

Reaction to Feedback, Error Correction

My recent (and ongoing) experience as a student learning a second language enables me to reflect profoundly on issues of feedback and error correction. Error correction has certainly been something I struggled with for years. Each time the chapter mentioned the problem of students either not noticing or understanding all the corrections and red marks on papers and exams, I couldn't help but thinking that I, too, was one of those students who paid more attention to the grade rather than the corrections! However, that stage didn't last forever. Learner readiness was a particularly important term in the Brandl reading, as my readiness to accept and appreciate correction has been a somewhat recent development that I knew would be crucial to obtaining an elevated level in French. I imagine other students will have an early or later maturity regarding readiness to be corrected, and it will be crucial to remember each student will react quite differently. I know what error correction doesn't work; my aunt Yolande loudly repeating my errors in French slightly traumatized and embarrassed me, and the correct answer was immediately forgotten- as the book said can happen with many error corrections.

Reflecting on my own experiences with errors, I definitely liked the notion of "selective error correction" in the Brandl reading- not the idea of only correcting certain errors, but the idea of categorizing errors into a particular group, so struggling students know exactly what to address. For example, some students will excel in vocabulary, and forming sentences, but may have a horrible time with questions, and selective error correction will inform students the areas they must put the most effort in to. For example, my high school French professor constantly reminded me that I was weakest in the "partitif"- which then seemed impossible, and now seems fairly simple. I will be sure to retain this thought for my future teaching: rather than only pointing

out errors as they happen, students can absolutely benefit knowing the types of errors they make, so they know how to focus their energy and ask for additional explanation!

The SCT text was very helpful to me in terms of understanding nuances of comprehension. On page 208, an example was given of two language learners who made the same mistake. On the surface, it would seem that both students were at a similar level because they made the same mistake, but could have radically different approaches towards mediation to communicate in the target language. My biggest take-away from this class so far, perhaps, has been the emphasis on the vast diversity among students in terms of preferred methods of error correction; how information is absorbed, stored, and recalled; how students should be evaluated, and the ways students navigate challenges. As a student, it's far too easy to assume all of my future students will be learners like me (although hopefully, that will not be the case, as I took a long time to be able to see things like error correction as necessary and helpful rather than something to be ashamed of).