

Preferences of ELT Students on the Strategies Instructors Use in the Correction of Oral Grammar Errors

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the learners' preferences on the strategies used by the instructors in the correction of oral grammar errors in an ELT context at a Turkish university. The data were collected through a five-point Likert scale from 213 ELT students from four levels. In the analysis of the data, frequencies, percentages and mean scores were used. The results of the study reveal that instructors teaching ELT students should be selective in the strategies they employ while providing corrective feedback for oral grammar errors. Firstly, ELT learners tend to prefer their instructors to correct their recurring oral grammar errors. Especially, the senior students seem to be far more sensitive and positive about the correction of such errors instantly if they deteriorate meaning. Also, most learners agree that their oral grammar errors be corrected as if they are common errors in class rather than being corrected individually. Secondly, the majority of the students need their instructors' help to realize and correct their errors on their own and prefer to be given choices in the process of correction. Thirdly, freshman students need more feedback in grammar use and prefer being warned by their instructors as well as being corrected by repeating the correct form of grammar structure/usage orally more than the other levels do, whereas the sophomore learners are more interested in using the language fluently. As the level goes up, ELT students seem to become more sensitive about error correction with the notes taken by the instructors during a class hour and prefer more individual face-to-face correction. Also, they agree on being provided with explanations for the right usage with examples on the board; however, top students do not feel such a need. In conclusion, the correction strategies derived from our study as the most favourable could be employed by instructors working in ELT departments in the treatment of oral grammar errors, and the use of the strategies which were found ineffective by the students should be avoided.

Key Words: Oral grammar errors, corrective feedback, correction strategies, English Language Teaching (ELT)

1. Introduction

A language class is supposed to be a non-threatening environment for learners as they make mistakes, commit errors and receive feedback; however, regardless of the proficiency level of the learners, the situation could be a bit complicated in an ELT context in which candidates get training to become English teachers. In this sense, whether to correct their errors or not, and how and when to correct these errors have always been important issues for instructors who teach students at ELT departments; thus, this is an area which needs to be investigated in the Turkish context so that suggestions can be put forward for more effective teaching and better treatment of errors. Apart from private institutions, the language education system in state high schools in Turkey mainly focuses on grammar teaching, reading comprehension, and vocabulary learning, as a result of which candidates who would like to study at an ELT department do not receive much training on communication and listening comprehension skills; hence, teacher trainees in an ELT context have difficulty with speaking and listening skills, the former a productive and the latter a receptive skill, and their errors are considered to be natural as they are exposed to the target language restrictively in their high-school experiences.

ELT students, for this reason, see instructors as the main source for corrective feedback. Normally, most ELT students may expect to be given feedback and prefer their errors to be corrected as they will be expected to be the source of language for their students. However, no matter how much of a perfectionist the learners are, they may differ in the correction strategies employed by instructors. The fact that not all students may tolerate their errors and that they do prefer to be corrected may stem from their different views on error correction, and this may result in different reactions.

From a pedagogical perspective, corrective feedback is an important component of form-focused instruction and it is advocated as effective for L2 teaching (Long and Robinson, 1998), and according to Long's Interaction Hypothesis (1996), feedback provided through verbal interaction can facilitate L2 learning by connecting form and meaning. When provided in response to errors during communicative interaction, corrective feedback provides an opportunity for learners to pay attention to form as it relates to their intended meaning (Long, 1996; Gass, 1997; Long and Robinson, 1998; Doughty, 2001; Loewen and Nabei, 2007).

When we have a look at the research studies on error correction, we can see that it has been mostly the written errors that researchers tended to focus on, leading to a controversy on whether feedback helps learners improve the accuracy and quality of their written products, whereas oral errors usually seem to have had less concern. The main reason behind this is that, rather than the written errors, the oral ones seem to offer a more challenging task for researchers as well as teachers. On top of the issue whether a distinction should be made between errors and mistakes, it was stated that an error takes place when a deviation arises as a result of lack of knowledge/competence whereas mistakes are to do with performance as regular features of native-speaker speech, also called as slips of tongue, and they reflect processing failures while using the language (Lee, 1990; Ellis, 2008). Therefore, apart from mistakes, how oral errors should be treated in the Turkish EFL and ELT context needs to be investigated in order to handle students' errors more effectively.

