

Sudan University of Science and Technology

College of Graduate Studies

Faulty of Education

English Department

Investigating EFL teachers' Opinions about the Effect of Using
Error Correction Techniques on Students' Writing skills
(A case Study of Secondary Level Schools in Eastern Gezira
Locality - Gezira State - Sudan)

تقصى آراء المعلمين عن فعالية استخدام أساليب تصويب الأخطاء في مهارات
الكتابة لدي الطلاب
(دراسة حالة مدارس المرحلة الثانوية في محلية شرق الجزيرة – ولاية الجزيرة –
السودان)

A Thesis Submitted in Fulfillment of the Requirement for Ph.D
Degree in English Language Teaching (ELT)

Submitted by:

Fadud Mohamed Haroon Mohamed

Supervised by:

Dr. Mahmoud Ali Ahmed Omer

March 2019

Dedication

To the soul of my father, my mother, brothers and sisters.

Acknowledgements

My gratitude is to Allah, the Almighty without whose support I would never have achieved this work. Then, sincere thankfulness is due to my supervisor Dr. Mahmoud Ali Ahmed.

I would like to thank all EFL teachers, in particular, at secondary schools in Eastern Gezira Locality who have participated In this work and gave their opinions about the subject frankly.

I would also like to thank the Liberians in the libraries of Sudan University of Science and Technology who have helped me in finding the intended material and my colleagues helped me in overcoming some difficulties.

ABSTRACT

This study aims at investigating EFL teachers' opinions about the effect of using error correction techniques on learners' writing skills, finding out the techniques that can be used and the type of errors that the teachers treat. The researcher has followed descriptive analytical method and used questionnaire with some open-ended requests as a tool for collecting data. Then SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) program was used for analyzing the data. Some of the outcomes which have been achieved are: the use of error correction techniques has a great role not only in writing skills but also in all other language skills, there are definite techniques to be used for correction but bearing in mind their disadvantages, advantages and suitability for the situation in which they are used, is necessary, the effectiveness of using error correction techniques is reinforced by some other procedures like giving writing exercises regularly, encouraging purposeful reading, etc. then a great deal of recommendations were made accordingly, such as, Certain technique/s should be adopted for giving feedback on students' written tasks, some prerequisites (lesson planning, discussing the techniques with the students, etc.) should be accompanied for making the use of error correction techniques more efficacious, using error correction techniques is to be adopted as the most effective way of error eradication and consolidating correct language, etc. For completing the processes of students' writing skills promotion, the researcher has suggested some further studies, for instance, investigating the most appropriate techniques to be generalized, how EFL teachers actually use those techniques in written error treatment, analyzing spine series for identifying to what extend it is sufficient or needs supplementation, etc.

ABSTRACT (ARABIC VERSION)

مستخلص الدراسة

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تقصي آراء المعلمين عن فعالية استخدام أساليب التصويب في تطوير مهارات الكتابة لدى الطلاب، إيجاد الأساليب التي يمكن استخدامها وأنواع الأخطاء التي يستأصلونها. اتبع الباحث المنهج الوصفي التحليلي و استخدم الاستبيان و بعض أسئلة ترجي المفتوحة كوسيلة لجمع البيانات ثم استخدم برنامج الحزمة الإحصائية للعلوم الاجتماعية (SPSS) في تحليلها. توصلت الدراسة إلي عدد من النتائج منها أن استخدام أساليب التصويب له دور كبير ليس في تطوير مهارات اللغة المكتوبة فحسب بل في كل مهارات اللغة، و أن هنالك أساليب محددة يمكن استخدامها ولكن مع وضع اعتبار لسلبيات و ايجابيات كل منها و تناسبه مع المحيط الذي يستخدم فيه. وان استخدام أساليب التصويب يمكن تعزيز فعاليته بإجراءات أخرى مثل إعطاء تمارين الكتابة بصورة منتظمة و الحث علي القراءة الهادفة، . . . الخ. بالتالي وصي الباحث بعدد من التوصيات منها وجوب تبني أسلوب أو أساليب محددة في تصويب أخطاء الدارس، وجوب مصاحبة استخدام أساليب التصويب ببعض الأنشطة المطلوبة والتي تجعلها أكثر فعالية مثل مناقشة الأساليب مع الدارسين و تحضير الحصة، . . . الخ. و لإكمال عملية تطوير مهارات الكتابة لدي الطلاب من هذه الزاوية، اقترح الباحث دراسات ذات علاقة البث عن انسب اسلب أو الأساليب بغرض التعميم والتحقق من كيفية استخدام هذه الأساليب وتحليل منهج ال (SPINE) لتحديد ما إن كان المنهج يحتاج إلي إضافة أم لا.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Contents	Page
Dedication	i
Acknowledgments	ii
Abstract (English Version)	iii
Abstract (Arabic Version)	iv
Table of Contents	V–vii
List of Tables	
List of Figures	
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	
1.0 Background	1
1.1 Statement of the study Problem	3
1.2 Questions of the Study	5
1.3 Objectives of the Study	5
1.4 Hypotheses of the Study	5
1.5 Contribution of the Study	5
1.6 Methodology of the Study	6
1.7 Delimitations of the Study	6
1.8 Structure of the Study	7
1.9 Operational Definitions	8
1.10 summary of the Chapter	9
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW AND PREVIOUS STUDIES	
2.0 Introduction	10
2.1 Part One: Literature Review	10
2.1.1 Context of the Study	10
2.1.2 Writing Skill Definitions	12
2.1.3 Peculiarities of Writing	13
2.1.4 Writing Skills Typologies and Discourse Types	20
2.1.5 Writing Skills at Secondary Level	21
2.1.6 Improving Students' Writing Kills	23
2.1.7 Error Correction	23
2.1.7.1 The Term Error	23
2.1.7.2 The Term Correction	40
2.1.8 Correct English	44

