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Correction of Speaking Mistakes when Learning a Foreign Language - Analysis of the Most Common Mistakes and their Correction in Learning the German Language

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Abstract

Verbal mistake corrections occur frequently during the process of learning a foreign language and are usually initiated by the teacher. Foreign language teachers have a significant impact on the behavior of verbal correction, thus influencing the organization of in-class discussions and the acquisition of a foreign language. Making mistakes during foreign language learning is no longer seen as a deficiency of language skills. On the contrary, making mistakes is a completely normal part of the process during foreign language acquisition. Fundamentally, mistake correction should be seen as a good opportunity for the students. They show the current acquiring status of the student; teachers understand where it is necessary to replicate knowledge and profoundly acquire it. The main topic of this article is correcting mistakes when speaking in a foreign language. The article addresses issues closely related to the main topic such as: What mistakes do teachers usually correct and how? When do teachers correct mistakes? In what situation do they immediately intervene / not intervene? What do teachers do after the correction? Who corrects during the lesson? How do teachers encourage self-correction? In addition to the theoretical contributions in this field, we have tried to answer these questions through surveys and questionnaires by evaluating the answers we have received from 90 German language teachers. The analyses of the questionnaire as well as the conclusions are presented at the end of this article.

Keywords: linguistic error, mistake correction, types of mistakes, ways of correction

1. Introduction

Avoiding the mistakes and correcting them are very important components of teaching; they have a massive impact in the progress of language acquisition and the success of teaching. Furthermore, we encounter these elements in each of our teaching efforts

Correction of mistakes must be preceded by ascertainment. We will try to illustrate how difficult it is to find a mistake in the following examples based on teaching and on everyday life experience:

a. A child should color inside the lines, but he has not yet learned and practiced this kind of coloring. Therefore, he occasionally goes out of the contour and tries to correct himself by erasing the mistake. Another one has the same task, but unlike the first, he does not like to draw and goes out of contours. Another child can color very well, but while coloring a friend pushes his hand and he comes out of the contours. In this situation the question that arises is which one of the three children made a mistake.

b. Spelling mistakes: A student will write in an essay in German the word "Walnuss" (walnut). She recognizes the constituent parts of the word: Wal and Nuss and writes it correctly. Another one states that based on the rules of spelling in German a word can have a long vowel only if this vowel is followed by the consonant "h". Based on this logic she misspells the word.

c. A teacher explains at the beginning of the lesson that students who do not copy the words written on the blackboard correctly, will stay in class during the lunch break. A student who does not want to go out during the lunch break intentionally copies them incorrectly. Are we dealing with the mistake of the student or the teacher, as she has not discerned the tactics used by the student?

d. A tailor sews a pair of jeans, which have a hole in the knee cup. These jeans have some threads hanging from the fabric of the jeans on their hem, which. Are we dealing here with a tailoring mistake, a fabric-weaving mistake or can we say that in this case these "shortcomings" have a certain function?

e. In a formal dinner table, there is cutlery for many menus "gänge". The cutlery arrangement in these situations is in accordance to certain rules. Not knowing the rules at these types of dinners leads to an uncertainty as to the known rule in the case of ordinary family dinners.
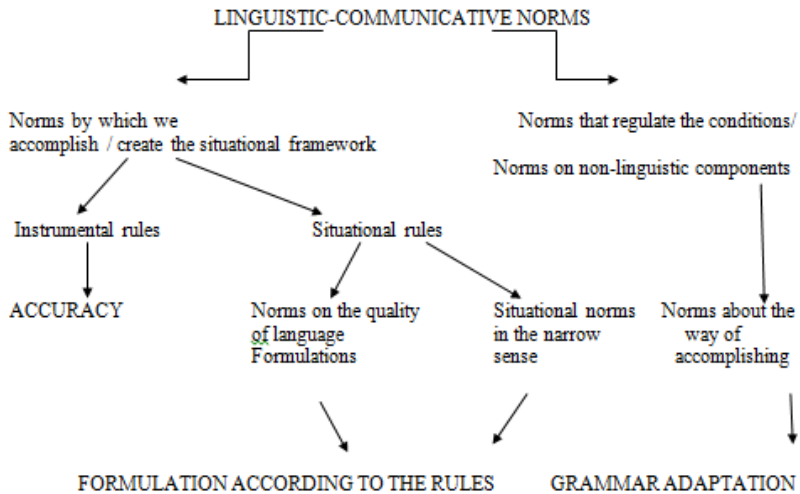
The above examples illustrate the problems we encounter if we are to define the concept of "mistake". The definition of this concept emerges as a necessity if we consider the variety of designations that this concept has in different languages. In German, there are the following designations: *"Irrtum", "Missgeschick", "Patzer", "Schnitzer", "eine Panne", "ein Ausrutscher", "Störfall", "Versäumnis", bzw. "Vergessen", "Murkel", "Misslingen", "Scheitern", "Versagen", "Unglück", "eine blosse Abweichung", "Differenz", "Regelverletzung", "Täuschung", "Irreführung", "ein Verstoss" , „Verbrechen".*

