

Modeling Corrective Feedback Taxonomy Patterns in the Teaching of Use of English among Lecturers in Tertiary Institutions in Katsina State

Maryam Mannir

General Studies Department
School of Vocational Education, Skills and Professional Development
Federal Polytechnic Daura, Katsina State, Nigeria
maryamamuneer@gmail.com

Esther Nuhu Samuel

General Studies Department
School of Vocational Education, Skills and Professional Development
Federal Polytechnic Daura, Katsina State, Nigeria
esthersamuelamba@gmail.com

Abstract

Teacher corrective feedback plays an important role in facilitating classroom discourse. Using appropriate corrective feedback techniques help to promote learners' language proficiency. Despite the benefits of good corrective feedback, most classroom teachers fail to provide corrective feedback appropriately. This study adopted qualitative method. Simple random sampling technique was used to select one university, one polytechnic, one college of Education among the Tertiary institutions in Katsina State. Purposive sampling techniques was used to select three lecturers taking Use of English in each tertiary institution. In-depth interviews were held with 15 lecturers using Lecturer Corrective Feedback Interview Guide (LCFIG). The study revealed that lecturers correct all forms of error (grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary and semantic). The study also revealed that direct correction by giving the correct form of expression (explicit correction) is the most commonly use pattern of reformulation corrective feedback by the lecturers. More so, the study further revealed that lecturers use recast as a form of corrective feedback. The study recommends that considering the potential benefits of corrective feedback in teaching and learning of Use of English, seminars and conferences should be organized by the school management for Use of English lecturers on corrective feedback patterns. This is to improve the lecturers' skills in corrective feedback practices. Also, Lecturers should use corrective feedback taxonomy model which consist of reformulation corrective feedback patterns and prompt corrective feedback patterns.

Keywords: Corrective Feedback, Taxonomy Models, Errors.

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INTRODUCTION

Corrective Feedback is a significant medium for teachers to prevent their learners' errors from getting fossilized and assist them progress along with Second Language learning process (Hashemian & Mostaghassi, 2015). Corrective feedback is an instructional and interactive phenomenon and a potential tool for learning (Ellis, 2009). Lyster and Ranta (1997) were among the first to suggest that how teachers choose to provide corrective feedback is linked to learners' proficiency level. In essence, corrective feedback is constructive approach to improve students' performance. The use of appropriate corrective feedback can be viewed as a significant tool in enhancing student learning (Noor et. al., 2010). However, Truscott (2007) condemned teachers' patterns of corrective feedback in the following respect; teachers correct inconsistently, sometimes wrongly, students are sometimes hurt by being corrected, students may not take corrections seriously and learners do not learn from the correction. More so, other scholars like Bailey and Garner (2010) and Carless (2006) argued that corrective feedback by the teacher to the students is inadequate in helpfulness, timeliness, consistency, specificity and clarity.

Therefore, with the concerns about the teachers' inability to apply corrective feedback patterns adequately, educational researchers contend that corrective feedback taxonomies can help teachers to match the patterns of corrective feedback patterns they use with the type of thinking that they are trying to develop in the learners. This concern led to the development of a number of corrective feedback taxonomy models proposed by researchers. The corrective feedback models were developed with the view to describe the process of corrective feedback in language classrooms and guide teachers in effective teaching and learning. These include; Chaudron (1977). Lyster and Ranta (1997), Ranta and Lyster (2007) and Sheen and Ellis (2011), Ellis (2009). Some of these models were based on experimental and observational studies on second and foreign language teaching and learning conducted in previous years, the need for a standard model of corrective feedback in language classrooms has begun.

Statement of Problem

Classroom interactions are expected to demystify course content and facilitate students' proficiency in English Language. Studies have shown that the prevailing English Language classroom interactions in Nigerian Tertiary institutions do not take into account students' proficiency. Consequently, experts had advocated for adequate use of corrective feedback patterns which account for student proficiency and demystify course content in teaching of English language. Therefore, this study is therefore designed to investigate lecturers' corrective feedback patterns in the teaching of Use of English in Tertiary institutions in Katsina State.

