

REPAIR OF ERRORS AND LEARNERS' ORAL PRODUCTION

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Submitted to the Faculty of Human Sciences  
in partial fulfillment of the requirement  
for the degree of B.A. in the Linguistics  
and Languages Department  
University of Nariño

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## ABSTRACT

This study was aimed to examine the effect of repair after feedback on language learners' oral production in a pretest-posttest design. Fifteen second-level students received two types of stimuli: corrective feedback alone in the form of recasts and corrective feedback plus elicitation for repair during a 5-week treatment period. The results showed that when learners were asked for repair of their errors, they incorporated a higher number of corrections than when they received corrective feedback only. This finding suggests that input alone does not provide the best conditions for learners to internalize the corrections provided by the teacher. Besides, it reinforces the idea that repair is an element that can bring about positive results in terms of corrected words incorporated in subsequent students' performance.

## RESUMEN

El propósito del presente estudio fue examinar el efecto de "repair" (correcta reformulación de un error después de producirlo) en la producción oral en un diseño de investigación basado en un pre-test y un post-test.

Durante cinco semanas, quince estudiantes de segundo nivel recibieron dos tipos de estímulo: 1) Únicamente corrección 2) Corrección y "repair". Los resultados demostraron que cuando los alumnos eran forzados a corregir sus errores inmediatamente después de producirlos, ellos tendían a incorporar un número mayor de correcciones en subsecuente uso del idioma extranjero. Esta evidencia sugiere que la sola corrección no brinda las mejores condiciones para que los estudiantes internalicen las correcciones echas por el profesor. Además, se fortalece la idea de que "repair" es un elemento que puede producir resultados positivos en términos de correcciones incorporadas en una futura producción oral.

## Introduction

A significant element that, according to numerous researchers, helps learners modify their incorrect use of the target language is corrective feedback (i.e. indication given to a learner that his or her use of the target language is incorrect). Since it plays a facilitative role in drawing learners' attention to form, it prevents fossilization of errors (Vigil & Oller, 1976, as cited in Ellis, 1994; Gass & Selinker, 2001), and fosters effective language learning.

However, it has been seen that the efficacy of corrective feedback can negatively be affected by several factors, being one of them the absence of immediate repair of errors (i.e. correct reformulation of an error after it is uttered) on the part of learners after receiving it, due, to a certain extent, to the teacher's lack of elicitation for the repair required.

Consequently, the aim of this paper is to examine the role of this move, sometimes neglected, on learners' language development, with the aim of enlightening teachers' decisions on error correction for the sake of providing a more consistent and productive feedback, thus contributing to successful language learning.

*Technical-Scientific Aspects**Topic*

Corrective feedback

*Title*

Repair of errors and learners' oral production.

*Problem Statement*

Corrective feedback is a practice that takes place in most language classrooms in order to mend the errors produced by learners. What teachers seek through its application is learners' interlanguage improvement. Diverse studies (e.g., Swain, 1985; White, 1987) have shown that feedback efficacy depends on several factors, one of them is repair of errors (i.e., restructuring of the incorrect utterances) on the part of learners after receiving it. However, it is usually thought that just giving correction to learners is enough for them to fix the incorrect use of the target language. Therefore, the present research intended to establish the effect of repair after corrective feedback on learners' pronunciation in a group of 15 second-level learners at the Language Center of the University of Nariño.



*Justification*

For decades, it has been said that language learning is a process in which the learner acquires knowledge of the language just by being exposed to it (Krashen and Terrell, 1983). However, as researchers like Swain (1985), and White (1987) affirm, exposure alone is insufficient for successful learning to occur. The learner must also be given the opportunity to generate output, that is, produce language via speech or writing, instead of being just a passive recipient. Output production is the only way in which teachers can measure learners' current level of proficiency and provide them with new information that can improve and develop their use of the target language.

Besides, output is seen to be essential as it allows the learner to test his/her hypotheses about what works and is acceptable in the target language and affords him/her opportunities to rectify an erroneous use of it.

It is at this point that corrective feedback arises and gains importance, since it is defined as the information given to learners to indicate that their use of the target language is inaccurate and needs to be modified in order to improve, thus refining existing knowledge and preventing fossilization of errors (Gass & Selinker, 2001).

Research has shown that corrective feedback helps learners improve significantly their interlanguage (i.e., learners' developing language knowledge), and it is held that such correction can be even more effective when learners are pushed to modify and reformulate their incorrect use of the target language, which is called *repair*.

Nevertheless, such modification rarely occurs, teachers just provide corrective feedback and no response is elicited from learners, preventing them from better opportunities to increase their knowledge and language proficiency.

One component of language that could be addressed with *repair* is pronunciation since it represents a problematic aspect for learners, especially for beginners, resulting in incomprehensibility and communication breakdown.

Given that one of the basic objectives of research in the field of language learning and teaching is to provide useful techniques for teaching practices, and taking into account that corrective feedback is an element that makes part of most daily teaching routines, it is important to reflect on the best way in which it can be offered, making its provision productive and useful for learners.

Due to the fact that in EFL settings like Pasto research concerning this topic and the subsequent action for

error treatment is scarce, this study intended to fill this void, approaching the issue of repair of errors after feedback as a component that can benefit learners' performance in the target language.

Consequently, the present study was worth being undertaken because it can provide teachers with information about the way in which they can act towards errors in order to enhance effective language learning.

#### *Limitations*

With regard to the limitations, there are two that are worth mentioning in this paper. One of them involves the process of data collection which at the beginning seemed to be affected by the recurring nonattendance on the part of students. This fact led to reduce the sample from 25 to 15 students.

Besides, given that the present study was conducted by a single person, at the beginning, it was difficult to select when to provide a certain type of feedback. However, this situation was overcome thanks to the thematic to be developed throughout the semester, which emphasized on past simple structures and facilitated the teacher's job by providing a steady focus for the feedback.

Finally, it was difficult for the teacher to tape-record some students' performance, given that they felt threatened when they noticed this was taking place.

