Students' Perceptions of Error Correction at the University of Phan Thiet

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Abstract: The primary concern of English lecturers is how to motivate students to learn English. Investigating students' perceptions of oral error correction will help to improve understanding of the need to find the best method to motivate students to learn successfully.

The article focuses on the analysis of perceptions of students on oral errors correction at the University of Phan Thiet. Therefore it offers a number of solutions that contribute to improving the method of English speaking teaching efficiently.

Keyword: oral error correction, motivation, students' attitude.

I.   INTRODUCTION

1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY:

The first characteristic of the students at the University of Phan Thiet is the wide gap in their English proficiency level. Some of them have learned English from grade 1, while the others from grade 6. Therefore, the proficiency level of the students is not equivalent. That brings many difficulties for English teachers. She/he has to consider the appropriate teaching method in which error correction is varied accordingly to the English level of every student.

This research investigated students' perceptions at the University of Phan Thiet on oral error correction. The purpose of the study is to find out students' needs and expectations to help lecturers design the best methods to motivate students in learning to speak effectively. 96 students from two classes of second years at the University of Phan Thiet participated in this study. Through a questionnaire, a research tool, the researcher collected useful information concerning students' perception of oral error correction. The findings in this study showed that most students favored having their grammatical and vocabulary errors to be corrected. They preferred teachers' corrections because they believe in their reliability and accuracy. For every error they made, they preferred they must be corrected, Finally, they are interested in all errors discovered at all stages of the teaching process, regardless of the necessity of fluency in communication.

2. THE STUDY'S PURPOSE:

The purpose of the study is to explore students' perceptions of oral error correction in English classes at the University of Phan Thiet. By investigating types of oral error correction, error corrector, appropriate time of correction, and extent of correction, the researcher will suggest some solutions for improving teaching and learning speaking more effectively.

3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In order to accomplish the purpose of the study, this research will find out the following questions:

1. What are the perceptions of students of the University of Phan Thiet on oral error correction?

2. What are their perceptions of oral error correction techniques?

4. SCOPE OF THE STUDY:

The study will be restricted to describing the phenomenon of oral error correction in two English classes of second-year students in the second semester of school year 2021-2022 at the University of Phan Thiet. Due to the limitation of time, the study will not investigate teachers' and administrators' opinions on oral error correction. Moreover, how oral error correction affects teaching and learning will not be discussed in this study.

5. CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY:

Researcher hope that the results in this study will help teachers deeply understand students' needs. Therefore, teachers will apply the research findings in encouraging, motivating learners in learning to speak English in particular and it is hoped that the findings of the study is useful in learning and teaching EFL.

II.   LITRATURE REVIEW

1. DEFINITION OF ORAL ERROR

Based on different perspectives, errors have been classified in several types such as global error, local error, overt mistake, covert mistake, etc. In the limitation of this study, and based on five language components, errors are classified in phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics and pragmatic. According to Katayama (2007), errors are divided into five types including grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, pragmatic and discourse as follows:

    a. Grammar error is defined as a large concept including errors in morphology and syntax
    b. Pronunciation errors include phonetic errors and prosodic errors. Phonetic errors mean incorrect physical production of simple sound. Prosodic errors are errors in stress, intonation and rhythm.
    c. Vocabulary errors are errors used in word and phrase.
    d. Pragmatic errors are errors caused by inappropriate word, expression in particular context
    e. Discourse errors include errors caused by using inappropriate cohesion, coherence.

Students in this investigation have errors in grammar, stress, intonation, rhythm, pronunciation, vocabulary and using expression inappropriately. To understand more general about the students' attitude towards oral error correction, we investigate error corrector, especially in manner of teacher, time of correction, the extent as well as the correction method.

2. DEFINITION OF ERROR CORRECTOR

In corrective feedback, particularly in error correction, person who corrects error is very important. Error corrector considerable affects students' attitude in correction. Studying influence of corrector will help us clearly understand students' expectation as well as teacher's demand in correcting.

To understand deeply the influence of error corrector, the question should be answered: Who should correct errors?

a. Self-correction: According to Harmer (1991), self-correction is an important useful part in learning process. Teacher uses this correction technique to help students to be able to correct themselves.
b. Peer-correction: when students are unable to correct themselves, Harmer (1991) and Katayama (2007) suggested that teacher may ask their classmate to help student who made errors. However, this method may bring some disadvantages. Student who made errors may feel humiliated if this technique is used insensitively.
c. Teacher-correction: Harmer (1991) suggested that when students are extremely mixed-up about the correct response or majority of the class are having the same problem, teacher should take charge of correction. In this case, teacher re-explains part that causing troubles misunderstand.

