

Errors in the Second Language Classroom: Corrective Feedback. Juan de Dios Martínez (ed.). Málaga: Aljibe, 2010, ISBN 978-84-9700-607-1

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As the editor points out in the preface, this book has been written in response to an overwhelming demand from non-native teachers of L2/FL who wish to provide an effective corrective feedback on learners' errors. Its main purpose is to explore and synthesize insights into this issue from classroom-based observational research as well as teachers' experience and reflection.

The book is intended primarily for all those who teach a second language (L2) or foreign language (FL) anywhere in the world, under any circumstances, and who wish to know more about the issue of corrective feedback. It can also be used as a helpful reference text or handbook for student teachers.

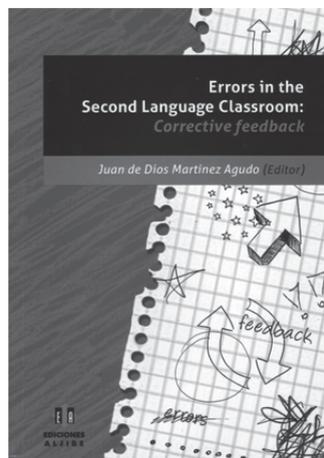
Readers can find a collection of original papers covering diverse aspects of error treatment in the second language classroom. It provides an in-depth discussion on specific issues of error correction. The chapters are sequenced in such a way that they give an overall coherence to the publication.

The first chapter, «What is revealed through errors? Sources or causes of errors» explores a significant aspect of learner language errors. Throughout this chapter, the author attempts to answer several questions: What can we discover from learners' errors?, How difficult is it to determine the real source or cause of particular errors? and What are the most important causes of errors?.

In view of the existence of different types of feedback based on negotiation, chapter 2, «Error, feedback, negotiation: Technological and humanistic ways», describes possible modes of corrective interaction using technology, examining particularly students' preferences for two types of student-teacher interaction with online exercises: e-mail vs. online feedback. Special emphasis is given to the weight of technology in language learning, attempting to answer diverse questions such as how much technology should we introduce, and in what forms.

Given that intonation helps to interpret the pragmatic function of discourse utterances, chapter 3, «The effect of teachers' intonation on error correction», analyses the didactic functions of certain prosodic features embedded in the discourse generated by teachers when interacting with students in EFL classrooms. It provides teachers with useful suggestions that may help understand that the use, elicitation and analysis of certain prosodic features have proved to be an effective way to let the students perceive their errors and encourage self-correction without the direct intervention of the teacher.

Chapter 4, «Corrective feedback and affect in the language classroom», highlights the importance of affective aspects including personality, self-esteem, motivation and anxiety that may be involved when providing corrective feedback in the FL classroom context because



some unfavourable corrective practices or procedures may lead to negative learning experiences. Such affective factors are tied into corrective processes, particularly in oral exchanges.

Chapter 5, «The attitude of teachers of Spanish as a second or foreign language towards error correction in writing» is mainly concerned with error correction in writing in the Spanish language classroom -in both foreign and second language contexts, considering also the Truscott/Ferris debate as to the usefulness of correction in written production. Given the strong influence of teachers' beliefs and attitudes on classroom practice, the study discussed explores several aspects of error correction, insisting on the importance of selective correction, using different strategies depending on the nature of the error, and teaching students how to self-correct.

Chapter 6, «Students' attitudes to error correction. Lessons to be learned», describes Spanish university students' preferences and attitudes towards error correction in the EFL classroom and also presents several useful suggestions for making error correction more effective based on the results obtained in the study carried out. In the last part several students' comments about different aspects of error correction (as for example, the method or type of correction they prefer; feelings about correction..) are also included. The author highlights the importance of considering students' feelings and reactions to error correction at the time of treating errors.

Chapter 7, «It's only those who do nothing that make no mistakes» presents reflections on several aspects of error treatment. It is assumed that many factors need to be taken into consideration when dealing with error correction. After lesson planning, error correction is considered to be the principal role of the EFL teacher in the foreign language classroom. As the author rightly states, if the teacher is regarded by the students as a facilitator and not as a dictator, then the language learner will be more likely to accept guidance rather than criticism and a more positive state of mind is arrived at.

Chapter 8, «Mind the gap: Error-correction strategies and procedures», focuses mainly on the issue of corrective feedback in ESP classes, particularly English for Occupational Purposes. Based on the professional experience of both authors as English teachers at different levels of teaching (Secondary school and University), different perspectives are shown concerning the issues of both error production and corrective feedback. Given the need to develop a functional control of the L2, the views of both language in context and cooperative learning in ESP classes are highlighted.

The last chapter of the book «Self-learning, self-correction and selfassessment» focuses all attention on the learner-centred approach (LCA) as a step forward in the evolution of FLT Methodology, like the Communicative Approach and the Humanistic Approach, highlighting the importance of initiating learners from the very beginning into the habit of self-learning, reflection and self-assessment.

Finally, it must be added that each chapter in the book ends with a list of recommended reading that provides the reader with sources for additional information on specific topics dealt with in each chapter. There is also an annotated bibliography that will be highly useful for readers. The Questions for reflection section at the end of each chapter can be used for group discussion.

Without any doubt, the issues addressed in the various chapters are of a great value and interest for language teachers.