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INGLÉS COMO LENGUA EXTRANJERA

**A comparative study on the effectiveness of the use of explicit
correction in the improvement of EFL university students' oral
production: grammar and pronunciation accuracy**

TRABAJO DE TITULACIÓN

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this thesis project to my beloved mother for her unconditional love, support and encouragement. Also, I dedicate this work to God for being a light in my life. A special thank you to my family, my TAO friends and to Luna, Rafael, and Paloma for always being by my side bringing out the best of me. I feel the luckiest person for having such supportive people in my life.

Yolanda

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ABSTRACT

This research study was conducted at a language institute of a public university of the city of Cuenca, Ecuador. The purpose of this study was to know to what extent the use of explicit correction was effective in promoting students' pronunciation and grammar accuracy in their oral production as well as to know the students' perception of the use of explicit correction in the treatment of use of language and pronunciation errors. This was a quanti-qualitative study with a quasi- experimental design. Data was gathered by means of pretest, posttest, diagnostic survey and post survey which were applied to a control and experimental group during seven weeks. The participants were male and female students from two intact low-intermediate intensive classes. Results revealed that the experimental group improved their use of language and pronunciation accuracy more than the control group. Also, collected data indicated that students regarded explicit correction as an effective and productive tool in the treatment of grammar and pronunciation errors. Finally, the results revealed that some students opted for delayed error corrections and others preferred immediate error correction.

Key words: corrective feedback, explicit correction, oral production, pronunciation-errors, language.

RESUMEN

Este estudio se realizó en un Instituto de Lenguas de una universidad pública de la ciudad de Cuenca, Ecuador. El propósito de este estudio fue conocer hasta qué punto la corrección explícita de errores fomentaba la precisión del uso de la lengua y de la pronunciación en la producción oral así como también el conocer la percepción de los estudiantes del uso de la corrección explícita en el tratamiento de errores gramaticales y de pronunciación. Se trata de un estudio cuantitativo-cualitativo con un diseño cuasi-experimental. Con el fin de responder a esta pregunta, los datos se recogieron mediante pruebas preliminares, posteriores, encuestas de diagnóstico y encuestas posteriores aplicadas a un grupo control y grupo experimental durante siete semanas. Los participantes de este proyecto fueron estudiantes varones y mujeres de dos clases intactas del programa de cursos intensivos cuyo nivel era intermedio bajo. Los resultados revelaron que el grupo experimental mejoró su precisión en el uso del lenguaje y de pronunciación más que el grupo control. La información colectada también indicaron que los estudiantes consideran eficaz y productivo el uso de la corrección explícita en el tratamiento de errores del uso del lenguaje y de pronunciación. Finalmente, los resultados revelaron que algunos estudiantes preferían una corrección inmediata de sus errores mientras que otros favorecían a una corrección retardada.

Palabras claves: retroalimentación correctiva, corrección explícita, producción oral, pronunciación, errores, lenguaje

INTRODUCTION

It is not possible to talk about error correction without defining error. According to Pawlak (2014), errors are linguistic forms that differ from native speaker norms and are considered by teachers as needing improvement. In reference to error correction, this author defines it as a process that is part of language teaching and that consists on providing responses to incorrect language use either in learner's speech or writing. One of the biggest challenges English as a Foreign Language /English as a Second Language instructors face every day is deciding which, how, and whether students' errors should be corrected or not. With respect to this, Hendrickson (1978) urges language instructors to correct those errors that inhibit the comprehensibility of oral or written messages and avoid using corrective techniques that embarrass or frustrate students. In reference to whether errors should be corrected or not, Ferris and Hedgcock (2014) state that recent investigations have shown that error correction is necessary and useful to language learning and that students appreciate and value teacher corrective feedback. According to Ellis (1994), there is an extensive literature about error correction; however, there is a lack of research about this aspect and its effect on language acquisition. This lack of research is also felt by Jiménez (2004), who states that many foreign language instructors never question the validity of their error correction technique and that most of the time, teachers are accustomed to using their intuition when correcting students' errors.

This research study tries to fill up this gap in the educational research by studying the effectiveness of explicit correction in the improvement of EFL university students' oral production in grammar and pronunciation accuracy. Here, explicit correction is defined as the type of feedback where the instructor tells the learner directly and overtly that an error has been made and provides the correct form as well as an explanation of the error (Pawlak, 2014). When determining what errors should be corrected, Ellis (2003)

suggests establishing the difference between errors that are product of lack of students' knowledge and errors that are lapses in students' performance. Taking into account this premise, the objective of this study, and after having analyzed the syllabus of the participants' class, it was determined that this research study would treat students' grammar and pronunciation errors in their oral production. In this study, students' grammar errors are regarded as the use of language errors and pronunciation errors are referred to the mispronunciation of the past tense of regular verbs. That is the pronunciation of the phonemes [t], [d] and [Id]. In addition, an important aspect in this study is the concept of oral production and accuracy. Here, oral production is seen as the ability to construct meaning and transmit information in a verbal way (Adams, Nuevo, & Egi, 2011), and accuracy is defined as the intelligibility and mastery of speech production (Delzende, Vahdany & Arjmandi, 2014).

The present study was conducted at a language institute of a public university in the city of Cuenca, Ecuador. In 2014, directors of this institution decided to evaluate its English program in order to know if it was fulfilling the students' expectations, motivations and needs in terms of English learning. Among the findings, it was reported that the target learning outcomes were not being achieved by all the English students. This finding was strongly supported by the results of the oral diagnostic exams applied to low- intermediate EFL students of intensive courses during the academic year 2016. Here, the results showed an average grade of 73 points over 100 points in students' oral proficiency. In fact, this students' low English speaking proficiency has always been the concern of English instructors of his institution who constantly have reported that a great number of English students struggle producing comprehensible utterances during oral class activities. Another important finding presented in this institutional evaluation was the disparity in the use of error correction techniques and strategies used by the English

instructors to correct students' errors in their oral production. After the completion of this evaluation, peer-teaching observation has been promoted and carried on among English instructors to improve the English teaching and learning process. During these observations, it has been seen that explicit correction is one of the most popular corrective techniques used by EFL instructors to correct their students' errors in their oral production.

As it is seen, explicit correction is being used in the English teaching learning process in this institution; therefore, the general objective of this research study was to determine the effectiveness of explicit correction in the improvement of EFL students' pronunciation and grammar accuracy in their oral production. In addition to this, three specific objectives were formulated. The first one was to determine students' improvement in their grammar and pronunciation accuracy in their oral production. The second one was to know students' perceptions of the use of explicit correction in the treatment of grammar and pronunciation errors in their oral production, and the last one was to provide recommendations about the use of explicit correction in the treatment of grammar and pronunciation errors in oral production. Finally, this study sought to answer the following question: To what extent the use of explicit correction is effective in promoting students' pronunciation and grammar accuracy in their oral production?

This research will benefit the English instructors from this institution when dealing with students' errors in their oral production. Likewise, the findings of this research study will enrich the existing literature about the use of explicit correction in the teaching learning process of a foreign or second language. Data was collected from students by means of pretest, posttest, diagnostic and post surveys.

This study encountered the following methodological limitations. First, the comment section included in the diagnostic and post surveys did not encourage students

to give their opinions, comments or suggestions about the use of explicit correction on the treatment of pronunciation and use of language errors. In fact, a very small number of students participated in this section, making difficult to reach the specific objectives. Another limitation was time constrain which did not allow the researcher to obtain more data from students.

CHAPTER 1

LITERATURE REVIEW

Error correction

As never before, there is an increasing interest of people to learn a second or foreign language either for pleasure or for the necessity to access education or to maintain a job. Regardless of the situation, learning a new language is a complex process that involves many aspects such as error correction. Before analyzing the most common errors students make during language acquisition, it is important to have a clear definition of what error is. In regards to this, there is not an agreement on the definition of error, some linguists refer to it as a failure in communication, others such as Ferris and Hedgcock (2014) define it as the morphological, syntactic and lexical deviation from the grammatical rules of a language that violate the intuitions or expectations of literate adult native speakers of that language.

With respect to error correction, Pawlak (2014) defines it as the process of providing response to learners' inaccurate written or oral output. This provision of corrective feedback to incorrect students' output has a long controversial history, which according to the previous author is connected to the theories of language acquisition. Thus, in the *behaviorism* theory, developed by the psychologist Frederic Skinner in 1957, reinforcement is essential to promote language learning, which is the result of imitation and habit formation. One of the most important contributions of this theory to error correction is the strong belief that errors should be avoided at all costs and eradicated when they emerge to avoid fossilizations. For this, it is necessary to treat students' errors immediately by presenting them the correct language model (Nesterenko, 2016).

Another theory of language acquisition is the *nativism* developed by Noam Chomsky in 1959. According to this author, humans have the innate ability to learn any

language due to the innate mental structures (Language Acquisition device or Universal Grammar) that they possess (Pawlak, 2014). The main principle of this theory is that learners need access to language data to activate their mental structures rather than negative feedback of error correction (Ellis, 2015). In addition, the theories of *interactionist*, which include the interaction hypothesis developed by the linguist Michael Long in 1980, the output hypothesis developed by Swain in 1985, the input hypothesis developed by Stephen Krashen in 1982 and the sociocultural model developed by Lev Vigotsky claim that corrective feedback is an important element in second language acquisition since it helps L2 learners to notice their errors, correct their output and self-monitor their errors (Nesterenko, 2016). The information provided by these theories clearly show an ongoing debate about whether error correction should be treated or not and how to treat them.

Source of errors

According to Glass and Selinker (2001), there are two basic sources of errors in second language acquisition: interlingual and intralingual errors. As stated by these authors, Interlingual errors are the result of the interference of the mother tongue in the production of the target language whereas intralingual errors are those that emerge as the language is being learnt. Interlingual and intralingual errors are transitory.

Interlingual errors

The concept of interlanguage was introduced by the American linguist Larry Selinker in 1972. According to this researcher, interlanguage is a unique linguistic system that differs from the L1 and L2 (Gass & Selinker, 2001). In other words, interlanguage is the type of language ESL/EFL students produce during the process of learning a new language and that it is different from the learners' mother tongue and target language. Interlanguage is based on the principles of language transfer and fossilization.

Language transfer

According to Ellis (2015), language transfer is the positive or negative influence of a previous acquired language on the learning of a new one. Positive transfer refers to the cross – lingual similarities that facilitate the learning of the target language (Tarone, 1988). In other words, positive transfer helps L2 learners use and produce the target language accurately. For example, Spanish nouns take the suffixes “s” or “es” to mean plural such as in the noun *perro(s)*. This structure is also seen in English. In fact, most of the English plural nouns are formed by adding the suffixes “s” and “es” such as in the word *dog(s)*. Thus, this similarity in the construction of plural nouns in both languages facilitates the English learning in Spanish students. Negative transfer, on the other hand, refers to the cross-lingual differences that interfere with the learning of a new language or knowledge (Odlin, 1997). In essence, it refers to the inappropriate transference of items and structures from the mother language to the new language. To illustrate, in the structure of Spanish sentences, adjectives follow nouns, but in English, adjectives go before nouns. This difference in word order is usually transferred by Spanish learners to their English learning. Thus, it is common to hear structures like, “My cat color black is small.”

Fossilization

In 1972, Larry Selinker stated that 95% of L2 learners would never use the target language as native speakers do regardless their motivation, age, input and instruction due to fossilization (Ellis, 1994). Fossilization is the process by which L2 learners keep linguistic items, rules and subsystems from their native language or language previously learnt in their interlanguage (Zhao, 2013). In other words, it is the process in which incorrect language forms become permanent in the students’ use of language, obstructing the learning, fluency and accuracy of the target language. Research conducted by these

authors' points out five features of fossilization. First, it is connected to interlanguage features. Second, it can affect every linguistic feature (syntax, phonology, morphology). That is, L2 learners may present fossilization in morphology but not in syntax. Third, it is persistent and resistant. Fourth, it can affect children and adult learners. Fifth, it can sometimes disappear and appear again (backsliding).

Intralingual errors

In regards to intralingual errors, Gass and Selinker (2001) state that these errors are the result of partial, deviate or faulty learning of the target language. In this case, intralanguage emerges when L2 learners become confused between the new language patterns and the language patterns that they already know. According to Kaweera (2013), intralanguage comprises seven categories which are going to be described in the following section.

The first category is *false analogy*. According to Kaweera, it is the process by which L2 learners mistakenly construct language forms by following the language rules and patterns they already know. False analogy is also called overgeneralization. For instance, it is very common to hear constructions like, "Sun *can to* cause skin cancer." In this example, the student is overgeneralizing the use of the infinitive.

The second category is *misanalysis*. As reported by Kaweera (2013), this error type occurs when L2 learners misguidedly create a hypothesis about the use of a language form. For example, it is common to hear L2 students saying, "I have two dogs, *its* names are "ears" and sky" In this example, the student probably hypothesizes that the plural form of the pronoun *it* is *its*.

The third category is *incomplete rule application*. In reference to this error type, the previous author explains that it consists on not applying complex rules to produce accurate utterances and on not using complete rules to produce complex language forms.

This error type is opposite to overgeneralization. For instance, L2 learners usually say, “I did not know where was he last night.” instead of, “I did not know where he was last night.”

The fourth category is *exploiting Redundancy*. Here, the noted author indicates that this type of error consists on using unnecessary words or phrases to add meaning to words or sentences. In this case, the additional words and phrases used only create redundancy in the language use. This author describes three types of redundancy. The first one is *word redundancy* which consists on using redundant words in order to give more emphasis to the idea, word or utterance. For instance, it is common to hear L2 learners saying, “My laptop computer was bought in Mexico” In this example, laptop and computer have the same meaning; however, some students use both words to emphasize the concept of computer. The second type of redundancy is *quantifier redundancy*. This type of redundancy consists on using quantifiers with words that already express a high or low degree. For example, “The very honest person left the office”. In this example, the word *honest* already expresses a high degree; therefore, the adverb *very* is unnecessary. The third type of redundancy is *synonyms redundancy*. This form of redundancy means using synonyms to emphasize the meaning of a word or phrase. For example, it is common to hear constructions like “Can you repeat it again?” In this case, the word *again* is not necessary since the word *repeat* already means to reproduce a word or phrase.

The fifth type of intralanguage error mentioned by Kaweera is *overlooking Cooccurrence Restriction*. According to this author, this type of error occurs because L2 learners do not observe the restriction of an L2 structure. For example, L2 learners tend to overlook the use of gerunds after prepositions. Therefore, it is common to hear constructions like, “I am interested *in play* soccer.” Instead of, “I am interested *in playing* soccer.”