Choosing the appropriate moment to correct error is also very important. It contributes to success of teacher in checking students' understanding as well as guiding them in using language fluently and creatively. Choosing the right person at the right moment to correct errors will bring highly effectiveness.

3. DEFINITION OF ORAL ERROR CORRECTION TECHNIQUE

There is a variety of techniques that can be used to respond to students' errors in oral performance. To understand error correction techniques, following issues should be defined:

a.　　　When should errors be corrected?

b.　　　How errors should be corrected? (Or to what extent errors should be corrected?)

4.1. When should errors be corrected?

According to Harmer (1991), during accuracy work, especially when the main focus is on grammatical items, teachers should correct mostly errors immediately. The purpose of this stage is to show students where errors occur and help them to see what is their incorrectness, therefore students have a change to get the language right. After correcting, re-explaining, students are required to choral and individual repetition. Students are required to produce sentence, phrase or word correctly. Any error is not accepted.

During practice activity, correction is different with stage mentioned above. Teacher shows incorrectness to students but not asking for repetition. Harmer (1991) suggested that teacher may intervene slightly to guide and point out incorrectness.

During creativity or fluency work, when communication might be broken down or not clear, teacher should use many types of correction with tact and discretion such as reformulation. In reality, researchers as well as many teachers made correcting seriously. They sometimes even got angry with errors repeated many times. The atmosphere of class became strained and heavy. Therefore creativity or communication is stopped. In these situations, Harmer (1991) suggested gentle correction. According to this author, teachers show students errors that had been made but he/she should not make a big fuss about it or emphasize it seriously. Students are not required to repeat sentence correctly. Teacher should apply a correction method that does not damage the atmosphere of class or free conversation such as reformulation, using gesture, etc.

4.2 How should errors be corrected? (Or to what extent should errors be corrected?)

1. Correct some certain errors:

Ur, P. (1999) based on communicative approach to suggest that not all errors need to be corrected. The main purpose of learning is to receive and convey information. Therefore, errors that interfere with the purpose, not with the inaccuracies of information should be focused and corrected.

2. Correct all errors:

According Hamer (1991), errors which occur with high frequency or were made by majority of the class should be corrected and re-explain if students are still confused.

In my teaching experience, many teachers correct errors in the way that they don't realize that they will break communication.

III.　　METHODOLOGY

1 Research Question

In order to accomplish the aim of this research, this study has to find out the following questions:

1. What are the perceptions of students at the University of Phan Thiet on oral error correction?

2. What are their perceptions of oral errors correction techniques?

2 RESEARCH DESIGN

This study focused on describing the phenomenon in error correction in English classes, so this study employed a descriptive research design by using questionnaire to collect useful data concerning oral error corrections of students in English classes at the University of Phan Thiet,

3. CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted in April of school year 2021-2022, at the University of Phan Thiet. This year, Speaking 4 was a compulsory subject, so students have invested much time in learning to speaki English. There is an assessment of speaking ability in English examination. Therefore, correction is necessary in stage of practice and production to help students clearly understand the lesson and use it fluently and correctly.

4. Participants:

4.1 Participants:

In the Foreign Languages Department at the University of Phan Thiet, there are 550 students, of whom 96 are students in second year. This semester, they finished 3 courses in speaking and they are learning Speaking 4. Therefore, their perceptions of error correction are clear. That is the reason, researcher investigated these two classes. The researcher hoped that choosing these students to investigate would bring results more objectively and clearly. Participants in this study included 96 students from two classes of the second year at the University of Phan Thiet.

4.2 Sampling:

The size of samples will affect the reliability and accuracy of the research. In this study, the population is large, so it is impractical to take a lot of time to test students. I chose cluster sampling that was introduced by Cohen, L., L. and Morrison K. (2007) through selecting a specific number of classes and testing all the students in these selected classes. I chose two classes of K12NNA1 and K12NNA2 to test all these students.

5. Instrument

However, there are still some disadvantages to questionnaires, such as often low incomplete answers, and relatively restricted data. However, research found that it might bring many more advantages, such as low cost, large-scale studying, respondents' feeling convenient in using their own time in class, and data results were standardized. Therefore, researcher chose questionnaires as the research tool for this study.