Research Question

Three research questions guided this study:

- What types of errors do Use of English lecturers provide corrective feedback for in the classroom interaction?
- What are the patterns of corrective feedback do Use of English lecturers use in classroom interaction?
- What corrective feedback model can lecturers adopt to facilitate English Language classroom instruction?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Corrective feedback is an essential input in classroom interaction as it helps students clarify their understanding of meaning and construction of the language (Khunaivi & Hartono, 2015). Ellis (2009) defined corrective feedback as any response from teacher to learner utterances containing error with the intention of correcting the learner's erroneous utterance. In classroom interaction, to make complex course content meaningful to the learners, teacher needs to consciously draw the learners' attention to their error by using corrective feedback. Taipale (2012) maintained that comprehensible input alone is not sufficient for learning; learners also need to discover how the language they use deviates from the target language (English Language) through corrective feedback. According to Lyster, Saito and Sato (2013), corrective feedback is an essential aspect of language classroom that is used to ascertain current language development of the learners and acts as a tool to diagnose students' problem. Hashemian and Mostaghassi (2015) argued that timely and adequate corrective feedback (CF) is a way by which teacher prevents students from getting hardened to the wrong expressions and it helps the students to achieve proficiency in learning the second language.

How then should learners' error (s) be corrected to neither get their errors fossilized nor put the students on self-protective? Basically, in language teaching and learning, the corrective feedback taxonomy models that have been proposed for correcting students' errors are: Chaudron (1977) error treatment sequence model, Lyster and Ranta (1997) six patterns of corrective feedback and Ranta and Lyster (2007); Sheen and Ellis (2011) corrective feedback taxonomy model. None of the models specify the roles of teachers and learners in the corrective feedback process.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted qualitative method. Simple random sampling technique was used to select one university, one polytechnic, one college of Education among the Tertiary institutions in Katsina State. Purposive sampling technique was used to select three lecturers taking Use of English in each tertiary institution. In-depth interviews were held with 15 lecturers using Lecturer Corrective Feedback Interview Guide (LCFIG).

RESULTS

Interview Guide 1: What types of errors do Use of English lecturers provide corrective feedback for in the classroom interaction?

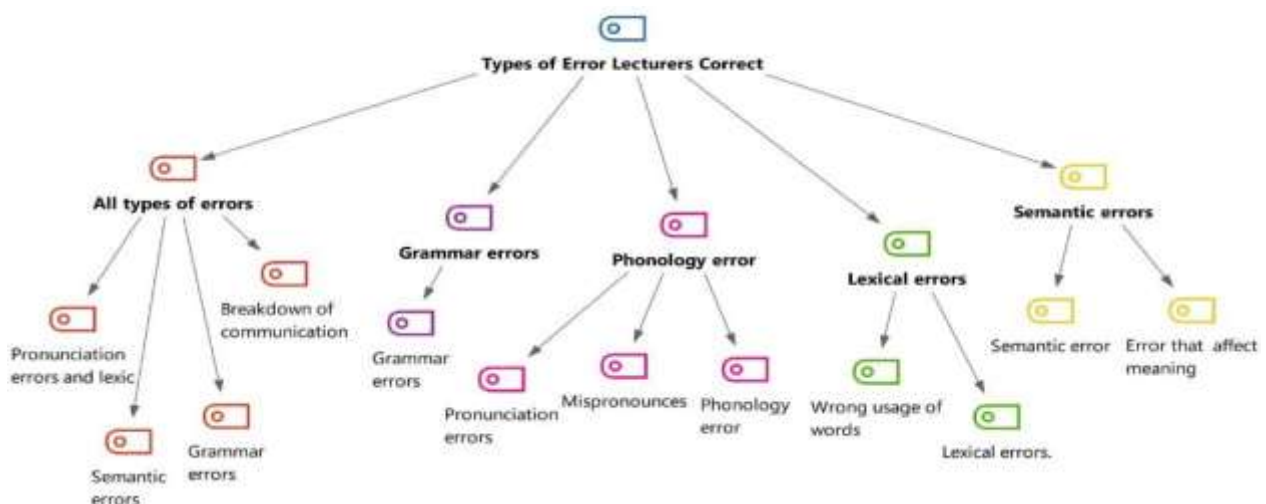


Figure 1: Thematic Map of Five Emerging Themes from Twelve Codes that Capture Types of Error Lecturers Correct.

