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Oral Corrective Feedback in EFL:

Teachers' Techniques and Learners' Attitude

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Summary

Corrective feedback is an important aspect of language learning and teaching, especially a second or a foreign one and, therefore, it presents one of the most frequently studied areas of second language acquisition today. It is a very broad area that opens up a great number of research topics and questions. Corrective feedback is important for learners and teachers because it helps them to focus on the most common errors and mistakes and prevent their occurrence in the future learning. This paper deals with oral corrective feedback, one of the most important aspects of English language classroom as a communication-oriented classroom. It consists of two parts: theoretical part in which an overview of the theoretical background and relevant research is given, and the second part, which presents the results of the empirical research on oral corrective feedback. The aim of the study is to find out which techniques of oral corrective feedback are the most commonly used in English language classroom and how learners perceive oral corrective feedback in general. The author wanted to investigate what factors may influence learners' attitude towards feedback. The results show that the choice of corrective feedback depends on the type of the lesson and that teachers in English classroom in two schools in Croatia tend to use recasts as a corrective technique, but also that recasts are not the best technique for prevention of further errors. The second part of the study shows that learners prefer being given the chance to self-correct their errors and that they do not like when they are interrupted during their turns. The study also shows that there is no significant correlation between gender, years of learning, and attitude towards corrective feedback. However, the surprising finding is that two schools differ regarding the correlation between grade and attitude: in one school the higher grade leads to positive attitude, and in the other school, the results are opposite.

Key terms: oral corrective feedback, error, teacher techniques, learner differences, attitude

Sažetak

Ispravljanje pogrešaka je važan aspekt učenja i poučavanja jezika, osobito kada govorimo o drugom ili stranom jeziku, i zbog toga predstavlja jedan od najčešće istraživanih područja usvajanja drugog i stranog jezika. To je vrlo široko područje koje otvara velik broj mogućih tema i pitanja za istraživanje. Ispravljanje pogrešaka važno je i za učenike i za nastavnike jer im pomaže da se usredotoče na najčešće pogreške i spriječe da se iste ponavljaju u daljnjem učenju. Ovaj se rad bavi usmenim ispravljanjem pogrešaka, koje je jedan od najvažnijih aspekata nastave engleskog jezika koja je komunikacijski orijentirana. Rad se sastoji od dva dijela: teorijskog dijela u kojem je dan pregled teorijske osnove i važnih istraživanja, te drugog dijela koji se bavi rezultatima empirijskog istraživanja na temu usmenog ispravljanja pogrešaka. Svrha istraživanja je otkriti koje tehnike usmenog ispravljanja pogrešaka se najčešće koriste u nastavi engleskog jezika i kako studenti shvaćaju ispravljanje pogrešaka. Autorica je htjela istražiti koji faktori utječu na stav učenika prema ispravljanju. Rezultati pokazuju da odabir tehnika ovisi o tipu sata i da nastavnici u školama u Hrvatskoj najčešće koriste reformuliranje kao tehniku za ispravljanje, ali također da ta tehnika nije najučinkovitija za sprječavanje daljnjih pogrešaka. Drugi dio istraživanja pokazuje da učenici preferiraju kada im se pruži mogućnost da sami isprave svoje pogreške i da ne vole kada ih se prekida usred rečenice. Istraživanje je također pokazalo da ne postoji značajna veza između spola, godina učenja i učeničkog stava prema ispravljanju pogrešaka. Međutim, ono što je iznenađujuće je da se škole razlikuju po pitanju korelacije između prosječne ocjene i stava: u jednoj školi veća ocjena vodila je do pozitivnijeg stava, a u drugoj su rezultati bili obrnuti.

Temeljni pojmovi: usmeno ispravljanje pogrešaka, pogreške, tehnike nastavnika, razlike među učenicima, stav

Contents

1. Introduction

The area of corrective feedback (CF) in second language acquisition (SLA) has been an area that produces a lot of controversy, but also a great number of research ideas and topics. Since English language classroom is a communication-oriented classroom, it is a common thing that errors in oral form occur regularly, especially among younger learners. In order to prevent errors and mistakes from happening and to improve their students' speaking skills, teachers use corrective feedback, also known as negative feedback or negative evidence. The term "corrective feedback" produces a lot of negative connotations and people usually regard it as an indication that something is not right, and for this reason might feel discouraged by it. However, CF is a great tool for improvement of language knowledge because it helps the learner to focus on the correct language forms.

Dealing with errors made by learners tends to be one of the most important, but also one of the most difficult jobs a teacher has to fulfill, especially because there are a lot of things one has to keep in mind while correcting them. CF is important for both the learner as well as the teacher. It gives the learner the opportunity to become aware of his/her errors because it draws the attention to the error and makes the learner aware that the correction is needed and that the utterance is not correct. On the other hand, it gives the teacher the opportunity to see how his/her teaching methods work and to see in which way learners learn and which areas of their language knowledge have to be improved.

The reason why I chose this area for the study is the fact that it is a problematic area for all language teachers. Moreover, this is the area that is rarely addressed in pre-service teacher education, even though it is one of the most difficult and challenging areas in SLA. The purpose of the present paper is to give an overview of important studies in the area and conduct a new study to explore what works and what does not work in the field of CF.

The research presented consists of two parts. Since it was intended to take several factors into consideration and see which methods are used and how learners perceive them, the first part of the study was conducted in order to see how teachers treat errors made by their learners. The aim of the second part of the study was to see how learners perceive correction and what their attitude towards correction is. In addition, factors influencing the attitude were explored.

The first few chapters (2.1, 2.2) deal with theoretical background of the CF and definition of the most important terms of the research. One whole chapter (2.3) is dedicated to the description of recasts which tend to be the most commonly used technique. Also, previous studies in the field are reviewed in chapter 3. Next, the model on which the current study is based, i.e. Lyster and Ranta's corrective discourse model, is presented and important terms defined (chapter 4). The rest of the paper presents empirical research on corrective feedback.

2. Theoretical Background

When talking about corrective feedback, a few terms appear in all studies in the area, as well as the study conducted by the author. Different authors give various definitions of the terms *error, mistake,* and *corrective feedback*, but some of the most commonly used definitions will be mentioned in the next two chapters.

2.1. Errors and mistakes

Learner's errors are the starting point for the CF and they are the reason the feedback occurs in the classroom. Although sometimes no distinction is made between errors and mistakes, there are experts in the field of SLA who insist on distinguishing the two terms. What follows is an overview of some of the definitions and categorizations of errors and mistakes.

Edge (as cited in Harmer, 2007) groups mistakes in three categories:

a) slips which are defined as "mistakes which students can correct themselves once the mistake has been pointed out to them" (as cited in Harmer, 2007:137);

b) errors, or " mistakes which they can't correct themselves- and which therefore need explanation" (as cited in Harmer, 2007:137);

c) attempts, which are defined as utterances in which "a student tries to say something but does not yet know the correct way of saying it" (as cited in Harmer, 2007: 137.).

Similar to Edge's definition of attempts, Brown defines mistake as "a performance error that is either a random guess or a slip" (1987: 170). As it can be seen, mistakes tell us nothing about the learner's target language proficiency. They present something that is likely to occur from time to time in the process of learning. They are usually easily recognized by the learner himself/herself and corrected. Once the mistake is corrected, it will probably never occur again because the learner is aware of it and knows how to prevent its occurrence.

On the other hand, an error is defined as an "utterance, form, or structure that a particular language teacher deems unacceptable because of its inappropriate use or its absence in real-life discourse" (Hendrickson, 1978: 366). An error is something that occurs regularly in the process of learning because the learner is not aware of the incorrectness of the utterance. As Edge's definition explains, when an error occurs, learners need an explanation why the utterance is erroneous because they lack the knowledge of the correct linguistic form. The error presents a gap in the learning process of which learners cannot become aware without some help. Gass says that errors are "only errors from teacher's or researcher's perspective, not the learner's" (2013: 91).

There are many different error classifications, but the most important distinctions are the ones between global and local errors, and between covert and overt errors. Corder (as cited in Brown, 1987: 173) defines overt errors as errors that are "ungrammatical at a sentence level" and covert errors as errors that are well formed in a grammatical sense, but cannot be interpreted in the communicational context. Valdman (as cited in Hendrickson, 1978) makes a distinction between global and local errors. Global error is a communication error that may cause a proficient speaker to misunderstand the message or consider it incomprehensible in the given context, and local errors make form or structure of the utterance awkward, but the proficient speaker is able to understand the meaning of the utterance or a sentence.