The definition of the concept of "mistake" can be written considering two perspectives: linguistic and psycho-didactic.
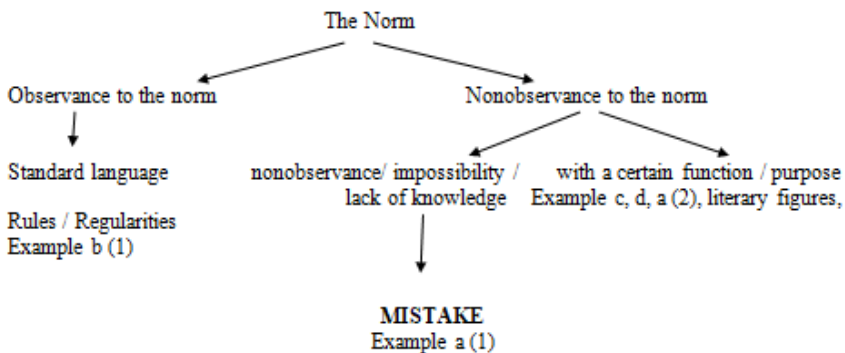
Considering the first perspective, the definition becomes possible only by comparing "mistake" with the concept of "norm". The relation established between the word "norm" and "deviation from the norm, its violation" is manifested in the German proverb "Die Ausnahme bestätigt die Regel" (The rule becomes clear from the exception) as well, which in linguistics would have the meaning "Deviation determines the norm."

In the following model, Fix (Fix 2003: 184) defines the norm based on two planes: the grammatical-semantic plane and the situational one. Grammatical-semantic norms, defined as instrumental norms, help us to judge the accuracy of linguistic expressions as a special aspect of sufficiency. On the other hand, sufficiency is based not only in the fact whether the situational rules have been respected, but also in the level of their observance. Situational norms are determined by the social roles of the partners in communication, respect for the conditions of the situation, communication goals and different procedures or models of texts used to achieve these goals, etc.

Another element of judging linguistic expressions besides grammatical or semantic accuracy and their adaptability to the situation is also the quality evaluation of these linguistic tools.

LINGUISTIC-COMMUNICATIVE NORMS

Norms by which we accomplish / create the situational framework

Norms that regulate the conditions/

Norms on non-linguistic components

Instrumental rules   Situational rules

ACCURACY   Norms on the quality of language Formulations   Situational norms in the narrow sense   Norms about the way of accomplishing

FORMULATION ACCORDING TO THE RULES   GRAMMAR ADAPTATION

The definition of the norm in the above model allows us to define "mistake" as a non-compliance or violation of norms in various planes, planes that we have outlined in the norm model. This non-compliance is not intentional and has a direct effect on knowledge deficits or even impossibility or knowledge uncertainty. In our concept, we can illustrate the relationship between norm and mistake with the following sketch:

The Norm

Observance to the norm   Nonobservance to the norm

Standard language   nonobservance/ impossibility /   with a certain function / purpose

Rules / Regularities
Example b (1)   lack of knowledge   Example c, d, a (2), literary figures,

MISTAKE
Example a (1)

Suspicious cases[1]
   (Uncertainty, forgetfulness)
   Example a (3), e
   löslich/lösbar,

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[1] *Suspicious cases are those cases when competent speakers or connoisseurs cannot distinguish the variant that belongs to the norm, between at least two variants. With regard to such cases, the author emphasizes that judging on the accuracy or correctness of variants leads us to critical thinking and the stage of reflection, a stage that has language as its object. Vgl. Wolf Peter Klein: Sprachliche Zweifelsfälle als linguistischer Gegenstand. Zur Einführung in ein vergessenes Thema der Sprachwissenschaft, Lingustik online, 16, 4/03.*

des Automat/en,
meines Erachtens nach/ nach meinem Erachten
am Anfang dieses Jahres/ diesen Jahr
grammatical gender mismatch with natural gender

2. Causes of Mistakes

There are various causes of mistakes:

- Interference was previously seen as the most common cause of mistakes in the foreign language (Raabe, 1980, 79). A distinction is made between transferring and interference as well. Transferring means a positive transfer from one language to the target language - interference, the opposite is a "negative transfer". Therefore, for example, we can solve a problem in the foreign language with the help of the mother tongue if there are similarities between the languages in terms of vocabulary, pronunciation or structure. However, transferring (mainly) does not lead to mistakes, but rather offers help in learning a foreign language. Some scholars state that large differences between languages cause difficulties in acquiring a foreign language. On the contrary, similarities between languages are seen as ease (Kleppin, 1998, 31-32).