Figure 1 shows the emerging themes from the lecturers' interview on types of error lecturers correct. The five themes are:

Theme one: Phonology error

One of the lecturers maintained that:

"Yes, we have so many. We have phonology error, yes, in terms, of pronunciation, when a student mispronounces, you correct. We have the semantic error that we correct, in terms of their expression. When a student uses a word wrongly, the lecturer will correct it so that next time, the students will know where to put it in the right way, semantically." (KII, Fed. Poly Daura).

Theme two: Grammar error

Other lecturer asserted that:

"Yes, the error lecturer should focus on is vocabulary, their lexicon (word). Then the error of the use of their grammar; tenses, concord. Once they make mistake we should correct them. We don't overlook all these and in the context of their usage (KII, Fed University of Transportation).

Theme three: Semantic errors

One of the lecturers stated that:

"Certainly, there are but I am always particular about error that will affect meaning (semantic error) or error that will result in the breakdown of communication. If you have said something that is not appropriate, it is necessary that the lecturer draw your attention to it. For instance, mispronunciation that will affect the meaning of what you are saying. That type of error also needs to be corrected" (KII, Fed. Poly Daura).

Theme four: Lexical errors

Another grammar lecturer stated that:

There are different types of errors in English Language. Errors of omission slip of tongue. There is lexical error, where student omit a word in the string of sentence (KII, Isa Kaita COE).

Theme five: All types of error.

One of the lecturers stressed that they correct all types of error. One of the lecturers maintained that:

“I correct grammar error, wrong pronunciation of words, wrong usage of words, using words in the wrong context. Especially when you don’t have better understanding of the meaning of a particular word then you use it in the wrong context. The grammatical errors border on errors of concord, errors of tenses. The pronunciation errors deal with the phonological aspect of English Language. This is where students pronounce a word the way it should not be pronounced. When the word is pronounced, you will think that it is another word entirely” (KII, Isa Kaita COE).

The study revealed that lecturers correct all forms of error (grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary and semantic). This finding is in line with Othman (2012) submission that lecturers should correct all types of error (pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar and semantic). The study is also in line with Mohamed (2016) who found out that teacher provide corrective feedback to the errors that students committed in the order of grammatical errors 65.2%, semantic errors 17.91 and lexical error 14.65%. However, to determine whether one is concentrating on pronunciation, grammar or vocabulary error will depend on the focus at a time.

Interview Guide 2: What are the patterns of corrective feedback do Use of English lecturers use in classroom interaction?