The distinction relevant for the presents study is the one offered by Lyster and Ranta (1997) in their research on corrective feedback in EFL and it will be defined later in the paper (see chapter 4).

The distinction between the types of errors is sometimes made based on their sources. Harmer (2007) distinguishes between two sources of errors: the interference of first language (L1) and developmental errors, which are a part of the target language (TL). The interference of the L1 can occur at the level of sounds, grammar, or at the level of word usage (Harmer, 2007). They occur because learners have already acquired, and probably mastered, their L1 and have difficulty in learning new rules of the TL and distinguishing them from the rules for L1. This is why the interference of the L1 is often regarded as negative transfer. Developmental errors are often presented in terms of over-generalization which means that "the child starts to 'over-generalise' a new rule that has been (subconsciously) learnt, and, as a result, even makes mistakes with things that he or she seems to have known before" (Harmer, 2007:138). In addition to these sources, Brown (1987) mentions the context of learning and communication

strategies as important sources of errors. When speaking about the context of learning, errors can occur because of the classroom atmosphere, teaching materials that can provide misleading explanations, or faulty presentations of linguistic patterns. Communication strategies include "processes of interlingual and intralingual transfer and the context of learning as a learner tries to get a message across to a hearer or reader" (Brown, 1987: 180).

Since errors are the evidence of learner's use of the target language, they are a significant factor in learning a foreign language and are important for the teacher, as well as the student. Corder (as cited in Hendrickson, 1978: 357) says that "[e]rrors provide feedback, they tell the teacher something about the effectiveness of his teaching materials and his teaching techniques, and show him what parts of the syllabus he has been following have been inadequately learned or taught and need further attention". On the other hand, they may be an indication that the learner's learning strategies are not suitable enough and that they need modification and improvement.

According to Hendrickson (1978) there are some questions the teachers must ask themselves before providing feedback:

1. Should learner errors be corrected?

The answer to this question is usually positive because learners are not aware of their errors and need assistance in recognizing and correcting them.

2. When should errors be corrected?

This question leads to the distinction between immediate and delayed error correction which depends on the type of activity. In an interactive activity, teachers usually use delayed error correction because immediate correction would result in interrupting the flow of communication and learner's thoughts and might cause the learner to be focused more on the correctness of his/her utterances than on the fluency, which is usually the focus of interactive activities. However, if the error results in misunderstanding, teachers tend to use immediate feedback.

3. Which errors should be corrected?

As it has been said, teachers usually choose to correct errors that prevent the listener from understanding the message that was supposed to be conveyed by the utterance. Some linguists, such as Valdman (as cited in Hendrickson, 1978), say that global errors are the type

that receives priority. Hendrickson (1978) also mentions that errors that should be corrected first are the ones that are frequently made by learners.

4. How should errors be corrected?

Hendrickson (1978) names some methods of recording and correcting students' errors, such as error charts or tape and video recordings. Wingfield (as cited in Hendrickson, 1978) says that teachers should choose techniques that are the most appropriate ones for individual students.

5. Who should correct the errors?

Usually, the teacher is the one that corrects the errors as they occur. This is probably because, since learners are not aware of making errors, they are usually unable to self-correct them. Hendrickson (1978: 365) says that the teacher "should not dominate the correction procedures". Another possibility is to use peer-feedback, but this techniques is highly dependent on learners' language proficiency and the time available.

2.2. Corrective feedback

Feedback may be defined as a teacher's response to the learners' utterances and does not necessarily have to be negative. Hattie and Timperly (2007:81) define feedback as "information provided by agent regarding aspects of one's performance or understanding". Feedback is usually considered to be the evidence of incorrectness of learner's performance, but sometimes teachers provide feedback that confirms or approves utterances that are well made in order to encourage students and provide them with the evidence of the correct use of the TL. However, the field that, especially in recent years, attracts a lot of attention among the researchers of SLA, is the field of negative evidence, usually called corrective feedback. Negative evidence is the evidence of learner's incorrect use of the TL. One of the most frequently used definitions of CF is provided by Lightbown and Spada (as cited in El Tatawy, 2002: 1), who define it as "any indication to the learners that their use of the target language is incorrect". Even though by providing feedback to learners, teachers correct their errors and draw their attention to the correct linguistic forms, some theorists of SLA, like Krashen, believe it to be harmful for the acquisition and language learning because it affects the flow of communication and may interrupt learners' utterances (Rezaei, et al., 2011). On the other hand, Long (as cited in Kim, 2004) says that corrective feedback provides evidence that

cannot be found in the output and that learners highly benefit from it. The field of CF produces a lot of debate among theorists and researchers, especially when it comes to the effectiveness of feedback in general, but also the effectiveness of certain types of feedback. Margolis (2010) named some linguists that gave a different opinion about the effectiveness of corrective feedback. One example are Lyster, Ligthbown, and Spada who believe that students benefit from CF. The opposite opinion in advocated by Truscott who believes that CF has a rather negative effect on grammar learning.

There are also different types of CF and different techniques that can be used by teachers. Long (as cited in El Tatawy 2002:2) provided a framework that portrays different types of feedback (see Figure 1).
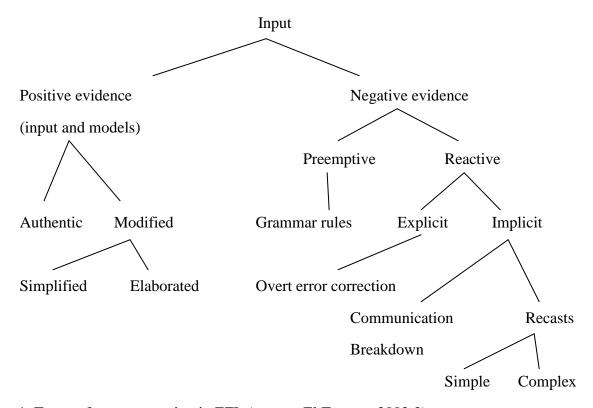
Figure 1. Types of error correction in EFL (source: El Tatawy, 2002:2)

As it can be seen from the framework, input can be divided into positive and negative evidence, which are then further divided into two categories. For the present research, the most important part is the reactive negative evidence which can be classified into explicit and implicit feedback. These two categories of feedback types are the most commonly used types among language theorists and researchers. Implicit feedback indirectly informs learners that the error has been made, whereas explicit feedback provides learners with the explanation and directly points to the place and the type of error (Kim, 2004). Implicit feedback is usually

provided in the form of recasts which, as it will be seen from the research review, are the most commonly used technique, but not the most effective one for the learners' acquisition of correct forms. Explicit feedback is usually provided using the techniques that either elicit the correct answer from learners, or explain the error, e.g. metalinguistic evidence, which explains to learners why the error has been made and why it is considered an error. Lyster, et al. (2013) mention two types of feedback: reformulation (includes recasts and explicit correction) and prompts (includes elicitation, repetition, clarification request, and metalinguistic feedback). These types will be defined later in the paper (see Chapter 4).

It can be very difficult to provide CF to learners in an actual classroom situation and there are many things one must consider before doing so. Providing too much feedback can be discouraging and can induce anxiety and make learners unwilling to participate in classroom activities. According to Margolis (2010), the teacher must consider some factors before providing feedback: the type of the error made, the learner who made the error (his/her proficiency and preferences), and timing. The type of activity in which the error occurs and the focus of activity (fluency or accuracy) are also the factors that influence the effectiveness of feedback. According to Hattie and Timperly (2007) there are some question to be asked when providing feedback to learners:

1) Where am I going?

This question is concerned with future teaching and learning goals. By asking this question, teachers decide what they want to accomplish by providing feedback. It is also connected with goals set by learners. They say that goals are more effective when students are committed to attaining them.

2) How am I going?

Feedback must provide information about student's progress and success to be effective.

3) Where to next?

This question refers to the effectiveness of feedback and learners' ability to acquire the correct linguistic form.

There are also a lot of factors that influence the effectiveness of feedback after it has been provided. In their research on the effectiveness of feedback on the acquisition of L2 grammar, Russel and Spada (2006), list some of them: the type of feedback, the amount of feedback, the

mode and the source of feedback, learners' proficiency level, attitude towards feedback, learners' aptitude, motivation, anxiety, age, and learners' noticing and interpretation of feedback.