In this study, researcher used questionnaires with close-opened questions and Likert-scale questions to collect data from participants to investigate their perception of types of errors corrected, corrector, appropriate time to correct errors, and extent to correct. The questionnaires and open-ended questions were delivered to all participants. Their answers will be kept confidential.

5.1. The open-response questions:

Researcher used open-response questions because of three reasons: the first reason is to give the participants the various choices and flexibility in answering. The second reason is to hope to receive a wide range of possible answers, especially unexpected answers. For third reason, with open-response questions, researcher might be able to explore the many dimensions of oral error correction.

5.2. The Likert-scale questions:

This study is a kind of research to investigate the respondents' attitudes therefore using Likert-scale questions would bring more effective result. Researcher used Liker-scale ranged on dimensions from strongly disagree, disagree, agree and strongly agree. Researcher used four Likert-scales questions instead of common five scale questions to avoid neutral tendency of opinion. Respondents were forced to express a definite opinion.

5.3. Format of the questions:

There were two parts of questions: part 1 included six questions concerning general information about participant, and parts two, the questionnaire concerning correction of spoken errors. The questionnaires were designed in four categories with eleven questions: questions about types of errors, corrector, and time of correcting.

Based on the reason to apply the research tools mentioned above, the following summary table was presented:

No	Students' attitude	Research tool	Question number
1	Attitude toward types of error	Likert-scale question	Questions 1 to 4
2	Attitude toward corrector	Likert-scale question	Questions 5 to 7
3	Attitude toward time of correcting	Likert-scale question	Questions 8 to 9
4	Attitude toward extent of correction	Likert-scale question	Questions 10 to 11

Table1: Summary table of instrument tool

Based on the conceptual framework, questionnaires were designed in details format as follows:

No	Students' attitude	Detail Information	Question
1	Type of oral errors	Correction in grammar errors	Question 1
		Correction in pronunciation errors	Question 2
		Correction in vocabulary errors	Question 3
		Correction in errors of inappropriate expression	Question 4
2	Corrector	Self-correction	Question 5
		Peer-correction	Question 6
		Teacher-correction	Question 7
3	When should errors be corrected	Correction during practice activity	Question 8
		Correction during free speaking	Question 9
4	Extent of correction	Correction some certain errors	Question 10
		Correction all of errors	Question 11

Table 2: Table of framework of questionnaire

6. DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

The procedure of data collection was carried out as following steps:

Time	Stage	Content	Purpose
1st week of April 2022	Pilot questionnaire	Administer questionnaires to 10 students	Determine reliability
2st week of April 2022	Revise questionnaire	Delete and change questions which is inappropriate; add necessary questions	Revise for appropriate questionnaire
3, 4st week of April 2022	Deliver questionnaire	Deliver questionnaire to the rest of students	Collect information

Table 3: Data collection of procedure

7. DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURE

After students received and completed questionnaire, data would be analyzed. Likert four-point scale was applied to analyze data. Choices with "strongly disagree" will be scored 1, "disagree" will be scored 2, "agree" will be scored 3 and "strongly agree" will be scored 4. Close-responsequestions and Likert-scale questions were gathered and analyzed according to the following points:

-      Participants information.
-      Participants' attitudes toward four aspects of correction mentioned in the tables.
-      Participants' ranks of the choices most students choose concerning correction.

Based on the tables mentioned, all data collected were statistically analyzed and synthesized by Microsoft Excel

IV.   RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1.   Analysis of data and discussion of results:

Questionnaires were delivered to 96 students and all of them were interested in the survey and replied the questionnaire. Firstly, Section A and B of the questionnaire provided responses for research question1: What are the perception of students at the University Phan Thiet on oral error corrections?

SECTION A: TYPES OF ERROR CORRECTION

According to table 4 "Errors students wanted to have corrected", we can realize that a great number of students wanted to have their grammatical errors (50% students) and vocabulary errors (61% students) corrected.

Throughout first year and second year, students have been taught to have sufficient knowledge mostly in grammar and vocabulary. Regarding grammar error, in teaching English, grammar are primarily focused. Being afraid of making grammatical error, students hesitate to speak English. Therefore, they are interested in learning grammar, particularly learning grammatical errors.

Regarding vocabulary error, strong interest of students can also be explained in the same way of grammatical errors mentioned above. They have been prepared to have wide knowledge in vocabulary that would appear in in many questions of examination.