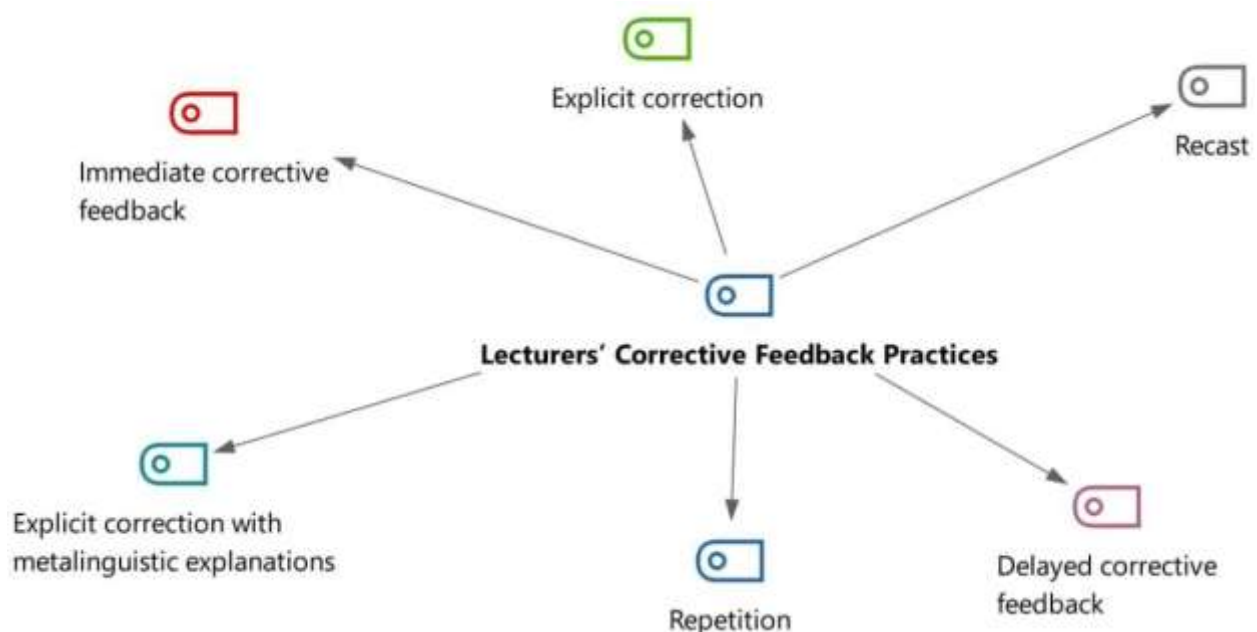


Figure 2: Thematic Map of Six Emerging Themes from Lecturers’ Interview on Corrective Feedback Patterns.

Figure 2 shows the emerging themes from the lecturers’ interview on their corrective feedback patterns. The six themes are;

Theme one: Explicit correction

The lecturer emphasized the use of explicit corrective feedback. One of the lecturers asserted that:

“Yes, when we want to correct error especially in the classroom. It is not that you will shut the student but you can tell the student after answering the question in a wrong way. You can say, do you mean to say this, do you mean this and you will say the correct thing. I think that is how to correct the students.”(KII, Fed. Poly Daura).

Another lecturer maintained that:

“One way of doing this is to know what one wants to give out. Another way is by being a model. The best way to do it is to show model of pronunciation. Your own pattern of pronunciation should be the one that is worthy of emulation. In essence, you be a model to your learners because they learn from you. Words should not be pronounced the way the lay man will pronounce. People look up to us as experts when it comes to errors and how it should be corrected” (KII Isa Kaita COE).

Theme two: Recasts (Change wrong word to solve communication problems)

Two of the lecturers stressed that they often use recast as a pattern of corrective feedback.

One of the lecturers stated that:

“When you say the wrong thing, I say the right one. By the time I want to recast what the students have said. I will say it in the correct way” (KII, Fed University of Transportation).

Theme three: Repetition

Another lecturer asserted that:

“How do I do that, for instance say pronunciation error? I will try to repeat after the student. You repeat and draw the student’s attention to what he or she said and what he or she ought to say. You have just said” He is the chief /si:f/ of that village”, I will say chief /tsi:f/. You are indirectly correcting but you are conscious of what you are doing. This can a time be embarrassing but essentially, when I correct, I do not try to humiliate” (KII, Fed. Poly Daura).

Theme four: Delayed corrective feedback

Two lecturers emphasized that they don’t like giving corrective feedback immediately. One of the lecturers stated that:

“Correcting students’ error, one must do it with tact unless you will hurt their ego. This may lead to inhibition. When you attack a student for making an error, the students may not want to talk in the class again. We should correct them with love and let the students test their ideas by saying the ideas out. If a student used wrong word, I may not correct him or her immediately but use the word correctly with an emphasis generally for the student to learn the differences. I will just make it general so that the student will not know that I am still referring to his or her wrong usage”. (KII, Fed University of Transportation).