Since there are a lot of questions to ask before selecting the effective and adequate feedback technique, it might seem that it takes away a lot of time and focus from the lesson content. Corrective feedback is a part of language learning and teaching that focuses the attention to the things that matter and that must be corrected and improved. It is a useful tool for improving students' accuracy, fluency, and overall language proficiency. For all these reasons, teachers should focus on this aspect more, improve their feedback techniques, and use different and more effective techniques. There is a lot of work to be done prior to providing CF, but it should not discourage anyone because the results of it are, in most cases, positive.

2.3. Recasts

As it has been mentioned in the previous chapter, recasts are one of the most commonly used corrective techniques in EFL. Therefore, it requires a more detailed explanation.

There are a lot of different definitions of recasts as a corrective technique. Therefore, the table provided by Ellis and Sheen (2006), gives a useful overview of the most important definitions (Table 1).

Table 1. Definitions of recasts (source: Ellis and Sheen, 2006:580)

Reference	Definition
Long (1996, p. 434)	Recasts are utterances that rephrase a child's utterance by changing one or more components (subject, verb, object) while still referring to its central meaning.
Lyster and Ranta (1997, p. 46)	Recasts involve the teacher's reformulation of all or part of a student's utterance minus the error.
Braidi (2002, p. 20)	A response was coded as a recast if it incorporated the content words of the immediately preceding incorrect NNS utterance and also changed and corrected the utterance in some way (e.g., phonological, syntactic, morphological, or lexical).

Long (2006)	A *corrective recast* may be defined as a reformulation of all or part of a learner's immediately preceding utterance in which one or more nontargetlike (lexical, grammatical, etc.) items are replaced by the corresponding target language form(s), and where, throughout the exchange, the focus of the interlocutors is on *meaning* not language as an object.
Sheen (2006)	A recast consists of the teacher's reformulation of all or part of a student's utterance that contains at least one error within the context of a communicative activity in the classroom.

In all of these definitions, it can be seen that when the teacher uses a recast as a technique, he/she just reformulates the part of the utterance that contains an error. This is why recasts are usually an implicit technique, meaning that the teacher does not clearly indicate to the learner that an error has been committed. For this reason, learners are usually not aware of the correction and regard recasts as a mere repetition of their utterance. Sometimes, they are not even aware that the teacher pronounced the utterance in a different way.

In their article on corrective feedback in SLA, Rezaei, et al. (2011), divide recasts in two broad categories: simple and complex. The former refer to the minimal change in the learners' utterance, whereas by using the other type, the teacher provides some additional information about the error. In this case, simple recasts are implicit and the latter are rather explicit in their nature since the learner is aware of the incorrectness of the utterance.

Ellis and Sheen (2006) categorize recasts differently. The first type of recasts are intensive, which prove to be more effective. This is the type which is "focused repeatedly on the same linguistic feature" (Ellis and Sheen, 2006:593). There are also incidental and extensive recasts which "constitute what is natural and normal for most language learners"(Ellis and Sheen, 2006:593). Declarative recasts are aimed at a particular part of language learning, such as lexis and pronunciation, and involve substitution of the incorrect utterance (Ellis and Sheen, 2006).

The question that has to be asked is: do recasts aid acquisition at all? If they do, in which cases are they better than other feedback techniques? Ellis and Sheen (2006: 593) argue that "[i]f recasts are intensive, focused, and individualized (as has been the case in laboratory studies), they are likely to be effective". Studies on the effectiveness of feedback types that

will be mentioned in the next chapter, show that recasts are far less effective than the techniques that elicit the answers from learners (metalinguistic feedback, clarification request, elicitation). However, Doughty (as cited in Ellis and Sheen, 2006) argued that recasts are an ideal technique because they enable the learner to compare interlanguage and target language forms in a communicative context. This means that when the teacher uses recasts as a corrective technique, the learner has a chance to compare the incorrect form he/she made with the correct form provided by the teacher. In this case, recasts are effective if learners are aware of the correction, which is not always the case. Unfortunately, even if the learner repeats the correct form, it does not necessarily mean that he/she acquired it and that the error will not occur again.

There are, certainly, a number of factors that influence the successfulness of recasts. Learner differences are certainly the most important factor because it depends on the learner if recasts will be noticed in the first place. The most important factor is "developmental readiness—that is, the extent to which individual learners have reached a stage of development that will enable them to incorporate the target forms addressed in the recasts into their interlanguage" (Ellis and Sheen, 2006:591). Developmental readiness can be described as learner's language proficiency. If learners are not proficient enough to acquire the correct form, recasts will not be effective, but if the learner is developmentally ready and proficient enough, and has enough language knowledge to acquire the correct form, recasts will be an effective technique. The other important factor, according to Ellis and Sheen (2006), is the choice of the linguistic target at which recasts are aimed.

Even though studies usually portray recasts as an ineffective technique, it is not always the case. As it was explained, there are some factors that influence the effectiveness of this technique, as well as the choice and successfulness of all other techniques.

3. Previous studies on corrective feedback

Corrective feedback is a field that opens up a great deal of research topics. This review presents some of the most common topics: influence of oral corrective feedback on certain aspects of language learning (DeKeyser, 1993; Mackey and Philp, 1998; Lochtman, 2002; Russel and Spada, 2006), influence of different types of feedback (Rahimi and Dastjerdi, 2012; Li, 2013), awareness and attitude towards the provision of feedback (Kalebić Čurković

2009; Yoshida, 2010; Vasques and Harvey, 2010; Hernandez Mendez and Reyes Cruz, 2012), and the interaction between corrective feedback and learner uptake (Lyster and Ranta, 1997; Panova and Lyster, 2002; Samar and Shayestefar, 2009; Safari, 2013).

The most important research for the present study is the one conducted by Lyster and Ranta (1997). The data for their research was compiled by audio-recording 18 hours in French immersion classrooms. The participants in the study were learners of the 4th grade and four teachers. The authors wanted to see which errors receive more feedback, which techniques are used, and how learners react to them. The results of the study showed that 62% of erroneous utterances receive some kind of feedback. However, teachers usually used recasts as a corrective technique (55%), a technique that leads to uptake by learners only 31% of the time, proving that recasts are ineffective technique for improving learners' proficiency. Techniques that require learners to engage in correction led to the greatest number of uptake: metalinguistic feedback 86%, clarification request 88%, and repetition 78%. These techniques were effective because they did not provide the correct form immediately, making learners more actively engaged in the corrective sequence. Regarding the uptake produced by learners, metalinguistic feedback turned out to be the technique which is most likely to lead to repair (45%).

Using the same model devised by Lyster and Ranta, Panova and Lyster (2002) conducted a research in order to see how correction interacts with uptake in an adult ESL classroom. They started from the prediction that adult learners react to recasts more that children do. The study showed that out of 1,716 students turns, 857 were ill-formed in one way or another. However, out of these incorrect utterances, only 48% received uptake. Recasts were, again, the most frequently used technique (55%) and were followed by translation (22%). The study also showed that only 8% of the incorrect utterances were corrected after the provision of feedback. The highest rate of uptake occurred after clarification requests, elicitation, and repetition. Recasts were followed by uptake in 40% of cases. The least effective technique for eliciting feedback in this study, was translation (21%).

Another research with the same result as Lyster and Ranta's, is the one conducted by Jabbari and Fazilatfar (2012). The research was conducted among 35 elementary and 25 high-intermediate learners and their teachers and contained 12 hours of audio-taped lessons. The results showed that teachers used recasts 50.5% of the time, which were the least effective technique for eliciting repair. Their study also showed that the type of feedback provided

depends on the type of error made. Lexical errors received feedback in 94% of the time, grammatical in 93.5% cases, and phonological errors only in 75.5% of cases. The study made by Safari (2013) yielded the same results, but with one important difference. The participants in her study were a teacher and 16 learners. The results showed a tendency of the teacher to use recasts as a corrective technique (51.38%) which, again, turned out not to be the technique that elicits uptake by learners. However, in this study, metalinguistic feedback was the least effective technique for eliciting uptake, which is a great opposition to the study by Lyster and Ranta in which it was among the top techniques.

Since recasts are the most commonly used technique, it is important to see how they influence language development, and see if learners recognize their corrective force. Mackey and Philp (1998) conducted a research in order to see how recasts relate to short-term language development. The research was carried out among 35 adult learners at different developmental levels. The authors categorized recasts in four ways: continue (topic continuation, there is no repetition of correct form), repeat, modify (not a repetition of the correct form, but simply modification of the previous utterance, usually in the incorrect way), and other. Their hypotheses were that learners who receive recasts intensively will increase in the production of more advanced structures, and that those who modify the responses, will also increase in the production. Results of the study showed that the production of more advanced structures increased only in those learners who are at the higher developmental levels and receive intensive recasts. The other hypothesis was not confirmed. This research also showed the tendency of learners to continue the topic without responding to recasts in any way.