*General objective.*

To identify the effect of feedback and subsequent repair on learners' pronunciation.

*Specific objectives.*

To determine the number of student turns containing mispronounced words when reading 10 pre-selected items (10 regular verbs in past form) before receiving corrective feedback followed by repair.

To establish the number of student turns containing mispronounced words learners produce when reading 10 different pre-selected items (10 words containing the sound /θ/) before receiving only corrective feedback.

To determine the number of student turns in which regular verbs in past form are pronounced correctly or are nearer the target-like form during a reading activity after 5 weeks of being exposed to corrective feedback followed by repair.

To determine the number of student turns in which words containing the phoneme /θ/ are pronounced correctly or are nearer the target-like form during a reading activity after

5 weeks of being exposed to corrective feedback without elicitation for repair.

To compare the results in terms of the number of student turns incorporating corrected words after receiving corrective feedback followed by repair and without repair.

To suggest methodological strategies for error treatment.

*Hypothesis.*

Several studies concerning the implementation of repair of errors after corrective feedback have shown positive results on learners' performance in the target language. Knowing this, the present study is aimed to demonstrate the effectiveness of repair of errors in learners' oral production. Therefore, the study is hypothesized as follows:  
 $H_1$ = Learners pronunciation will suffer a major improvement when they receive corrective feedback followed by repair instead of corrective feedback alone.

However, since the present study is of the experimental type, the outcomes are uncertain, consequently, it can also be hypothesized that:

$H_0$ = Learners pronunciation will not suffer a major improvement when they receive corrective feedback followed by repair instead of corrective feedback alone.

*Variables.*

Students' accurate pronunciation depends on the application of repair after corrective feedback.

Independent variable: Repair of errors.

Dependent variable: Accurate pronunciation.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

*Reference Framework**Theoretical framework*

In the field of language learning, several aspects need to be considered in order to ensure effective learning, one of them, with which teachers are directly concerned, is error correction, known as corrective feedback.

*Corrective feedback.*

Corrective feedback is defined as the information given to the learner that his or her use of the target language is incorrect (Lightbown & Spada, 1999). Over the last years, this practice has been influenced by diverse insights and theories into language learning which state different views about its provision, role, effects, and the way in which it must be offered.

*Input and corrective feedback.*

As was stated earlier in this paper, the application of corrective feedback has been affected by the idea that input is the only element necessary for successful language learning to take place. Ellis (1997) defines input as the oral or written language a learner is exposed to. This view is primarily supported by Krashen, in the *input hypothesis*. Krashen (1983, in Krashen & Terrell, 1983) argues that learners acquire language just by understanding input that

is slightly beyond their current level of competence. This input is known as *comprehensible input*. Krashen (1983, in Krashen & Terrell) claims that listening and reading are of primary importance and the ability to speak or write fluently in a second language would come on its own with time. This means that acquisition is essentially based on what learners hear and understand, not on what they say. Therefore, from the input hypothesis' perspective there is no place for corrective feedback.

However, extending the notion of input and its role, Long (1996, in Long & Robinson, 1998) affirms that for language learning to occur, input must be of two kinds: positive evidence and negative evidence. The former refers to the language that provides learners with a model of what is acceptable in the target language, or as Krashen (1983, in Krashen & Terrell, 1983) holds, input understandable for learners. The latter, in contrast, gives learners information of what is unacceptable in the target language. This information can be given before the incorrect use of a form occurs or afterwards to correct a non-targetlike use of the language made by the learner (Long & Robinson, 1998). Based on this assertion, it can be said that the function of corrective feedback is acknowledged as part of negative



input since it refers to information given to learners which can be used to revise their interlanguage (Ellis, 1994).

To this point, it is necessary to mention some studies that account for deficiency of input and the relevance of corrective feedback in language learning.

Trahey and White (1993, in Lightbown & Spada, 1999) carried out a study with young francophone learners in intensive English as a second language (ESL) classes in Quebec. Their aim was to determine whether high exposure to input containing adverb placement forms would lead them to use that form accurately. Learners were intensively exposed to the structure for 10 hours during a period of two weeks; neither teaching nor corrections were given. The researchers found that although learners benefited from the exposure and, in fact, learned what was grammatical in English adverb placement, they also considered as correct sentences those which were built based on the grammar of their native language, which were ungrammatical in English. Regarding this evidence, Trahey and White (1993, in Lightbown and Spada, 1999) suggest that exposure to correct samples of the target language can help learners add new elements to their interlanguage, but it does not mean that they will correct errors founded on their native language. Consequently, the authors imply that exposure alone is not all what learners

need. Input gives students information of what is possible in the target language, but it does not tell them what is not possible, which is the role of corrective feedback.

*Output and corrective feedback.*

For corrective feedback to occur, learners' language production is of primary importance. Therefore, in contrast to the claims that comprehensible input is the only condition for language acquisition, Swain (1985), as well as White and Trahey (1993, in Lightbown & Spada, 1999), state a divergent position. Swain introduces the concept of *output* (i.e. language produced by the learner) in the *output hypothesis* as another factor to be taken into account in language learning.

The author acknowledges the relevant role of input, but argues that learners' production also plays a part in the language learning process. She holds that one function of output is that it provides the opportunity for meaningful use of one's linguistic resources and test hypotheses about the way in which the target language works (Swain, 1985). Her claims stem from a study conducted with a group of 6<sup>th</sup> grade French immersion students who received 7 years of exposure to comprehensible input. Swain (1985) noted that in such setting there was little opportunity for learners to use the language productively; they just used it for

comprehension. The results demonstrated that after 7 years of comprehensible input with limited opportunities for output, learners' grammatical performance was extremely weaker than that of the same-aged native speakers.

Swain maintains that when one hears a message in the target language, we can often comprehend the meaning with little or no use of syntax; little knowledge, other than knowing the meanings of the words is needed. However, in the case of language production or output the situation is different because one is forced to pay attention to the language and put the words into some order. According to the author, language production also leads the learner to move from a semantic to a syntactic analysis of the language.