Those are the reasons that why students in this study were highly interested in grammatical and vocabulary errors.

TABLE 4: ERRORS STUDENTS WANTED TO HAVE CORRECTED

ITEM	No	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Always	MEAN	SD
		1	2	3	4		
		%	%	%	%		
1. Gramatical error	96	0	10.42	39.58	**50**	3.4	0.67
2. Pronunciation error	96	3.13	**37.5**	37.5	21.88	2.78	0.82
3. Vocabulary error	96	0	10.42	28.13	**61.46**	3.51	0.68
4. Error caused by using inappropriate expression	96	13.5	34.38	44.79	7.292	2.46	0.82

SECTION B: ERROR CORRECTOR

In table 5: Attitudes towards error corrector, only 36% student preferred to correct by themselves. After interviewing students who did not prefer to correct themselves, researcher found that most of them didn't feel confident about their correction. They would rather to have their teacher correct their errors (54%). A total number of 48% students disagreed with peer-correction. The first reason is that they felt uncomfortable when their classmates correct themselves. The second reason is that students were afraid of breaking their friendship when they show their friends' errors. And the last reason is that they didn't know how to express their opinion without hurting or losing their friend's face.

For error corrector, most students (54% agree and 35% strongly agree) preferred teachers' correction because they believe in their reliability and accuracy.

TABLE 5: PERCEPTIONS ON ERROR CORRECTORS

ITEM	No	Strongly Disagree 1 %	Disagree 2 %	Agree 3 %	Strongly Agree 4 %	MEAN	SD
5. I prefer to correct errors by myself	96	0.24	**0.3646**	0.3333	0.0625	2.22	0.89
6. I prefer my classmate to correct my errors	96	**0.48**	0.2917	0.1667	0.0625	1.81	0.93
7. I prefer my teacher to correct my errors	96	0	0.1042	**0.5417**	0.3542	3.25	0.63

Section from C to D in the questionnaire addressed research question number 2 "What are their perceptions on oral errors correction techniques?". Results of participants are considered in terms of time of correction, extent of correction.

TIME OF CORRECTION

Based on table 6, there are not many differences between students' preferences during practice activities (45,8% strongly agree and 54% agree) and corrections during free speaking activities (57% strongly agree). The results mean most students agreed with the necessity of oral error correction in all stages of learning English, regardless of practice stage or free practice stage. That can be easily explained that at the level of students in this study, they preferred every error they made to be corrected in order to meet their need for better understanding of a foreign language.

TABLE 6: PERCEPTIONS ON TIME OF CORRECTION

ITEM	No	STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 %	DISAGREE 2 %	AGREE 3 %	STRONGLY AGREE 4 %	MEAN	SD
8. I want my errors to be corrected during practice activity	96	0	0	**0.5417**	0.4583	3.46	0.5
9. I want my errors to be corrected during free speaking activity	96	0.11	0.2083	0.1042	**0.5729**	3.14	1.11

Similarly to time of correction, based on table 7: "Perceptions of extent of correction", most of students (40% agree and 49% strongly agree) agreed with the statement "I want all my errors should be corrected". For them, correcting all errors could satisfy their need of clear understanding English. However, with limitation of four periods per week for teaching English, correcting such errors could be impossible.

Similarly to the explanation of all errors, more students (42%) disagreed with correcting only errors that interfered with communication because they thought that correcting only this type of error would not be enough to understand English. These preferences of students can be explained by the fact that their English proficiency is mostly at intermediate level or lower. Therefore, they are interested in all errors discovered at all stages of the teaching process, regardless of the necessity of fluency in communication.

TABLE 7: PERCEPTIONS OF EXTENT OF CORRECTION

ITEM	No	STRONGLY DISAGRE 1 %	DISAGREE 2 %	AGREE 3 %	STRONGLY AGREE 4 %	MEAN	SD
10. I want only errors that interfere with communication should be corrected	96	0.09	0.4167	0.2917	0.1979	2.59	0.91
11. I want all my errors should be corrected	96	0.1	0	**0.4063**	**0.4896**	3.28	0.91

2.   Findings

Based on analyzing and discussing results in part 1 mentioned above, in this part 2, researcher will present findings from this study.

Firstly, like some other research's findings such as Nguyen (2009), Katayama (2007), the majority of students in this study favored having their grammatical errors and vocabulary errors tobe corrected. These preferences were caused by the habit of English learning for many years in high school. This habit is caused by exams in English class in high schools that mostly focused on checking knowledge and understanding of learners in grammar and vocabulary.