Carpenter et al.(2006) investigated how learners interpret recasts. For their study, they used recasts and repetition and gave learners to interpret the recordings of the corrective sequences. One group of learners was given the entire corrective sequence, and the other only a response made by the teacher. The results showed that 20% of learners who were given the response only recognized recasts as a corrective technique. The same was true for 33% of learners from the group that was given the entire sequence. However, both groups equally frequently identified recasts as repetitions and recognized their corrective force.

In all of the mentioned studies, recasts tend to be the most commonly used technique by teachers. However, Lochtman's study (2002) and the study conducted by Samar and Shayestefar (2009) yielded different results. Lochtman conducted her research among three

teachers and recorded their L2 lessons. She wanted to see how oral corrective feedback affects interaction in analytic language teaching. Lochtman grouped the techniques used by the teachers in three categories: explicit correction, recasts, and teacher's initiation to self-correct which included clarification request, metalinguistic feedback, elicitation, and repetition. The results of this study showed that in 55.8% of the time, teachers used the techniques that initiated self-repair from the students. Recast were used in 30.5% of the cases and usually elicited no uptake. Metalinguistic feedback and elicitation were successful at eliciting uptake in 98% of the cases. The reason for the difference between the results of this study and the previously mentioned studies is the fact that analytic language learning differs from the 'natural' FL learning. However, the use of corrective techniques differs also according to the types of activities. In form-focused and analytic activities, teachers used initiation to self-repair, but when focus of the activity shifted to meaning, the number of recasts was higher. Another important finding of this study is that, when learners were asked to correct themselves or their peers, they noticed the feedback. When recasts were used as a technique, learners often did not notice that the feedback had been provided and sometimes regarded it as mere repetition of their utterance. The results of the study by Samar and Shayestefar (2009), showed that the teacher mostly used metalinguistic feedback in the activities where the focus was on form. In almost two thirds of all corrective sequences, the teacher gave learners the opportunity to try to self-correct their errors. Recasts, which were used in 30% of the cases, elicited no uptake from learners, so they, once again, turned out not to be the most successful technique. Metalinguistic feedback and explicit correction were the best techniques for eliciting learner uptake.

All of these studies show that, whenever used, recasts are not the most successful technique for improving learners' TL knowledge. The problem with recasts is that learners are usually not aware of their corrective nature, whereas with other techniques which require them to try to correct the mistakes, they become aware that the correction is needed.

When it comes to the interaction between individual differences and corrective feedback, the important research is the one by DeKeyser (1993). He started from the hypothesis that corrective feedback does not have any effect on the classroom as a whole, but that it affects individual learners. He wanted to see how error correction influences oral proficiency and grammar knowledge. The subjects in his study were 35 Dutch learners of French as a second language. They were divided in two groups: one that received feedback as much as possible, and the one whose teacher was advised to avoid feedback whenever possible. Individual

differences that were taken into account were previous achievement, motivation, and anxiety. Regarding previous achievement, the study showed that students with higher previous achievement benefit from correction in the field of grammar, but not oral proficiency. The hypothesis that students with strong motivation benefit from correction yielded opposite result from the expected one. It proved that learners with higher motivation did better without error correction and the ones with lower motivation did better after the provision of feedback. When it comes to anxiety, it was assumed that students with low anxiety would benefit from correction more than those with high anxiety. However, this was true for grammar, but not oral proficiency, which was surprising. Overall result of the study showed that error correction interacts with individual differences, such as previous achievement, extrinsic motivation, and anxiety.

Other individual differences in form of language analytic ability and working memory and their interaction with corrective feedback, were investigated by Li (2013). The participants in the study were 78 L2 Chinese learners whose age range was from 18 to 38. There were three groups: 28 students who received implicit, 29 explicit feedback, and 21 students who did not receive any feedback. Implicit feedback was provided in the form of recasts and explicit in the form of metalinguistic correction. The results showed that all three groups improved on the posttest and that both implicit and explicit feedback group outperformed the control group, but explicit group was better than implicit. Language analytic ability influenced implicit feedback. Working memory was related to the effects of explicit feedback. It can be seen from the mentioned studies that corrective feedback interacts with numerous factors.

Kalebić Čurković (2009) investigated the following individual differences and their correlation to the attitude towards feedback: gender, number of years of learning, and average grade in English. Her research was conducted in six elementary schools in Croatia and included 212 participants. The main aim of the study was to see what students think about corrective feedback. The results showed a significant correlation between gender and average grade and attitude towards feedback. Female learners accept correction better than male and they do not mind being corrected. She also found out that learners with better grades are more acceptant of feedback than the ones with lower grades. The results also showed that learners like being given the chance to self-correct error and dislike being interrupted in their utterances, but that they prefer when the teacher waits after they are finished and then correct the error. The overall attitude towards feedback was positive which shows that learners understand its importance and benefits.

In order to see how teachers of English language perceive corrective feedback and what their attitude is, Hernandez Mendez and Reyes Cruz (2012) conducted a study among 45 language instructors. For the purposes of the study, they used interview and a questionnaire. The results showed that 80% of the instructors agreed on the need for corrective feedback in order to improve learners' fluency and accuracy. 87.7% believed that corrective feedback has a positive effect on learning. They were aware of the positive attitudes of their learners towards feedback and 80% of them believed that students do not get angry or feel anxious when provided with correction. They also noticed that they should be careful about the differences between individual learners and agree that the decision which strategies to use depends on learners' proficiency (60%). Similar research was made by Vasquez and Harvey (2010) who investigated the thoughts and beliefs about corrective feedback of graduate students in applied linguistics. The study was conducted at a public university in the USA among the students of graduate course of English language. The participants of the study were nine students between 25 and 60 years of age. The data were collected by using different methods: research report, post-course questionnaire, a reflective essay, and a reflective journal. This study examined how students' thoughts and attitudes shift and change over the semester. At the beginning of the semester, the students had very little knowledge about corrective feedback and were afraid of its possibly threatening nature and its effect on students' self-esteem and motivation. However, on the post-interviews and reports, the attitudes of all participants changed significantly. They decided to focus on other aspects of corrective feedback, for example its interaction with uptake, the nature and the type of error, the role and function of feedback, and frequency. They were also very surprised that the method they most frequently used were recasts because they were aware that recasts lead to no uptake, and that they are not the best technique for improving their students' knowledge. They gained a more sophisticated view of corrective feedback compared to the attitude they had at the beginning of the semester. They became aware that corrective feedback is nothing to be afraid of and that there is nothing negative about it, but that there are a lot of aspects of feedback to take into consideration and to be careful about. These three studies (Kalebić Čurković, 2009; Hernandez Mendez and Reyes Cruz, 2012; Vasques and Harvey, 2010) show that both learners and teachers have a positive attitude towards corrective feedback and that they are aware of their benefits for language learning. If the attitude is positive and everyone can see that it benefits language knowledge, why is it not always successful?

Havranek (2002) conducted a research in order to find the answer to this question. The main aim of her research was to see when feedback is most likely to be successful. She started from the three factors that influence feedback: the type of correction sequence, the length of correction sequence, and the communicative focus of the utterance (Havranek, 2002). She believed that learners who are corrected should not be the only ones who should benefit from correction, but that their peers should remember the correct form as well. The participants were 207 learners of six different age and proficiency levels, and eight teachers of English language. The methods used were class observation and recording. The results of the study showed that on the posttests, more than half of the students that were corrected were likely to use the correct form. However, what was surprising was that their peers used the correct forms even more (61%). Other results confirmed the ones of the previously mentioned studies. First of all, general attitude of students was rather positive and they felt that feedback is there to help them and that they can learn with the help of it. Recasts were again not the most effective technique for the acquisition of the correct forms, but students who were given the chance to self-correct were more likely to acquire the correct form. The study also investigated how long the corrective sequence should be in order to aid learning, and the results show that sequence containing 5 to 7 turns is the most effective. The type of errors that turned out to be the most resistant for correction were pronunciation errors.