The importance of output, according to Swain (1995, in Swain, 1998), lays in its three potential roles: 1) Noticing: is a conscious process in which learners, while producing language, test their hypothesis about the structures and meanings of the target language. In this way, they can notice the gap between what they want to say and what they can say (i.e. by trying to speak or write in the target language they realize that there is something wrong in what they want to say). 2) Hypothesis formulation and testing: language production can provide learners with a means by which they can test hypotheses about linguistic

correctness for the verification of these hypotheses.

3)Metatalk: output production can help learners increase linguistic knowledge of how the target language works, that is, it can make them aware of forms and rules and their relationship to the meaning they want to convey. It can also help learners understand the relationship between meaning, forms and function.

Supporting Swain's ideas, Gass and Selinker (2001), recognize another central role of output. It refers to learners' development of automaticity in their language production.

To this point, the functions of input and output have been discussed. Not only do they provide evidence of their relevance, but also confirm that they are elements required for corrective feedback to occur.

#### *Corrective feedback and language learning.*

At this instance and after having explained the core of corrective feedback, the reason why it is worth being promoted in language learning is an issue that needs to be addressed.

In line with Ur (1996), one of the objectives of corrective feedback is to improve learners' performance, since it provides them with information about the way in

which they carry out a learning task; thus, recognizing its importance.

Ellis (1997) also acknowledges the value of corrective feedback, assigning it a facilitative role in drawing learners' attention to form. From this perspective, corrective feedback prompts learners to recognize the gap between the language they produce and the target form, process that leads to subsequent interlanguage restructuring (Ellis, 1997).

Another important function conferred to corrective feedback is that of being a way to help learners modify the incorrect use of target forms. In this way, students are encouraged to confront their errors and revise their hypothesis about the target language (Pica, Halliday, Lewis and Morgenthaler, 1989; Swain, 1993, 1995, cited in Lyster, 1998). In addition, it is held that in cases where feedback is not given, errors are likely to remain fossilized (Gass & Selinker, 2001).

*Research on corrective feedback.*

As a result of the shift in the perception of corrective feedback, as showed above, a number of studies concerning its role in language learning has been conducted over the last decades.

In 1990, Lightbown and Spada (in Lightbown & Spada, 1999) examined the effects of corrective feedback and form-focused instruction (i.e. instruction that draws attention to the forms and structures of the language within the context of communicative interaction) on second language acquisition (SLA) in the context of intensive ESL programs. The participants were native speakers of French enrolled in five-month intensive ESL courses in either grade five or six in Quebec. The findings revealed that students' accuracy level on certain targeted linguistic features had significantly improved.

White (1991, in Lightbown and Spada, 1999) investigated the impact of explicit instruction plus corrective feedback. The experimental groups received 8 hours of instruction on adverb placement in English and were compared to a control group learning question formation that did not received neither explicit instruction nor corrective feedback . The results showed that the experimental group outperformed the control group both in immediate and delayed posttests. White (1991, in Lightbown & Spada, 1999) concluded that explicit instruction and corrective feedback can help students learn certain forms, but based in a follow-up test, she found that it does not have long lasting effects, consequence that was

attributed to the lack of subsequent instruction and exposure to the target language.

Carroll and Swain (1993, cited in Rim & Mathes, 2001) provide empirical evidence on the advantage of implicit and explicit corrective feedback in learning English dative alternation. The results of this study revealed that treatment groups which were provided with corrective feedback generally outperformed the control group both on an immediate posttest and on a delayed posttest administered a week later. Explicit feedback was found to be more helpful than implicit feedback. Carroll and Swain (1993, cited in Rim & Mathes, 2001) hold that explicit feedback might have been of more benefit because it identifies the precise location and nature of erroneous utterance, while implicit corrective feedback requires learners to be involved in a good deal of mental deductive reasoning.

Later, Doughty and Varela (1998) investigated the effect of corrective feedback in the form of recast, which consisted of two phases: repetition of the learner's incorrect utterance with rising intonation for him/her to notice the error, and the teacher's modeling of the target form. This type of feedback was tested in a content-based ESL classroom during 2 weeks and only errors concerning simple past and conditional were addressed. Learners'

performance in a posttest and in a delayed posttest was compared to that of a group that had received no corrective feedback. The results in both, the posttest and delayed posttest, showed that the experimental group had made more progress in using past and conditional forms than the control group.

Years later, Muranoi (2000, cited in Yamamoto, 2001) conducted a study with three groups of Japanese students in order to find out if interaction enhancement (i.e., process in which the teacher pushes learners to produce output in order to provide them with feedback to modified their errors) and explicit grammar instruction is beneficial in learning complex rules. In Groups 1 and 2, interaction and feedback in the form of request for repetition and recast were enhanced. Group 1 was given explicit grammar explanation while Group 2 was given comments on the students' performance in terms of meaning. Group 3, on the other hand, received only meaning-based debriefing. The findings demonstrated that Groups 1 and 2 performed significantly better in subsequent posttests and at the same time, Group 1 outperformed Group 2. The researcher implied that the learning of complex rules such as English articles can be facilitated by implicit instruction plus interaction



enhancement, which involves the provision of corrective feedback.

More recently, Mackey and Oliver (2002) conducted a study with a group of ESL learners in an intensive course in Australia. The research was aimed to determine whether interactional feedback facilitates second language development in children. The experimental group received interactional feedback including negotiation and recasts, while the control group was given instruction carefully modified to minimize opportunities for error to occur. The results showed that children who interacted and received feedback improved more than the control group in terms of question formation. Mackey and Oliver (2002) also found that children's interlanguage seemed to be affected at a short term, while similar studies with adults demonstrated more delayed effects.