For the process of error correction, Lightbown & Spada (1999, p.118) suggest that 'get it right from the beginning' may describe, as a slogan, when to begin correcting students' errors. However, the issue of providing learners with grammar feedback depends on learners' level and the teaching and learning contexts. Whereas Hong (2004, p.18) stresses that teachers should provide either direct or indirect feedback to the learners for their grammar errors, Hyland (2003, p.218), referring to early research on L2 writing, points out that grammar correction is both helpless and discouraging for the students. Referring to later research, Hyland also discusses that some ways of indirect feedback may be helpful for learners in some situations. According to Kepner (1991) and Truscott (1996, 2007), all kinds of correction done on student writing are ineffective in improving the written accuracy, and so may be harmful; therefore, they should be abandoned in spite of the fact that correction focusing on the usage of grammar rules may be desirable on the part of students. It seems that the research evidence on the useful effects of grammar correction needs to be taken into consideration and cannot be disregarded totally (Ferris, 1999; Chandler, 2003; Hyland, 2003; Bitchener, 2008).

Guenette (2007, p.41) surveyed the students about what they did with their corrected written production and saw that students threw their papers into wastepaper baskets while leaving the class, and concluded that some successful students benefit from feedback while weak ones do not. As students react to feedback in different ways, it is clear that they may have some preferences regarding the strategies used in the correction of their errors.

Correcting errors of grammar is an important task in class. Ho (1977, p.71) listed some of the responses of first year teacher trainees attending a university in Singapore about struggling with errors of grammar. The following statements are just some of their ideas related to the correction of grammar errors: "Now I am able to explain the rules of grammar", "Instead of being able to recognize errors, I am now able to explain the rules and correct the errors". They also said that the idea of preparing a table is a helpful idea, and "identifying, defining and classifying errors is a systematic, step-by-step approach". In line with this study, the question to be focused on seems to be to what extent our learners can benefit from error correction and how it should be approached. In other words, which types of error correction are effective in treating which types of errors (Ferris & Roberts, 2001). Liu (2008) also found that providing corrective feedback on students' writing is not a sufficient way to improve accuracy, and suggested using mini-lessons or workshops focusing on different types of errors or aspects of grammar, which, as can be seen, requires oral explanation or clarification for students. This leads us to say that oral errors of students need more and different care in and out of classroom compared to written ones.

On the other hand, though carried out with different groups of students, various research studies on the treatment of oral errors and preferences of students (Sali, 2000; Schulz, 2001; Lasagabaster and Sierra, 2005; Katayama, 2007; Amador, 2008) seem to offer some results in favor of corrective feedback for oral errors. These studies indicate that explicit corrective feedback provided by teachers is preferred by students when oral errors are concerned and they should not be ignored. Students believe in the usefulness of it and find it necessary to learn a foreign language better. Oral errors should be corrected if they are interfering with communication, and such a correction should be performed with plenty of explanations by using various techniques or strategies. In short, corrective feedback, as a teacher's move, invites a learner to attend to the grammatical accuracy of the utterance which is produced by the learner (Sheen, 2007). In this sense, Richards et al. (1992, p.127) point out that error analysis may be carried out for such reasons as "to identify strategies which learners use in language learning, to try to identify the causes of learners' errors, and to obtain information on common errors in language learning, as an aid to teaching or in the preparation of teaching materials." Keeping these reasons behind error analysis in mind as stated by Richards et al. (1992), the aim of the current study is to explore the ELT students' preferences on the strategies used by the instructors in the treatment of oral grammar errors.

2. Method of the Study

This study aimed at finding out the preferences of ELT students on the strategies used by the instructors in the correction of oral grammar errors. Therefore, the research question of the study was designed as follows:

What are the preferences of ELT students in error correction strategies used by the instructors regarding oral grammar errors?

2.1. Participants and Research Context

The participants were comprised of 58 male (27,2 %) and 155 female (72,8 %) students out of 213 ELT students attending The Department of English Language Teaching at Pamukkale University, Denizli, Turkey. The questionnaire was given to 58 freshmen, 60 sophomore, 35 junior, and 60 senior students who were available during the week when the questionnaire was administered. In our program, the students who show a low proficiency level have to attend the preparatory class for two terms. Our students take integrated skill-based courses and continue to develop themselves in language skills in their freshman year. They take the field courses on their second, third and fourth year in addition to the courses in Turkish.