There are some other studies in the field of corrective feedback that are worth mentioning. Yoshida's research (2010) presented teachers' choice of corrective techniques and learners' preferences towards the same. The study also showed the tendency to use recasts although teachers were aware of the ineffectiveness of the technique. The reasons why teachers used recasts are time restriction and fear that learners will not be able to self-correct if other techniques are used. Teachers also recognized the importance of the differences among learners and its relationship with the choice of the corrective technique. However, the research showed the contrast between teachers' techniques and learners' preferences since they like being given the time to think about the correct answer (clarification and elicitation). Rahimi and Dastjerdi (2012) investigated the impact of delayed and immediate error correction on oral proficiency and found out that delayed corrective feedback has a positive effect on learners' fluency and accuracy, but that it also produces less anxiety and makes the students more relaxed during the lesson. Russel and Spada (2006) report on opposite results, but for the acquisition of grammar. They conducted a meta-analysis of 15 relevant studies and found

out that the benefits of corrective feedback are durable, but that, for the acquisition of grammar, immediate feedback has a more positive effect.

From the review of relevant studies, it can be seen that there are a lot of important things to investigate when it comes to corrective feedback. The fact that the area of error correction is a complex one is the reason teachers, especially young and inexperienced ones, are reluctant or even afraid to do the job. However, this fact has been the inspiration for the present study on corrective feedback in Croatian schools.

4. Lyster and Ranta's Corrective Discourse model

As it could already be seen from the previous chapters of the paper, there are a lot of issues and questions to consider before and after providing the feedback. A number of studies in the field of CF considered only some parts of the sequence, like errors, uptake, or the type of feedback used. However, unless the entire corrective sequence is taken into account, the principle behind feedback, or the way it works and affects learners' knowledge, can hardly be understood. What matters in the correction is how the error occurred, what aroused it, which type of feedback to use for certain errors, how learners react to feedback, how they interpret it, or if they remember the correct form after feedback has been provided. Lyster and Ranta perceived the importance of all of these questions and decided to consider the entire communicative sequence. For the purposes of their study, they created a model, which they called corrective discourse model. Their model, which presents the sequence, contains the types of errors, the types of feedback, and the types of learner uptake. It has been used in a number of studies, as well as the present study for the coding of the data.
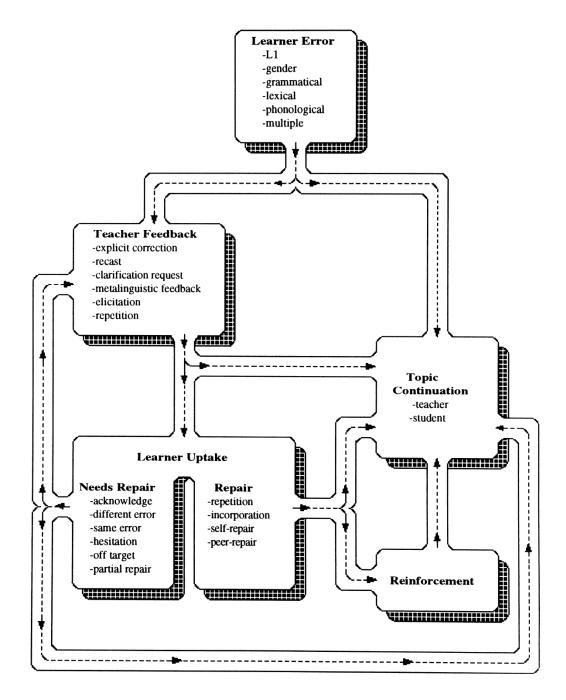
Figure 2. Error treatment sequence (corrective discourse model) (source: Lyster and Ranta, 1997:44)

As it can be seen from the model (Figure 2), the corrective sequence consists of three main parts: error, feedback, and learner uptake. However, there is also the possibility that the error is not accompanied by feedback, or that feedback is not followed by any uptake on the part of the learner, in which cases there is topic continuation.

Since the model has been used for the present study, it is important to explain and give definitions of the types of errors and types of feedback. In the present study, the author did not

consider learner uptake so this part of the model will not be explained in detail. It is important to mention that all the definitions for feedback types are taken from the article by Lyster and Ranta (1997) but the examples of errors and feedback are taken from the current study.

We will begin with the types of errors since they are the starting point for all the error correction turns. There are six types of errors mentioned in the model: the use of L1, gender, grammatical, lexical, phonological, and multiple errors. The definitions of errors, which are not offered by Lyster and Ranta, are taken from Jabbari and Fazilatfar's study (2012), which was based on the study by Lyster and Ranta and seemed like an appropriate source.

1) The first type of errors mentioned is *the use of L1*. This is the type of error made when the learner uses the word from the mother tongue because he/she does not know the form in the target language. However, "[e]ven if the student was capable of producing a certain utterance in English, the teacher might consider the use of L1 an error" (Jabbari and Fazilatfar, 2012:140).
   T: Which group answered the question?
   S: Druga grupa.
   T: Group two.

2) *Gender errors* refer to errors in grammatical gender and they were treated as a separate category because of their frequency.
   St: Le . . . le girafe? [Error-gender]
   "The . . . the giraffe?"
   T3: Le girafe? [FB-repetition]
   "The giraffe?
   (the example is taken from Lyster and Ranta, 1997: 64)

3) *Grammatical errors* are the next type of errors made. The type refers to "non-target like use of determiners, prepositions, pronouns, number agreement, tense, verb morphology, and auxiliaries" (Jabbari and Fazilatfar, 2012:139).
   S: They used Piggy's glasses to lit the fire.
   T: We don't say to lit, but to light.
   S: To light the fire.

4) *Lexical errors* include "inaccurate use of nouns, verbs, adverbs, and adjectives" (Jabbari and Fazilatfar, 2012:139).
   S: Chalk is a place where ground is.
   T: You mean the Earth.

S: Yes.

5) *Phonological errors* are errors in pronunciation and present the most numerous type of errors made.

   S:He scrutinized Harry to gauge [goug] the strength.

   T: Isn't it [gaʊdʒ]?

   S: Yes it is.

6) *Multiple error*, as the name says, contains more than one type of errors in a single sentence.

   S: Grudgingly is an adjective of grudge.

   T: It's not an adjective but an?

   S2: Prilog.

   T: It's a what? An?

   S2: An adverb.

After the error has been made, the teacher provides feedback to inform the learner that the utterance needs correction. Lyster and Ranta differentiate six different types of feedback provided to learners: explicit correction, recasts, clarification request, metalinguistic feedback, elicitation, and repetition.

1) By providing *explicit correction*, the teacher clearly indicates that the error has been made and provides the correct form. The teacher can use sentences like: "You mean, You should say", or something similar.

   S: She is born in 1957.

   T: Not is born, but she was born.

2) *Recasts* refer to the simple reformulation of the learner's incorrect utterance (see chapter 2.3)

   S: He saved their life.

   T: He saved their lives.

3) *Clarification requests* is a corrective feedback technique that "indicate to students either that their utterance has been misunderstood by the teacher or that the utterance is ill-formed in some way and that a repetition or a reformulation is required" (Spada and Frohlich, as cited in Lyster and Ranta, 1997:47). Clarification requests are usually used when the utterance by the learner cannot be interpreted and results in misunderstanding of the message.

   S: Chalk is the place where ground is.

T: Do you mean the Earth?

S: Yes.

4) Next is *metalinguistic feedback.* This technique contains comments, information, or questions related to the utterance and its incorrectness. It usually indicates to the learner that the error has been made, provides comments about the type of the error, and gives the learner a chance to correct the mistake by himself/herself. This technique can be successful when it comes to older and more proficient learners, but when it comes to younger learners, they are usually unable to provide the correct form since they are not familiar with all the rules. Teachers usually choose not to use it since it takes up a lot of time during the lesson because it involves explanations and waiting for the learner to provide the correct answer.

(During a reported speech practice)

S: They wanted to know if I was with friends.

T: Nisi promijenio vrijeme. Morate paziti na to koje vrijeme je upotrebljeno u originalnoj rečenici i onda ga vratiti jedno unazad. U šta prelazi Past Simple?

(You didn't change the tense. You have to be careful about the tense that was used in the original sentence and then switch it back one tense. What do we use instead of Past Simple here?)

S: Past Perfect.

T: What is the correct answer then?

S:...

T: They wanted to know if I had been with friends.

5) *Elicitation* can be used in three different ways. "First, teachers elicit completion of their own utterance by strategically pausing to allow students to "fill in the blank" […].Second, teachers use questions to elicit correct forms […]. Such questions exclude the use of yes/no questions […].Third, teachers occasionally ask students to reformulate their utterance" (Lyster and Ranta, 1997: 48).

S: Grudgingly is an adjective of grudge.

T: It is not an adjective, but an?

S: Prilog.

T: What? It is an…

S2: An adverb.

