International Journal of Social Science, Education and Humanities
ISSN Print: 3104-4239
ISSN Online: 3104-4247
CD ISSN: 3104-4255
https://doi.org/10.63313/IJSSEH.9060

Strategies for Correcting Oral Errors in Junior High School English Classrooms

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How to cite this paper: Wen, Y. (2026). Strategies for Correcting Oral Errors in Junior High School English Classrooms. International Journal of Social Science, Education and Humanities, 3(1), 119–125. ISSN Print: 3104-4239; ISSN Online: 3104-4247.
https://doi.org/10.63313/IJSSEH.9060
Published: 2026-07-28

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Abstract

Nowadays, in the process of junior high school students' English learning, most students are weak in spoken language. And there are many types of oral errors made by junior high school students in English class, such as phonetic errors, lexical errors, grammatical errors and pragmatic errors. It is observed that most junior high school students and English teachers have positive attitudes towards errors and error-correction. They believe that errors are inevitable in the process of language learning. Therefore, how to treat these oral errors that may occur in the classroom is also the goal of English teachers. Some useful suggestions put forward in this paper will help English teachers to improve their teaching methods and optimize the teaching effect in junior high school English classrooms. Specifically, teachers should choose the right time for error-correction, take into account all aspects of the students' situation, adopt a variety of ways of error-correction and make full use of the oral errors made by the students in class as a resource for further learning.

Keywords

English Teaching In Middle Schools; Oral Errors; Error-Correcting Strategies

1. Introduction

In the present junior high school English classroom, with more and more content being learned, there are more and more opportunities for students to practice their speaking. Similarly, in the process of practice, students will easily make some oral errors. Therefore, English teachers need to explore the types of middle school students' oral errors and the corresponding methods of correcting errors, which can help improve the students' English oral skills effectively.This template, created in MS Word 2007, provides authors with most of the formatting specifications needed for preparing electronic versions of their papers. All standard paper components have been specified for three reasons: 1) ease of use when formatting individual papers, 2) automatic compliance to electronic requirements that facilitate the

concurrent or later production of electronic products, and 3) conformity of style throughout a journal paper. Margins, column widths, line spacing, and type styles are built-in; examples of the type styles are provided throughout this document and are identified in italic type, within parentheses, following the example. Some components, such as multi-leveled equations, graphics, and tables are not prescribed, although the various table text styles are provided. The former will need to create these components, incorporating the applicable criteria that follow.

1.1. Background of the Research

Actually, in real classroom teaching, some teachers, especially for the young English teachers, still do not know how they should correctly deal with the different spoken errors made by students although they have a quite positive attitude towards these spoken errors. As Norrish stated, there is no way to avoid errors, but it is important that language teachers change their attitudes toward students' errors and adopt a positive attitude towards students' errors in language learning. Teachers have the responsibility to help students correct their errors, which means that teachers should attach importance to students' errors. Thus, English learners will gradually make less errors.

1.2. Significance of the Research

On the one hand, errors are very important for the learners themselves because they are a tool for learners to learn the language and a way for learners to test their assumptions about the nature of the language they are learning. On the other hand, for English teachers, errors enable them to understand how far the learner has progressed from the target and what the learner still needs to learn. In this process, junior high school English teachers can learn more about what students' real problems and interests are, prescribe the right medicine, set reasonable teaching goals, apply scientific teaching methods and achieve better teaching results. Since errors are unavoidable in the process of language learning, a reasonable and effective strategies for error-correction is the key for junior high school English teachers to maintain the efficiency of English teaching.

2. Literature Review

Since the late 1950s, scholars at home and abroad have been exploring the types of English errors and strategies for correcting them. At present, although there are many theoretical studies on English oral errors and error-correction at home and abroad, only a part of empirical studies mainly focuses on higher education. And there are also few studies focus on spoken errors and error-correction occurring in compulsory junior high schools.