2.2. Data Collection Instrument

A questionnaire including five-point Likert scale items was designed for this study. The items were in a sequence such as 'I strongly disagree (SD) (1)', 'I disagree (D) (2)', 'Not sure (NS) (3)', 'I agree (A) (4)' and 'I strongly agree (SA) (5)'. The items in the questionnaire were derived from the answers given by the students to the open-ended questions. Three experts from the field of ELT were asked to check the items and give feedback, and necessary alterations were made based on their comments. The overlapping items and those which reduced the reliability were omitted after the pilot study. After 15 items were excluded from a pool of 60 items, the Cronbach Alpha co-efficient was calculated as 0.887 for the whole questionnaire (N of items: 45). The questionnaire consisted of five different sections. The first section which specifically became the focus of this present study included only 10 items, and aimed to investigate the preferences of ELT students on the strategies used by the instructors in the correction of oral grammar errors. The Cronbach Alpha co-efficient for this section was calculated as 0.734, indicating a satisfactory level of reliability.

2.3. Data Analysis

In the analysis of the data, SPSS 17 software version was used. Frequencies and percentages were used for the presentation of the data in Table-1 through Table-10. And finally, percentages and mean scores were calculated for the data presented in Table-11 revealing the overall tendencies of all participants.

3. Results

The results in Table-1 through Table-10 are presented depending on the levels of the learners and percentages for each item in a sequence of importance identified by the learners with respect to the error correction strategies.

Table 1 presents the percentages for the correction of oral grammar errors if they are recurring ones.

Table 1: Percentages for “When I make oral grammar errors, I prefer the instructor to correct them if they are recurring.”

	N	SD %	D %	NS %	A %	SA %
Freshmen	58	0	0	0	34,5	65,5
Sophomore	60	1,7	8,3	6,7	41,7	41,7
Junior	35	2,9	0	2,9	45,7	48,6
Senior	60	1,7	3,3	0	21,7	73,3

As shown in Table 1, when the percentages in ‘**I strongly agree**’ choice are considered, the senior students have the highest percentage (73,3%) while the sophomores have the lowest percentage (41,7%). It can be clearly seen that the percentages of the freshmen (65,5%) and the senior students (73,3%) are much higher than those of the sophomores (41,7%) and juniors (48,6%). It can be inferred that ELT students seem to need more feedback in grammar usage in freshman year in the courses they have to take after their high school experiences. Similarly, the senior students become aware that they are teacher candidates and seem to be more sensitive about their recurring oral grammar errors prior to their graduation. However, when we look at the percentages for ‘**I agree**’ and ‘**I strongly agree**’ choices together, we can conclude that most ELT students prefer their instructors to correct their recurring oral grammar errors.

Table 2 presents the percentages regarding the instructors’ helping students realize and correct their errors on their own.

Table 2: Percentages for “When I make oral grammar errors, I prefer the instructors to help me realize and correct my error by myself”

	N	SD %	D %	NS %	A %	SA %
Freshmen	58	1,7	0	1,7	70,7	25,9
Sophomore	60	1,7	8,3	5	60	25
Junior	35	0	2,9	11,4	60	25,7
Senior	60	0	3,3	8,3	56,7	31,7

As the data in Table 2 show, the majority of the ELT students at all levels seem to prefer their instructors to help them realize and correct oral grammar errors on their own. This finding indicates that the students value self-correction or self-repair of their errors.

Table 3 shows the percentages regarding instant correction of oral grammar errors deteriorating meaning.

Table 3: Percentages for “When I make oral errors in grammar usage, I prefer the instructor to correct them instantly if they deteriorate meaning.”

	N	SD %	D %	NS %	A %	SA %
Freshmen	58	1,7	3,4	6,9	41,4	46,6
Sophomore	60	5	11,7	10	46,7	26,7
Junior	35	0	0	11,4	54,3	34,3
Senior	60	3,3	8,3	10	33,3	45

According to the data presented in Table 3, when the percentages for ‘**I agree**’ and ‘**I strongly agree**’ are considered together, 88% of the freshmen, 73,4% of the sophomores, 88,6% of the juniors, and 78,3% of the seniors prefer that their oral grammar errors be corrected instantly if they deteriorate meaning, which indicates a positive view of ELT learners about this error correction strategy.