6) By using *repetition*, the teacher isolates the part of the utterance that contains an error and repeats it usually by changing the intonation in order for the students to be able to see that the error has been made.

S: We needs to know that she is one of the main characters

T: Needs?

S: Need.

5. Exploring Oral Corrective Feedback in Croatian Schools

5.1. Aims and Research Questions

The present study consists of two parts. The aim of the first part is to see which are the most commonly used strategies of corrective feedback in oral exercises in EFL classroom. Another important aim of the study is to explore if there is any relationship between the type of errors and the type of corrective feedback used. The focus of this part of the study is not so much on the number of errors or on learners' uptake, but on the techniques used by the teacher and their relation to the type of error. In addition to this, the aim is to investigate how learners of different gender, levels of knowledge and different number of years of learning English feel about corrective feedback and what their preferences are. The purpose is to see if learners like to be corrected, if they think the correction is helpful or discouraging, and if they prefer immediate or delayed correction.

Following are the research questions:

1. Does the type of activity influence the choice of correction and how?
2. Which are the most commonly used corrective feedback techniques in EFL?
3. Does the type of error influence the choice of corrective feedback?
4. Which errors recieve the most feedback?
5. What is the relationship between individual differences: gender, number of years of learning English and average grade and learners' attitude towards corrective feedback?
6. Do the techniques used by the teacher influence learners' attitude towards corrective feedback?
7. What are the learner preferences when it comes to corrective feedback?

5.2. Participants

The research was conducted in two grammar schools in Croatia: Language Grammar School in Osijek and Grammar School in Slatina. The participants were two female teachers, both experienced in the field of EFL, and 83 learners. Learners are taken from two second and two third grades, and are at two proficiency levels: intermediate and upper-intermediate.

Table 2. Participants according to school and grade

School	Language School		Grammar School	
Grade	Second	Third	Second	Third
Number of learners	19	22	21	21
Total	41/49.4%		42/50.6%	

Table 3. Participants according to gender

	Frequency	Percent
Male	30	36.1
Female	53	63.9
Total	83	100.0

Table 4. Number of years of learning and average grade in English

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
years of learning English	83	6.00	13.00	10.1446	1.28910
average grade in English	83	2.00	5.00	4.1205	.78705

As it can be seen from Table 2, the participants of the research were 41 (49.4%) learners from Osijek and 42 (50.6%) learners from Slatina. Out of 41 learners from Osijek, 19 were second grade and 22 third grade learners. Out of 42 learners from Slatina, 21 were second grade and 21 third grade learners. Table 3 shows that out of 83 learners in total, 30 were male, and 53 female learners.

Table 4 shows the average grade of learners and the number of years of learning English. The table shows that learners have been learning English approximately 10 years on average, minimum years were 6, and maximum 13. Average grade in English was 4 (B). The minimal grade was 2 and maximal 5.

5.3. Instruments

The instrument used for the second part of the study was a questionnaire that was distributed to learners (appendix A). The questionnaire consists of 14 items and each item was followed by a Likert scale (1- I do not agree, 2- I do not have an opinion, 3- I agree). The first six items in the questionnaire were taken from the questionnaire designed by Jernigan and Mihai (2008). Since these six items did not take into account everything that the author wanted to investigate, some other items had to be added. The rest of the questionnaire items (7-14) were partly based on the questionnaire made by Kalebić Čurković (2009).

The questionnaire was translated into Croatian to avoid confusions and enable learners to understand what was meant by a particular item.

Table 5. Reliability statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.534	14

The instrument had a reliability of .534 (as measured by Cronbach's alpha). Such a low coefficient could have been caused by a number of factors: learners' unwillingness to participate in the study, possible misunderstanding of the items, or the fact that the questionnaire items were few and taken from two different, unrelated sources.

5.4. Procedure

The first part of the study was conducted by using observation. After being given the permission to conduct the research in two schools, the author first observed three lectures given to second grade learners and three lectures given to third grade learners in Language school in Osijek. The same was repeated in Grammar school in Slatina: three lectures given to second grade and three given to third grade learners. Each lesson lasted for 45 minutes. In

total, 540 minutes, or 9 hours of classroom activities were observed. In the school in Osijek, learners had oral presentations of previously selected literary texts. The presentations were prepared in advance. In the other school, the lessons were structured as usual, with maximum interaction between learners and the teacher. Learners in both schools did not know the reason for the visit of the author so they acted normally. It was important for learners not to know that their errors would be marked and analyzed to avoid the risk of them being too careful. While observing the lessons, the author took notes of learners' errors and the feedback provided by the teacher. After the observation was finished, the collected data were analyzed and grouped according to the previously mentioned Lyster and Ranta's discourse model (1997). For the purpose of the study, the part of the model describing the uptake by learners was left out, because the author wanted to see which techniques are used and how they differ according to the type of errors. For the analysis of this part of the study, the distinction between immediate and delayed oral corrective feedback was also used.

After the observation part was finished, all learners were given questionnaires they had to fill out. After carefully reading the instructions and asking questions about the possible misunderstandings, learners had to mark their answers on a Likert scale. Learners completing the questionnaire were the same learners whose lessons were observed. The data were analyzed by using descriptive statistics, Pearson product moment correlation test, and independent samples T-test by means of IBM SPSS.

Prior to statistical analysis, items 2, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, and 14 in the questionnaire were recoded.

5.5. Results and discussion

Teachers' Techniques

First, the difference between immediate and delayed feedback will be analyzed. In the first school, as it has already been mentioned, learners did all the work during the lesson. The teacher observed the lesson and marked some errors in her notebook. Because she did not want to interrupt learners in their presentations, she used delayed corrective feedback. This means that after learners finished their presentations, she gave them the feedback and told them what they should be careful about. This type of feedback was used mostly for grammar errors and some major pronunciation errors, but when learners mispronounced some words or

the utterance was not understood, the teacher used immediate feedback. Moreover, if learners making the errors were not the same learners who were presenting, but their peers, the teacher also used immediate correction. It is important to say that, in this classroom, delayed feedback was not the most effective since after they were done with their work, learners did not carefully listen to what the teacher had to say and did not note the errors. What was more, some of them even tried to persuade the teacher that they had used the correct form. With delayed feedback and marking the errors, there is always the possibility that some major errors will be left out. This was observed in this class.

In the other school, lessons were structured in the usual way and the focus was on the interaction between the teacher and learners. Since the focus was mostly on speaking and interaction, the teacher used immediate feedback. This type of feedback draws the attention to the error as soon as it is made so that learners become aware of it and correct it as soon as it appears. Immediate feedback was used mostly in the situation when the error impeded communication and prevented the message of the utterance from being understood. It is important to say that the author noticed that the greatest number of errors that were corrected were pronunciation errors, as will be explained further on. Moreover, the teacher used immediate feedback when the error was made in the forms that were learned recently, Present Perfect and Reported Speech. Just as with delayed feedback, the problem with this type is the possibility that learners will be distracted and that the focus will be shifted from the real purpose of the activity.

The answer to the first research question is that the type of activity, but also the type of the error made and the learner making the error, influence the choice of corrective techniques. If the focus of the activity is interaction between the teacher and learners, the technique used is immediate feedback, but when the activity involves learners doing the work, it is important not to interrupt them, so the teacher uses delayed feedback, unless the error impedes communication.

Table 6. Distribution of feedback types according to the type of error (School 1)

	Type of Feedback						
	Explicit correction	Recasts	Clarification Request	Metalinguistic Clues	Elicitation	Repetition	Total
L1	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Grammatical	2	9	-	-	1	2	14
Lexical	-	3	1	2	-	-	6
Phonological	-	6	1	-	-	-	7
Multiple	-	1	-	1	1	-	3
Total	2	20	2	3	2	2	31

Type of Error (row label)

Table 7. Distribution of feedback types according to the type of error (School 2)

	Type of Feedback						
	Explicit Correction	Recasts	Clarification Request	Metalinguistic Clues	Elicitation	Repetition	Total
L1	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Grammatical	-	5	-	3	4	-	12
Lexical	1	1	-	1	1	-	4
Phonological	-	17	-	-	-	-	17
Multiple	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Total	1	23	0	4	6	0	34

Type of Error (row label)

Tables 6 and 7 show the distribution of corrective feedback techniques according to the types of errors. It can be seen that the number of errors is similar, although in the first school fewer errors were made, probably because of the type of activities. What can be seen is that in the first school, the greatest number of errors were grammatical errors. This can be the result of the fact that learners prepared their presentations in advance so the number of pronunciation errors was not that high. In the other school, the greatest number of errors were pronunciation errors, even though the number of grammatical errors was also pretty high. When talking to the teacher, the author found out that learners have difficulty in pronouncing certain words, so this result was not surprising.