Others say that the different structures between the mother tongue and the target language hardly lead to learning problems (Kleppin, 1998, 32). Students see their mother tongue and any other foreign language as independent systems containing different structures. In this sense, different structures do not always lead to mistakes.

Mistakes caused by the interference of our own mother tongue, for example in the Albanian language the example, *(I) help mom*. In Albanian it is used after the verb *(I) help* completeness in the accusative case and the sentence translated into German would be: *ich helfe die Mutter* but in German it is not used completely in the accusative case, but dative (*ich helfe der Mutter*)

- Generalization: While in the past the interference was seen as the only source of mistake, it was later observed that mistakes could also occur within the target language itself. This was observed, for example, when comparing first language acquisition with foreign language learning, and these mistakes are called generalizing (Kleppin, 1998, 33). Children who learn their mother tongue also generalize before mastering the language and its structures. However - while interference is an interlinguistic process - generalization is more intralingual, so problems arise from the foreign language itself. Generalization means that a rule is used where it should not be used, and occurs through parts of the foreign language itself (Kleppin, 1998, 33). This happens, for example, with weak and strong verbs in German. For example, the ending -en can be transferred from strong verbs to weak verbs, or vice versa the ending - (e)t from weak verbs to strong ones.
- Mistakes arising from misunderstanding the norm or rule of a foreign language as a result of using analogy, generalizing or simplifying a rule, e.g. wife (die Frau), husband (der Mann), but daughter (das Mädchen) , of the incorrect formation of verb tenses ruften statt riefen, of the use of verbs in the wrong order in dependent sentences in German.
- Lack of contrast: Lack of contrast refers to the formal and semantic similarity of words or learning elements within the target language. For example, the similar appearance of words in a foreign language can lead to mistakes. In German, such words are e.g. Ereignis, Erlebnis and Ergebnis (event, experience and result). Because of the similarity of these words, the student may interpret them in a similar way and therefore use them incorrectly if the difference in direct meanings is not explicitly preserved (Raabe, 1980, 82.)
- Impact from other mistakes: The influence of other mistakes, leads us to the "domino effect", i.e. if someone reads or hears a mistake somewhere, he carries it into other similar situations. Literary texts or poetry in general are a good example of mistakes that are carried over into other situations of use if the student is not informed that lyrical texts sometimes do not follow

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the rules of standard language. These include semantic errors, syntactic errors, and morphological errors that affect pronunciation. They can also be spelling mistakes or hearing or articulation mistakes. (Raabe, 1980, 82.)

- sociocultural interference, e.g.: students / pupils address to the teacher as professor instead of using greeting forms in German Herr / Frau, use of verbs in the second person even for people with whom they no longer had acquaintances first. This form of communication is used even though the persons with whom they communicate have different social statuses.
- Mistakes caused by the emotional factors that accompany teaching and learning.
- Impact on the foreign language learning process: Mistakes can also happen when teaching foreign languages. These mistakes can occur when the teacher is not familiar with idiomatic expressions, for example, or does not have a good command of a foreign language - especially when the teacher is not a native speaker. Teacher behavior also has an impact on student learning. Various mistakes can also occur in textbooks, e.g. spelling mistakes can appear in textbooks. Mistakes made by classmates that may not be corrected can also be the cause of mistakes.

Mistakes can be classified into performance and competence mistakes, mistakes that impede communication and according to the plane where they appear in: phonetic, lexical-semantic, morphological-syntactic and pragmatic errors. This classification is based on the division made by Kleppin (1998). In our paper, we will focus more on phonetic, lexical-semantic, morphological-syntactic and pragmatic errors.

2.1 Competence and Performance Mistakes

Kleppin (1998) describes mistakes in competence as mistakes that the student cannot correct himself. These can occur in topics that have not yet been addressed in the classroom. Kleppin calls such mistakes attempts, where it implies that the student is trying to formulate something new. The student himself cannot correct the mistakes, he needs the help of the teacher. In the case of performance mistakes, the student himself admits that he made a mistake and may be able to correct his mistake - in any case, if he is notified for his mistake. In the case of written exercises, for example, errors are underlined by the teacher and the student can correct them himself, or in the case of an incorrect verbal sentence, the teacher draws attention to the fact that his sentence contains a mistake.

2.2 Mistakes that Hinder Communication

If mistakes that hinder communication occur, misunderstandings may arise between participants in communication or expressions may not be understood at all (Kleppin, 1998, 42). The so-called "serious" grammar mistakes can prevent comprehension. Failure to meet a foreign culture can lead to mistakes if the student does not use certain specific cultural or regional concepts correctly or misbehaves because he or she does not recognize the foreign culture. (Müller, 1994, 51). These can be described as serious mistakes precisely because they hinder communication and as such must always be corrected in order for the content to become clear. One of the most important goals of learning a foreign language is to be understood in the target language.

