

**Main focus**

Ways of providing feedback to learners on spoken language.

**Learning outcomes**

- Trainees understand the main considerations in providing feedback.
- Trainees understand a variety of techniques for providing feedback.

**Key concepts**

- errors, mistakes
- correction, teacher, peer, self-
- reformulation
- immediate/delayed correction

# Providing feedback on learner production

## Task 1:

- a. *Decide which of these teachers' views you agree with. Then work in groups and compare your ideas.*

**Olga:**

Errors need to be avoided at all costs. I don't want my learners to pick up bad habits.

**Mariagrazia:**

Errors are a natural part of the learning process – and as teaching material they're really useful.

**Paula:**

I feel bad correcting my students' errors – it's judgemental and demotivating.

**Tomas:**

I think it is really important that teachers highlight good examples of language use, because it builds the confidence of the student who said it and other students can learn by copying it.

**Carol:**

I think it is really important to praise learners' effort and perseverance, as well as when they get something 'right'.

**Marco:**

I try to involve my students in correction. Sometimes they can correct themselves, or another student can correct them.

- b. Think back to your own language learning experience. Did you like it when the teacher corrected your errors? Why or why not? Did your teacher highlight good examples of language use?

Compare your experiences with a partner.

Many language teachers and students believe the provision of negative feedback by the teacher in speaking and writing is a staple of good classroom instruction.

Lourdes Ortega, 2009

## Task 2: Types of error

- a. Find the errors in the sentences (1–6) and match them with the classifications (a–f). Then compare your answers with a partner.

| Errors                                                         | Classification                                |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| 1 She likes her job. She works for the same company for years. | a problem with word stress                    |
| 2 (In a restaurant) Bring me the menu!                         | b problem with intonation                     |
| 3 My brother fell off his bike but he wasn't badly damaged.    | c problem with word order                     |
| 4 It's a lovely day, isn't it?                                 | d problem with choice of word(s) (vocabulary) |
| 5 She's a MATure student.                                      | e problem with register                       |
| 6 Where is standing the teacher?                               | f problem with the choice of verb form        |

- b. Think about some of the errors your learners have made in teaching practice. Do the errors fit one of the types above, or are they different?

## Task 3: When to intervene

Work with a partner. Look at some options teachers have for giving feedback. Read the situations below and discuss which you would use in each situation. Be ready to justify your choices.

|                     |                    |                               |
|---------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| correct immediately | delay correction   | until the end of the activity |
| ignore the error    | praise immediately | praise after the activity     |

- a. You are monitoring group work and you hear learners in different groups say these things:
1. "Technology is such important for all of us these days."
  2. "For sure, I am agree with Anja."
  3. "Salma makes a brilliant point."
  4. "The battery is terrible – I have to redo it every hour!"
- b. The following exchanges occur on different occasions in open class:
- a You: We have a new student today.  
Welcome Vera! Vera, can you introduce yourself?  
Vera: I am coming from Moscow. I am absolutely happy to join this class.
- b You: Monika, can you tell us what your group talked about?  
Monika: We think that endangered species need safe habitats.
- c You: Freddie, tell us about your job.  
Freddie: I work in hotel. My job is to make the guests.
- c. The following exchanges happen in open class as learners report back their answers to a listening exercise:
- a You: What instrument does he play?  
Student: He is play saxophone.
- b You: What did she say about her favourite movie?  
Student: She doesn't like black and white movies.

## Task 4: Correction strategies

- a. Work in pairs. Compare the ways that different teachers responded to the same error. Explain the strengths of each strategy and identify any potential disadvantages. Complete the table below.

Learner:

*'We go to the beach yesterday.'*

Teacher 4:

Sorry, do you mean you go every day?

Teacher 1:

Yesterday – so, grammar?

Teacher 5:

You went to the beach – that's nice. Who did you go with?

Teacher 2:

Yesterday you ...

Teacher 6:

[makes no comment and the activity continues until, at the end, the teacher says] I heard someone say *We go to the beach yesterday*. Can anyone correct that?

Teacher 3:

Not quite; look: We go to the beach yesterday.  
[Holds up their hand and indicates the second finger from the left from the learners' point of view]

| Strategy                                                                                    | Advantages                                                                                                                  | Disadvantages                                           |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| Teacher prompts using terminology – e.g. 'grammar, tense, pronunciation,' etc.              | Easy to use and prompts the learner to self-correct.<br>Indicates the type of error that the learner should be looking for. | Learners need to be familiar with the terminology used. |
| Teacher repeats the utterance to the point of the error. e.g. <i>Yesterday you ...</i>      |                                                                                                                             |                                                         |
| Finger correction (teacher uses fingers to indicate the position of the error)              |                                                                                                                             |                                                         |
| Teacher asks a question to establish the meaning, e.g. <i>Do you mean you go every day?</i> |                                                                                                                             |                                                         |
| Reformulation (recast), e.g. <i>You went to the beach.</i>                                  |                                                                                                                             |                                                         |
| Delayed correction                                                                          |                                                                                                                             |                                                         |

- b. Think about lessons you have observed. Did the teacher use any of the strategies shown here? If so, were they effective?

**Task 5: Putting it into practice**

- a. Read out the error on the card you are given and respond to what your trainer does or says. Pay attention to how the trainer corrects the error.
- b. Look at the list of errors and complete the table.

| Error                                                     | How was it corrected? |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Can you borrow me some money?                             |                       |
| Do you can juggle?                                        |                       |
| Bring me the menu!                                        |                       |
| Where is going Felipe?                                    |                       |
| Her mother is a PROfessor.                                |                       |
| My brother fell off his bike but he wasn't badly damaged. |                       |

- c. Can you think of any alternatives that could have been used to correct these errors?
- d. Work in a group of three. Your trainer will give you a set of cards. Each card has an error on it.

Trainee A: Play the role of the learner. Take a card and read out the error.

Trainee B: Play the role of the teacher. Correct A's error.

Trainee C: Play the role of an observer. Give feedback on the success of the correction strategy.

Take turns playing each role.

### Keywords for teachers

Check you know the meanings of these terms.

- *feedback*
- *immediate correction*
- *delayed correction*
- *reformulation*
- *peer correction*

## Reflection

1. Use the prompts below to write sentences about giving feedback. The first one has been done as an example.
  1. there are/types There are different types of error.
  2. learners/expect
  3. correction/quickly
  4. correction/clearly
  5. immediately / interfere with meaning
  6. sometimes/delayed/because
  7. no fixed rules / when or how
  8. praise/sincere
  9. praise/effort
  10. feedback/supportive
2. Do you agree with all the advice given in the sentences above?
3. Read the quote below. Explain how errors 'invite opportunities'.

Feedback is most effective when students do not have proficiency or mastery – and thus it thrives when there is error or incomplete knowing and understanding ... Errors invite opportunities. They should not be seen as embarrassments, signs of failure, or something to be avoided. They are exciting, because they indicate a tension between what we now know and what we could know.

John Hattie, 2012