Secondly, students in this study preferred teacher-correction due to the English proficiency level and habit of learning of high school students that still heavily depend on the teacher's guidance, and lack of self-learning.

Thirdly, in order to understand English more clearly, most students in this study preferred to have all errors corrected, regardless of stage of practice for accuracy or fluency.

V.   CONCLUSION

1.   Conclusion and suggestion

In this study, researcher investigated students' perceptions at the University of Phan Thiet on oral error correction in terms of type of error, error corrector, time of correction, and extent of correction. Using a questionnaire with likert-scale questions and open-response question as a research tool, researcher gained many useful results that were presented in Chapter 4. From the data analyzing, discussion and findings in this study, teachers and particularly researcher will understand more deeply and thoroughly the students' needs and their expectations. From the results of the study, researcher suggests some implications.

Researcher as well as many English teachers, expect our students can correct themselves. With the limitation of time for English class, the teacher can't observe, discover errors and correct them, whereas students are not confident about their correction as well as peer-correction. Therefore, firstly, to meet the expectation of students, to some extent, depending on particular student level, the aim of the lesson and situation, teacher should correct their error. Later, teacher teaches students to get familiar with correcting by

themselves or by classmates through learning more actively. Gradually, teacher reduces teacher-correction and replaces it partially with peer-correction or student-correction.

To end this paper, researcher would like to use a quote by Albert Einstein that teachers should remember to treat students' errors sympathetically: "Anyone who has never made a mistake has never tried anything new."

2. Limitations of the study and recommendations for further study:

Due to time and project scope constraints, this study has some certain limitations relating to the number of participants, aspect of correction, research tool and correlation between correction method and learning outcome. Based on each limitation of the study, the researcher makes some recommendations for future research.

Firstly, it is the limitation of the number of participants in two classes due to the limitation of time. Therefore, the results of the study cannot fully represent the perception of students at the University of Phan Thiet towards oral error correction. Further study should be extended to more students in first year, third year, and fourth year classes.

Secondly, the study investigated mostly in one aspect of correction, particularly in attitudes towards correction of teacher, not peer correction or self-correction. Peer correction and self-correction are essential and interesting matters that should be widely and deeply investigated in further research.

Thirdly, this research used one research tool which is questionnaire. Further study should use more instrument of study such as observation, interview, etc. These research tools will help researcher to get more accurate and dynamic picture of oral error correction in high school.

Finally, this study didn't investigate the correlation between oral error correction method and result of learning speaking of high school students. In further study, researcher should specify the correlation of aspects mentioned above to get clearer impact of oral error correction and learning English in University.

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRES

PART 1
PARTICIPANTS INFORMATION
1.   Name:………………..
2.   Gender: □ male   □ female
3.   Age   :
4.   Year of learning English: □ under 5 years   □ over 5 years □ over 10 years
5.   I want to improve my English in speaking skill: □ yes   □ no
6.   I want my errors in speaking English to be corrected: □ yes   □ no

PART 2
QUESTIONS
Direction: Please read the following statements and questions, from item number 1 to 11, please stick (x) to the most appropriate choice. For questions 12 that require information, please write down at the space provided.

(SD: strongly disagree; D: disagree; A: agree; SA: strongly agree; N: Never; R; rarely; Sometimes; Al: Always)

Question number	Statement	N	R	S	Al
		1	2	3	4
	A. Types of error correction				
1	How often do you want to have your grammatical errors to be corrected?				
2	How often do you want to have your pronunciation errors to be corrected?				
3	How often do you want to have your vocabulary errors to be corrected?				
4	How often do you want to have your errors caused by using inappropriate expression to be corrected?				
Question number	Statement	SD	D	A	SA
		1	2	3	4
	B. Error corrector				

5	I prefer to correct errors by myself				
6	I prefer my classmate to correct my errors				
7	I prefer my teacher to correct my errors				
	C. Time of correction				
8	I want my errors to be corrected during practice activity				
9	I want my errors to be corrected during free speaking activity				
	D. Extent of correction				
10	I want only errors that interfere with communication should be corrected.				
11	I want all my errors should be corrected				

12. Do you have any suggestion concerning oral error correction (type of error, degree of correction, time of correction and how to correct)? Please give the reason.

…………………………………………………………………………………………

Thank you for your contribution.