Hypercorrection is the sixth type of intralanguage error stated by the same author. This error type is caused by overgeneralization of rules or by misapplying rules in the language use. Here, the L2 learners consciously tries to use the language correctly by applying all the language rules they have learnt; however, they fail to accomplish it. For instance, L2 learners commonly say, “I decided did not call him” instead of “I decided not to call him”. In this case, students know that a negative form in English is constructed with an auxiliary and the adverb *not*; therefore, they try to comply with this rule, but in their effort, they make a mistake by misapplying this rule.

The last type of intralanguage error listed by Kaweera is *overgeneralization or system- simplification*. In this case, the author defines overgeneralization as the process of overusing a language rule and underusing another. Thus, when L2 learners learn a rule, they tend to apply it in all situations without taking into account that every rule has exceptions. For example, it is very familiar to hear questions like, “Does she can dance?” In this case, students are overgeneralizing the use of the auxiliary verb in questions.

Types of errors

There are different types of errors. For example, Richards and Schmidt (2002) identify performance and competence errors. Performance errors are those errors that are caused by students’ tiredness or fatigue. In other words, these errors are not the result of students’ lack of language knowledge. Competence errors, on the contrary, are those errors that reflect inadequate learning. In view of this, the mentioned researchers make a distinction between mistakes and errors. Mistakes are defined as lapses in performance and errors reflect inadequate learning of the target language. Other researcher such as Amara (2015) classifies errors into local and global. Local errors are the ones that do not interfere with communication and understanding the meaning of any utterance. Global errors, on the other hand, hinder communication and disrupt the meaning of utterances.

In this research study, the types of students' errors to be corrected are competence errors and global errors.

Language learning errors

Learning language errors are classified into vocabulary or lexical errors; pronunciation or phonological errors; grammar or syntactic errors; misunderstanding of speaker' intention / meaning or interpretative errors; and wrong use of rules of speaking or pragmatic errors (Gass & Selinker, 2001). This study focuses on the correction of grammar and pronunciation errors; therefore, these are the ones that are explained below.

Grammar errors

Richards and Schmidt (2002) define grammar as the study of the structure of a language and how words and phrases are combined to produce sentences in a language.

The questions whether to correct grammar errors or not has caused much debate in second language acquisition over the years. For instance, Truscott (1999) states that grammar correction in oral and written production should be abandoned due some error correction is poorly done and tend to confuse students. Jean and Simard (2011), on the other hand, report that students and teachers consider grammar error correction not only necessary but beneficial in learning a language accurately.

According to Celce-Murcia (2002), mastering grammar is a complex process that requires from L2 learners the ability to make decisions about when and why a certain grammar structure or rule should be used. This decision making is, as stated by DeKeyser and Sokalski (1996), what makes grammar proficiency difficult to be mastered by non-native speakers. In regards to this, Ur (2012) states that one of the reasons why L2 learners do not acquire an English grammar proficiency is that grammar instruction is basically focused on the teaching and learning of grammar forms, neglecting the teaching of grammar function and use. In other words, L2 learners are taught how to use the

language structures correctly, but they are not exposed to the different functions and uses of these grammar structures or forms in different situations.

Ur' assumption is supported by a numberless of commercial English grammar books and online programs available in the market that are focused on the teaching of grammar forms. Another possible reason why EFL learners do not develop an English grammar proficiency is the fact that every grammatical rule has an exception and that learning all the grammar exceptions of the target language is not only hard, but impossible.

When talking about grammar, it is necessary to talk about its form, meaning and use.

Form. – According to Mart (2013) *form* refers to the grammar rules that structure a language. In other words, *form* is the mechanics of a language. For instance, negative statements in the past tense is formed with the auxiliary “Did” plus the word. “Not”.

Meaning. – According to Ortega-Llebaria and Colantoni (2014), meaning is the mental image or understanding created by vocabulary or grammar structure. With regards to meaning, there are literal meaning and meaning in context. Literal or essential meaning refers to the actual meaning that a word, expression or grammar structure conveys. For instance, “Wayne Dyer died in Hawaii.” Here, this sentence is literally stating an event in the past. In this case, it is the death of the famous writer in his hometown. Meaning in context, in contrast, relates to the meaning implied in context. For instance, “Hugo Chavez did die in Venezuela.” This statement is assuring that Hugo Chavez actually died in Venezuela and not in any other place.

Use. – Use indicates when, where or under what conditions a particular grammar structure or unit is appropriate to be used Mart (2013). In other words, “use” refers to the ways a particular language unit is used in specific contexts. For example, in the sentence, “His

face is red! He may be upset”. Here, it is better to use the modal auxiliary *must* instead of *may* since *must* denotes logical deduction. Consequently, the sentence, “His face is red! He must be upset.” Shows a better use of the language.

Some grammarians refer to use as functions. According to Richards and Schmidt (2002), function is the purpose for using a particular language unit. In this case, function is the role utterances play in context. Some of the categories of language functions are: request, apologies, complains, offers, compliments, orders, information, and many others. For instance, in the sentence, “Ecuador is a multi-cultural country.” The function or purpose is to inform people that in Ecuador there are different cultures.

According to Ur (2012), error correction has to be in accordance with the class syllabus, lesson planning and the instructional goals the instructor plans to accomplish. Taking into account this aspect, and after having analyzed the class syllabus of the participants of this project, this research study is concentrated on correcting students’ grammar errors in the use of language

Pronunciation errors

According to Xu and Dinh (2013), many varieties of English are spoken across cultures, and even all of them are linguistically equal, there is a commonality for modeling the English pronunciation spoken by English native speakers. In reference to this, Chan and Evans (2011) mention that the tendency of regarding the English native speakers’ pronunciation as the ideal one has developed the habit of correcting students’ inevitable mother-tongue accents as if they were pronunciation errors.

Even though little research has been conducted in the field of error correction of students’ pronunciation, the available studies stress the impact of pronunciation on the development of students’ communicative competence. For instance, Yates and Zielinski (2009) state that when L2 learners have an unintelligible pronunciation, communication

is affected even though students have a good vocabulary and grammar knowledge. In addition, in second /foreign language instruction, it is very common to hear people talking about, “good pronunciation”. According to Gilakjani and Sabouri (2012), good pronunciation does not mean having a native-like pronunciation but understanding the speakers’ utterances without effort and concentration. Since this research study is conducted in an EFL context, it will be based on these authors’ postulation to achieve students’ accuracy in their oral production.

As it is seen, there is a collective consensus on the importance of pronunciation in language learning, making the correction of students’ pronunciation errors vital to promote language communication.

According to Fraser (2006), correcting students’ pronunciation is essential for the following reasons: First, correct pronunciation enhances language acquisition. Second, correct pronunciation of patterns facilitates communication. Third, mastering the pronunciation of phonemes and morphemes leads to the infinite use of them. Fourth, working on pronunciation motivates students to develop a native-like pronunciation.

In regards to what pronunciation is, Richards and Schmidt (2002) define it as the way sounds are produced. When talking about pronunciation, there are two terms that are linked to it, phonetics and phonology. Yavas (2011) defines phonetics as the study of the sounds of human language. That is, the study of how sounds are produced, transmitted and heard by the listener. According to this author, phonetics is divided into articulatory, acoustic and auditory phonetics. Articulatory phonetics studies how the vocal organs produce speech sounds. Acoustic phonetics studies how the air vibrates as sounds are transmitted from the speaker to the listener and auditory phonetics studies how sounds are perceived by the listener. That is, how sounds are processed from the ear to the brain.

Phonology, on the other hand, is the study of the sounds systems of a language. In other words, it is the linguistic knowledge that speakers have about their language. That is to say, phonology identifies what sounds belong to a particular language and which ones do not. Another important terminology that is linked to pronunciation is morpheme. As stated by the author mentioned before, morphemes are the part of words or the smallest units of meaning within a word (suffixes, prefixes affixes), and phonemes are the basic units in the sound system of a language that do not carry any meaning. For example, the word *run* is a morpheme because it conveys a message and it is composed of three phonemes *r, u and n*. Finally, the last concepts closely related to pronunciation are intonation and stress. Richards, and Schmidt (2002) define intonation as the rises and falls in tone of an utterance and stress as the emphasis on a particular sound.

According to Skandera and Burleigh (2005), the discrepancy between the spelling and the pronunciation of English words is one of the reasons for the inaccuracy of L2 learners' English pronunciation. Additionally, Pawlak (2014), mentions that interlingual and intralingual factors difficult the development of students' accurate pronunciation of English words. On the other hand, Gilakjani, Ahmadi and Ahmadi (2011) state that accent, stress, intonation, motivation, exposure, attitude, instruction, personality and mother tongue influence are factors that affect the learning of pronunciation.

Regarding motivation and exposure, these authors mention that having a personal or professional goal can encourage students to improve their pronunciation and to look for ways to interact with English speaking people. According to Elliot (1995) when students are concerned about their pronunciation, they tend to develop a better pronunciation of their target language. Gilakjani, Ahmadi and Ahmadi (2011) state that some instructors sacrifice pronunciation practice for the development of reading, speaking, listening and speaking ability. In reference to personality, these authors mention

that students' self-confidence can promote or impede pronunciation skill development. Finally, the influence of mother tongue in the acquisition of pronunciation is related to learner's first language transfer into the second language.

Among the most common pronunciation errors made by ESL/EFL students mentioned in Yavas (2011) and the treated ones in this research work are the mispronunciation of the past tense of regular verbs.

English regular past tense has three types of pronunciation that always confuses EFL/ESL students. The phonological types of the past tense of regular verbs are: First, if the last sound of the regular verb is a voiceless consonant, except /t/ the past tense is pronounced with phoneme [t]. For example: shop-shopped, wash- washed

voiceless consonants sounds: p-t-k-f-s-th-sh-ch-h

Second, if the last sound of the regular verb is voiced, the past tense is pronounced with the phoneme [d]. For example, clean- cleaned, name- named

voiced consonants sounds: b-d-g-v-z-th-sz-j-l-m-n-ng-r-w-y and vowel sounds

Third, if the last sound of the regular verb is [t] or [d] sound, the past tense is pronounced with the phoneme [ɪd]. For example, want- wanted.

Error treatment in oral production

When deciding whether to treat students' errors or not, Amara (2015) states that there are a couple of aspects to consider. First, research has shown that EFL/ESL learners expect their errors to be corrected by their instructor and that when it is not done, students feel disappointed or ignored. Second, if students' oral errors are not corrected, there is the danger that they might become an input model for the other students in class. Third, corrective feedback can speed up students' second or foreign language learning.

In reference to the correction of errors, it is impossible to correct all students' errors in a single class, therefore, Touchie (1986) suggests some guidelines to provide

appropriate corrective feedback during class. First, teachers should correct errors that interfere with the general meaning and comprehension of utterances. In other words, teachers should correct global errors instead of local errors. Second, ESL/EFL instructors should correct high frequency and general errors. For example, the overuse of the possessive adjective “your” to refer to all persons is frequent and general in L2 learners. Third, ESL/EFL instructors should correct errors that affect the majority of students. Fourth, ESL/EFL instructors should correct errors that are relevant to the class topic or lesson. For instance, if the class is working with past events, the instructor has to pay more attention on correcting errors related to the use, meaning, and form of the past tense rather than correcting errors related to other language aspects. This way, students’ attention would be focused on the topic of the lesson. Gebhard (2006) contributes to Touchie’s statements by saying that error correction should be based on the students’ stage of language acquisition, thereby, turning the analysis of the students’ course syllabus indispensable before correcting students’ oral production. Brown (2009) on the other hand, emphasizes on the use of non-threatening and non- embarrassing error – correction techniques. The guidelines provided by these authors are the bases of corrective feedback in this research study.

Use of explicit error correction to correct oral production

Explicit correction is a direct and overt corrective feedback in which the instructor corrects student’s error and openly tells him/her and typically to the whole class that an error has been made (Pawlak, 2014).

For example,

Student: *It not rained yesterday*

Instructor: *IT DID NOT rain yesterday. This sentence has an error in the construction of the negative form. Remember that to make negative statements in the past tense, you need to use the auxiliary DID and the verb has to go in the base form.*

In this example, the instructor corrects the student's error and openly explains him/her the cause of the error.

In regards to the benefits of explicit correction, Adams, Nuevo and Egi (2011) state that although it is true that explicit correction might disrupt the communication flow, it reduces misinterpretations from students, making corrective feedback more effective. Pawlak (2014) contributes to this opinion by stating that the benefits of over and direct feedback extend to the members of the class who take explicit feedback as a great opportunity to self -correct. In discussion of the negative aspects of explicit feedback, Ellis, Loewen, and Erlam (2006) state that this type of error correction makes students focus on form rather than on meaning, leading to incorrect language use in the future. Also, this author states that explicit correction may have a negative effect on the students' affective filters, which might interfere with students' language learning.

Ellis (2007), in response to this, asserts that when explicit error correction takes the form of metalinguistic feedback, students have greater opportunities of correcting their mistakes. Metalinguistic feedback consists on telling students the nature of the error made without correcting it (Adams, Nuevo, & Egi, 2011). For instance: Student: *How much you pay for your sweater?*

Instructor: *You need to use an auxiliary to make a correct question.*

In this case you are talking in the past. (Metalinguistic clue)

Student: *How much did you pay for your sweater?*

This author also mentions that explicit feedback can also include elicitation and the provision of the correct form. For instance:

Student: *Leo Rojas is a musician and your music is very popular in Europe.*

Instructor: *What is the possessive adjective of a man? (elicitation)*

Student: *The possessive adjective of a man is his.*

Instructor: *Good! Leo Rojas is a man, so you need to use "his" in this sentence.*

Student: *Leo Rojas is a musician and his music is very popular in Europe.*

When correcting students' oral errors with explicit correction, there is an important aspect to consider; that is, whether to correct students' errors immediately after they have been made or delay their correction. In respect to this dilemma, Honglin (2010) suggests delaying the error correction when the speaking activity is focused on developing students' fluency and interrupting students' participation when the speaking activity is focused on achieving accuracy. Evidence found in Murillo and Chaves (2016) favor the use of immediate feedback by showing that this type of feedback helps students to reformulate incorrect utterances and produce accurate utterances.

Hedge (2000), on the other hand, favors delayed feedback by stating that teacher guides and course books frequently suggest correcting students' error at the end of fluency activities. Besides that, this author recommends recording students' activities and note taking as techniques that can be used in delayed feedback. According to this author, these techniques allow the instructor to go over the students' errors and they provide students to opportunity to identify and correct their error by themselves. Taking into account Honglin and Hedge's (2010) suggestions, this research study will implement delayed and immediate explicit correction in class to know the students' perception about these two forms of explicit correction. Finally, Ellis (1995) states that when working with explicit

feedback, it is important to remember that it will take time and repetition before students start using correct forms. In fact, it will be a process of comparing the correct forms with the students' interlanguage as well as testing students' hypothesis about the target language.