Table 4 presents the percentages related to the strategy “correcting errors as if they are common errors in class rather than correcting them individually.”

Table 4: Percentages for “When I make oral grammar errors, I prefer the instructors to correct the mas if they are common errors in class rather than correcting me individually.”

	N	SD %	D %	NS %	A %	SA %
Freshmen	58	0	5,2	8,6	46,6	39,7
Sophomore	60	3,3	8,3	11,7	46,7	30
Junior	35	0	14,3	2,9	62,9	20
Senior	60	3,3	5	15	35	41,7

When ‘**I agree**’ and ‘**I strongly agree**’ categories are evaluated together, the majority of the learners in all levels (Freshmen: 86,3%, Sophomores: 76,7%, Juniors: 82,9%, Seniors: 76,7%) seem to prefer that their oral grammar errors be corrected as if they are common errors in class rather than by means of individual correction.

Table 5 presents the percentages related to instructor’s taking notes during a lesson and correcting errors individually.

Table 5: Percentages for “When I make oral grammar errors, I prefer the instructor to takenotes during a lesson and correct me individually later.”

	N	SD %	D %	NS %	A %	SA %
Freshmen	58	3,4	12,1	22,4	34,5	27,6
Sophomore	60	3,3	10	13,3	41,7	31,7
Junior	35	0	5,7	11,4	45,7	31,1
Senior	60	0	5	5	38,3	51,7

According to the data presented in Table 5, when ‘**I agree**’ and ‘**I strongly agree**’ categories are considered together, 62,1% of the freshmen, 73,4% of the sophomores, 76,8% of the juniors and 90% of the seniors prefer their instructors to take notes during a lesson and correct their errors individually. We can state that ELT students approach face-to-face individual treatment of errors more positively as the level progresses, which indicates a rising sensitivity towards oral grammar errors.

Table 6 presents the percentages of the ELT learners on being given choices in the process of error correction.

Table 6: Percentages for “When I make oral errors in grammar usage, I prefer the instructors to give me choices in the process of correcting my errors”

	N	SD %	D %	NS %	A %	SA %
Freshmen	58	5,2	1,7	3,4	67,2	22,4
Sophomore	60	3,3	6,7	10	63,3	16,7
Junior	35	0	2,9	20	57,1	20
Senior	60	0	3,3	8,3	51,7	36,7

Ascan be seen in Table 6, the majority of the students at all levels prefer their instructors to give them choices in the process of error correction. In addition, the senior students (36,7%) rank the first in ‘**I strongly agree**’ choice. It seems that as the level progresses, the students enjoy being provided with choices in error correction.

Table 7 presents the percentages pertaining to the correction strategy “explaining the right usage with various examples on the board”.

Table 7: Percentages for “When I make oral errors in grammar usage, I prefer the instructors to correct them by explaining the right usage with examples on the board.”

	N	SD %	D %	NS %	A %	SA %
Freshmen	58	3,4	3,4	12,1	46,6	34,5
Sophomore	60	8,3	1,7	11,7	62,3	15
Junior	35	0	5,7	14,3	51,4	28,6
Senior	60	10	3,3	5	45	36,7

According to the data in Table 7, the total percentages in ‘I agree’ and ‘I strongly agree’ categories are very high and show a similarity among the freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors (81,1%; 77,3%; 80%; 81,7% respectively). The students seem to be in favor of being given explanation or clarification for the correct grammar usage with various examples on the board. Only 10% of the senior students feel no need for explanation, and this percentage may be a reflection of the top students. This means that providing such students with oral explanation could be satisfactory whereas a majority of students in all levels would like to be given more examples on the board and explanation for correct usage.

Table 8 shows the percentages regarding ‘to what extent the ELT learners prefer their instructors to warn them in the correction of oral grammar errors’.