In order to ascertain the type of mistakes of Albanian students learning German, their expressions in the "Text analysis" course were analyzed. We tried to group the most common mistakes made by them. The most commonly made mistakes based on the above classification are listed as follows:

2.3 Phonetic / Phonological Mistakes

These mistakes are connected to the incorrect spelling of words. The most common mistakes in this

group are due to the generalization of the rules, for example: * Wahlnuss although the correct spelling should have been "Walnuss", *ißt instead of form "isst", or *isst instead of "ist". In addition, some spelling mistakes are related to the adoption of a new spelling reform adopted in 1996 and applied in 2006.

Another group of phonetic mistakes has to do with the incorrect emphasis of foreign words in German, which also have in the Albanian language a "borrowed" equivalent, e.g.:

*Dóktor   doktór
*Bálkan   ballkán
*Aggrésor   agresór
*Kómik   komík

Pronunciation mistakes can also prevent communication and completely change the expression, as is the case, for example, in the *Ta<u>ss</u>e* and *Ta<u>sch</u>e* word pair (cup and purse). The so-called ich and ach sounds also need special practice. These appear in words like *Mäd<u>chen</u>, Bröt<u>chen</u>* ose *A<u>ch</u>tung* and *ma<u>ch</u>en*.

2.4 Morphological and Syntax Errors

Morphological and syntax errors are errors that appear in morphology (e.g. verbal endings in choice) or errors in the syntactic level (e.g. word order in a sentence) (Kleppin, 1998, 42). Morphological errors can also occur in the field of vocabulary, as in the formation of plural nouns.

1. Misuse of gender, e.g. *der Leiter instead of 'die Leiter' (degree), *der Fenster instead of 'das Fenster'. The cause of the misuse of the suffix is the generalization of the rule according to which the names bearing with -er are masculine. The percentage of errors in this subgroup is large, as in German there are generally no rules for determining gender. Even in cases where these rules exist, there are plenty of exceptions.
2. Wrong formation of the plural number of nouns: *zwei Praktikas and not "zwei Praktika'(generalization of the rule according to which the plural of foreign words in German is done by adding the ending -s).
3. Misrepresentation of the adjective scale: *grüner (greener), der einzigste Fehler (single error). It is semantically impossible to form the comparative scale of the adjectives that name the colors and the upper scale of the adjective "sole".
4. Misuse of verb forms (*man seht), verb tenses (* Nachdem er das gesehen hat statt hatte), ist er nach Hause gegangen), inactive form (* wird gemacht können) or the verb mode (* das Handy sieht so aus, als ob es kaputt ist).
5. Wrong formation of compound or derived words, e.g. Tageslicht but not * Sonneslicht, * Lautstärkentaste, * zickzackten. * Lautstärkentaste is a word formed by the misuse of a compound word formation strategy even though that word does not exist as such.
6. Misuse of noun case, especially after prepositions, e.g.
a. ich warte ihn, instead of "ich warte auf ihn";
b. ich gehe mit ihn, instead of "ich gehe mit ihm".

In the case (a) we are dealing with a linguistic phenomenon typical for the German language, which presents significant problems to Albanian students. In German, there is a group of verbs closely related to prepositions, a group which has no correspondence in the Albanian language.

Case (b) speaks of a misuse of the pronoun case because of interference from the Albanian language. The case required by the prefix "with" is different in both languages.

2.5 The Syntax Errors are the Most Common Ones

1. Instead of the word order a sentence, e.g.: * Ich ging nicht zur Uni, weil ich bin crank. In German the verb in the subordinate clauses must be placed at the end of the sentence, a rule which does not apply to the Albanian language

2. Not placing auxiliary or modal verbs when forming long sentences, e.g. *Ich fand es, dass es sehr interessant und viel Spaß gemacht hat.
3. The discrepancy between the number of the subject and the predicate, e.g.
a. *Auf dem Display ist die Uhrzeit, das Netz oder der Netzbetreiber, die Akku- und Datumsanzeige zu sehen.
b. *Die Hose passen mir gut.

In example (b) we are facing an error, which comes from the interference of the mother tongue. In the Albanian language, in contrast to German, after the nouns as "pants, glasses" the predicate is placed in the plural number.

1. Forgetting to place the prefix of separable verbs at the end of the sentence. The group of derived and divisible verbs in the German language, the prefix of which in simple tenses is placed at the end of the sentence, presents a problem for the learning of the German language at all levels by Albanian students. For example, * der Unterricht fängt um 9 (the prefix an of the verb is missing).
2. In the selection of conjunctions, conjunctive pronouns or conjunctions of parts of sentences, e.g. * alles, das; * ich weiss nicht, um was (instead of the form "worum") es geht.

2.6 Lexico-Semantic Errors

Semantic errors are a result of cultural interferences in linguistic knowledge. To learn the meaning of words from German to Albanian, students use the knowledge on the socio-cultural background of the mother tongue.