Contents	Page
2.1.9 Actual Error correction	47
2.1.9.1 Before Correction	47
2.1.9.2 While Giving Feedback	50
2.1.9.2.1 Conceptualizing Error Correction	51
2.1.9.2.2 Approaches to Error Correction	52
2.1.9.2.3 Error Correction Techniques	55
2.1.9.2.4 What to be Corrected	62
2.1.9.2.5 Marking Criteria	67
2.1.10 The Term Opinion	68
2.1.10.1 Opinions about English as Foreign Language	69
2.1.10.2 Opinions about written Language	69
2.1.10.3 Various Opinions about Learners' Errors	71
2.1.10.4 Various Opinions about Error Correction	81
2.1.110.5 Views about Feedback Methods	97
2.2 Part Two: Previous Studies	111
2.3 summary of the Chapter	115
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY	
3.0 Introduction	117
3.1 Population	117
3.2 Sampling	117
3.3 Instrument of the Study	118
3.4 Validity	118
3.5 Reliability	119
3.6 Procedures	121
3.5 Summary of the Chapter	121
CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	
4.0 Introduction	123
4.1 The Results of the Questionnaire	123
4.2 Data Analysis and Discussion	124
4.2.1 Information about the Respondents	124
4.2.1.1 Gender	124
4.2.1.2 Qualifications	124
4.2.1.3 Experiences	125
4.2.2 The Result of the Questionnaire – Part (A)	126
4.2.3 The Result of the Questionnaire – Part (B)	134
4.2.4 The Result of the Questionnaire – Part (C)	157

Contents	Page
4.2.5 The Result of Open-ended Requests	170
4.3. Verification of the Study Hypotheses	171
4.3.1 Hypothesis One	171
4.3.2 Hypotheses Two	172
4.3.3 Hypotheses Three	172
4.4 Summary of the Chapter	172
CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	
5.0 Introduction	174
5.1 Summary of the Study	174
5.2 Conclusions	175
5.3 Recommendations	176
5.4 Suggestions for Further Studies	177
References	179
Appendix (A)	187
Appendix (B)	188
Appendix (C)	195

List of Tables

Table	Title	Page
4.1	Distribution of Frequencies and percentages of the respondents according to the gender	131
4.2	Distribution of Frequencies and percentages of the respondents according to the qualifications	132
4.3	Distribution of Frequencies and percentages of the respondents according to the experience	132
4.4	The Results of the Questionnaire – Part (A)	134
4.4 _a	Using error correction techniques to give feedback on learners' written tasks makes progress in their writing skills	135
4.4 _b	Adopting certain technique/s to give feedback on students' written tasks is necessary	136
4.4 _c	Students' written errors can be radically eradicated without using correction techniques.	136
4.4 _d	Giving systematic feedback on students' written works is tiring.	137
4.4 _e	Using error correction techniques helps in consolidating correct language forms.	138
4.4 _f	Teachers feel bored with systematic correction.	139
4.4 _g	Teaching writing without correction is a worthless activity.	140
4.5	The Result of the Questionnaire – Part (B)	141
4.5 _a	Selective correction is preferable to the comprehensive one.	143
4.5 _b	Analytical correction is useful but time-consuming.	144
4.5 _c	Impressionistic (holistic) correction allows error fossilization.	145
4.5 _d	Postponed correction is more beneficial than immediate correction.	146
4.5 _e	Letting written errors to disappear for themselves by time, adds nothing to students' writing skills.	147
4.5 _f	"Checklist" helps teachers determine individual differences among their students	148
4.5 _g	Taking remedial work is suitable only for error/s made by the majority of the students.	149
4.5 _h	Self-correction leads to disappearing collaboration in the classroom.	150
4.5 _i	Teacher-correction saves time.	151
4.5 _j	Using error logs leads to a steady and gradual promotion of writing skills.	152
4.5 _k	Conferencing (discussion between teacher and student about the error/s) is suitable only in small classes.	153
4.5 _l	Peer-correction in large classes is a matter of chaos	154
4.5 _m	Identifying the place and type of error/s makes correction more utilized	155