2.1. Relevant Research on Error

Errors in the broad sense are expressions that deviate from the target language. Errors in the narrow sense are divided into errors and mistakes. According to Corder, errors are the output of the language deviates from the standard of the target language because the learner has not fully mastered and internalized the rules of the language, and they are errors of competence, which are systematic. As Lightbown and Spada (2013) point out, learner language should be viewed "not simply as imperfect versions of the target language". Errors, therefore, are not mere failures but rather reflections of the learner's ongoing development of the interlanguage system. This perspective implies that teachers should recognize errors as natural and even necessary components of the language learning process, rather than as signs of inadequate learning. However, mistakes are about the failure of expression, which are non-systematic, such as slips of the tongue that occur in the process of using the language due to the influence of the learner' s memory, physical strength and psychological conditions. Therefore, errors and mistakes are totally different concepts.

In terms of the causes of errors, Brown identifies interlingual and intralingual errors as the two types of errors. According to Chaudron' s findings, the type of error that teachers corrected most often was pragmatic errors, followed by lexical and grammatical errors, and the least was phonetic errors. However, Burt categorized students' English errors into two types. Global errors are those that cause the listener or reader to misinterpret the message, like those that lead to errors in comprehending information. Local errors are those that do not significantly impede the transmission of the message. Lyster and Ranta (1997) identified four main learner error types in their corrective discourse model: grammatical, lexical, phonological, and L1 use. Their research further demonstrated that different error types tend to trigger different corrective feedback strategies from teachers. For instance, phonological errors like mispronunciation and grammatical errors such as tense misuse often prompt teachers to use recast techniques, whereas other error types may lead to more negotiated forms of correction. This finding underscores the importance for teachers to recognize not only the existence of different error categories but also the differential pedagogical responses that each type may appropriately elicit.

After observing junior high school students' oral expressions in class, oral errors basically conform to Chaudron' s classification method, which is divided into the following four major types: phonetic errors, lexical errors, grammatical errors, and pragmatic errors.

2.2. Relevant Research on the Strategies of Oral Error-correction

There are many strategies for oral error-correction, and Ellis suggests that in error correction, teachers often use strategies such as explicit error-correction, feedback error-correction, heuristic error-correction, meta-linguistic error-correction, and

restatement error-correction. Sheen (2011) defines corrective feedback as "any feedback that provides learners with evidence that something they have said or written is linguistically incorrect". This definition broadens the scope of error correction beyond the traditional notion of simply pointing out mistakes, encompassing a variety of feedback forms that can occur at different times and through different modalities. According to Sheen, most of the second language acquisition literature supports that second language learners require this feedback in order to progress linguistically in the target language. However, it is very difficult for teachers to distinguish between different types of errors in a limited classroom time, and this is compounded by the different personalities of students. Therefore, scholars have proposed many different strategies for error-correction. Pawlak, after summarizing the views of his predecessors, proposed specific strategies for error-correction. For example, when learners make spoken errors in the English classroom, teachers can inspire and guide learners to discover their mistakes by saying 'Can you repeat?' or 'Once again'. Teachers can also inspire and guide learners to realize their errors and correct them by repeating or rising the tone of voice.

Except for this, teacher error-correction, peer error-correction and self-correction are also frequently used error correction strategies. According to Zhu Ming-hui, peer correction not only corrects learners' errors, but also creates opportunities for learners to practice using the target language.

3. Measures Taken to Treat Students' Oral Errors

3.1. To Choose the Right Time to Correct Oral Errors

In the process of learners' speaking practice, they may produce a wide variety of errors, among which if there are grammatical errors, they must be corrected instantly, other errors that do not affect communication can be ignored. In other words, the time of error-correction depends on the specific situation. Teachers correcting students as soon as they make a mistake can also demotivate students.

According to the three methods of error correction proposed by Hendrickson, immediate correction, delayed correction and deferred correction. Immediate correction is when a student makes an error and corrects it immediately. Delayed correction is when students make an error but need to wait until they have completed the discourse. Delayed corrections are corrections made outside the context in which the error occurred, such as after-school corrections. As Ergül (2025) observes, speaking activities are "where language comes alive, and where teachers face the constant question of whether to correct errors on the spot or let communication flow". The author further warns that correcting too much "may shut down" learners, while correcting too little may allow "persistent errors to fossilize". This dilemma is particularly acute in junior high school classrooms, where adolescent learners are simultaneously developing linguistic competence and

navigating sensitive developmental stages. Ergül emphasizes that timing and feedback type matter significantly, and that learner factors such as anxiety and attention shape what students actually take in from corrective feedback.