*Corrective feedback and repair of errors.*

The evidence presented above visibly justifies the importance of corrective feedback. However, it has been seen that its efficacy can be affected by a number of factors, one of them, which is the concern of this research, is the response from the learner to the feedback provided by the teacher, that is, *repair*, or the correct reformulation of an

error as uttered in a single student turn (Lyster & Ranta, 1997).

Swain (1985) recognizes the function of repair defining it as the output produced by the learner in reaction to feedback. However, to make reference to repair, she coined the term *modified output* (i.e. restructuring of an incorrect utterance after receiving corrective feedback).

Lyster and Ranta (1997) propose a categorization for the kinds of repair after corrective feedback: 1) Repetition: student's repetition of the teacher's feedback when the latter includes the correct form. 2) Incorporation: student's repetition of the correct form provided by the teacher, which is then incorporated into a longer utterance produced by the teacher. 3) Self-repair: self-correction produced by the student in response to the teacher's feedback when the latter does not already provide the correct form. 4) Peer-repair: peer correction provided by a student, other than the one who made the initial error, in response to the teacher's feedback.

Researchers maintain that corrective feedback together with repair is believed to have a major impact in learners' interlanguage development.

Swain (1985) argues that pushing learners in modifying their output may benefit and improve their current level of

proficiency, for that reason, it is necessary for second language mastery. Repair may result from plenty opportunities for student output on the one hand and from the provision of useful and consistent feedback from teachers and peers on the other (Swain, 1985).

Then, the researcher affirms that modified output can be considered "the leading edge of a learner's interlanguage" (Swain, 1995, quoted in Lyster, 1998, p.54).

Swain and Lapkin (1995, cited in Swain, 1998) maintain that in the process of modifying their incorrect utterances, learners' knowledge is positively affected, thus promoting second language learning. The authors argue that the conscious reformulation of output leads to mental processes that may represent the internalization of new linguistic features, or the consolidation of existing knowledge (Swain & Lapkin, 1995, cited in Swain, 1998).

Schmidt (1995) affirms that when students consciously reflect on output, a process of noticing is enhanced. For the author, what learners notice is what will become intake prior to processing and integration into a learner's developing interlanguage system. Moreover, Gass (1988) claims that noticing is the first stage of language acquisition because when learners notice how the target language works they are able to reflect on what is noticed,

make an effort to understand its significance, and experience comprehension.

In the same way, Lyster (1998) states that repair can benefit learners in two ways: 1)It gives them opportunities to process target language knowledge that has already been internalized and 2)It helps them analyze and modify their incorrect output production, thus leading to comprehensibility and development of their interlanguage.

Regarding the relationship between repair and the types of feedback, Holliday, Lewis and Morgenthaler (1989, cited in Ellis, 1994) claim that the type of feedback is a central factor in learners' repair of error. Based on their study with Japanese adult learners, the authors state that learners are more likely to correct their errors when they were provided with clues pointing out that something was wrong in their language production, which is the case of clarification requests. The results of their study showed that after receiving such type of feedback, learners made significant grammatical modifications.

According to Pica et al. (1989, cited in Lyster, 1998), there are more possibilities for modified output to occur when the teacher signals explicitly that an error was made because the repetition or modeling of the correct form may

be useless if the learner is not able to recognize that s/he produced an error.

Consequently, it is argued that because of their characterization, feedback types such as metalinguistic feedback, elicitation, clarification requests, and teacher repetition of error allow learners produce repair of their errors (Lyster & Ranta, 1997)

An experimental study conducted by Nobuyoshi and Ellis (1993, cited in Ellis, 1994) demonstrated that learners who were pushed to modify their errors on past-tense by means of requests for clarifications, subsequently used the target form accurately and in a post-test, they outperformed the learners who were not pushed to reformulate their errors. In consequence, these findings imply that learners' efforts to modify their initial incorrect output can help them notice the gap between their interlanguage and the target form.

Subsequently, Ellis and He (1999) carried out a study with the aim of determining the effects of modified input and output in the acquisition of vocabulary. They studied 50 college students learning English and after a series of controlled tests, the researchers found that the modified output group outperformed the input group in all areas. Ellis and He concluded that the production of repair, or

modified output, helped learners process the words more deeply and enhanced their vocabulary learning.

Similarly, Mennim (2003) conducted a research in which students were encouraged to focus on their oral output by typing and transcribing a rehearsal of a presentation they were due. They corrected the transcript before giving it to the teacher, who provided corrective feedback on the points they have missed. A comparison made between the language used in the rehearsal and the final presentation, 2 weeks later after receiving feedback and modifying their output, showed considerable improvements in pronunciation, grammar and in organization of content.

To sum up, it is of no doubt that there are several factors that can work as a tool for helping learners improve their interlanguage, and it is evident that corrective feedback is one of them. As a result, it is worth taking into account the way in which it can yield better results. According to several studies, one factor that makes corrective feedback be more productive is to elicit repair of errors from learners since language production leads to learning, and as a consequence, if it is accurate, language learning will be more effective.

### *Conceptual Framework*

As stated previously, the present research aims to determine the effect of corrective feedback followed by repair. Therefore, this study will be undertaken based on the theory of comprehensible output proposed by Swain (1985). The theory is the basis to apply this experimental study because it holds that the repair of errors can benefit learners' developing language.

It is argued that when the learner is aware of his/her inaccurate use of the target language and makes an effort to restructuring it through repair of errors, the corrections are more likely to be incorporated in future language production, thus improving students' interlanguage. Besides, the feedback type applied in this research will be explicit, founded on Pica's assertions that possibilities for repair to occur are greater when the teacher signals explicitly that an error was made because the learner is able to recognize it.

### *Contextual Framework*

*Language center of the University of Nariño.*

The Language Center of the University of Nariño had its origin in the "Departamento Electronico de Idiomas" according to resolution N. 12 of October 24<sup>th</sup> 1961. Its primary objectives were to encourage languages learning

through the use of modern systems, and offer both students from the university and public in general the possibility of learning foreign languages in a fast and efficient way. The languages offered to be taught were English, French, Italian and German.