Language Accuracy

As Honglin (2010) mentions, EFL/ESL instructors need to distinguish if error correction is geared to improving students' accuracy or fluency in the use of the language (Pawlak, 2014). According to this author, fluency is the capacity to communicate smoothly within the target language and accuracy is the capacity to construct utterances as similar as to a native-speakers'. In this project, error correction treatment is oriented to improve students' accuracy in their grammar and pronunciation. As reported by Esteki (2014), an important benefit of directing error correction to achieve accuracy in the language use is the development of explicit knowledge in students. That is, the development of students' awareness of the rules that govern the target language. This conscious use of the target language promotes accuracy and leads to implicit knowledge, which according to the previous author is the intuitive use of the language. Thus, validating the assertion made in Richard and Rodger (2014) which states that the ultimate objective of learning a second or foreign language is the development of language fluency, accuracy and appropriacy.

Previous Studies

In regards to the importance of the correction of grammar errors, Almuhimedi and Alshumaimeri (2015) conducted a research study in which 304 EFL female students at a 3rd secondary grade in a Saudi secondary school were applied a questionnaire to know their perception on the effectiveness of grammar correction on second language acquisition. This study was conducted during the academic year 2013-2014 and the

results revealed that students consider grammar error correction helpful in their language learning and that they benefit when their instructor corrected their errors. Also, this study demonstrated that error correction has the potential to make students concentrate on the correction of their grammar errors and that students' benefit from repeating the sentences that have been corrected.

Another important contribution that favors the correction of students' grammar errors is the study conducted by Martinez (2015). In his study, 173 male and female Spanish EFL students from a secondary school completed a questionnaire to know their perception about grammar instruction and corrective feedback. The data obtained showed that most EFL learners acknowledged the importance of grammar instruction and the correction of grammar errors for L2 acquisition. Fidan (2015) also confirms the importance of correcting students' grammar errors through his research study conducted in two Turkish language centers of two state universities in North-West, Turkey. In his investigation, advanced and upper intermediate Turkish students completed a questionnaire to find out what errors should be corrected during language learning process. The data collected showed that 97% of the participants agreed on being corrected during language acquisition and 54% of them mainly preferred their grammar errors to be corrected. These positions of grammar error correction only restate the importance of grammar in second language acquisition

In reference to the correction of pronunciation errors, Huang and Jia (2016) conducted an investigation in which 73 male and female EFL students from a university in Beijing were interviewed and answered a questionnaire to know the similarities and differences between the students' and teachers' perception of corrective feedback in oral presentations. The results of this research showed that 78% of the students and teachers that participated in this investigation agreed that correcting students' pronunciation is not

only important but necessary and that the best time for receiving corrective feedback on their pronunciation is after their oral presentations.

Regarding the use of explicit correction, Yilmaz (2012) conducted a research study in which explicit feedback was used during the acquisition of Turkish morphemes by 48 native English speakers. The results revealed that the participants were able to use the taught morphemes in production and comprehension tasks more accurate than the control group

Another important study that corroborates the effectiveness of explicit correction in language acquisition is the one conducted by Dabaghi (2006). In his investigation, 57 intermediate EFL students from an Iranian University and a private language institute were asked to read a written text and then retell it in their own words during an oral interview. During this interview, students' grammar errors were corrected explicitly and implicitly. After students' errors were corrected, a test that included the errors corrected during the interview were administered to students. The results revealed that the students whose errors were corrected explicitly obtained higher grades in tests than the students that were corrected implicitly.

CHAPTER II

METHOD

Setting and participants

This research study was conducted at a language institute of a public university in the city of Cuenca, Ecuador with male and female low- intermediate English students as participants. The students' average age was 22 years old and they were distributed in two EFL intensive classes. One class was the experimental group, with 20 students and the other one was the control group, with 21 students.

This research study was conducted through a quanti-qualitative study with a quasi-experimental design. Quanti-qualitative research is the collection of quantitative and qualitative data within a single study to understand better the research problem (Creswell, 2012). In other words, working with mixed methods consists on providing numeric and narrative data about a problem or phenomenon. According to Edmonds and Kennedy (2017), the purpose of using mixed methods is not to force researchers to choose between qualitative and quantitative methods but, rather, to utilize and combine their strengths in a creative way. In reference to quasi-experimental design, Tavakoli (2012) defines it as experimental research in which it is not possible to select or assign the participants randomly; instead, the study works with groups that already exists. Since this design is less intrusive and disruptive than others, it is ideal for teacher-conducted investigation and or pilot studies.

Procedure

This research study worked with a control and experimental group. In the experimental group, students' grammar and pronunciation errors were corrected through the use of explicit correction in regular class sessions (two hours per day) three times a week for seven weeks and during different oral class activities. In reference to the control

group, their grammar and pronunciation errors were corrected through the use of different error correction techniques, except explicit correction.

This study began with the review of literature related to the subject of study. This information helped to narrow down the scope of the research work. Later, students from both groups were given a pre- test to measure their initial grammar and pronunciation accuracy in their oral production. This pre-test consisted of an oral interaction guided by a set of five open-ended questions between the instructor and the students; the content of the pre-test was taken from the syllabus of the students' previous class. Here, students' grammar and pronunciation accuracy in their oral production were evaluated over five points and through the use of a holistic rubric which consisted of two dimensions. In order to avoid bias during the application of the pre-test, this study followed the recommendations given by Ekbatani (2011). That is, having the participation of two instructors, the research instructor and an invited one. Thus, one instructor was in charge of interacting with the students while the other one was in charge of evaluating the students' oral production.

Additionally, in this study, students completed a diagnostic survey and post survey. The purpose of the diagnostic survey was to have a general perception of student's opinion about the correction of pronunciation and use of language errors. The purpose of the post survey, on the other hand, was to know the students' perceptions on the use of explicit correction in the improvement of their pronunciation and use of grammar accuracy in their oral production. Both surveys included a set of statements organized in a Likert Scale. In the case of the diagnostic survey, it included 8 statements and the post survey included 10 statements. Besides that, these surveys included an open comment section where students could write their comments, opinions or suggestions about the treatment pronunciation and use of grammar errors.

Furthermore, at the end of this research study, both the experimental and the control group took a post- test which followed the same guidelines of the pre-test. By having this posttest, it was possible to determine to what extent students from the experimental group had improved the accuracy of their pronunciation and use of language in their oral production. It is worth mentioning that before the data collection instruments were applied, they were piloted a month before the implementation of the study; this helped the researcher to adjust these instruments to the students' needs and specifications. Finally, the collected data was processed, tabulated, analyzed and presented in forms of statistical reports and in form of descriptions. This information was used to answer the research question, to present the conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER III

Results and Discussion

Description, Analysis and Interpretation of results

Table No. 1. Pretest results of the experimental and control group: use of language

Score over 5 points		Experimental Group		Control Group	
Criteria	Score	Number of students	Percentage	Number of students	Percentage
Student demonstrates an accurate command and appropriate use of the language with a few errors that do not inhibit comprehension of the message and communication.	4.5-5	2	10%	2	9%
Student presents an adequate use of the language with some errors that may interfere with the comprehension of the message	3.5- 4	4	20%	9	43%
Student demonstrates a basic use of the language with several errors that sometimes cause misunderstanding and communication problems	2.5- 3	12	60%	6	29%
Student's use of the language is inconsistent with many errors that cause frequent misunderstandings and communication problems.	1.5-2	2	10%	4	19%
Student demonstrates a poor use of the language with constant errors that	0.5- 1	0	0%	0	0%

prevent understanding and communication.					
Total		20	100%	21	100%

Author: Yolanda Loja

Source: Students' pretest

By comparing the pretest scores of the use of language between the experimental and control group, it is seen that the experimental group obtained lower grades than the control group. In fact, the percentage of students from the experimental group that obtained a score of 2.5-3 over 5 points is 60% and in the control group 29%. This difference tells that more than half of participants of the experimental group demonstrated a basic use of language in their speaking with several errors that sometimes caused communication problems. In addition, this difference suggests that a great number of students of the experimental group struggled with the use of basic English structures in their oral production and that this group of students had sometimes troubles making themselves understood.

Besides that, the scores of this pretest revealed that the number of students that showed an adequate use of language in the experimental group was much less than the control group. Indeed, only 20% of students from the experimental group demonstrated an adequate use of the language with errors that sometimes interfered with the comprehension of the message while in the control group, the percentage was 43%. This result validates Celce-Murica's (2002) statement which asserts that mastering grammar is a complicated process that requires from learners the ability to know when and why a certain grammar rule should be used. Besides that, this difference in percentage suggests that in the experimental group only some students were able to use the basic English structures appropriately in their oral production whereas in the control group the number

of students was much larger. In other words, a greater number of students from the control group was capable of making themselves understood better than students from the experimental group when communication in English.

Furthermore, when analyzing the students' scores, it is seen that a larger percentage of students from the experimental group displayed an inconsistent use of language which frequently caused misunderstandings and communication problems than the control group. That is 19% against 10%. This result clearly states that a bigger number of students from the experimental group could not express themselves easily in the target language due to their inaccurate use of basic English structures. Thus, supporting what was previously stated.

Finally, in reference to language accuracy, the pretest reported that only a 9% of students from the experimental group demonstrated an accurate command and appropriate use of language with a few errors that did not hinder communication. This percentage is smaller than the control group which percentage was 10%. On the whole, the results of this pretest suggest that at the beginning of this study, students from the control group displayed a better command and accuracy of the use of language than the experimental group.

Table No.2. Pretest results of the experimental and control group: pronunciation

Score over 5 points		Experimental Group		Control Group	
Criteria	Score	Number of students	Percentage	Number of students	Percentage
Student's pronunciation is phonetically clear and correct, with minor phonetical errors that do not	4.5-5	4	20%	4	19%

interfere with the comprehension of the message. Word stress and intonation is correct.					
Student's pronunciation is mostly phonetically correct with some inaccurate errors that occasionally interferes with the understanding of the message. Word stress and intonation is mostly accurate	3.5- 4	7	35%	10	47.61%
Student's pronunciation is largely phonetically inaccurate with frequent phonological errors that cause major communication problems. Word stress and intonation is frequently inaccurate	2.5- 3	8	40%	5	23.80%
Student's pronunciation is mostly unintelligible and severely interferes with the comprehension of the message. Word stress and intonation is highly inaccurate.	1.5-2	1	5%	2	9.52%
Student's pronunciation is incomprehensible and it inhibit comprehension of the message. There is no word intonation and stress	0.5- 1	0	0%	0	0%
Total		20	100%	21	100%

Author: Yolanda Loja C.

Source: students' pretest

The scores of the pronunciation pretest of the experimental and control group showed that the number of students from the control group with a mostly phonetically correct pronunciation, word stress and intonation surpassed that of the experimental group. In fact, almost half of population of the control group (48%), obtained a score of 3.5-4 over 5 points in this pretest. This means that these students displayed a correct

pronunciation with occasionally errors that did not hinder the understanding of the message whereas the percentage of the experimental group was 35%.

Also, the results of the pretest indicated that 40% of the population of the experimental group presented a largely inaccurate pronunciation, word stress and intonation while the percentage of the control group was 24%. In other words, less than a quarter of students from the control group had communication problems due to inaccurate pronunciation, which was not the case of the experimental group. This difference also states that a great number of students from the experimental group had problems getting their message through due to phonetic problems in their pronunciation. This result supports what Gilakjani, Ahmadi and Ahmadi, (2011) say about pronunciation. Indeed, according to these authors, what really hinders communication in ESL/ESL learners is not grammar or vocabulary but pronunciation. In this regard, Yavas (2011) states that one of the most severe pronunciation problems among English learners is the mispronunciation of the phonemes of the past tense of regular verbs.

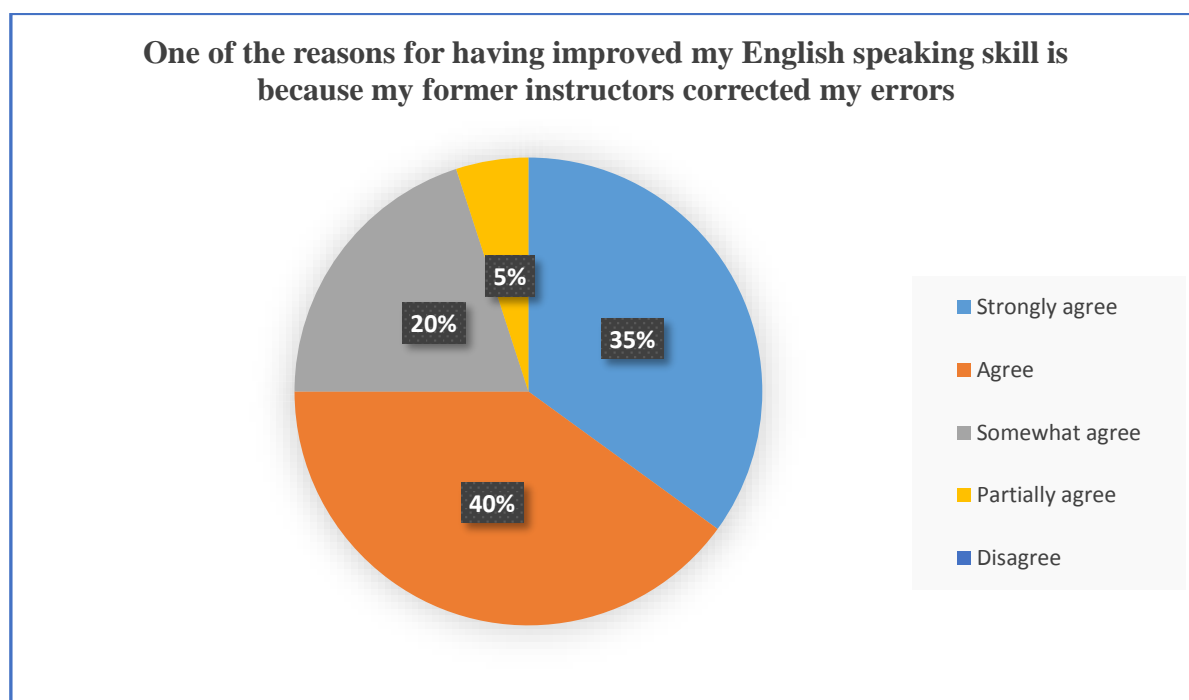
In addition, the pretest reported that both the experimental group and the control group included a small number of students whose pronunciation was phonetically clear and correct with a correct word stress and intonation. Thus, the percentage of students that had minor phonetic errors that did not interfere with the comprehension of the message in the control group was 19% and in the experimental group was 20%. Likewise, the results tell that a small number of students from both groups had an untelligible pronunciation and inaccurate word stress and intonation that most of the time interfered with the comprehension of the message. That is, 9% of students from the control group and 5% of students from the experimental group had serious problems making themselves understood when they communicated in English.