We want to emphasize that the meanings of words are always placed in associative relation with approximate meanings of new words thus forming what in linguistics is known as the lexical field. The sociocultural background conditions these associative ties. This model of internal organization of semantic knowledge on the one hand and the approach of meanings of words, lexical units of different languages on the other hand are an integral part of the learning process.

This approach is known in the communicative concept of teaching according to which when learning a foreign language not only language systems should be approached, but also socio-cultural aspects should be taken into account.

We are clarifying this elaboration with an example.

The lexical field of the verb "gratulieren" (congratulate) in German and "uroj" ("wish") in Albanian is not the same. The use of the verb "wish" in the Albanian language is wider than in German[2]. This discrepancy in the meanings of the equivalents in both comes because of the different semantic elements that carry the words "gratulieren" and "wish".

3. Different Concepts of "Error" from a Psycholinguistic Point of View, Error Analysis

Error analysis is a quite new discipline that emerged only in the late 1960s. In the past, errors in language learning were considered a sin, which is related to the concepts of behaviorism. At that time, the only cause of error was the transfer from the mother tongue (Hufeisen & Bielefeld, 2010, 740). Behaviorism focuses on error prevention (Bohnensteffen, 2010). Only in the 1970s, did people become somewhat more tolerant of mistakes and began regarding them as a necessary intermediate stage in language acquisition. The focus of research before the 1970s was to classify errors, determine the frequency of their occurrence, and provide suggestions for evaluating, correcting, and attempting to avoid them. Later, intralinguistic causes of errors also appeared in research through the cognitive

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[2]*"I wish you a Happy New Year", "Happy Easters", "Happy First of Day of May" are common combinations for the Albanian language, but meaningless in German.*

approach, where it was thought that errors could also occur through the target language itself (Hufeisen & Riemer, 2010, 741).

The term error is defined as a violation of linguistic appropriateness or acceptability and is referred to as a deviation (Kleppin, 1998, 19).

There are two concepts in terms of mistake correction. The traditional concept sees them as shortcomings, which should be noted from the beginning by teachers. Both the teacher and the student should try to avoid them. Representatives of this concept think "that a mistake made cannot be avoided or eliminated by correction". The mistake will continue even after the correction. Even an immediate correction by the teacher cannot completely eliminate the impact of this mistake. According to this concept, "students should not make any mistakes from the beginning" (Heuer, 1968, 64). This way of dealing with mistakes required a punitive teacher. Learning from mistakes had to be accompanied by negative feelings because the teacher punished and forced responsibility by creating an atmosphere conducive to the realization of the plan, a climate that excludes the possibility of daring to undertake experiments (Karl, 1995, 21).

Another concept of correcting mistakes sees them as an integral part of the learning process. According to this view, negative assessment of mistakes cannot be the primary purpose of teaching. Such a culture of dealing with mistakes creates in teaching a motivating atmosphere for the student, an atmosphere that puts the student at the center of teaching, giving him the opportunity to express himself freely or even to experiment (Spychiger, 1999, 44). In this case, we can talk about "diagnostic learning", which is based on the principle of identifying students' constant mistakes, putting them at the center of the learning process, thus enabling a better understanding of the knowledge transmitted (Lorenz, 2004, 47). "This way of judging mistakes presupposes that the trial subject (student) has the ability to judge competently, to conduct this trial. Reflection on mistakes enables students to know the ontogeny of mistakes, to learn to know the causes of mistakes.

The reflection phase on mistakes is also very important in learning a foreign language. In the loop of lexico-semantic errors, we found that the various lexical fields that form the equivalents "gratulieren" in German and "uroj" in Albanian were the cause of errors in the syntagmatic connections of these lexical units. Analysis and identification of the cause also led to the reduction of such errors.

Errors in other language systems (phonetic, morphological and syntax) can also be analyzed by reflecting on them. The reflection of the errors treated in the above loop comes because of the use of wrong strategies (analogy, generalization, simplification of the rule), inconsistencies or obvious differences in equivalent language systems or situational and cultural norms.

Foreign language teachers correct speech mistakes, but how and how appropriately do they do so? An important question is: To what extent does verbal, mistake correction have an impact on promoting knowledge or skills? It is generally assumed that foreign language teachers correct because they want to help their students.

However, there are other reasons to verbally correct. Teachers correct because they believe that correction is part of the teacher's job. They use verbal mistake correction so that the students take them seriously as teachers. The purpose of this article is to show what different types of oral corrections occur and how they can affect the interaction and learning processes of a foreign language.

The following results came from a study on the type and role of correcting verbal /oral mistakes in foreign language teaching, which were conducted at the Dekra Academy in Tirana / Albania in 2019-2020. On the one hand, these are the results of a survey conducted with teachers on this topic, which was attended by 90 Albanian teachers of the German language. On the other hand, various German language teachers in this institution observed lessons.

The following is an analysis of some questions from the questionnaire (compare Kleppin 1998) regarding the verbal / oral correction of Albanian teachers of the German language.

