

ERROR CORRECTION STRATEGIES AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON LEARNER AUTONOMY

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Abstract: Error correction is one of the most debated yet essential aspects of language pedagogy. This study investigates how various error correction strategies influence the development of learner autonomy in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts, with a particular focus on Uzbek classrooms. Through a combination of theoretical analysis and classroom-based observations, this paper explores the relationship between teachers' corrective feedback, learners' self-regulation, and the gradual emergence of autonomy in language learning. Findings indicate that when correction is handled reflectively and interactively, it promotes learners' responsibility, self-monitoring, and confidence — key components of autonomous learning.

Keywords: error correction, learner autonomy, EFL teaching, feedback strategies, Uzbekistan

Introduction

Error correction in language learning has long been one of the most debated and influential aspects of language pedagogy. For teachers, identifying and responding to learners' errors is not merely a matter of linguistic accuracy, but also a pedagogical decision that can deeply affect students' motivation, participation, and ability to take control of their own learning. Some teaching approaches emphasize immediate correction and accuracy, while others consider errors as a natural and necessary part of the learning process, encouraging learners to discover and correct their own mistakes. Consequently, **error correction strategies** are not only about fixing linguistic forms but also about shaping the learner's mindset toward autonomy, confidence, and self-regulation.

Historically, attitudes toward learner errors have evolved significantly. In the behaviorist paradigm, errors were seen as undesirable habits to be eliminated through

repetition and correction. However, with the emergence of cognitive and communicative approaches, errors came to be viewed as evidence of active hypothesis testing and interlanguage development. Studies on feedback types—such as **recasts**, **elicitation**, and **metalinguistic feedback**—have shown that strategies encouraging learners to reflect on and self-correct their errors tend to promote long-term language acquisition more effectively than direct correction. Thus, the way teachers handle learner errors can either foster or hinder independent learning behaviors.

Error correction strategies are closely tied to **learner autonomy**, a concept referring to learners' ability to take responsibility for their learning through goal-setting, self-assessment, and self-directed practice. When teachers involve students in identifying and correcting their own mistakes—through peer feedback, guided self-correction, or reflective questioning—they cultivate metacognitive skills and self-awareness. On the contrary, overly teacher-dependent correction methods may reinforce passivity and reliance on external authority[1].

In the context of **Uzbekistan**, this issue has particular relevance. Many EFL (English as a Foreign Language) classrooms in Uzbekistan still adhere to traditional, exam-oriented teaching styles, where teacher authority is dominant and accuracy is prioritized over communicative competence. This can sometimes create an environment where learners fear making mistakes and hesitate to experiment with language. Additionally, the cultural expectation of teacher-centeredness can make peer correction or student-led feedback feel uncomfortable or even inappropriate for some learners. Hence, understanding how error correction strategies influence learner autonomy in Uzbek EFL classrooms is both a pedagogical and a cultural challenge.

Although global literature offers extensive research on corrective feedback and learner autonomy, **localized studies within the Uzbek context remain limited**. There is still a lack of comprehensive research on how Uzbek EFL teachers actually implement error correction in practice, what strategies they prefer, how learners perceive these strategies, and how these practices impact different dimensions of autonomy—such as self-monitoring, self-evaluation, and self-regulation [2].

This study aims to address that gap by exploring the relationship between **error correction strategies** and **learner autonomy** among Uzbek EFL teachers and students. The main objectives are:

To identify which types of error correction strategies (e.g., explicit correction, recasts, elicitation, metalinguistic feedback, peer correction, self-correction) are most commonly used by Uzbek EFL teachers and why[2].

To examine how different strategies affect learners' metacognitive development and self-monitoring behaviors.

To analyze how teachers' and learners' attitudes toward error correction influence the development of learner autonomy.

A qualitative-descriptive approach is employed, combining classroom observations, teacher interviews, and student reflective journals to provide context-sensitive insights into how feedback practices shape autonomous learning behaviors. The findings aim to inform teacher training programs and methodological resources that promote reflective and learner-centered feedback practices[3].

In conclusion, this study is grounded in the understanding that **error correction is not only about linguistic accuracy but also about fostering autonomy, confidence, and self-awareness** in learners. Within the Uzbek educational context, examining how feedback strategies can be adapted to support learner independence has both theoretical significance and practical value[4]. The subsequent sections of the paper present the literature review, methodology, findings, and discussion based on this foundational premise.