Overall, the results of this pretest suggest that at the beginning of this research study students' pronunciation of the control group was more accurate than the pronunciation of the experimental group. Consequently, a bigger number of students from the control group were capable of establishing a more comprehensible communication than the experimental group. In this respect, it is very important to mention that as Gilakjani, Ahmadi and Ahmadi (2011) state, there are different factors involved in the development of students' pronunciation skill such as accent, stress, intonation, motivation, exposure, attitude, instruction, personality and mother tongue.

Student Diagnostic Survey about Error Correction

The students' answers to these statements were the following:

Graph No. 1.



Author: Yolanda Loja C

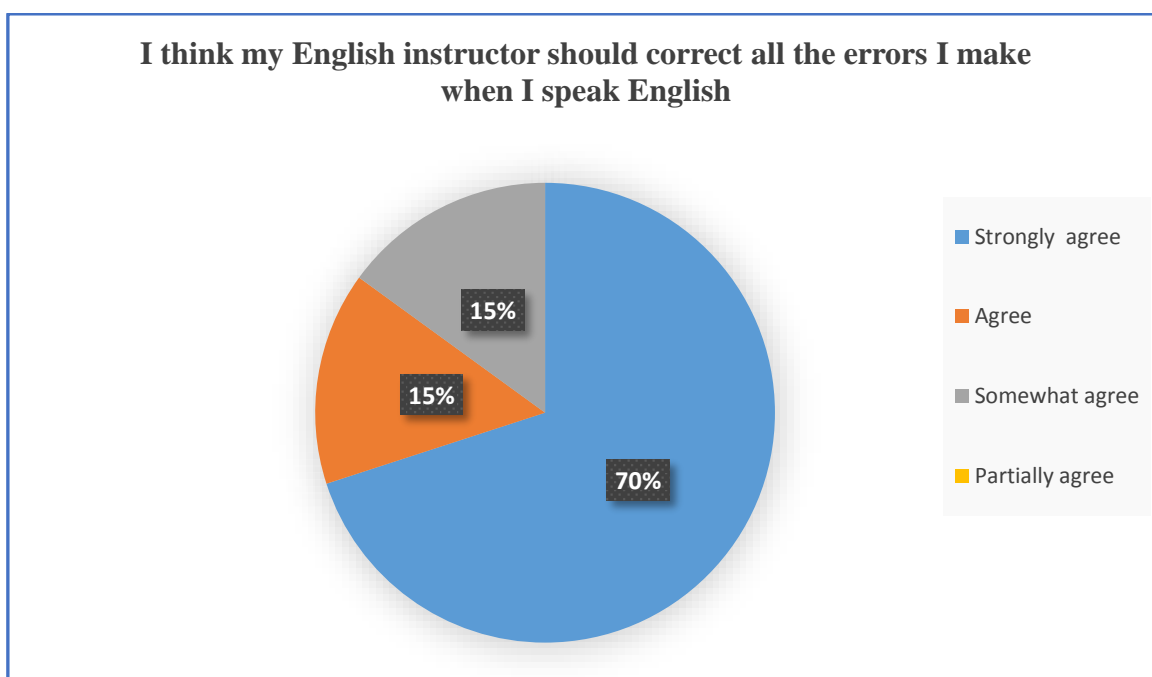
Source: Students' diagnostic survey

The reason for having this statement was to know the students' perception of correction in the improvement of their language proficiency. The results showed that a 40% of students agreed that corrective feedback provided by their former instructors has

helped them to improve their English and a 35% of the population strongly supported this idea. This pie chart also illustrates that less than a quarter of this group of students (20%) moderately agreed to this statement while a very small number (5%) partially agreed to it.

These findings show that at the beginning of this research study, the majority of students believed that error correction has had a major impact in the improvement of their English proficiency and that it is necessary in the learning of a foreign language; thereby, confirming Ferris' and Handcock's (2014) assertion which claims that language students not only appreciate and value teacher corrective feedback but regard it as necessary and useful to language learning.

Graph No. 2.



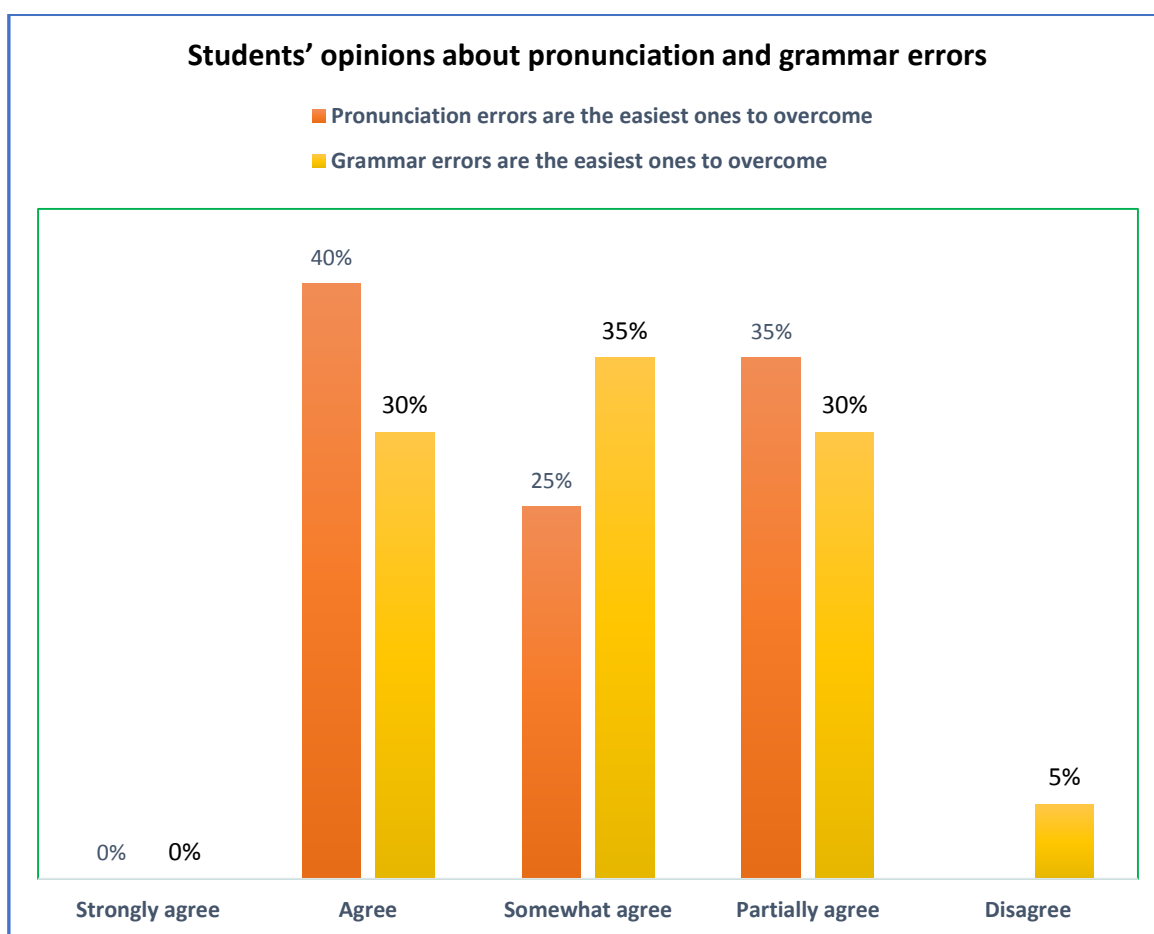
Author: Yolanda Loja C.

Source: Students' diagnostic survey

The purpose of the second statement was to know if students liked all their errors to be corrected or not. The results reported that more than two thirds (70%) of the population strongly believed that their English instructor should correct all the errors they

make in their oral production, whereas a 15% of students just agreed to this statement and another 15% of students somewhat agreed to it. These results illustrate that the majority of students favored error correction and that they expected their instructors to correct all the errors they make in their oral production. This finding contradicts Touchie’s (1986) suggestion which states that teachers should correct only the errors that interfere with the general meaning and comprehension of utterances.

Graph. No. 3.



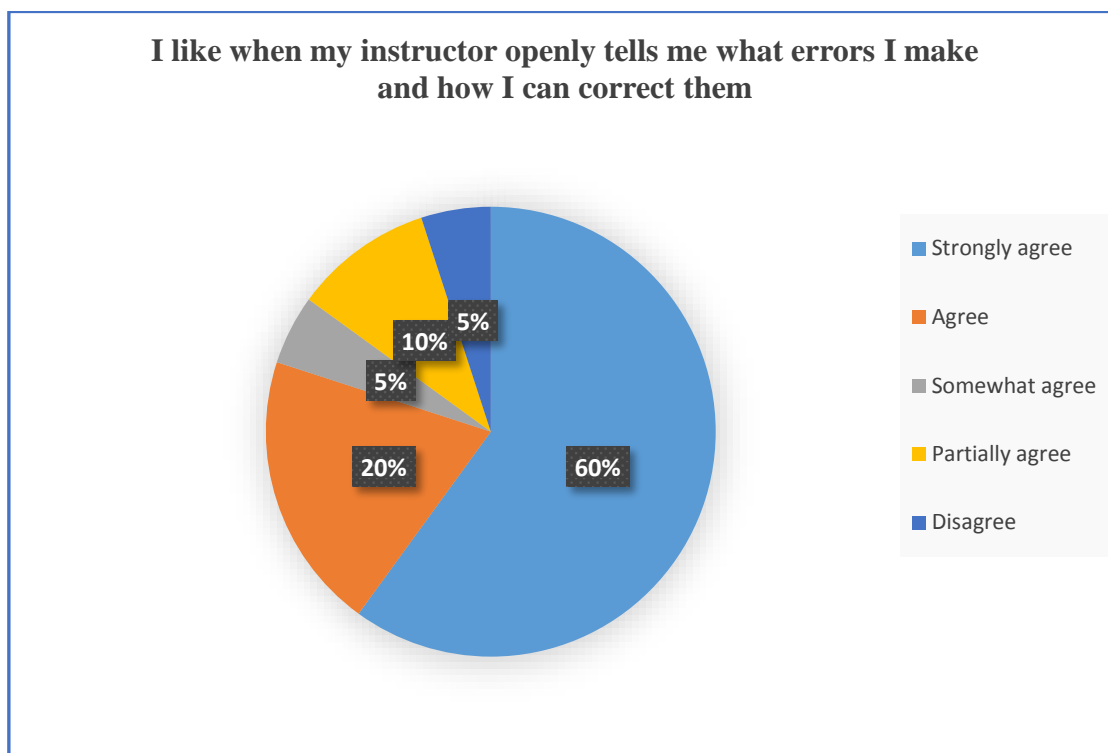
Author: Yolanda Loja C.

Source: Students’ diagnostic survey

The diagnostic survey also helped to know the students’ perception about the degree of difficulty in correcting pronunciation and grammar errors. In this regard, the results showed that the majority of students considered pronunciation errors easier to correct than grammar errors. In fact, 40% of students agreed that pronunciation errors

were the easiest ones to overcome whereas only a 30% of students regarded grammar errors as the easiest ones to master. Also, the collected information showed that nobody disagreed that pronunciation errors were the easiest ones to correct; however, a 5% of students totally disagreed that grammar error were the easiest ones to rectify. Consequently, the data collected supports DeKeyser's and Sokalski's (1996) affirmation which states that what makes grammar proficiency difficult to be achieved by non- native English speakers is the capacity to decide when a certain grammar rule should be used. Also, it can be interpreted that the cross lingual similarities between the mother tongue and target language are considered positive by the learners; that is, the language transfer from Spanish to English has helped students in the learning of the pronunciation of the target language.

Graph. No. 4.

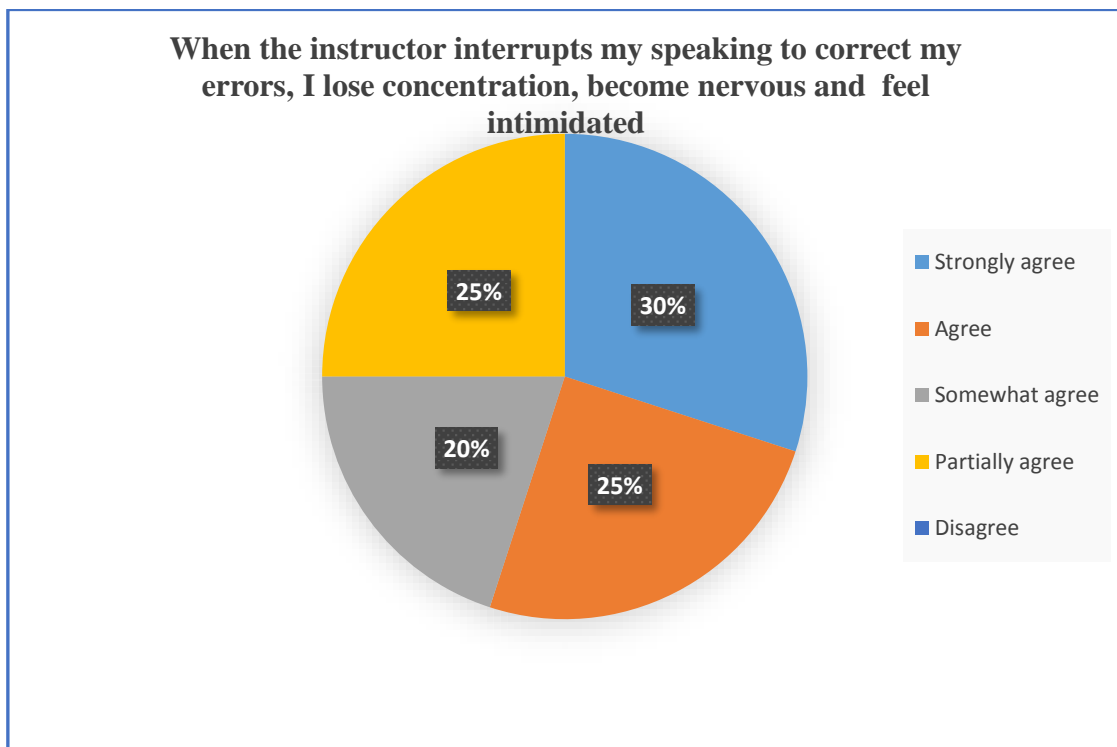


Author: Yolanda Loja C.