However, due to the lack of commitment on the part of students, the institute was just going to disappear. The solution was an entire restructuring; therefore, a number of high school teachers joined the institute and started working on the creation of the Department of Modern Languages as a unit of the "Faculty of Educational Sciences."

The functions of the emerging department were to present the modern languages curriculum as the specialty of the Faculty of Educational Sciences, offer its services to other majors from the university, and offer cultural expansion courses. In 1969 the Department of Modern Languages was approved in conformity with the resolution N. 0049 of January 15<sup>th</sup> of the "Ministerio de Educación Nacional." In 1991 the Faculty of Education was restructured and the Department of Modern Languages became part of the Faculty of Human Sciences, with English-French and English-Spanish programs. The services to students from other dependencies and public in general remain, applying a



communicative approach to language learning. In 1993 a new facility at Panamericana Avenue was afforded by the administration in order for an extension of the Department of Modern Languages to operate with two groups composed by people from the public. This extension was then called "Language Center." It was ascribed to the Department of Modern Languages, which changed its name to "Department of Linguistics and Languages" in 1995. With new and appropriate facilities, the educational community gradually increased. At the moment, the Language Center offers its services to around 2000 students from the public and other programs at the University of Nariño. The number of students is divided into 72 groups of people from the university and 37 of people from the public and counts on the services of a total of 66 teachers.

*Nature of the Language Center.*

The Language Center is a unit of academic support in the Languages Area ascribed to the Department of Linguistics and languages. Its objective is to offer foreign languages courses to students from different faculties at the University of Nariño and public in general. In addition, the Language Center will serve as a Research Center to carry out innovative pedagogical projects in the languages area.

*Vision of the Language Center.*

The Language Center at the University of Nariño will be an academic unit for the search of pedagogical advancements through research and methodological experimentation. Its aim is to give students an excellent academic level of knowledge of foreign languages and broaden their social, literary and cultural horizons.

*Mission of the Language Center.*

The mission of the Language Center is to promote learning of foreign languages to contribute to the scientific and intercultural formation based on a continuous investigation and methodological experimentation.

*Definition of terms*

*Corrective feedback.*

An indication to a learner that his or her use of the target language is incorrect.

*Explicit feedback.*

Overt indication to the learner that his/her use of the target language was incorrect.

*Input.*

The samples of oral or written language the learner is exposed to from which s/he can learn.

*Interlanguage.*

Learners' developing language knowledge. It may have characteristics of the learner's first and second language.

*Metalinguistic feedback.*

Provision of questions, comments or other type of information related to the formation of the student's utterance.

*Modified output.*

Restructuring of an incorrect utterance after receiving corrective feedback.

*Interaction enhancement.*

Process in which the teacher pushes learners produce output in order to provide them with feedback to modified their errors.

*Output.*

The samples in the target language produced by the learner.

*Recast.*

Indirect indication to the learner that his/her utterance was incorrect through implicit reformulation of his/her error.

*Repair.*

Correct reformulation of an error as uttered in a single student turn.

## CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS

*Population and Sample*

This research made use of the universe of students from the Language Center of the University of Nariño. The sample was composed by 15 second-level students whose ages ranged from 15 to 50 years old.

*Design*

Given that this study was aimed to determine the effects of the elicitation of repair after feedback on learners' pronunciation, the design was classified as experimental. In order to achieve the purpose of the present study, two types of stimuli were chosen: corrective feedback followed by repair and corrective feedback alone. The first type was applied to treat the words that contained regular verbs in past, this type of words will be addressed as *Group 1*. The second type, on the other hand was provided to treat the errors that did not belong to the words that would receive corrective feedback plus repair, those words will be addressed as *Group 2*. In order to ease the data collection, only a sample of 10 words from *Group 1* and 10 from *Group 2* was chosen to determine the effects of the treatment. The main criterion to select the words to be treated was their likelihood to appear in the lessons throughout the semester

and in everyday language, therefore, both groups of words had the same options to be practiced in class.

Subsequently, a pre-test in the form of a reading containing the 20 words was administered. Each of the 15 students was asked to read aloud while the teacher ticked the right or wrong pronunciation of the selected items in a checklist, this means that the words chosen for the experiment would appear 15 times each, for a total of 300 student turns.

Once the overall number of mispronounced words was obtained, the treatment took place. Throughout the course, learners were given a series of different tasks in which both they and the teacher had opportunity to practice the words selected in the current research.

The wrong pronunciation of the words in Group 1 was treated with corrective feedback plus repair. On the other hand, the wrong pronunciation of the words in Group 2 was addressed providing only corrective feedback in the form of recasts, that is to say, the teacher modeled the correct form without eliciting production from students.

On the other hand, since most of the students did not know the correct pronunciation, at the beginning the teacher modeled it and made students produce the right pronunciation by using sentences containing the word.

After 5 weeks of treatment students were given a post-test that consisted in a reading containing the words in groups 1 and 2. At that point, the number of student turns incorporating repaired errors in both groups of lexical items after providing the two different treatments was measured.

At the end, the final student turns containing corrected words from group 1 and group 2 was compared in order to determine whether or not elicitation for repair led students to correct the pronunciation of words with a higher frequency.

G= X1 01 X2 02

#### *Research Type*

In order to fulfill the purpose of the present study it was necessary to analyze and interpret in a statistical way the information collected, that is to say, it is a quantitative research. Since the process and the results obtained were carefully characterized, it is convenient to place it as a descriptive study, and given that one of its objectives is to suggest methodological strategies for error treatment, this research also belongs to the propositive type.

*Data Gathering Procedure*

In order to gather the information required to fulfill the aim of this study, it was necessary to administer a pre-test and a post-test which were the tools to determine the progress of the participant group in terms of repair of errors. Besides, a record card and a tape recorder were used to register the essential information, that is, the errors made by the students in this research, taking into account that learning was assessed as the experiment was being applied.