4. Questionnaire Regarding Verbal Correction during Free Speech

4.1 Types of teacher corrections

4.1.1 Do you tend to correct too much or not at all when students formulate something freely?

In the teachers' questionnaire on the role of verbal mistake correction, it was found that teachers have completely different views on this topic. Based on the answers, one can distinguish 'different types of correction' of teachers: the first group includes teachers who treat mistakes with tolerance, the second group includes teachers who do not tolerate mistakes, i.e. those teachers who behave more strictly with corrections and the third group includes teachers who choose a middle way to correct mistakes.

Group 1 is made of 30 teachers (out of 90). This group of teachers is not afraid that speaking mistakes can negatively affect foreign language learning. Speech mistakes do not always need to be corrected. Group 2 is made of 45 teachers. These are teachers who want to correct as many mistakes in speaking. Group 3 is made of 15 teachers. These teachers do not want to immediately choose one or the other point of view and are more likely to believe that both the correction and the type of oral correction depend on the situation.
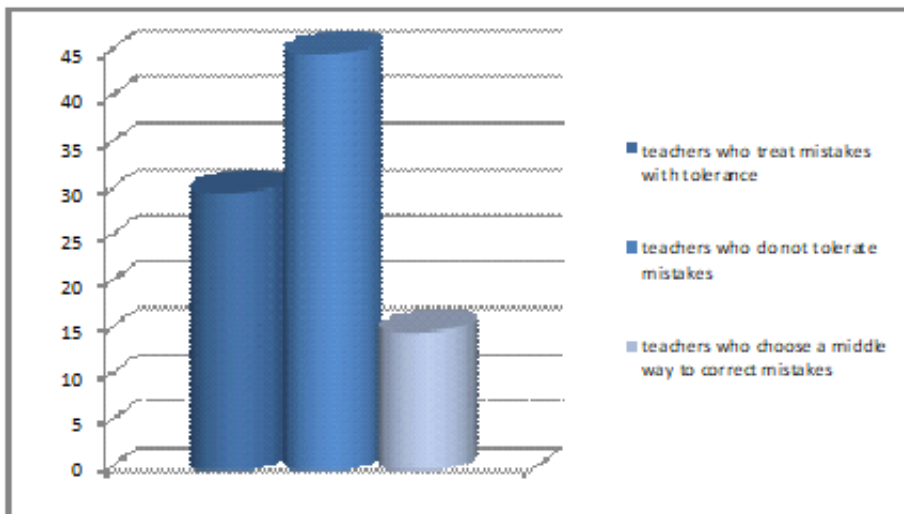

Figure 1: Types of teacher corrections

4.1.2 What do you mainly correct?

In the teacher survey, it was found that 5 teachers are more likely to correct pronunciation mistakes, 50 of them grammatical errors, 10 teachers word mistakes (lexico-semantic), 10 teachers pragmatic mistakes and 15 teachers content-related mistakes.
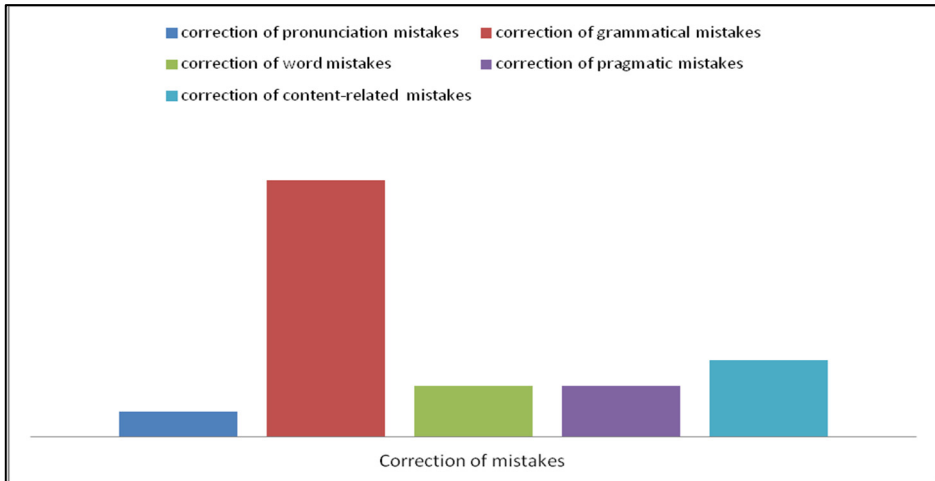
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Figure 2: Teacher survey

Pronunciation mistakes are phonetic mistakes. Our assumption was that pronunciation is not practiced as much in advanced students, but teachers' responses showed that pronunciation exercises are offered even at the highest levels of language learning and therefore need to be corrected.