Source: Students 'diagnostic survey

The statement aimed to find out if students liked their errors to be corrected explicitly. Here, 60% of the students strongly agreed to this statement and 20% just agreed to it. In addition, the results reported that a small minority of students (10%) somewhat agreed while 5% disagreed to it. Taking into account these results, it can be concluded that the majority of participants liked their instructor to correct their errors openly and loudly as well as they wanted to know how to correct them. These results, clearly supports Ellis' (2007) claim which states that when explicit correction is followed by metalinguistic feedback, students have better opportunities of correcting their mistakes by themselves. Also, these results suggest that the majority of the participants considered the explanation of errors not only useful but necessary in the improvement of their language proficiency.

Graph No. 5

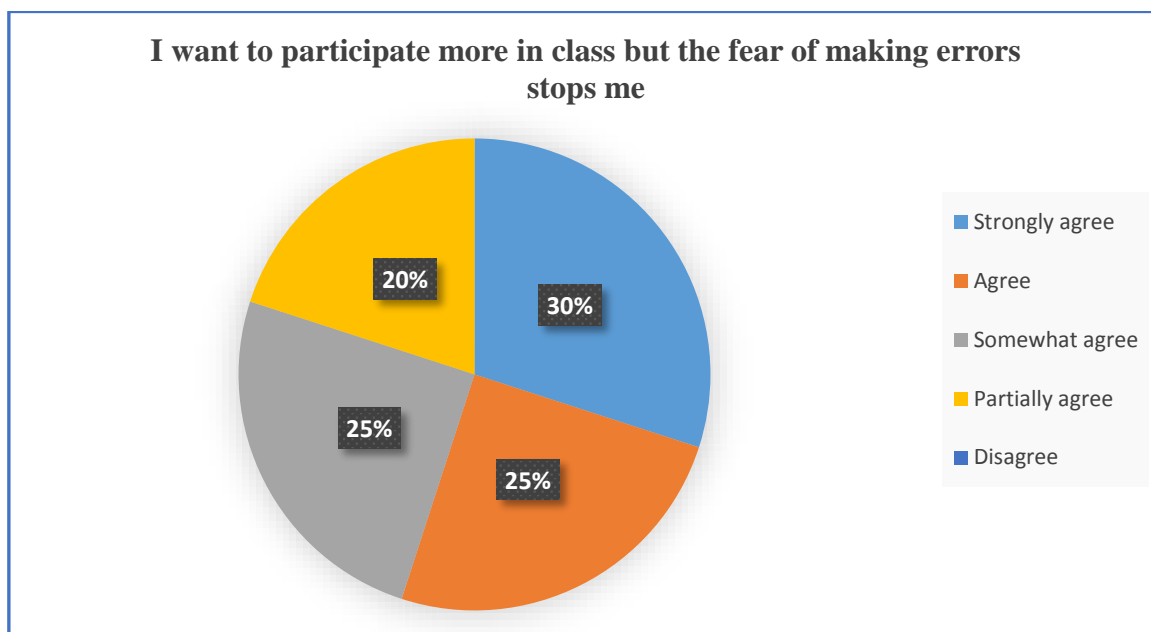


Author: Yolanda Loja C.

Source: Students' diagnostic survey

The purpose of this seventh statement was to find out if students' concentration and affective filters became affected when the instructor interrupted their speaking to correct their errors. The results showed that a great number of students (30%) strongly agreed to this statement and that a quarter of students (25%) seconded it by agreeing to it. In addition, the data collected reported that another 25% of students partially agreed to this description and that a small number 20% somewhat agreed to it. These results suggest that the majority of the participants became nervous and lost concentration when the instructor interrupted their speaking to correct their errors. Consequently, English instructors must be mindful when correcting students' speaking errors by not using threatening or embarrassing techniques as mentioned by Brown (2009).

Graph. No. 6.



Author: Yolanda Loja C.

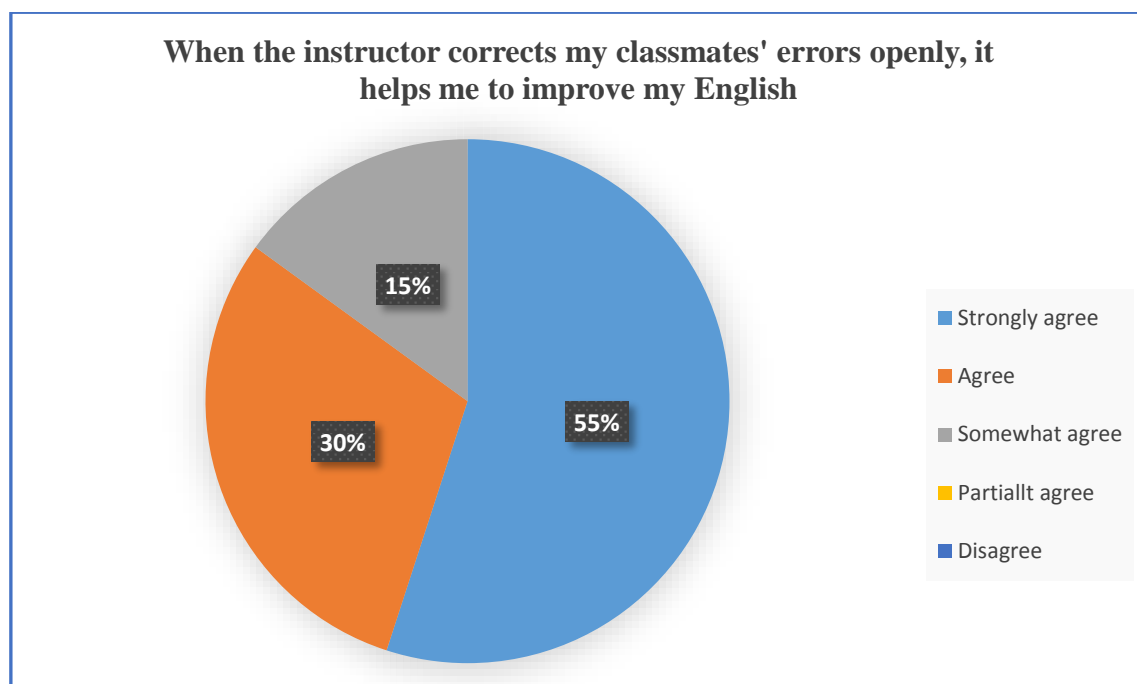
Source: Students' diagnostic survey

This statement aimed to know if the fear of making mistakes hindered students' participation in class. Here, (30%) of students strongly agreed to this affirmation and a quarter of them (25%) agreed to it. Besides that, the data gathered showed that a similar

number of students 25% somewhat agreed to this opinion whereas a 20% partially agreed to it. This evidence tells that the fear of making mistakes prevented most of these students from participating more in class. With respect to the fear of making mistakes, Juhana, (2012) links it to some aspects. The first one is the fear of being corrected; the second one is the fear of receiving negative feedback; the third one is the fear of being laughed by their classmates and the last one is the fear of being criticized by their instructor.

Unfortunately, this finding does not tell which aspect is the dominant one in this group of students; however, it clearly states that the fear of making mistakes make students reluctant to participate in class.

Graph. 7.



Author: Yolanda Loja C.

Source: students' diagnostic survey

The purpose of this last statement was to know if the correction of students' classmates' errors helped students to improve their language proficiency. Here, more than half of the participants (55%) strongly agreed to this statement and 30% of them agreed to it, while a small number of students (15%) somewhat agreed. This information

clearly states that the majority of students believed that their English proficiency improves when the instructor corrects their classmates' errors. That is, students considered the correction of their classmates' errors as a great opportunity to improve their English, opinion that is shared by Pawlak (2014).

An important part of the student diagnostic survey was the comment section where students could give opinions, ideas and suggestions about the treatment of error correction in their oral production. Only six of twenty students of the experimental group commented on this part. For example, one student suggested correcting the students' errors at the end of class. Another student recommended using different class activities to correct their pronunciation errors. Also, a group of three students expressed their need of working more in groups to practice their speaking and grammar. Finally, one student recommended listening to more audios and having more oral presentations to practice and correct their pronunciation errors.

These comments reflect the students' interest for improving their grammar and pronunciation errors. At the same time, they confirm the importance of error correction in the improvement of students' English proficiency stated in the diagnostic student survey

Post Test Results

The second part of this research study was the application of a posttest to the experimental and control group. The purpose of this test was to know if the experimental and control group had improved their pronunciation and use of language accuracy with and without the implementation of explicit correction in their learning. The application of this test followed the same guidelines of the pretest.

Table No. 3. Posttest results of the experimental and control group: Use of language

Score over 5 points		Experimental Group		Control Group	
Criteria	Score	Number of students	Percentage	Number of students	Percentage
Student demonstrates an accurate command and appropriate use of the language with a few errors that do not inhibit comprehension of the message and communication.	4.5-5	3	15%	3	14%
Student presents an adequate use of the language with some errors that may interfere with the comprehension of the message.	3.5- 4	9	45%	10	48
Student demonstrates a basic use of the language with several errors that sometimes cause misunderstanding and communication problems.	2.5- 3	7	35%	6	29%
Student's use of the language is inconsistent with many errors that cause frequent misunderstandings and communication problems.	1.5-2	1	5%	2	10 %
Student demonstrates a poor use of the language with constant errors that prevent understanding and communication.	0.5- 1	0	0%	0	0%
Total		20	100%	21	100%

Author: Yolanda Loja C.

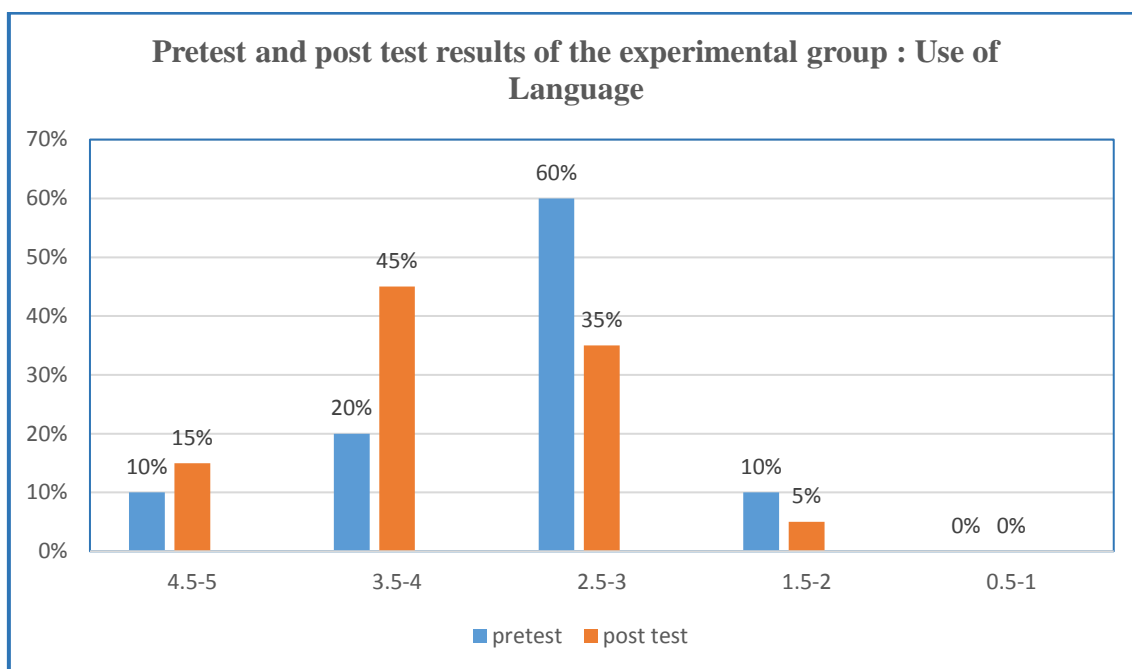
Source: Students' post test

By comparing the scores of the use of language posttest between the experimental and control group, it is seen that their scoring did not differ much. For instance, 48% of students from the control group obtained a score between 3.5 to 4 points over 5 points while the percentage of the experimental group was 45%. This slight difference means that at the end of this research study a similar number of students from the control and experimental group presented an adequate use of language in their speaking with still some errors that sometimes interfered with communication.

On the other hand, the results showed that more students of the experimental group (35%) presented a basic use of language with several errors that sometimes caused communication problems than the control group (29%). In reference to the number of students that demonstrated an accurate command and appropriate use of language with a few errors that did not hinder communication, the chart shows a bigger percentage in the experimental group than in the control group, that is 15% against 14%. Also, the data collected showed that the percentage of students with an inconsistent use of language was bigger in the control group (9%) than in the experimental group (5%).

At first sight, it might seem that the experimental group did not improve its command of use of language as much as it was expected since its posttest scores were very similar to the ones obtained by the control group. However, by comparing the scores of the pretest and posttest of the experimental group, it is seen that this group of students sharply improved its use of English language in their oral production; as it is seen in the following graph.

Graph No. 8



Author: Yolanda Loja C.

Source: students' pretest and post test

To illustrate, in the pretest, the percentage of students that was able to use grammar adequately was 20% and in the posttest it was 45%. Also, in the pretest, the number of students that demonstrated a basic use of the language with several errors that caused communication problems was 60% and in the post test it decreased to 35%. Similarly, the post test results revealed an increase in the percentage of students that demonstrated an accurate use of the language. That is, from 10% in the pretest to 15% in the posttest. Consequently, the results obtained support the use of explicit error correction over the use of other corrective techniques; thus, validating the results of previous studies that favor the use of explicit correction such as the one conducted by Dabaghi (2006).

In reference to the pretest and posttest scores of the control group, it is seen that some of the results are similar. For instance, the percentage of students that demonstrated a basic use of language with errors that sometimes caused communication problems is

29% in both cases. Likewise, the percentage of students with an adequate use of language is almost the same in both tests; that is, in the pretest this group obtained 43% and in the posttest 48%. However, there is a difference in percentage between the pretest and posttest in the number of students that demonstrated an accurate use of the language. In the pretest, the percentage was 9% while in the posttest it was 14%. Another difference is in the percentage of students that displayed an inconsistent use of the language. In the pretest, the percentage was 19% and in the posttest it was 9%.

These results show that at the end of this study, students from the control group improved their command of the use of language; however, this improvement is not as significant as the one experienced by the experimental group. Thus, giving support to Ellis (1995) who claims that explicit correction promotes peer and self – repair rather than just rephrasing and repeating someone’s utterances.

Table No. 4 Posttest results of the experimental and control group: pronunciation

Score over 5 points		Experimental Group		Control Group	
Criteria	Score	Number of students	Percentage	Number of students	Percentage
Student’s pronunciation is phonetically clear and correct, with minor phonetical errors that do not interfere with the comprehension of the message. Word stress and intonation is correct	4.5-5	5	25%	6	28.5%
Student’s pronunciation is mostly phonetically correct with some inaccurate errors that occasionally interferes with the understanding of the	3.5- 4	12	60%	10	47.6%

message. Word stress and intonation is mostly accurate					
Student's pronunciation is largely phonetically inaccurate with frequent phonological errors that cause major communication problems. Word stress and intonation is frequently inaccurate	2.5- 3	3	15%	3	14%
Student's pronunciation is mostly unintelligible and severely interferes with the comprehension of the message. Word stress and intonation is highly inaccurate.	1.5-2	0	0%	2	9.5%
Student's pronunciation is incomprehensible and it inhibit comprehension of the message. There is no word intonation and stress	0.5- 1	0	0%	0	0%
Total		20	100%	21	100%

Author: Yolanda Loja C.