*Data analysis and interpretation*

The information gathered in this study was measured in terms of the number of student turns, out of 300, having pronunciation errors. The occurrence of errors obtained both in the pre-test and post-test was analyzed statistically in the form of percentages which were compared to establish the effect of the experiment. In the same way, the data were represented through graphs in order to visualize the results in a clear way, to understand the interpretation.



## CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

*Effects of repair.*

After administering a pre-test in order to determine the number of student turns containing mistakes, it was seen that 98% of them were inaccurate when learners were asked to pronounce the words chosen to be treated with corrective feedback plus repair. On the other hand, 94% of student turns were wrong in some form when students pronounced the words that would receive only corrective feedback. This means that the frequency with which students made mistakes when pronouncing the given words was almost even in both groups of items.

Probably, the high frequency of errors showed in the pre-test occurred because the sounds or combination of sounds learners had to pronounce do not exist in Spanish, therefore, these are unfamiliar for the students, difficult to produce and internalize.

Some of the most common mistakes found when pronouncing the given words were, for words in group 1: the deletion of the final /t/ or /d/, pronouncing the words in the same way as in present tense:

Worked: /wɜ:k/\*

Traveled: /trævɛl/\*

Or the insertion of a vowel between the two final consonant sounds, pronouncing all the variants of -ed as a separate syllable:

Lived: /livɛd/\*

Wanted: /wɒntɛd/\*

For words in group 2: the substitution of /θ/ for /t/.

Thin: /tIn/\*

After gathering the information in the pre-test, the treatment was applied. The two groups of words received the two different types of stimuli chosen for this study.

As stated previously, words in Group 1 received corrective feedback followed by repair and the process was developed as follows:

As soon as a mistake (belonging to words in Group 1) appeared, the teacher modeled the correct pronunciation. The target form was repeated, if necessary, until learners realized the difference between the language they produced and the correct form.

The next step was the application of elicitation techniques in order to push students to restructure their utterances.

Sample situation 1:

- T: What did you like to play when you were a child?

- S1: I liked /laIkɛd/\* to play hide-and-seeK
- T: ok! You liked /laIkt/, you /laIkt/ to play hide-and-seeK! So, what did you like to play when you were a child?
- S1: I liked /laIkt/to play hide-and-seeK.

Sample situation 2:

- T: Where did you study your primary school?
- S2: I studied /stUdiɛd/\* in San Felipe.
- T: ok! You /stAdId/, you /stAdId/ in San Felipe.
- T: and you? Where did you study?
- S3: I studied /stAdId/ in Maux
- T: remind me, where did you study?
- S2: I studied in San Felipe.

On the other hand, when learners made pronunciation mistakes in words different from past of regular verbs, the corrections given by the teacher were just in the form of recasts and the target form was generally not elicited from students, obviously when their errors involved pronunciation.

After providing the two different types of correction to address two separate groups of words and administering a post-test to determine the final number of student turns containing pronunciation errors, a general conclusion can be drawn: when some kind of corrective feedback takes place,

followed or not by *repair*, learners' interlanguage suffers improvement.

However, based on the data collected in the post-test, it is important to point out that the provision of repair proved to have a major impact on learners' performance, it became more target-like and intelligible, thus confirming the hypothesis formulated in this research.

Figure 1. Percentage of student turns containing pronunciation errors in pre-test.

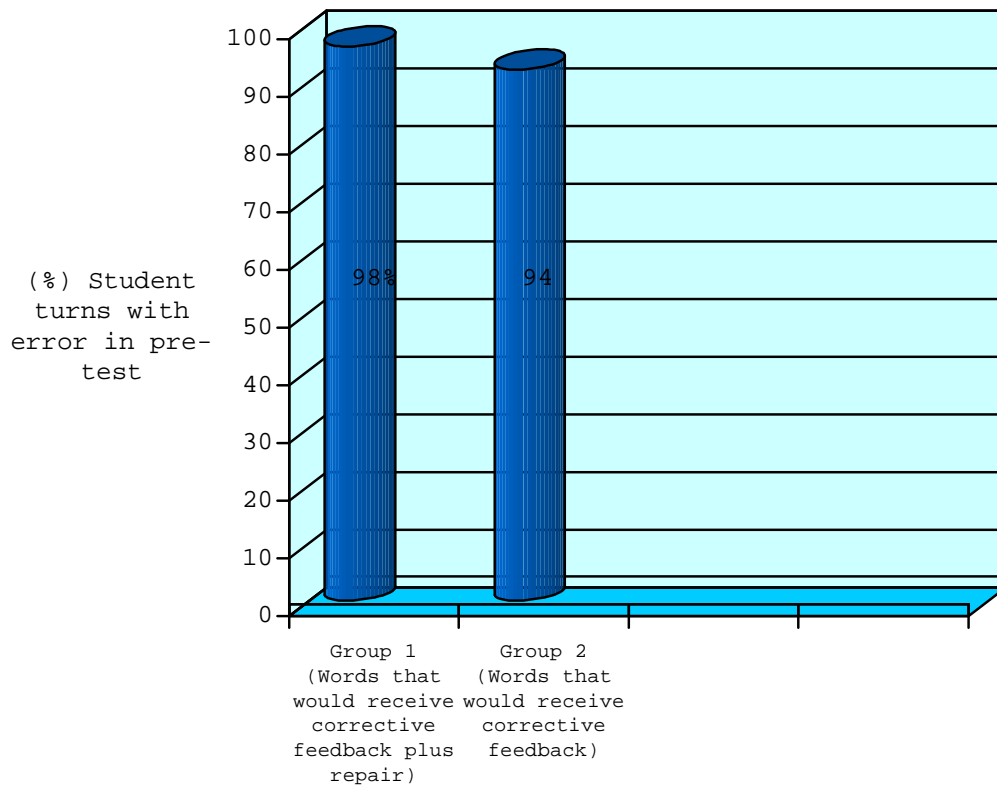


Figure 2. Percentage of student turns containing pronunciation errors in post-test.