Grammatical errors are morphological and syntactic mistakes and in the field of grammar there are always as many possibilities for mistakes as there are different rules. Our research has shown that teachers seem to consider grammar corrections as very important. A large proportion of teachers surveyed preferred the grammatically correct speech. Teachers emphasized the misuse of indefinite and definite articles as the most common example. In German, the article is used to determine the gender of nouns. Since there are large differences between the genders in Albanian and German, this often leads to incorrect use of the article.

Most teachers believe that at the beginning of language learning it is necessary to correct most mistakes, especially in grammar and pronunciation. If something is learned wrong from the beginning, it is also difficult to learn it correctly later. Mistakes made by beginners need to be corrected directly and explicitly.

Another mistake the teachers mentioned was Siezen (addressing with you) and Duzen (addressing with you) (cultural differences). Siezen is much more common in Germany than in Albania. This is why Siezen sometimes creates problems for Albanian students of the German language. Since we consider Siezen and Duzen as a cultural difference between Albania and Germany, we categorize this mistake according to cultural differences. In Germany, Duzen can be seen as a violation of etiquette, if on the other hand it is completely natural in Albania. Mistakes in the field of cultural differences belong to the category of pragmatic errors.

4.1.3 Who mainly corrects in your teaching?

- -   The teacher
- -   Other students
- -   The student who makes the mistake

When students make a mistake in speaking, the teacher can react in two ways: Either he corrects the mistake himself (teacher correction) or he demands self-correction from the student.

During both the observation in foreign language teaching and the teacher questionnaire, it was found that verbal correction of mistakes by the teacher is an essential part of classroom interaction.

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Eighty teachers stated that they correct the students themselves during the teaching process. The fact that teachers are those who mainly correct during the lesson is related to the expectations of students who think that teachers are "responsible" for the correction. Here we quote Henrichi and Herlemann (1986) who argue that "the dogma of the task and necessity of correction are seen as essential pillars to give the teacher a sense of his necessity and his need in learning foreign languages".

2 teachers stated that other students in the class correct their friend and 8 of them stated that students who make mistakes correct themselves. It seems more appropriate for self-correction to be applied with the most advanced. In all cases, it is important to consider different levels of students: the best students can be challenged more than those who do not yet master the foreign language.

Here we quote Tönshoff (2005) who raises the problem that in most cases the students do not have the opportunity to repeat the correct form of the saying, because the teacher starts speaking immediately. In any case, each student should be given the opportunity to repeat the sentence or saying in the appropriate form.
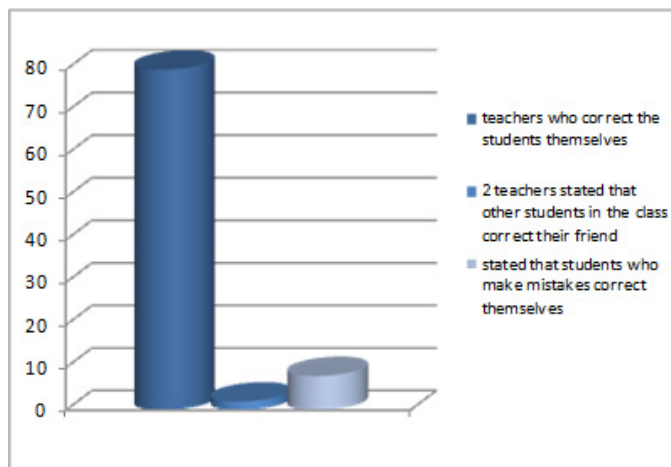

Figure 3: Types of reaction

4.1.4 When do you correct more often?

Correction time is an important aspect of mistake correction. Teachers can either correct the mistake right after the incorrect passage or just after the whole sentence or text.

During the analysis, it was also found that the teachers corrected mainly after the complete text of the students was completed. Seventy teachers agreed with this, while fifteen teachers correct immediately after the mistake is made, and five correct them at a later stage of correction.

If the correction is made immediately after the mistake, the student may not notice it. However, teachers need to be confident that correction will be heard, perceived and noticed by students. If the correction is made after the whole statement, it is easier to focus on it and go into the correction in more detail.

Interruptions can lead to speech inhibitions - especially when students speak freely. The student may forget his intention to express himself due to interruption. Teachers surveyed are of the opinion that most of the time students want them not to be interrupted, although they also want to be corrected. In the case of loose speaking, it would make more sense for the correction to be made at the end of the lesson.
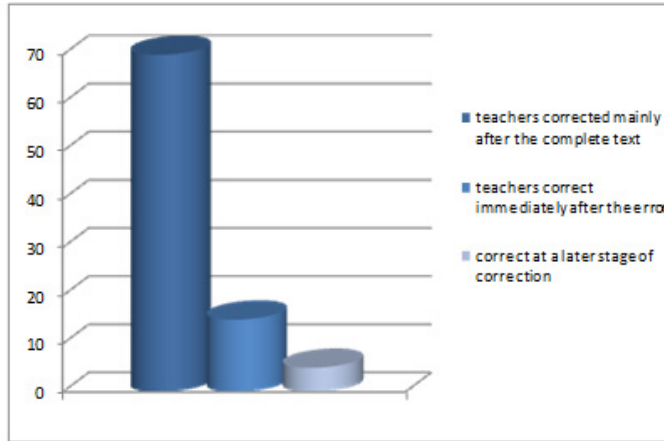
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Figure 3: Correction time