Source: Students' posttest: pronunciation

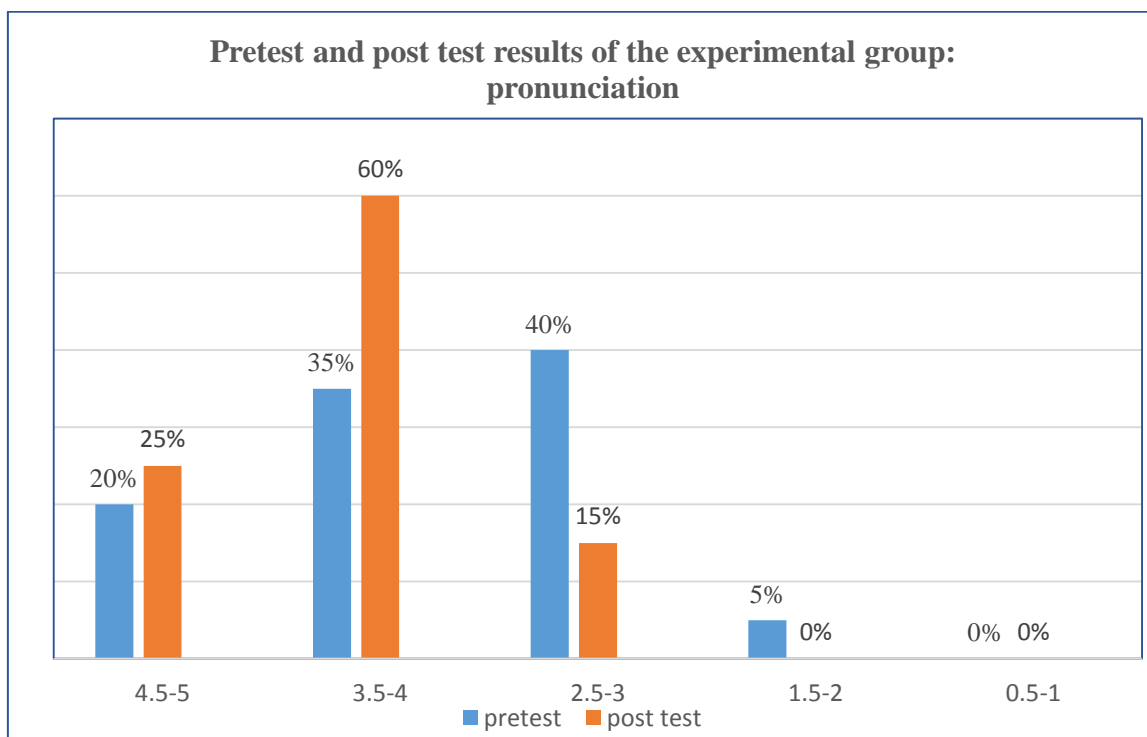
Before analyzing the results of the pronunciation posttest of the experimental and control group, it is important to note that in this study, the correction of pronunciation errors was specially focused to the pronunciation of the simple past tense of regular verbs.

When analyzing the scores of the pronunciation posttest of the experimental and control group, it is seen that at the end of this study these two groups presented two major differences. First, a bigger number of students from the experimental group (60%) developed a mostly phonetically correct pronunciation in their speaking than the control group (47.6%). Second, 9.5% of students from the control group presented a mostly unintelligible pronunciation that compromised communication whereas the percentage of students in the experimental group with this pronunciation problem was 0%.

The posttest results of these two groups of students also showed some similarities. For instance, the percentage of students that demonstrated a phonetically clear and correct pronunciation in the control group was (29%) and in the experimental one (25%). Furthermore, it is seen that the experimental and control group included a similar number of students with a largely phonetically inaccurate pronunciation. That is, 15% the experimental group and 14% the control group. Even though the difference in pronunciation accuracy between the control and experimental group is not much, the experimental group included a greater number of students with a good command of English pronunciation in their speaking; thus, favoring the use of explicit correction in the treatment of pronunciation errors.

By comparing the pretest and posttest scores of the experimental group, the results show that the students from the experimental group improved their English pronunciation; consequently its accuracy; as it is shown in the following graph.

Graph No. 9



Author: Yolanda Loja C. Source: students' pretest and post test

For example, the results of the pretest reported that 40% of this group of students exhibited a largely inaccurate pronunciation. In the posttest, this percentage dropped to 15%. Also, in the pretest, the number of students that displayed a phonetically correct pronunciation with some errors that occasionally caused communication problems was 35%, but in the post test this number increased to 60%. Another relevant data is that in the pretest the percentage of students with mostly unintelligible pronunciation, word stress and intonation was of 5% and in the post test this number disappeared.

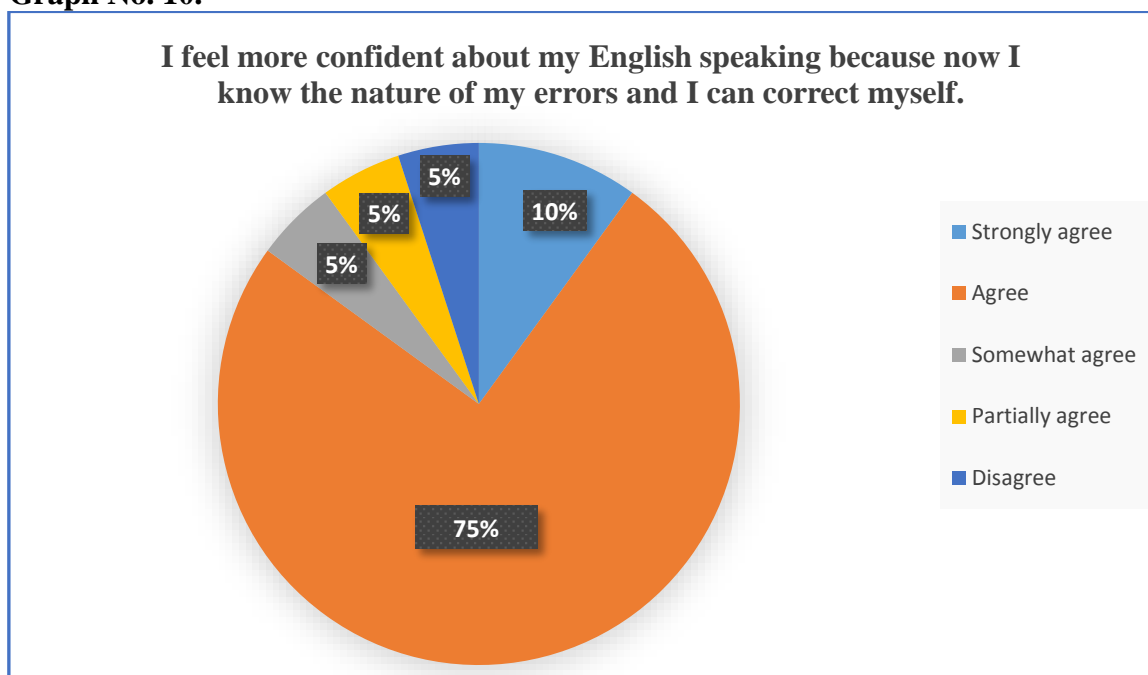
In reference to the pretest and posttest scores of control group, it is seen that they are similar very similar in some cases. For instance, the number of students with a mostly phonetically correct pronunciation is 48% in both tests. Another similarity is the percentage of students that demonstrated an unintelligible pronunciation, which was 9% in both tests. One difference between the pretest and posttest is the decline in the percentage of students that had an inaccurate phonetical pronunciation. In the pretest, the percentage was 24% and in the posttest it was 14%. Another difference is the increase of percentage of students that displayed a clear and correct pronunciation; in the posttest it was 29% and in the pretest it was 19%. These results are in agreement with other studies such as Yilmaz (2012) which showed that students from her experimental group were able to use morphemes in their speaking more accurate than the control group thanks to the use of explicit correction.

As it is seen, both the experimental and control group improved their pronunciation accuracy in their oral production; however, if we compare the results of the pretest and posttest of the experimental and control group, it is seen that the experimental group improved its pronunciation more than the control group.

Post Survey

The last step of this research study was the application of a post survey to the experimental group. The purpose of this survey was to know the students' perception on the effectiveness of the use of explicit correction in the treatment of their pronunciation and use of language errors in their oral production. As it was previously described, this post survey consisted on a set of eleven statements organized on a Likert scale. Besides that, this survey included an open comment section where students could write their comments, ideas, opinions and suggestions about the treatment of pronunciation and grammar errors. The results of this survey were:

Graph No. 10.



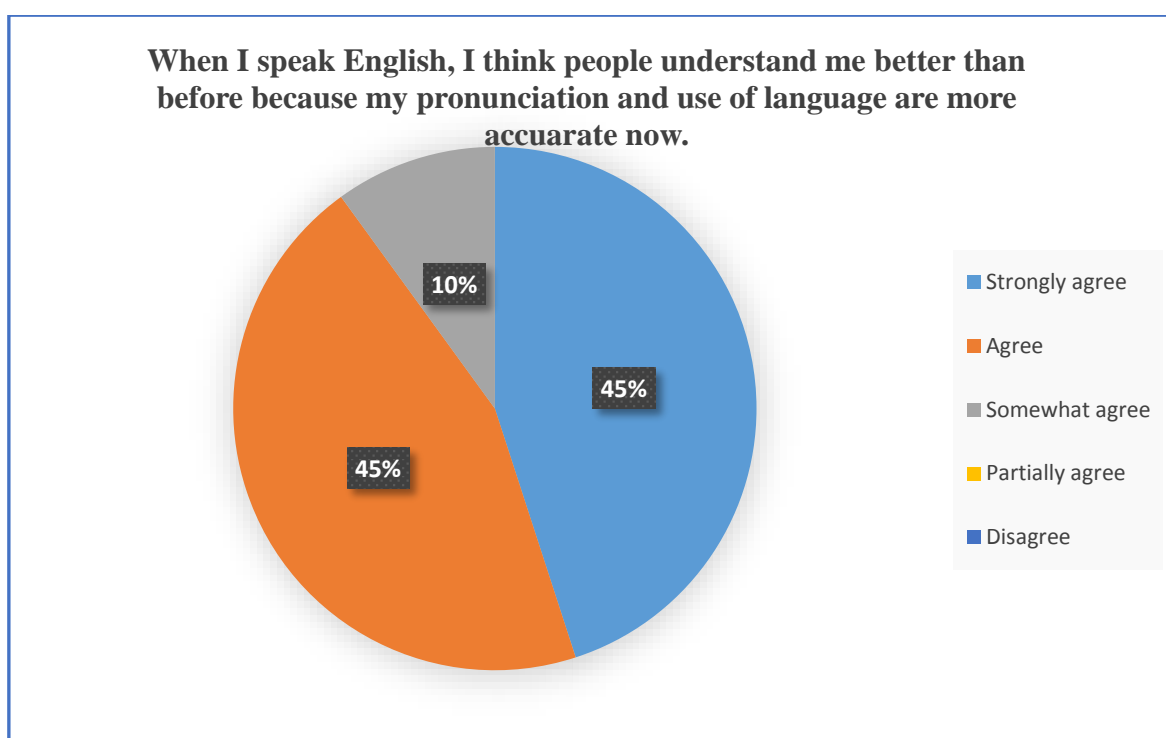
Author: Yolanda Loja C.

Source: Students' post survey

The purpose of this statement was to know if explicit correction helped students to develop their speaking confidence in class. Here, 75% of students reported they felt more confident when speaking English in class than before since they became aware of the type of errors they made as well as its nature. This result is in agreement with Pawlak (2014) who states that explicit correction is an input process which purpose is to develop

students' conscious and automatic use of language rules and concepts. In addition, this result suggests that the number of students that in the diagnostic survey regarded the fear of making mistakes as the main cause for not participating in class must have declined at the end of this research study. In spite of this positive finding, the data collected also reveals that a small number of students (5%) did not feel confident in their English speaking; therefore, arising the interest for knowing its reason in future studies.

Graph No. 11.



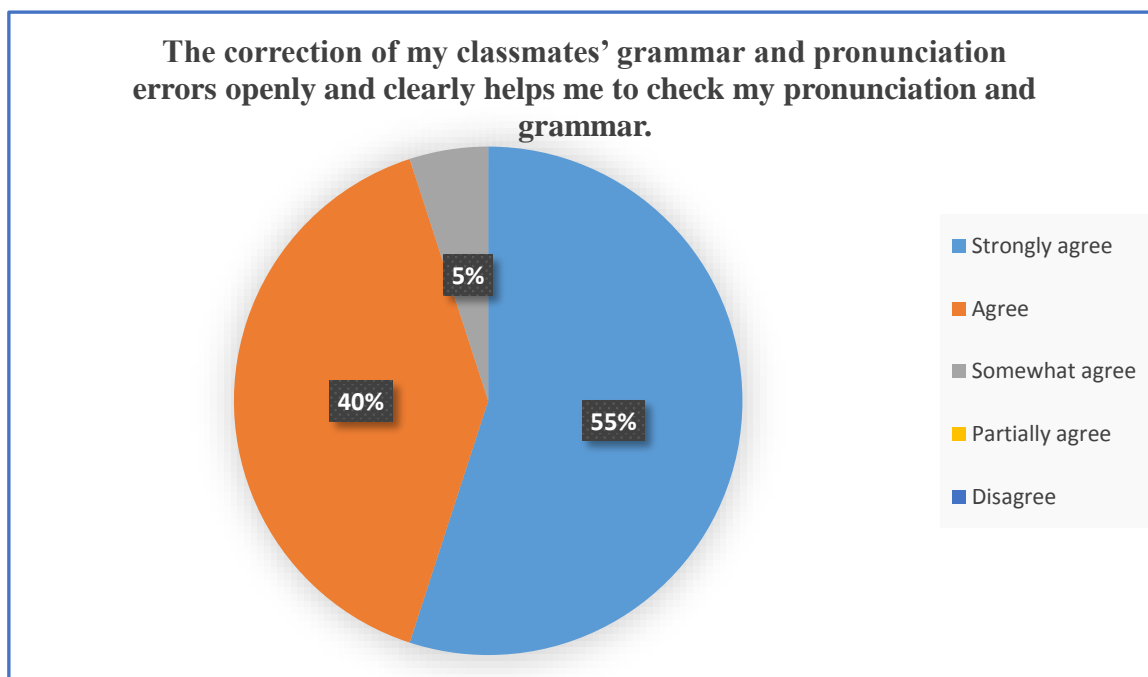
Author: Yolanda Loja C.