Table	Title	Page
4.5 _n	Using "projection" technique encourages competition among the students	156
4.5 _o	Weak students stay passive in "group composition" activity.	157
4.5 _p	'Exchanging Composition' technique makes some students' works messy.	158
4.5 _q	Discussing common errors in the class is useful for their uprooting.	159
4.5 _r	Error reoccurrence can be ended through 'charting errors'	160
4.5 _s	Using learners' dictionary in correction distract them from correcting the intended errors.	161
4.5 _t	Using "thinking prompts" technique activates learners' linguistic competence.	162
4.5 _u	'post-it-notes' technique is costly and exhausting	163
4.5 _v	Coded correction is more beneficial than non-coded one.	164
4.6	The Result of the Questionnaire – Part (C)	165
4.6 _a	When responding to students' written tasks, teachers point out errors in grammar.	166
4.6 _b	When responding to students' written tasks, teachers point out errors in spelling.	167
4.6 _c	When responding to students' written tasks, teachers point out errors in vocabulary choice.	168
4.6 _d	When responding to students' written tasks, teachers point out errors in punctuation.	169
4.6 _e	When responding to students' written tasks, teachers comment on page organization.	170
4.6 _f	When responding to students' written tasks, teachers comment on writing style.	171
4.6 _g	When responding to students' written tasks, teachers comment on organizing ideas.	172
4.6 _h	When responding to students' written tasks, teachers correct errors of content.	173
4.6 _i	When responding to students' written tasks, teachers point out errors of capitalization.	174
4.6 _j	When responding to students' written tasks, teachers do not just comment and suggest ways for improvement or sustain".	175
4.6 _k	When responding to students' written tasks, teachers do not simply give a (✓) or (×) to indicate their feedback on the whole work".	176

List of figures

Figure	Title	Page
4.1	The Frequency Distribution of the respondents according to the gender	131
4.2	The Frequency Distribution of the respondents according to the qualifications	132
4.3	The Frequency Distribution of the respondents according to the experience	133
4.4	Using error correction techniques to give feedback on learners' written tasks makes progress in their writing skills	135
4.5	Adopting certain technique/s to give feedback on students' written tasks is necessary	136
4.6	Students' written errors can be radically eradicated without using correction techniques.	137
4.7	Giving systematic feedback on students' written works is tiring.	138
4.8	Using error correction techniques helps in consolidating correct language forms.	139
4.9	Teachers feel bored with systematic correction.	140
4.10	Teaching writing without correction is a worthless activity.	141
4.11	Selective correction is preferable to the comprehensive one.	143
4.12	Analytical correction is useful but time-consuming.	144
4.13	Impressionistic (holistic) correction allows error fossilization.	145
4.14	Postponed correction is more beneficial than immediate correction.	146
4.15	Letting written errors to disappear for themselves by time, adds nothing to students' writing skills.	147
4.16	"Checklist" helps teachers determine individual differences among their students.	148
4.17	Taking remedial work is suitable only for error/s made by the majority of the students.	149
4.18	Self-correction leads to disappearing collaboration in the classroom.	150
4.19	Teacher-correction saves time.	151
4.20	Using error logs leads to a steady and gradual promotion of writing skills.	152
4.21	Conferencing (discussion between teacher and student about the error/s) is suitable only in small classes.	153
4.22	Peer-correction in large classes is a matter of chaos	154
4.23	Identifying the place and type of error/s makes correction more utilized	155

Figure	Title	Page
4.24	Using "projection" technique encourages competition among the students	156
4.25	Weak students stay passive in "group composition" activity.	157
4.26	'Exchanging Composition' technique makes some students' works messy.	158
4.27	Discussing common errors in the class is useful for their uprooting.	159
4.28	Error reoccurrence can be ended through 'charting errors' .	160
4.29	Using learners' dictionary in correction distract them from correcting the intended errors.	161
4.30	Using "thinking prompts" technique activates learners' linguistic competence.	162
4.31	'post-it-notes' technique is costly and exhausting	163
4.34	Coded correction is more beneficial than non-coded one.	164
4.35	When responding to students' written tasks, teachers point out errors in grammar.	166
4.36	When responding to students' written tasks, teachers point out errors in spelling.	167
4.37	When responding to students' written tasks, teachers point out errors in vocabulary choice.	168
4.38	When responding to students' written tasks, teachers point out errors in punctuation.	169
4.39	When responding to students' written tasks, teachers comment on page organization.	170
4.40	When responding to students' written tasks, teachers comment on writing style.	171
4.41	When responding to students' written tasks, teachers comment on organizing ideas.	172
4.42	When responding to students' written tasks, teachers correct errors of content.	173
4.43	When responding to students' written tasks, teachers point out errors of capitalization.	174
4.44	When responding to students' written tasks, teachers do not just comment and suggest ways for improvement or sustain".	175
4.45	When responding to students' written tasks, teachers do not simply give a (✓) or (×) to indicate their feedback on the whole work".	176