Table 8: Percentages for “When I make oral grammar errors, I prefer my instructor to warn me”

	N	SD %	D %	NS %	A %	SA %
Freshmen	58	1,7	0	13,8	50	34,5
Sophomore	60	0	23,3	23,3	43,3	10
Junior	35	0	8,6	17,1	51,4	22,9
Senior	60	3,3	10	15	46,7	25

According to the data given in Table 8, the sophomores seem to have given various reflections about this item when compared to the other levels, which indicates that, while some are still not very clear about being warned about their errors, a significant majority of them are getting more interested in fluent use of the language. When ‘I agree’ and ‘I strongly agree’ categories are considered together, 84,5% of the freshmen, 53,3% of the sophomores, 74,3% of the juniors, and 71,7% of the senior students agree with this item. These values show that, while the junior and the senior learners have similar attitudes, we see a sharp decrease in the percentage for the sophomores. Moreover, the freshmen rank first according to ‘I agree’ and ‘I strongly agree’ categories, which means that they prefer to be warned by their instructors more than those in the other levels. As the level progresses, it seems that the sophomores tend not to prefer to be warned when they make errors in grammar usage. However, the percentages rise again for the junior and senior ELT learners, indicating that ELT learners continue to give importance to the correction of their oral grammar errors as the level goes up.

Table 9 presents the percentages with respect to the correction strategy “repeating the correct form of the grammar structure orally”.

Table 9: Percentages for “When I make oral grammar errors, I prefer the instructor to make the correction by repeating the correct form of the grammar structure orally.”

	N	SD %	D %	NS %	A %	SA %
Freshmen	58	0	8,6	3,4	65,5	22,4
Sophomore	60	5	8,3	26,7	50	10
Junior	35	0	5,7	22,9	51,4	20
Senior	60	3,3	15	25	30	26,7

According to the data presented in Table 9, when ‘I agree’ and ‘I strongly agree’ categories are considered together, 87,9% of the freshmen, 60% of the sophomores, 71,4% of the juniors and 56,7% of the senior learners agree to be corrected by instructors by repeating the correct grammar use orally. It seems that the freshmen enjoy this sort of correction more than the other levels do. As the level progresses, it seems that sophomores do not prefer their instructors to correct their errors repeating the right usage orally. As the seniors arrive at the fourth level, less and less students would like their instructors to use this error correction strategy, but one-fourth of them are still unsure about making the correction by repeating the correct form of a grammar structure orally, and this is also true for the sophomores and juniors.

Table 10 presents the percentages on ‘being corrected directly by instructors’.

Table 10: Percentages for “When I make oral grammar errors, I prefer the instructors to correct them directly.”

	N	SD %	D %	NS %	A %	SA %
Freshmen	58	12	24,1	25,9	25,9	12,1
Sophomore	60	18,3	43,3	26,7	6,7	5
Junior	35	8,6	22,9	34,3	25,7	8,6
Senior	60	15	31,7	25	16,7	11,7

According to the data in Table 10, when ‘I strongly disagree’ and ‘I disagree’ categories are taken together, it is seen that 36,1% of the freshmen, 61,6% of the sophomores, 31,5% of the juniors, 46,7% of the seniors do not prefer to be corrected directly by instructors. These percentages suggest that nearly half of the seniors and more than half of the sophomores are more interested in using the language fluently in class activities without being interrupted. Moreover, a significant percentage of the freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors (25,9%; 26,7%; 34,3%; 25% respectively) are not very clear about direct correction by their instructors. These percentages imply that, unlike the freshmen who seem to need more feedback, the sophomores do not prefer direct teacher correction or feedback, but they are more interested in language use.

While Table-1 through Table-10 indicate the preferences of ELT students at different levels specifically, Table-11 presents the percentages and mean scores regarding the preferences of ELT learners as a whole in the treatment of their oral grammar errors in order to look at the data from a wider perspective.