Source: Students' port survey

The aim of this statement was to know if students felt they were able to make themselves understood in English better than before. In this respect, almost half of the participants (45%) strongly supported this affirmation and another 45% just agreed to it. This information states that at the end of this research study, the majority of students felt more confident about the accuracy of their pronunciation and use of language in their oral production. As Delzendeh, Vahdany and Arjmandi (2014) mention, accuracy is the

ability of using the target language without making errors. Overall, these results suggest that this group of students believed they were making less errors than they did in the beginning of this research study. In fact, this opinion is broadly supported by the results of the grammar and pronunciation posttest.

Graph No. 12.

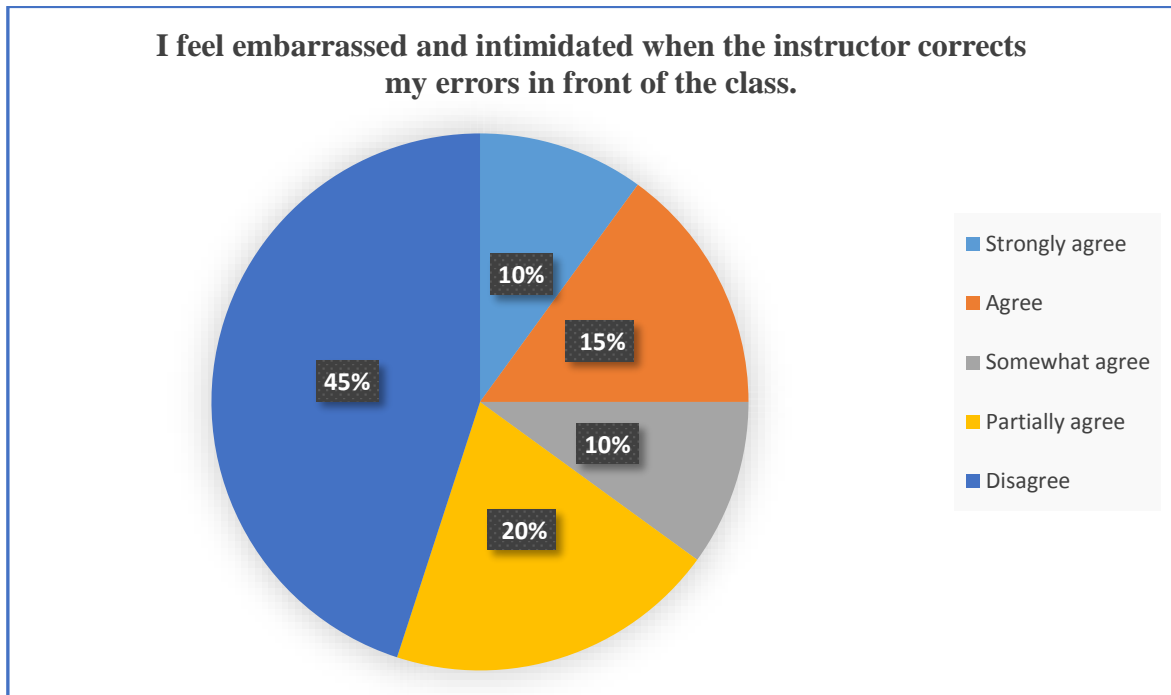


Author: Yolanda Loja C.

Source: Students' post survey

The purpose of this statement was to know if the correction of the students' classmates' errors explicitly helped them to improve their English. Surprisingly, the great majority of the participants agreed to this affirmation as it is shown in this graph. These results concur with the results obtained in the diagnostic survey; therefore, it can be said that the majority of students from this group regarded the correction of their classmates' mistakes as an opportunity to correct theirs, thereby, making error correction and explicit correction a learning tool in second and foreign language acquisition. In addition, these results are aligned with Ferris' and Hedgcock's (2014) opinion which states that direct feedback is a productive tool when working with lower- level students.

Graph No. 13



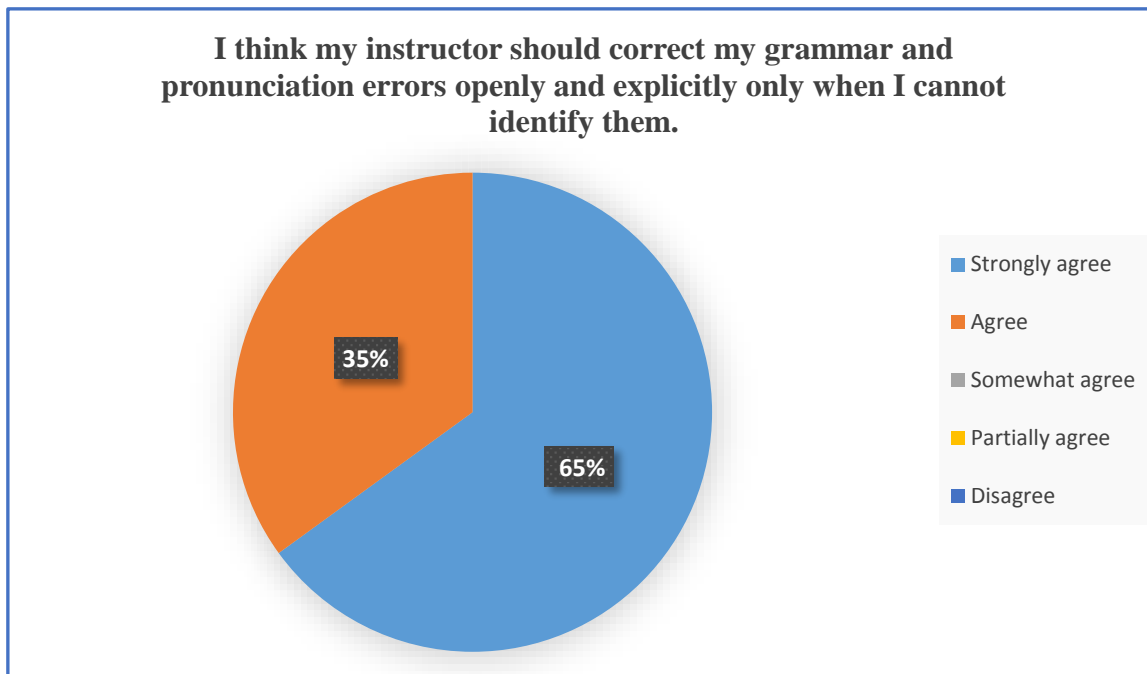
Author: Yolanda Loja C.

Source: Students post survey

The purpose of this statement was to know if students became emotionally affected when their errors were corrected explicitly in front of the class. Here, the students' opinions broadly differed. On one side, almost half of the participants (45%) denied being intimidated by explicit correction while a substantial percentage of students (10% and 15%) claimed on feeling embarrassed when their errors were corrected explicitly. These two opinions were seconded by smaller percentages as it is shown in the above pie chart. In addition, this information is corroborated by the results of the students' diagnostic survey which indicated that a great number of students lost concentration and became intimated when their instructor interrupted them to correct their errors. Overall, the data collected suggests that explicit correction has sometimes negative effects on students with high affective filters and students with high level of

anxiety. Thus, supporting Pawlak's (2014) claim which states that corrective feedback is a complex task that includes many variables.

Graph No. 14

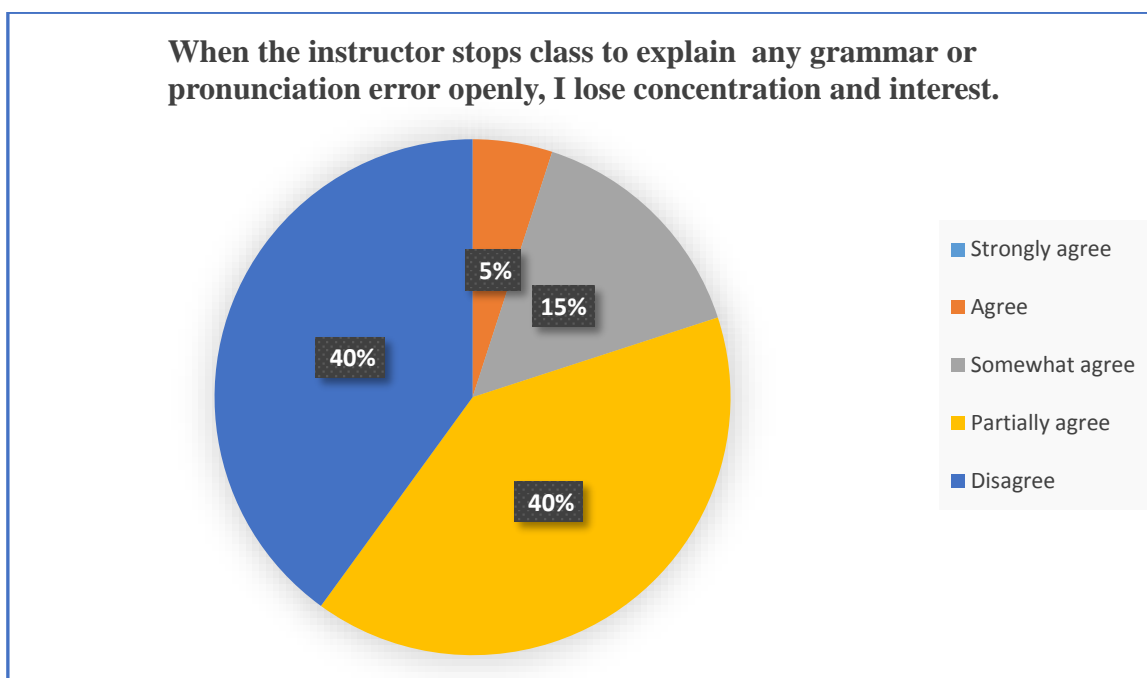


Author: Yolanda Loja C.

Source: Students' post survey

This statement aimed to know the students' perception on when explicit correction should be used in class. The results showed that the great majority of students (65%) strongly agreed on being corrected only when they could not identify their mistakes by themselves and when they did not know that they were making mistakes. This percentage was supported by a 35% of students who genuinely agreed to this statement. This finding is broadly consistent to Pawlak (2014) who clearly suggests providing students enough opportunities for identifying their errors before they are corrected by the instructor.

Graph No. 15

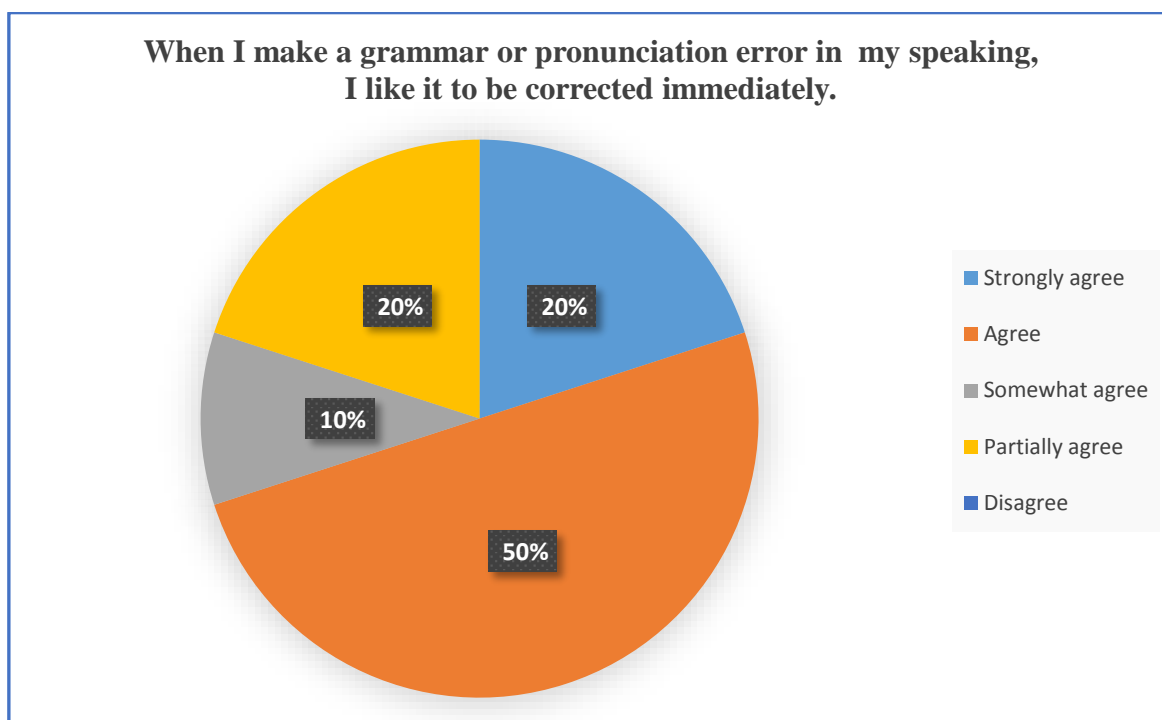


Author: Yolanda Loja C.

Source: Students' post survey

In regards to this statement, its aim was to find out if students considered explicit correction distracting. Here, 40% of students denied that when their instructor interrupted class to correct their pronunciation or grammar errors, they lost concentration and interest in class. This opinion was seconded by 40% of students who partially agreed to this statement. On the other hand, the results showed that a small number of students (15%) somewhat agreed to this statement and a slightly smaller percentage (5%) agreed to it. When comparing these results with the results of the graph No. 5 of the diagnostic survey, it is seen that at the end of this research study, a bigger number of students felt more comfortable with explicit correction than before; however, it is also seen that for a small number of students explicit correction is considered distracting.