The two tables show a great similarity to the previously mentioned studies (Lyster and Ranta, 1997; Panova and Lyster, 2002; Jabbari and Fazilatfar, 2012; Safari, 2013) because they show a strong tendency of teachers to use recasts as a corrective technique. Both teachers tend to

use recasts regardless of the type of the error made. The difference is that in the second school, all phonological errors were treated with recasts. This result is not unexpected since the focus of the activities was interaction, so the teacher did not want to use techniques that require learners to stop their utterance and correct the mistake. The problem with this technique is evident: when the teacher uses recast as a correction, learners tend to overhear the correction so they do not become aware that their utterance was erroneous. In the first school, the teacher used recasts for grammar errors more than other types of errors. This was probably because the presentations were prepared in advance, and the amount of phonological errors was not that high. The teacher decided to use recasts to correct grammar because she wanted to immediately draw learners' attention to the grammar forms they should be acquainted with and should not make errors while using them, but she did not want to take too much time from the presentations so she did not use the techniques that require explanation.

In both schools, grammatical and lexical errors were likely to be corrected by means of different techniques. In the first school, during the presentations, learners often used words in the incorrect way so it was often not clear what they wanted to say. Therefore, the teacher used techniques which elicit the answer from learners so that they would become aware when they can, and when not, use the word or the phrase. The same situation occurred with grammatical errors in the second school. The activities revolved around Present Perfect and Reported Speech, so the focus was on accuracy. Since learners are expected to know how to use these structured after they became familiar with the rules, the teacher used metalinguistic clues to give further explanations and comment on the usage of these structures. In other cases, she wanted to elicit the answer from learners to draw their attention and help them in using the structures in the correct way.

The research questions addressed here were concerned with the most commonly used techniques and their distribution according to the types of errors. The answer to these questions is that the most commonly used corrective technique in EFL are recasts regardless of the type of the error. Recasts are often used because of the time restrictions. They are the easiest technique to use and do not require a lot of time because there is no explanation of the error and the teacher does not have to wait for learners to make the correct answer. The other possible reason for the use of recasts might be that teachers do not have a particular interest in making learners aware of the errors they make. Recasts are a good technique to use when teachers want to correct the mistakes that are not that important for the development of proficiency, but when they want learners to remember the correct forms, other techniques,

like metalinguistic clues, clarification request, or elicitation, are far more effective because they require learners to think about the correct forms themselves.

When it comes to the fourth research question, i.e. which errors receive the most feedback, the answer is that it depends on the focus of the activity. In both schools, teachers paid attention both to fluency and accuracy, and for that reason the greatest number of errors that were corrected were grammatical and phonological errors. However, in the first school, the teacher corrected all the major grammar errors, regardless of which structures were used incorrectly. In the second school, since learners learned Present Perfect and Reported Speech, the teacher focused mostly on errors in these structures. Therefore, it can be said that the type of errors that receive the most feedback depend also on the items and structures that are learned recently or at the moment when the errors are made.

Learners' Attitude

In this research, the role of gender in attitudes towards feedback was investigated. To explore whether there were any differences between female and male participants in their attitude towards feedback, Independent samples t-test was used (Table 8).

Table 8. Independent samples t-test (gender and attitude towards feedback)

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Male	30	2.1667	.27590
Female	53	2.0957	.30593

T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
1.051	81	.296

*p< 0.05 level (2-tailed)

As Table 8 shows, there is no significant difference between mean values for the male participants (M= 2.17) and female participants (M= 2.1); t= 1.051, p= .296.

The result is different from the result of Kalebić Čurković's study (2009) which showed that female participants have a more positive attitude towards correction.

Table 9. Correlation between years of learning, average grade, and attitude towards feedback (N=83)

		Years of Learning	Average grade
Attitude toward feedback	Pearson correlation	.015	.142
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.892	.199

The relationship between years of learning, average grade, and attitude towards feedback was investigated using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. As Table 9 shows, there is no statistically significant correlation between years of learning, average grade, and attitude towards corrective feedback when both schools are taken into account. In order to explore this issue in more details, an Independent samples t-test was conducted to see if there was any difference between the two schools in learners' attitude towards feedback.

Table 10. Independent samples t-test for schools and attitude towards feedback

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Language School	41	1.9808	.24950
Grammar School	42	2.2585	.27413

T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
-4.822	81	.000

*p< 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 10 shows that the difference between two schools is statistically significant. Mean values for two schools (School 1, M= 1.9808, and School 2, M=2.2583; t=-4.822, p=.000) show that learners who attend School 2 have a more positive attitude towards corrective feedback.

The difference in the results for two schools is probably the result of the influence of the techniques the teacher uses to correct students' errors. Even though the teacher in School 2 used recasts most than other corrective techniques, she also used techniques that require learners to provide the correct forms (elicitation and metalinguistic feedback) more than the teacher in School 1. Further results will clarify this and yield other explanations. The results may also be caused by learners' attitude towards English and it may mean that learners who

attend School 2 take English to be more important than learners from School 1 and that they want to learn the correct forms to be able to use them later on.

Since Independent samples t-test showed that there is a difference among schools, another correlation was conducted. This time, learners from the two schools were observed separately. The result are shown in Table 11.

Table 11. Correlation between years of learning, average grade, and attitude (School 1)

		Years of learning	Average grade
	Pearson correlation	-.179	.378*
Attitude towards feedback	Sig. (2-tailed)	.263	.015

*p< 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 12. Correlation between years of learning, average grade, and attitude (School 2)

		Years of learning	Average grade
	Pearson correlation	-.113	-.357*
Attitude towards feedback	Sig. (2-tailed)	.476	.020

*p<0.05 level (2-tailed)

In the first school, there was a significant and positive correlation between average grade and attitude towards corrective feedback, r=.378. This result shows that learners who are more proficient in English and have better grades, have a more positive attitude towards corrective feedback. The research conducted by Kalebić Čurković (2009) yielded the same results.

This might mean that learners with better grades do not make as many errors and are, therefore, not corrected as often as learners whose grades are lower. Learners who are better at English probably have a higher degree of self-confidence, but it might also mean that they are more interested in learning English and for this reason feel that they benefit from correction. Learners with lower grades might feel anxious and discouraged when they are corrected and for this reason have a negative attitude towards the provision of feedback.

The result for the second school is different. Here, the test also shows a significant correlation between average grade and attitude towards corrective feedback. However, in this school, the

correlation is negative. This means that learners with lower grades tend to have a more positive attitude towards correction, r= -.357.

What can be concluded from these results is that learners who have better grades might feel as if they do not have to be corrected because they are good at English. Learners with lower grades feel the need to learn the correct forms and for this reason do not mind when the teacher corrects their errors. This result was surprising since it is usually considered that learners with lower grades have a higher degree of anxiety because they are not proficient enough and that they do not like when the teacher corrects their errors in front of their peers.

From these opposite results, it can be concluded that the attitude towards feedback depends on the learners' perception of correction and language learning. Learners' perception probably depends on the techniques the teacher uses, how often the teacher uses them, and in which cases the techniques are used, but it also depends on the techniques learners use to learn a language. The attitude does not necessarily depend on the methods the teacher uses, but it depends on learners' perception of these methods and their perception of the importance of correction. There is also the possibility that the attitude depends on other factors which were not considered in this study, such as motivation, anxiety, or learning styles.

In both schools, there was no correlation between years of learning and attitude towards feedback, which may be attributed to the fact that there was not a great difference between grades. This result is similar to the result of the study by Kalebić Čurković (2009) which also showed no correlation between grade, or years of learning, and attitude towards corrective feedback.

When it comes to learners' preferences concerning feedback, *Table 13* presents the most important results of this part of the study (the entire table is presented in the appendix B).

Table 13. Items with the highest and the lowest average score

Item	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I like it when the teacher gives comments on my mistakes	1.00	3.00	2.6867	.56152
I like being given the chance to correct my mistakes by myself	1.00	3.00	2.6265	.59900
I can learn a lot when the teacher corrects my mistakes	1.00	3.00	2.4578	.66811
I like being interrupted	1.00	3.00	1.9639	.94283
Correcting too many mistakes at once may be pleasing	1.00	3.00	1.9518	.92266
I prefer being corrected infront of other studens	1.00	3.00	1.9398	.75465
The teacher should focus on correcting every mistake in the utterance, not only the mistakes in the form we are learning at the time	1.00	3.00	1.8795	.77140
I like when other students correct my mistakes	1.00	3.00	1.5301	.78612

The results show a similarity to the results of the research by Kalebić Čurković (2009). What can be seen from the table is that learners prefer when the teacher gives comments about their errors. They also prefer being given the chance to try to self-correct their errors rather than being given the correct answer immediately. It is also clear that learners understand the importance of feedback for learning and improving their language proficiency, because the results show that learners think they can learn a lot when the teacher corrects their errors, as well as the errors made by their peers.