4.1.5 How are corrections made?

There are many different ways to correct a mistake. It is important that the correction has as much impact as possible to learn something through it. Therefore, correction should also be noted to the students. Teachers can correct directly or indirectly and verbally or in writing or they can use different symbols or expressions and gestures. The correction can also be illustrated metalinguistically or with an example. The teacher should explain to the student what the mistake was.

The teachers who participated in the survey had different views on how corrections should be made. However, most teachers reported that they do not use corrections to discipline or put students in difficulty in front of peers or others.
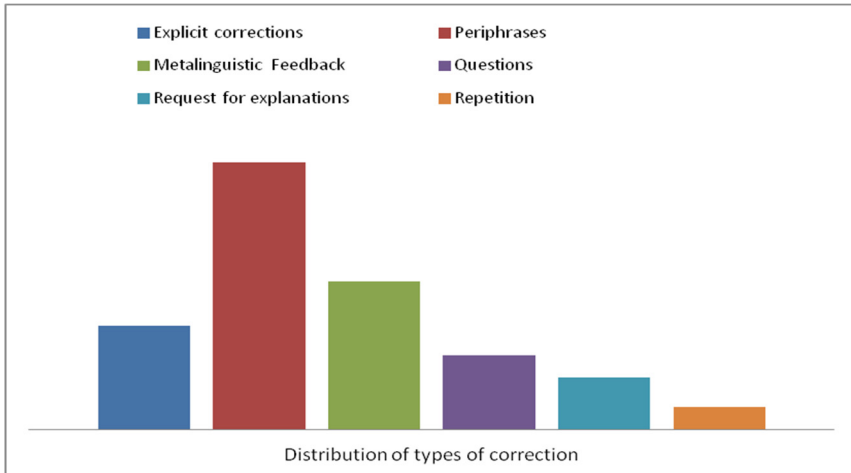
In the case of teacher corrections, a distinction can be made between direct and indirect corrections. In the case of an explicit correction, the teacher clearly indicates the speaking mistake, which he then corrects himself. The teacher corrects the student's mistake indirectly when he paraphrases the student's expression and perhaps extends it. Such a prolonged corrective repetition is also called a recast in the Anglo-Saxon literature.

The whole distribution of corrective actions (n = 90) in the study presented here is presented as follows.

The study shows that more than half of the corrections consisted of corrections by the teachers themselves (50). The request for self-correction by students (i.e. by means of metalinguistic, nonverbal reactions, requests for further explanations, indirect questions) included little response from teachers. Almost a very small part of corrective actions is corrective repetitions (isolated transformations).

Distribution of types of correction
1. Explicit corrections   14
2. Periphrases   36
   - Isolated periphrases   20
   - Extended periphrases   16
3. Metalinguistic Feedback   20
4. Questions   10
5. Request for explanations   7
6. Repetition   3
(n = 90)

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Distribution of types of correction

5. Results and Conclusions

The purpose of the empirical part of this study is to find out: What mistakes do students make when using a foreign language? What are the most common types of mistakes in (different) learning situations? Are the mistakes always corrected or which mistakes are not corrected? Are the verbal mistake correction methods discussed in this paper actually used? What other possible methods of verbal mistake correction are used - does the teacher correct or is he / she asked to correct? Do students correct each other? Is there a specific pattern of verbal corrective behavior?

A survey, with 90 German language teachers as participants, was conducted and different teaching hours were observed.

We assumed that students make the most errors in grammar, but that there are other types of mistakes as well. Our assumption was correct because most teachers mentioned the correction of grammatical errors firstly. Examples of corrections cited by teachers included dictionary mistakes, pronunciation mistakes, spelling, culture, and article mistakes, which can be referred to as grammatical errors. Therefore, it is clear that there are all kinds of mistakes in lessons, but the most common mistakes are made in the field of grammar. In most cases, the mistakes are corrected.

Our next assumption, that the teacher corrects all grammatical errors as well as dictionary errors, is also correct. Usually grammatical errors are corrected by the teacher and much less often by a classmate.

It was also found that teachers use all the mechanisms of correcting verbal mistakes presented in this paper. Direct and indirect corrections, external corrections and self-corrections are used. Metalinguistic descriptions, non-verbal suggestions (gestures and facial expressions) are commonly used as corrective tools.

Previous research in foreign language teaching has shown that foreign language teachers seem to have certain personal correction routines. Teachers should be encouraged to reflect on their corrective behavior by contributing to the improvement of foreign language teaching.

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