

Should We Say ‘This Is Wrong’? ; Impact of Explicit Corrective Feedback on Language Accuracy

Erandi Kithulgoda¹

In terms of pedagogy, the methodological options whereby a teacher can impart grammar knowledge to students are of two kinds: Learner performance options and Feedback options. Although learner performance options have been an unquestionable part of English grammar teaching in the Sri Lankan L2 classroom, feedback options are not always stringently practiced due to various reasons. The current study explores whether one of these feedback options -explicit corrective feedback- could be employed as an effective form of grammar instruction, in order to improve the English language accuracy of intermediate level English medium undergraduates.

The study while analysing the most salient errors made by 25 undergraduates of Kotelawala Defence University, explored the impact of explicit corrective feedback on those different error types. The methodology adopted was: i) Teacher feedback of classroom language production tasks coupled with pre and post tests, ii) Descriptive analysis of pre and post test data, iii) Quantitative comparative analysis of pre and post test data by employing paired sample t-test and multiple regression analysis of errors.

Findings revealed that out of sixteen types of lexical errors and morpho syntactic errors made by undergraduates, errors related to Sentence structure, Prepositions, Verb agreement, Determiners, Usage norms and formulaic expressions and Pluralisation were the six most salient error types. Moreover, it was revealed that although explicit corrective feedback had no significant impact on language accuracy as a whole in general class room context, it has a significant impact on lexical accuracy (rather than morpho syntactic accuracy). Additionally, it was revealed that the number of words per t-unit had increased after feedback. Hence, it can be assumed that either feedback or continuous language production or both had positively affected language complexity.

Key words: Grammar, Explicit corrective feedback, Errors, Language accuracy

¹ Productivity and Management Development Division, National Institute of Business Management, Sri Lanka.

ekithulgoda@yahoo.com