Table 11: Overall mean scores and percentages for the preferences of ELT learners on the correction of their oral grammar errors

When I make oral grammar errors, I prefer the instructors ..	M	N	SD %	D %	NS %	A %	SA %
1. to correct my errors if they are recurring ones	4,45	213	1,4	3,3	2,3	34,7	58,2
2. to help me realize and correct an error by myself	4,11	213	0,9	3,8	6,1	62	27,2
3. to correct my errors instantly if they deteriorate meaning	4,08	213	2,8	6,6	9,4	42,7	38,5
4. to correct the errors in class as if they are common errors rather than correcting me individually	4,03	213	1,9	7,5	10,3	46	34,3
5. to take notes during the lesson and correct me individually later	4,01	213	1,9	8,5	13,1	39,4	37,1
6. to give me choices in the process of correcting my errors	4,00	213	2,3	3,8	9,4	60,1	24,4
7. to correct them explaining the right usage with different examples on the board	3,93	213	6,1	3,3	10,3	51,6	28,6
8. to warn me	3,80	213	1,4	10,8	17,4	47,4	23
9. to make the correction by repeating the correct form of the grammar structure orally	3,74	213	2,3	9,9	19,2	48,8	19,7
10. to correct them directly	2,77	213	14,1	31,5	27,2	17,8	9,4

According to the data in Table-11, when all the participants in four levels are considered, *correction of errors if they are recurring ones* ($M=4,45$), *helping students realize and correct an error on their own* ($M=4,11$), *correction of errors instantly if they deteriorate meaning* ($M=4,08$), *correction of errors in class as if they are common errors rather than correcting a student individually* ($M=4,03$), *taking notes during a lesson and correcting students individually later* ($M=4,01$), *giving students choices in the process of error correction* ($M=4,00$) seem to be the most preferred error correction strategies by our ELT students in the correction of their oral grammar errors. When the category of ‘**Strongly Agree**’ is considered alone, *correction of errors if they are recurring ones* (58.2%) is perceived very highly. When the category of ‘**Agree**’ is considered alone, *helping students realize and correct an error by themselves* (62%) and *giving students choices in the process of error correction* (60,1%) seem to be perceived as the most useful strategies. *Correction of errors explaining the right usage with various examples on the board* ($M= 3,93$) also seems to be quite a good error correction strategy in the eyes of the students.

On the other hand, *warning the students when they make an oral error* ($M=3.80$), *making the correction by repeating the correct form of the grammar structure orally* ($M= 3.74$), and *correcting the students directly* ($M=2.77$) seem to be the least preferred error correction strategies by our students.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

This study investigated the preferences of ELT students on the strategies used by the instructors in the treatment of oral grammar errors.

According to our data within the constraints of our study, the majority of the freshmen prefer their instructors to correct their errors if they are recurring ones. Our findings reveal that ELT students need more feedback in grammar usage in their freshman year, and the senior students become aware that they are teacher candidates and seem to be more sensitive about their oral grammar errors prior to their graduation.

A second important finding in our study is that the majority of the learners at all levels prefer their instructors to help them realize and correct their oral grammar errors on their own. This finding is consistent with a comment by Harmer (2001, p.99) who suggests that teachers should behave as if they are helping students in their learning process instead of emphasizing and criticizing the students’ errors. In this sense, instructors can try to enhance the use of some error correction strategies while learners are trying to communicate in the target language and encourage them to realize their own errors and mistakes so that they can self-correct themselves. Harmer (2001, p. 276) also emphasizes that overcorrecting the learners’ mistakes may hinder the communicative style of a task, yet correcting errors gently may help learners much. Lynch (2008, p.2) suggests that, apart from peer-correction and teacher-correction, the most effective strategy for error correction is self-correction as learners can realize and learn from their mistakes. Hoque (2008, p.3) also argues that helping to focus students’ attention on errors through self-correction or peer correction can reduce reliance on the teacher, thereby encouraging student autonomy. In a study on measuring the effects of oral corrective feedback on L2 knowledge, Loewen and Nabei (2007, p. 363) place emphasis on the use of prompting as a strategy, saying that ‘prompting, whether through metalinguistic feedback or clarification requests, involves asking learners to correct the error themselves and therefore to process at a deeper level’, and suggest that learners can use their latent knowledge to perform self-repair.

Also, most of the learners who participated in our study prefer their instructors to correct their errors instantly if they deteriorate meaning. Junior and freshmen learners seem to be more sensitive about instant correction than learners in the other levels. This result is consistent with Katayama’s (2007) study carried out with Japanese EFL learners, in which nearly half of the learners agreed that teachers should correct only the errors that interfere with communication, in spite of the fact that the context of the so-called study focused on a different group of learners from ours.