Another lecturer maintained that correcting students' error directly can affect students' ego.

The lecturer stressed stated that:

"I do not directly correct some of their mispronunciation instead I turn to the power point on the computer and use examples that are similar to the error the student has committed. When students are directly corrected, their self-esteem is down. Such student stops to respond in the class. Nobody likes himself or herself to be corrected in the public. I encourage them to talk. English Language is not our language. One expects error in using the language. I give them task that will involve them learn the sounds indirectly. I do tell them that English Language is our second language not our native language. I encourage them to talk even if they are wrong. When the speak and we give them feedback they learn" (KII, Fed. Poly Daura).

Theme five: Immediate corrective feedback

Two lecturers observe that error should be corrected immediately. One of the lecturers maintained that:

"Okay, depending on the context of the language use. I correct the students right immediately when the error is committed so that the student will not go with the impression of saying the correct thing. I can also ask another student who know the correct expression, to correct the error". (KII, Isa Kaita COE)

Another lecturer asserted that:

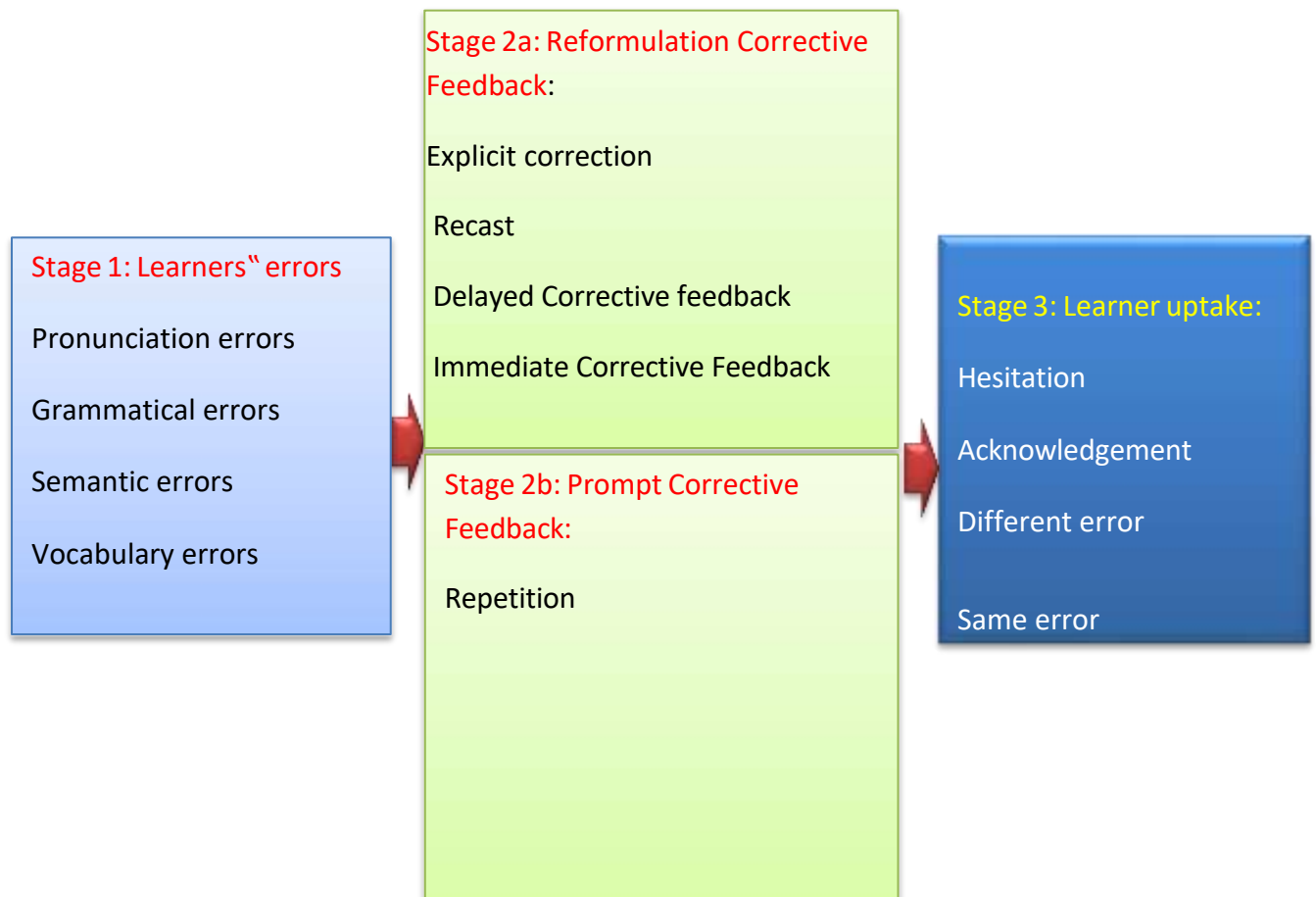
"Yes, when we want to correct error especially in the classroom, it should be immediate. For example when a student just finishes answering a question or just finishes discussing with you. During the discussion time or during question and answer section, and a student make an error as a lecturer we correct the student immediately. It should be immediate so that you will not forget or the student might even go away with the wrong impression thinking it is correct. So, you call the attention of the student to it immediately. And how do you do that. It is not that you will shut the student but you can tell the student after answering the question in a wrong way. You can say, do you mean to say this, do you mean this and you will say the correct thing. I think that is how to correct the +students." (KII, Fed. Poly Daura).