Graph No. 16

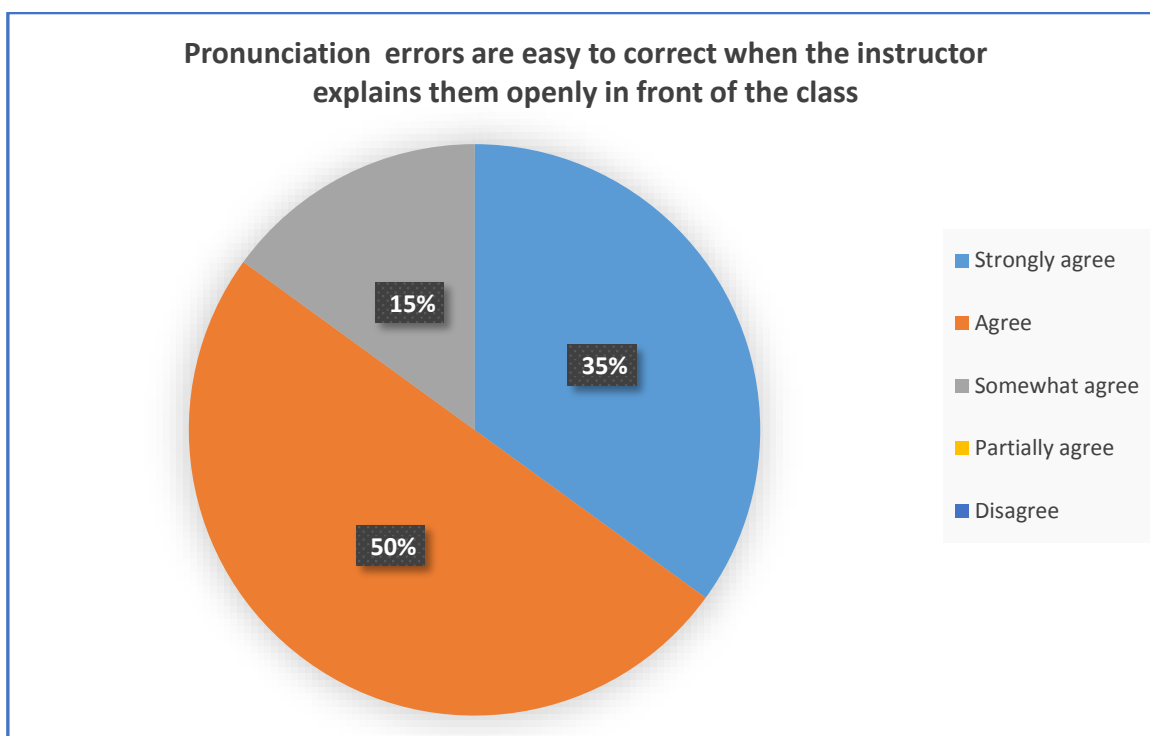


Author: Yolanda Loja C.

Source: Students post survey

The purpose of this statement was to know if students preferred immediate or delayed explicit correction. On this subject, the results showed that the majority of the participants (50% and 20%) liked to be corrected right after they had made an error. Also, the collected information reported that a small percentage of students, 20% and 10%, neither agreed nor disagreed on having immediate error correction. This data clearly increases to the dilemma of whether error should be corrected immediately or after the students' participation, to which Honglin (2010) responds by saying that if speaking is focused on achieving accuracy, the error correction should come immediately.

Graph No. 17

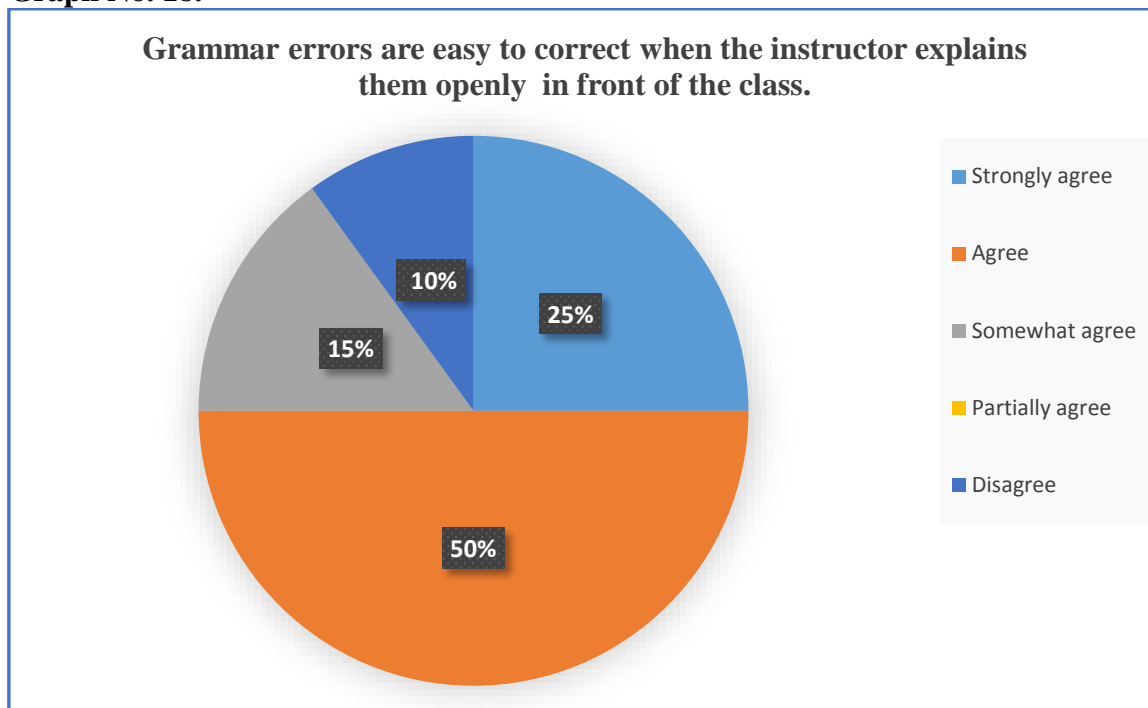


Author: Yolanda Loja C.

Source: Students post survey

The purpose of this statement was to know if students considered pronunciation errors easy to correct when they were treated explicitly. Here, the majority of the participants (50% and 35%) strongly agreed and agreed that explicit correction helped them to correct their pronunciation errors. This result supports Yilmaz' (2012) study in which explicit correction promoted students' pronunciation significantly. Furthermore, these results show that explicit correction is a great tool in the teaching and learning of English pronunciation. This information is supported by the results of the pronunciation posttest of this group, in which 60% of the students showed a mostly phonetically correct pronunciation.

Graph No. 18.



Author: Yolanda Loja C.

Source: Students' post survey

In this statement, half of the population answered that grammar errors were easy to correct when they were corrected explicitly in class by the instructor. This percentage was followed by 25% of students who strongly supported this opinion. Besides that, the results showed that a small number of students (15%) somewhat agreed to this affirmation. This information reflects that the majority of students consider explicit correction a good instrument to overcome their grammar errors. If we compare these results with the results of the graph No. 3 of the diagnostic survey, it is seen that at the end of this study, students felt more confident and positive about the correction of their grammar errors. That is, students believed that explicit correction helped them to overcome grammar errors in their speaking; thereby, supporting Almuhimedi and Alshumaimeri (2015) research which concluded that error correction promotes students' grammar proficiency and accuracy. Furthermore, these results coincide with the results

of the post test of this group of students where 45% displayed an adequate use of language and a 23% demonstrated an accurate command of the language in their oral production.

This students' survey also included a section where students could write comments, ideas and suggestions about the use of explicit correction in the treatment of pronunciation and use of language errors. Here, only five of twenty students completed this section. For example, one student commented that he would like to be corrected after he finishes his speaking because when he is interrupted, he always forgets what he was going to say next. Another student, on the other hand suggested correcting students' errors right after they are made since according to him, this helps them to identify the pronunciation and grammar problems they have. In addition, three students from this class mentioned that they liked to be corrected openly and clearly in class because this is a good way to improve their language proficiency. These opinions show that students have a positive attitude towards explicit correction.

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CONCLUSIONS

Explicit correction is effective in the treatment of use of language and pronunciation errors because it promotes students' awareness of the errors they make as well as their nature by drawing their attention to the teacher's feedback. Consequently, students concentrate on the features of their errors and make less errors in their oral performance.

Students regard explicit correction as a useful tool in the treatment of pronunciation and grammar errors; however, they consider this corrective technique more useful when treating pronunciation errors than grammar errors.

Explicit correction helps students to reach an adequate use of language and pronunciation by developing their confidence in their speaking through the identification and treatment of the errors they make; therefore, students' communication improves.

Explicit correction helps students to improve their use of language and pronunciation accuracy by showing them how to correct their own errors. This self-correctness contributes directly or indirectly to the development of students' interlanguage and it provides them the opportunity to know if they are really learning.

There is a dilemma among students about when errors should be corrected. Some students favor delayed correction and others opt for immediate correction. In spite of this uncertainty, all the participants agree that corrective feedback is essential to develop accuracy in their oral production.

Explicit correction is considered by some students as an intimidating and distracting technique since the instructor openly tells students what errors they have made and what the correct form should be; thereby, revealing that students are not accustomed to listening to other's feedback such as their teacher's suggestion.

Students consider errors should be corrected explicitly only when they cannot be identified by themselves. This point reflects the students' desire of correcting their own errors as well as their intention of testing their knowledge.

Explicit correction promotes pronunciation and use of language accuracy; therefore, it is concluded that students' struggles of producing comprehensible utterances in their diagnostic tests and oral tasks must be due to unknown factors.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

When conducting research about similar topics, it is recommended for researchers to use the same questionnaire in the pretest and posttest to have a more precise information of how students have really improved in their pronunciation and use of language accuracy at the end of the study.

When students make a use of language error and a pronunciation error at the same time, it is recommended to correct the one that compromises communication and the understanding of the message since correcting both of them at the same time might confuse students.

It is proposed to interview students to find out what aspects of explicit correction makes it a better tool for treating pronunciation errors than grammar errors.

When treating use of language and pronunciation errors, it is recommended to provide student's clear and simple explanations about their errors since too many details can deviate students' concentration and draw students' attention away from their errors.

With students with high affective filters, it is recommended to provide individual corrective feedback since some students become very nervous when their errors are corrected in front of the class. It is important to remember that students' anxiety can become bad learning experiences.

It is suggested that future research use metalinguistic feedback with explicit correction to accustom them to receive feedback and to give students the opportunity to identify and correct their errors by themselves.

Since a few students responded to the comment section of the diagnostic and post survey, it is recommended that future researcher combine this section with interviews to know the students' perception about the use of explicit correction in the treatment of pronunciation and use of langue errors.

It is advised to apply an opinion questionnaire to students the first week of class to find out if they prefer delayed or immediate explicit correction. This way, students will be prepared to receive feedback; thus, avoiding the possibility of developing a rejection towards explicit correction.

Due to time constraints, it is proposed that future research be conducted in a longer period of time.

Future researches should investigate what factors hinder students from developing and displaying an accurate use of language and pronunciation during their diagnostic tests and oral tasks.

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ANNEXES

Annex 1

Pretest: This pretest consists on an oral interaction guided by a set of five open-ended questions between the instructor and students. Students' grammar and pronunciation accuracy in their oral production will be evaluated over five points and through the use of a holistic rubric.

Pre-test Questions

- 1) What do you study?
- 2) What do you like to do in your free time?
- 3) When was the last time you received a present?
- 4) What did you do on your last vacations?
- 5) Who is your best friend?

Annex 2

Post-test: This post-test consists on an oral interaction guided by a set of five open-ended questions between the instructor and students. Students' grammar and pronunciation accuracy in their oral production will be evaluated over five points and through the use of a holistic rubric.

Post-test Questions

- 1) What do you like to do when you do not have homework?
- 2) When you were a child, what did you love doing?
- 3) When was the last time you went to a party?
- 4) When was the last time you were sick?
- 5) Who is the person that you admire the most?

Annex 3

RUBRIC FOR PRETEST AND POST-TEST

Holistic rubric for assessing students' grammar and pronunciation accuracy in their oral production.

Name: -----

Date: -----

Rubrics for evaluating students' grammar and pronunciation accuracy in their oral production

Grammar	Student demonstrates an accurate command and appropriate use of the language with a few errors that do not inhibit comprehension of the message and communication.	4.5 - 5
	Student presents an adequate use of the language with some errors that may interfere with the comprehension of the message	3.5- 4
	Student demonstrates a basic use of the language with several errors that sometimes cause misunderstanding and communication problems.	2.5 - 3
	Student's use of the language is inconsistent with many errors that cause frequent misunderstandings and communication problems.	1.5-2
	Student demonstrates a poor use of the language with constant errors that prevent understanding and communication.	0.5-1
Pronunciation	Students' pronunciation is phonetically clear and correct, with minor phonetical errors that do not	4.5-5

	interfere with the comprehension of the message. Word stress and intonation is correct.	
	Students' pronunciation is mostly phonetically correct with some inaccurate errors that occasionally interferes with the understanding of the message. Word stress and intonation is mostly accurate.	3.5-4
	Students' pronunciation is largely phonetically inaccurate with frequent phonological errors that cause major communication problems. Word stress and intonation is frequently inaccurate.	2.5-3
	Students' pronunciation is mostly unintelligible and severely interferes with the comprehension of the message. Word stress and intonation is highly inaccurate.	1.5-2
	Students' pronunciation is incomprehensible and it inhibits comprehension of the message. There is no word intonation and stress.	0.5-1

Annex 4

Student Diagnostic Survey					
Please complete the survey based on your personal experience and opinion about error correction					
The purpose of this survey is to know the students' general opinions and perceptions about error correction in their oral production before they receive feedback with Explicit correction.					
Criteria	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Partially agree	Disagree
One of the reasons for having improved my English speaking skill is because my former instructors corrected my errors.					
I think my English instructor should correct all the errors I make when I speak English.					
Pronunciation errors are the easiest ones to overcome.					
Grammar errors are the easiest ones to overcome.					
I like when my instructor openly tells me what error I make and how I can correct them.					
When the instructor interrupts my speaking to correct my errors, I lose					

concentration, become nervous and feel intimidated.					
I want to participate more in class but the fear of making errors stops me.					
When the instructor corrects my classmates' errors it helps me to improve my English.					
<p>In this space, you can give opinions or suggestions about the correction of grammar and pronunciation errors in oral production</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p>					

Annex 5

Student Post - Survey					
Please complete the survey based on your personal experience and opinion					
<p>The purpose of this survey is to know the students' opinions and perceptions about the effectiveness of the use of Explicit <i>Correction</i> in the improvement of the accuracy of their oral production.</p>					
Criteria	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Partially agree	Disagree
I feel more confident about my English speaking because					

now I know the nature of my errors and I can correct myself.					
When I speak English, I think people understand me better than before because my pronunciation and use of language are more precise than now.					
The correction of my classmates' grammar and pronunciation errors openly and clearly helps me to check my pronunciation and grammar.					
I feel embarrassed and intimidated when the instructor corrects my errors in front of the class.					
I think the instructor should correct my grammar and pronunciation errors openly and explicitly only when I cannot identify them.					
When the instructor stops class to explain any grammar or pronunciation error openly, I feel bored and I lose interest.					
When I make a grammar or pronunciation error during my speaking, I like it to be corrected immediately.					

Pronunciation errors are easy to correct when the instructor explains them openly and in front of the class.					
Grammar errors are easy to correct when the instructor explains them openly and in front of the class.					
<p>In this space, you can give opinions or suggestions about the explicit correction of grammar or pronunciation errors in class.</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>					