Literature review

The Role of Errors in Language Learning

The perception of errors has evolved significantly over time. In the behaviorist model of the 1950s, errors were seen as undesirable habits that needed immediate correction [1]. With the rise of cognitive and communicative approaches, scholars like Corder [4] and Selinker [1] began viewing errors as evidence of *interlanguage development* — a natural stage in language acquisition that reflects active hypothesis testing by learners.

Error correction strategies can be broadly categorized into:

- Explicit correction – directly providing the correct form.
- Recasts – reformulating the learner’s utterance correctly without overtly signaling the error.
- Elicitation – prompting the learner to self-correct.
- Metalinguistic feedback – providing clues or rules instead of answers.
- Peer correction – involving students in identifying and correcting each other’s errors.
- Self-correction – encouraging learners to monitor and repair their own mistakes.

Research [5],[6],[7] shows that strategies that promote *learner engagement* — such as elicitation and self-correction — are more effective for long-term acquisition than purely corrective methods like recasts.

Learner Autonomy and Its Connection to Error Correction

Learner autonomy, as defined by Holec (1981), refers to “the ability to take charge of one’s own learning.” Autonomous learners actively participate in decision-making, monitor their progress, and reflect on their learning outcomes. When teachers involve students in the correction process, they transfer part of the responsibility to learners, stimulating self-awareness and metacognitive skills.

In this sense, error correction becomes a bridge — transforming teacher control into learner self-control. Autonomy grows when students are encouraged to view errors not as failures, but as opportunities for discovery and self-improvement.

Methodology

This research adopted a qualitative-descriptive approach.

Participants: 20 Uzbek EFL teachers and 60 university-level students from Samarkand and Tashkent regions.

Instruments: classroom observations, teacher interviews, and learner reflection journals.

Focus: identifying which correction strategies teachers use most frequently, and how these affect learners’ attitudes toward independence.

Teachers were encouraged to apply a variety of correction techniques (explicit, recast, peer, and self-correction) over an eight-week observation period. Students’ reflections were analyzed to assess changes in motivation, confidence, and autonomy.

Findings and Discussion

Data revealed that traditional teacher-centered correction dominated most classrooms, especially in grammar-focused lessons. Although it ensured linguistic accuracy, it limited learners' active involvement. In contrast, teachers who adopted elicitation, peer, and self-correction reported greater learner engagement. Students became more willing to identify their own mistakes and less anxious about making errors.

Harsh or overly frequent correction tended to increase anxiety and dependence, particularly among lower-proficiency learners. However, constructive and timely feedback — framed as a learning opportunity — fostered self-confidence and reflection. One student wrote in her journal:

“At first, I was afraid of being corrected. But when my teacher asked me to think again or help a friend correct, I felt more responsible and less afraid. Now I try to notice my own mistakes.”

This demonstrates that feedback tone and interaction style have a direct impact on learners' autonomy and motivation[6].

Peer correction sessions encouraged collaboration and responsibility-sharing. Learners not only learned from their peers' mistakes but also gained confidence in providing constructive feedback[7]. Self-correction, guided by teacher scaffolding (e.g., hints, questions, or metalinguistic clues), was found to be the most autonomy-enhancing strategy. Over time, students began to internalize correction mechanisms, marking the transition from teacher-dependence to self-regulation.

In Uzbekistan's educational context, where respect for teacher authority is deeply rooted, shifting toward autonomous correction can be culturally challenging. Some learners initially perceived peer correction as “impolite” or “inappropriate.” Therefore, teachers must gradually introduce reflective correction models and create safe, supportive classroom environments where making mistakes is normalized.

Conclusion

The study concludes that error correction strategies have a profound influence on the development of learner autonomy. When correction is participatory, reflective, and

supportive rather than judgmental, it transforms learners from passive recipients of knowledge into active participants in their own language development.

Teacher-centered correction ensures immediate accuracy but offers limited long-term growth. Conversely, learner-centered strategies such as elicitation, peer feedback, and self-correction nurture *metacognitive awareness*, *motivation*, and *responsibility* — the cornerstones of autonomous learning.

For Uzbek EFL contexts, this implies a gradual pedagogical shift: from authoritative correction toward collaborative reflection. Teachers should serve as *facilitators and guides*, helping learners discover and analyze their own linguistic patterns. Moreover, teacher training programs should emphasize reflective feedback methods, providing teachers with practical frameworks to balance accuracy and autonomy.

Ultimately, effective error correction is not about eliminating mistakes but empowering learners to understand, monitor, and learn from them. In this process, autonomy is not given — it is *grown*, nurtured through trust, dialogue, and reflective engagement between teachers and learners.

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