The study revealed that direct correction by giving the correct form of expression (explicit correction) is the most commonly use pattern of reformulation corrective feedback by the lecturers. The finding is in line with Ayu (2016) who found that explicit correction is the utmost regularly used corrective feedback pattern for correcting students' errors. Though the finding shows that explicit correction is the most frequently used corrective feedback pattern, Walton (1994) argues that explicit corrective feedback affects the students' intention to communicate, makes student feel not comfortable and impedes learner's willingness to communicate in English language.

The study further revealed that lecturers use recast as a form of corrective feedback. The finding is in line with Lyster, Saito and Sato (2013) who submit that recast promotes classroom

interaction as it does not affect the flow of discussion. However, the finding contradicts Lyster and Ranta (1997), Sheen (2006) and Kennedy (2010) found that recast was the predominant technique of error correction used by the teachers. The study revealed that the frequency of the lecturers using corrective feedback is low.

Research Question 3: What corrective feedback model can lecturers adopt to facilitate English Language classroom instruction?



The corrective feedback taxonomy model shows that identification of learners' error, corrective feedback and learners' uptake are three stages in correcting learners' error in language teaching and learning. The learners' errors could be identified as either phonological (pronunciation), grammatical, semantic or lexical (vocabulary) errors. However, the second stage which is corrective feedback consists of reformulation corrective feedback patterns. The patterns of reformulation corrective feedback are: recast, explicit correction and explicit correction with metalinguistic explanation, delayed feedback and corrective feedback. The second patterns of corrective feedback are prompts corrective feedback. Prompts corrective feedback consist of repetition of students' error.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the study shows that lecturers correct all forms of error (grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary and semantic). More so, recasts and explicit correction were the basic emerged themes on lecturers' corrective feedback patterns. The study found that the suitable corrective feedback taxonomy model includes reformulation

corrective feedback patterns and prompt corrective feedback patterns.

Recommendations

The study recommends that considering the potential benefits of corrective feedback in teaching and learning of Use of English, seminars and conferences should be organized by the school management for Use of English lecturers on corrective feedback patterns. This is to improve the lecturers' skills in corrective feedback practices. Lecturers should use corrective feedback taxonomy model which consist of reformulation corrective feedback patterns and prompt corrective feedback patterns.

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