The fact that learners prefer being given comments about the errors and they like when they can try to self-correct the errors, is in great opposition to the techniques used by the teacher, which are mainly recasts. The results show that learners prefer techniques like metalinguistic feedback, elicitation, or clarification request, which are used far less than recasts. Since learners understand the importance of feedback, teachers should reconsider the use of corrective techniques.

On the other hand, learners do not like being interrupted in their utterances, but they prefer when the teacher waits for them to finish their sentences and then provide the feedback. This is an expected answer, since interruption may cause learners to forget what they wanted to

say, or make them discouraged and unwilling to continue doing the activity. Learners also feel that it is discouraging when the teacher corrects too many errors and think that they should focus on correcting errors in the form that is learned at that time. Since learners are at school to learn, teachers cannot expect them to already know all the forms and structures. For this reason, the teacher should not correct all the errors that learners make, but only errors in the forms they should have acquired. Learners also dislike when their peers provide the correct answers and correct their errors. This result shows that learners probably feel that the teacher is more competent for correcting their errors, and since they feel that it is important that their errors are corrected, they feel the need to be corrected by a competent person.

6. Conclusion

Corrective feedback is one of the most important areas of language learning and teaching. It is a useful technique that helps learners and teachers to focus on the important areas in a language that need improvement and correction. As it was presented in the review of previously conducted studies, there are a lot of areas inside corrective feedback that can be investigated and analyzed.

The current study focused on two aspects of corrective feedback: the teachers' aspect and the learners' aspect. First, this study investigated which techniques are used in EFL in Croatian schools and what these techniques depend on. The study shows that the choice between immediate and delayed feedback does not depend only on the type of activity, but also several other factors such as the focus of the activity, the student making the error, and the consequence of the error. The results show that the most commonly used technique are recasts and that its selection is independent of the type of error because recasts are used for all error types. However, it is important to say that teachers, in almost all cases, correct phonological errors with recasts, whereas for other error types, usually grammatical and lexical ones, they use the techniques that require learners to think about the correct answer. The answer to the question which errors receive feedback the most is that this depends on the focus of the lesson. Teachers usually choose to correct errors in the linguistic forms that have been learned recently.

Next, the study investigated which learner differences influence their attitude towards corrective feedback. Three factors were taken into consideration: gender, years of learning,

and average grade. The study showed no correlation between gender, years of learning, and attitude towards feedback. The correlation between average grade and attitude turned out to be significant. However, the correlation was positive in one, but negative in the other school, which led to the conclusion that the attitude depends on learners' perspective of teacher's techniques and, potentially, other factors, such as motivation, anxiety, or learning styles.

The study also shows a great discrepancy between learners' preferences and the techniques used by the teacher. The most commonly used corrective technique in EFL in the two schools were recasts, but learners claim to prefer techniques that give them the opportunity to self-correct the errors. They prefer the teacher explaining why the utterance is erroneous, because they understand the importance of correction for the development of their language skills.

The present study, along with other relevant studies and the underlying theory, portray the importance of correction in foreign language teaching, but also the difficulties of finding the right techniques. It is one of the most challenging jobs of every teacher to provide the evidence to his/her learners in a way which will make learners remember the correct language form and prevent them from making the same errors throughout the learning process. There are a lot of things teachers must consider when they provide the feedback: timing, type and focus of activity, learners' needs and preferences, the differences between learners, learners' proficiency level, and many more. For these reasons, teachers often do not think about correction, but just do it when the time comes and when they feel like the error must be corrected. However, what must always be kept in mind is that everything that is done inside the classroom and during the lecture, has a goal and a purpose. The most important thing a teacher can do to make this job easier, is get to know his or her learners well, learn about what they prefer and how they would like to be corrected. Every learner is an individual and the correction affects him/her as an individual, not the class as a whole.

As it could be seen from the results of the research, there are a lot of things that need further consideration and investigation when it comes to the provision of feedback. This research opens a number of other research possibilities: teachers' attitude towards feedback, learners' uptake, effectiveness of certain corrective techniques, as well as correlation between other individual differences, such as learning styles, anxiety, motivation, and attitude towards feedback.

This paper is useful to language teachers, students, and other researchers who want to see how corrective feedback works from both perspectives, who want to see what needs to be taken

care of when providing feedback, and what students prefer when it comes to corrective feedback in the EFL classroom. It can also help future teachers of English in developing their own strategies and techniques.

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Appendixes

Appendix A

Research Questionnaire

1.	Mogu puno naučiti kad profesor/-ica ispravlja pogreške koje napravim na nastavi.	1	2	3
2.	Većina učenika ne voli kada ih se ispravlja na nastavi.	1	2	3
3.	Sviđa mi se kad drugi učenici ispravljaju moje pogreške.	1	2	3
4.	Više volim kad mi se pruži prilika da sam/sama ispravim svoje pogreške nego kad profesor/-ica ponudi ispravan odgovor.	1	2	3
5.	Profesori ne bi trebali ispravljati pogreške ukoliko one ne ometaju razumijevanje danog odgovora.	1	2	3
6.	Mogu puno naučiti kad profesor/-ica ispravlja pogreške drugih učenika.	1	2	3
7.	Želim da profesor/-ica sačeka da završim s odgovorom prije nego me ispravi; ne volim kada me prekidaju.	1	2	3
8.	Mislim da bi se profesori trebali usredotočiti na ispravljanje pogrešaka u obliku koji vježbamo u tom trenutku te da ne bi trebali ispravljati svaku pogrešku u danom odgovoru.	1	2	3
9.	Mislim da bi profesori trebali upozoravati samo na velike pogreške, a izostaviti one manje.	1	2	3
10.	Upozoravanje na puno pogrešaka odjednom može biti obeshrabrujuće i neugodno.	1	2	3
11.	Obično zaboravim na koje je pogreške profesor/-ica upozorio/-la te ih ponovno pravim.	1	2	3
12.	Osjećam se nelagodno kad profesor/-ica ispravlja moje pogreške.	1	2	3
13.	Više mi se sviđa kada profesor/-ica objasni i da komentare o mojim pogreškama, nego kad samo ponudi točno rješenje.	1	2	3
14.	Više mi se sviđa kada profesor/-ica upozori na moje pogreške nakon nastave, nasamo, nego kad me ispravlja na satu pred ostalim učenicima.	1	2	3

Molim Vas da odgovorite na iduća pitanja

SPOL: M   Ž
Koliko dugo učite engleski? _____
Vaša prosječna ocjena iz engleskog jezika (1-5)? _____

Appendix B

Questionnaire items ordered by descending values

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I like it when the teacher gives comments on my mistakes	83	1,00	3,00	2,6867	,56152
I like being given the chance to correct my mistakes by myself	83	1,00	3,00	2,6265	,59900
I can learn a lot when the teacher corrects my mistakes	83	1,00	3,00	2,4578	,66811
I can learn a lot when the teacher corrects the mistakes made by other students	83	1,00	3,00	2,4337	,66613
I think the teacher should correct all of the mistakes, the major and the minor ones	83	1,00	3,00	2,1205	,90254
The teachers should correct the mistakes if they interfere with understanding	83	1,00	3,00	2,0723	,80824
Most students like being corrected	83	1,00	3,00	2,0241	,79596
I feel comfortable when the teacher corrects my mistakes	83	1,00	3,00	2,0120	,83365
I usually forget which mistakes the teacher corrected and make them again	83	1,00	3,00	2,0000	,86954
I like being interrupted	83	1,00	3,00	1,9639	,94283
Correcting too many mistakes at once may be pleasing	83	1,00	3,00	1,9518	,92266
I prefer being corrected infront of other studens	83	1,00	3,00	1,9398	,75465

The teacher should focus on correcting every mistake in the utterance, not only the mistakes in the form we are learning at the time	83	1,00	3,00	1,8795	,77140
I like when other students correct my mistakes	83	1,00	3,00	1,5301	,78612
Valid N (listwise)	83				