In this case, immediate correction interrupts students' conversations, hinders conversational fluency, and even demotivates students to speak English. And deferred correction makes correction boring because of the lack of context, and students forget where they went wrong. In contrast, delayed error-correction is more suitable for classroom oral error-correction than deferred error-correction, as it ensures conversational fluency and avoids the lack of context associated with deferred error-correction.

3.2. To Adopt Flexible and Varied Ways of Correcting Oral Errors

In actual English teaching, teachers do not need to correct every error, but pay attention to errors that students make frequently or that have an impact on communication. If the lesson focuses on accuracy or the aim is to help students master some grammar rules, teachers should focus on error-correction to strengthen students' memory of these rules. However, if the teaching objective of the lesson is to develop students' oral expression ability and focus on fluency, teachers may choose to ignore errors or correct errors after the lesson. This requires teachers to use various methods of error correction flexibly according to the actual teaching situation.

As junior high school students are in the sensitive and rebellious period of their lives, children of this age usually want to save face. Therefore, teachers should take into account the psychological characteristics of junior high school students when correcting oral errors and protect their 'love of face' psychology. In addition, teachers should treat students' errors in a fair manner. There should be no difference in attitude between the best and the worst students. Students who are not good language learners need more attention from teachers. What' s more, boys and girls should be treated equally. The treatment of timid and introverted children should be slightly different from that of cheerful and outgoing children, on an equal footing, in order to protect the child' s desire to learn.

Besides, too much direct error correction may hurt students' feelings and make them anxious. Teachers pointing out a student' s mistakes in front of the whole class may make that student feel embarrassed and lose interest in learning English. Therefore, teachers should be flexible in the light of the teaching objectives and adopt different methods of error correction when facing different students and different types of errors.

3.3. To Build a Corpus of Students' Oral Errors

Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005) proposed a performance analysis framework that examines grammatical, lexical, and pragmatic deviations in learners' spontaneous

spoken output. Their framework suggests that systematic spoken error analysis can illuminate second language development by revealing patterns in learner performance that might otherwise go unnoticed. This analytical approach aligns closely with the corpus-building strategy advocated in this section, as both emphasize the value of systematic documentation and analysis of learner errors for understanding interlanguage development and designing targeted pedagogical interventions. Students make different types of oral errors with different frequencies, and teachers should pay more attention to the types of errors that students make more frequently. Therefore, teachers can pay attention to them during the teaching process, record students' oral errors with the help of modern technology, using mobile phones, recording devices, video cameras and so on, to build a corpus of students' oral errors. Therefore, teachers can use students' errors as learning resources, present students' oral errors regularly, draw students' attention to them, and thus reduce their errors. By analyzing learners' errors through the corpus of students' speaking errors, teachers will also be able to understand learners' progress and needs in the learning process, so that they can design teaching content in a targeted way to promote the improvement of learners' abilities.

4. Conclusion

Junior high school students are prone to make more or less errors when they speak English in the classroom due to their age and knowledge accumulation problems. As Dong argues, the vast majority of students want their teachers to correct their mistakes in language learning, so error-correction is indispensable in the process of language learning. Then, junior secondary English teachers have the responsibility to help students correct these oral errors.

In the face of this situation, on the one hand, English teachers should start from themselves by choosing suitable strategies for error-correction which can be used to deal with different types of errors to improve the effectiveness of error-correction. On the other hand, teachers should consider the different factors that lead to students' errors. Each student has different characteristics in the process of learning, especially in the process of English learning. And teachers have their own characteristics in choosing corrective strategies for students of different levels. Reasonable and effective error-correction can create a harmonious classroom atmosphere for students, so that students are not afraid to make errors, dare to make errors, and be able to face their own errors. At the same time, teachers can also take students' oral errors as a topic of discussion in the classroom, guiding students to analyze the reasons for their errors and find ways to correct them.

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