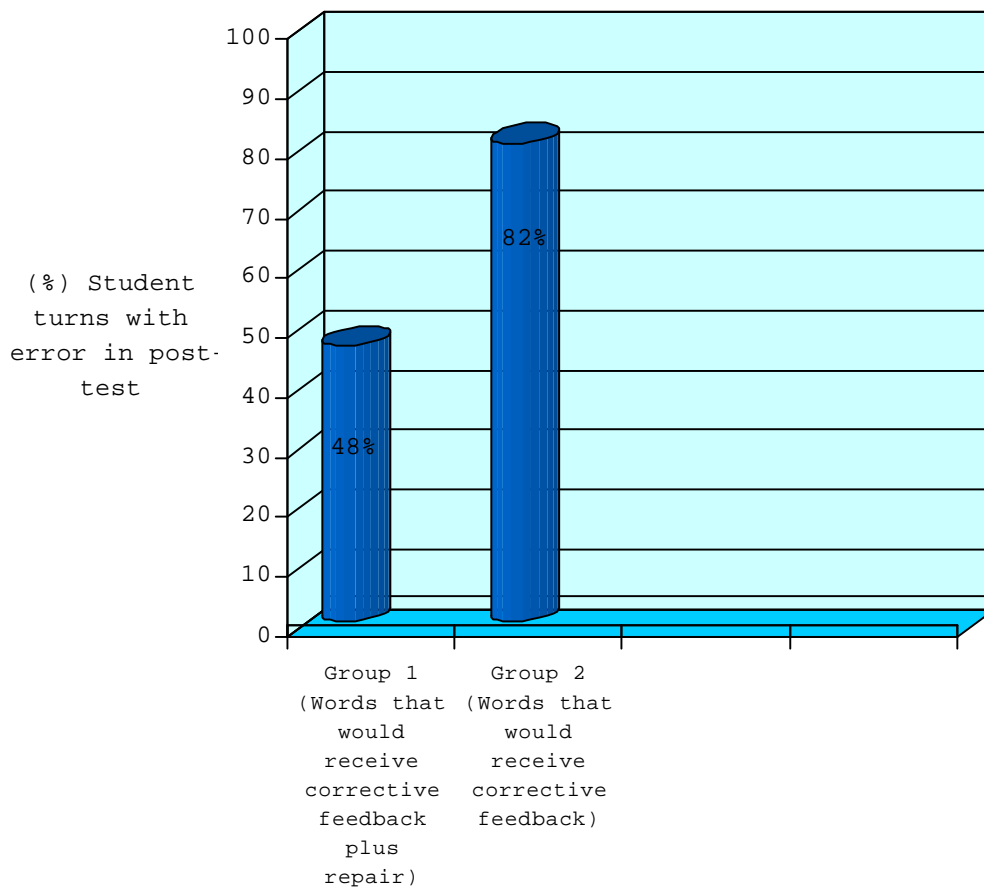
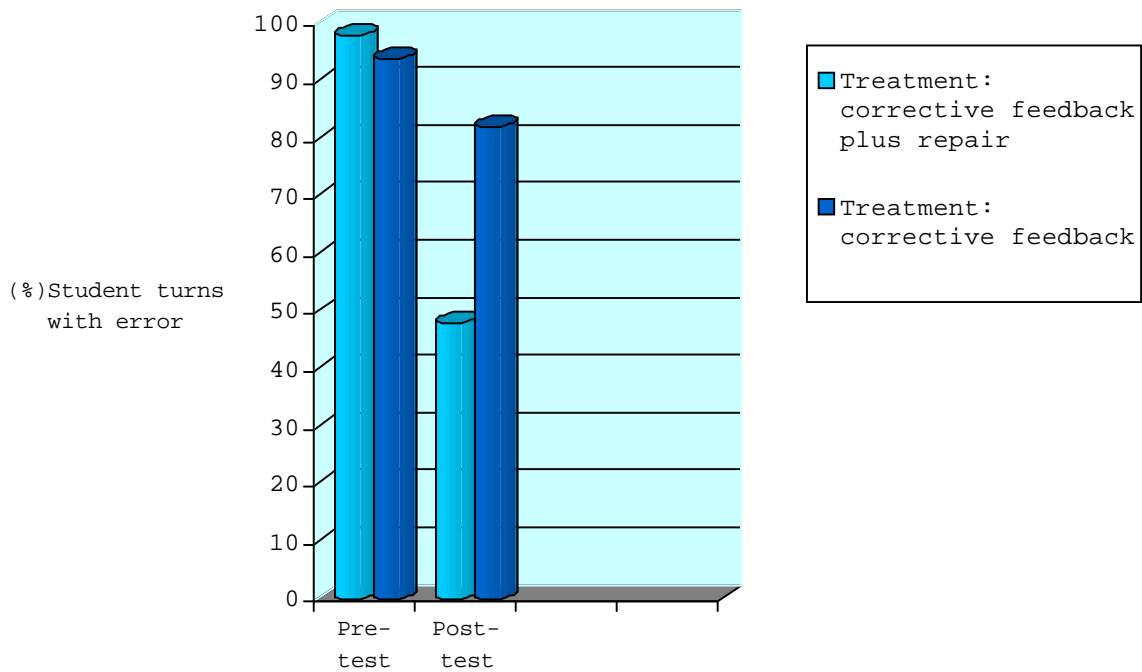


Figure 3. Percentage of student turns containing pronunciation errors in pre-test and post-test. Groups of words chosen to receive two different types of treatment.



Based on the results it can be observed that when students were exposed only to corrective feedback, the number of student turns containing pronunciation errors after 5 weeks of treatment slightly decreased from 141 to

124 (82%). It means that students incorporated 17 corrections provided when the teacher just modeled the right pronunciation.

On the other hand, the results show that when students received corrective feedback followed by repair, the turns containing wrong pronunciation lowered from 147 to 72 (48%), that is, 75 corrections were incorporated after 5 weeks of treatment.

