in writing English as a Foreign Language.

Miller,Mc.C (2014): How much feedback is enough? Instructor practices and Student attitude toward error treatment in Second Language treatment. Assessing Writing, Elsevier: Feedback in Writing: Issues and Challenges. Vol.19.24-35

Mutema.F& Mariko.I (2012): Common Errors in Second Language (L2) Speakers''Written Texts. A Case ofFirst Year First Semester (L1:S1) Arts students at Midlands State University:An Error Analysis Approach.MJAL 4:4,spring.

Monaghan.C (2007): Effective Strategies For Teaching Writing: The Evergreen State College MIT 2006-2007 cohort

Mukundan, J. Marhvelati, H.E (2013): Dina.M& Nimehchisal: Malaysian Secondary School Students' ESL Writing Performance in an Intensive Writing Program: World Applied Sciences 22 (12) :1677-1684.

Nayernia.A (2011): Writing Errors, What they cancall a Teacher: MJAL 3:2 .Summer

Oladejo.A.J.(1993) Error Correction in ESL:learners Preferences. TESL Canada Journal/Revue TESL Du Canada.:VO.l4.No.2.

Lee .J.Y (2006): The process-oriented ESL writing assessment: Promises and challenges: Journal of Second Language Writing 15 307–330

Lee. I(2003): L2 writing teachers' perspectives, practicesand problems regarding error feedback: Assessing Writing 8 216–237

Parr. M & Timperley.S (2010): Feedback to writing, assessment for teaching and learning and student progress.

Reid.J& Kroll.B (1995): Designing and Assessing Effective Classroom Writing Assignments for NES and ESL Writers , Journal of Second Language Writing (4) 1)17-41.

Salah,M. A. (2010).A Suggested Program for Developing Teaching WritingSkills of Secondary School Teachers in Khan Younis GovernorateM.A. Thesis. The Islamic University

Sattayatham.A&Ratanapinyowong.P (2008): Analysis of Errors in Paragraph Writing in English by First Year Medical Students from the Four Medical Schools at Mahidol University: Vol.8 : 17-38.

Wang.P (2010): Dealing with English Majors'Written Errors in Chinese Universities: Journal of Language Teaching and Research, Vol. 1, No. 3, pp. 194-205, May

Wen.Y. (2013): Teacher Written Feedback onL2 Student Writings Journal of Language Teaching and Research: Vol4: NO2, 427-431.

www.Lighthearted learning.com