Our findings show that the majority of the learners in all levels prefer that oral grammar errors be corrected as if they are common errors in class rather than correcting a particular student individually, and as the level goes up, the students seem to enjoy being provided with choices in correcting their errors. Another result from our study is that the junior and senior learners prefer face-to-face individual correction more than the other levels do, which indicates that, as the level goes up, ELT learners tend to give more and more importance to the correction of their oral grammar errors by their instructors with the notes taken in a class hour. This naturally means a delayed error

treatment. This finding is consistent with the results found in a study by Sali (2000) who aimed to explore EFL teachers' oral error treatment behaviors in ELT speaking classes as well as EFL teachers' and learners' perspectives on treatment of oral errors. In that study, it was found that the students had strong preferences when their oral errors were concerned. It was reported that the students did not want their teachers to ignore their errors, and that they found error treatment useful and necessary to learn a foreign language better. Also, they expressed strong preferences for delayed error treatment, teacher and self-treatment. Similarly, in a study carried out by Amador (2008) with university students, it was found that explicit error correction by teacher is preferred by students. The students also reported in the same study that they preferred teacher correction rather than peer-correction.

As the level progresses, it seems that the sophomore learners do not prefer their instructors to warn them when they make oral errors in grammar usage. However, the percentages tend to rise again for the junior and senior ELT learners, which indicates that the ELT learners continue to give importance to the correction of their oral grammar errors as their level goes up. Unlike the freshmen, the sophomores do not prefer direct teacher-oriented correction, and this means that they give more importance to using the language fluently. However, as the level goes up, more and more students would like to be given explanation for the correct usage of oral grammar errors. Giving oral explanations to top students could be satisfactory whereas a high percentage of students in all levels would like to see more examples for the correct usages coupled with explanations. Our findings reveal that correction of errors by explaining the right usage with various examples on the board is also perceived as a useful strategy by our students. It seems that this strategy can serve quite well to eye-oriented students. This result is consistent with the study conducted by Schulz (2001) and that of Lasagabaster & Sierra (2005). Schulz's study shows that students strongly prefer 'explicit grammar instruction' and 'error correction'. Lasagabaster and Sierra's study also suggests that error correction should be performed with plenty of explanations using various techniques. In this sense, we can say that individual and group sessions may help students raise their awareness and they can be better trained in self-treatment or self-repair of common errors.

Based on the total percentages for the senior students, it can be concluded that they do not prefer their instructors to make the correction by repeating the correct form of the grammar structure orally. In other words, as they arrive at the fourth level in the program, less and less students would like their instructors to use this kind of error correction strategy.

According to the findings derived from our study when four levels are considered as a whole, the error correction strategies listed below should be taken into account in terms of degree of importance and utilized by instructors teaching in similar contexts:

- *correction of errors if they are recurring ones*
- *making the students realize an error and helping them correct it on their own*
- *correction of errors instantly when they deteriorate the meaning*
- *correction of errors in class as if they are common rather than correcting students individually*
- *taking notes during the lesson and correcting the students individually at the end of class*
- *giving the students choices in the process of error correction, and*
- *correction of errors explaining the right usage with different examples on the board*

The results of our study, on the other hand, also reveal that ELT students do not enjoy the use of following error correction strategies:

- *warning the students when they make an oral error*
- *making the correction by repeating the correct form of a grammar structure orally, and*
- *correcting the students directly*

It seems that ELT learners do not enjoy direct error correction. Thus, instructors should avoid providing direct feedback to their students. Instead, they should consider the learners' recurring grammar errors as well as those that deteriorating meaning. The freshmen are more sensitive about the correction of grammar errors than the

students in the other levels, so instructors should provide more corrective feedback for students' oral grammar errors in freshman classes than they do in the other levels.

In addition, the junior and senior learners tend to prefer more face-to-face individual error correction than the students in the other levels as their level goes up, revealing an increasing level of sensitivity to errors.

Consequently, the findings derived from our study may be applicable to other institutions training teacher trainees, and the correction strategies found effective by our students can be reflected to classes by instructors in the correction of oral grammar errors. Naturally, those found ineffective should not be preferred by instructors; in other words, the use of such error correction strategies should be avoided in ELT classes.

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