Comparing the results yielded by both types of feedback, it can be said that when students were pushed to reformulate their utterances after producing a mistake they were more likely to incorporate the correct form and produce it subsequently. In contrast, when learners were only exposed to the target form by listening to it, just a few corrections were integrated into their interlanguage.

This evidence confirms, at least in the present study, that input alone does not provide the best conditions for learners to internalize the corrections provided by the teacher. Besides, it reinforces the idea that repair is an element that can bring about positive results in terms of corrected words incorporated in subsequent students' performance.

One fact that might have influenced the results is the level of proficiency that the participant group had. Since



most of them had an elementary level, when they received only feedback, they were probably not able to notice that the pronunciation of some words, even though they were familiar, was being corrected, that is, they did not notice the gap between the language they produced and the target form. In this way, the improvement of their interlanguage proved not to be significant compared to the progress that they showed when producing repair.

Allwright and Bailey (1991, in Lyster 1998) state that the simple repetition or modeling of the correct utterance may be useless if learners can not perceive the difference between the correct form and the error they produce.

It may be true that in order for students at elementary levels to incorporate a greater number of corrections, it is advisable to implement a type of feedback that makes visible that an error has been made; otherwise, they will not notice what needs to be corrected. Learners' awareness of the presence of an error is a crucial condition for repair to take place. Regarding this fact, Holliday, Lewis and Morgenthaler (1989, cited in Ellis, 1994) claim that learners are more likely to correct their errors when they are provided with clues pointing out that something was wrong in their language production. As seen in the theoretical framework of this research, in a study conducted

by Holliday et al., learners whose teacher indicated that there was an error in their speech made significant grammatical modifications given that they clearly noticed that corrections in their language production needed to be made.

Concerning noticing, it is possible that it was another factor that accounts for the improvement seen in the learners in the present research. Probably, when students are forced to reformulate their incorrect utterances, they become more aware of the adjustments they need to make, and as Swain and Lapkin (1995, cited in Swain, 1998) put it, this action leads to mental processes that may represent the internalization of new linguistic features.

Supporting this view, Schmidt (1995) affirms that what learners notice is what will become intake prior to processing and integration into a learner's developing interlanguage system. Moreover, Gass (1988) claims that noticing is the first stage of language acquisition because when learners notice how the target language works they are able to reflect on what is noticed, make an effort to understand its significance, and experience comprehension.

Another aspect that may explain the outcome of this research is that when repair is elicited from learners, they can realize whether or not they are capable of producing the

target form, in this case the correct pronunciation. When students recognize that they have problems producing the right form, *repair* can be the opportunity to rehearse it and improve their later performance. Mennim (2003) presents evidence that confirms this idea. In his study, students transcribed their speech after a speaking activity in order to focus on their oral output. Then, learners received corrective feedback and were elicited to repair the mistakes in the transcript. Two weeks after receiving feedback and modifying their output, learners made the same speaking activity and showed considerable improvements in pronunciation, grammar and in organization of content.

Although the focus of the experiment of the present study was on pronunciation, the results in terms of the positive effects of repair in learners' interlanguage, can be compared to those obtained by Ellis and He (1999) and McDonough (2004). As seen previously, Ellis and He conducted a study in which they exposed learners in the experimental group to modified output in order to find out if it helped them acquire new vocabulary items. After a series of controlled tests, the researchers found that repair indeed helped learners internalize new vocabulary. According to Ellis and He, the production of modified output helps

learners process the target forms more deeply, thus enhancing their vocabulary learning.

In the same way, if the results of the pre-test and post-test in the present research are compared, it can be said that students partially acquired the correct pronunciation of the -ed morpheme of past given that at the beginning of this study, learners were not even near to an accurate pronunciation of it, but after the treatment, they seemed to have processed the target form more deeply, improving dramatically their pronunciation.

On the other hand, McDonough (2004) carried out a similar study whose results showed that learners who were pushed to modify their incorrect question forms demonstrated significant improvement on their ratings of question items. However, learners who were pushed to modify their non target past tense forms showed no significant improvement on their ratings of past tense items. This result probably suggests that the production of repair helps learners' interlanguage be more accurate but only in some aspects of the language.

To conclude, the evidence presented above implies that at least in pronunciation and given the appropriate conditions for feedback, *repair* brings about positive results in terms of helping students develop a more accurate pronunciation of the target forms.

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

*Conclusions*

The aim of the present research was to apply two different treatments (corrective feedback and corrective feedback plus repair) in order to determine whether or not *repair* leads to a higher incorporation of corrections concerning pronunciation. From this experience the following conclusions can be drawn.

Based on the results, it is worth saying that corrective feedback itself, even if it was not followed by repair, played an important role in assisting students in correcting their mistakes. Besides, their reaction towards correction was positive, they never seemed to feel threatened, instead, they asked for repetition when they realized that they were wrong. Learners were always willing to cooperate, learn and try to organize their ideas and adjust their pronunciation once the teacher indicated them to do so through explicit feedback.

This involvement of learners in the provision of feedback is positive since they start taking responsibility for their own learning and a team work between teacher and learners is established. Thanks to this fact, the students in this research proved to have a more intelligible pronunciation which represents better understanding of the

message they wanted to convey orally, therefore, they increased their opportunities to communicate effectively. This evidence is significant because one of the aims of language learners is to establish a successful conversation keeping breakdowns or misunderstandings to a minimum. Generally, this objective can not be met because of the lack of accuracy in different aspects of language: grammar, syntax, pronunciation, etc.

On the other hand, it is important to point out that, against some misconceptions stating that students must not be forced to produce output and that correction is harmful for them, its provision in the current research yielded absolutely positive results and was of great acceptance among students.

As for *repair*, students were more likely to fix their pronunciation and incorporate the corrections in later language production when this element was elicited. This is a remarkable thing since in traditional ways of providing corrective feedback learners tend to repeat what the teacher has just said without reflecting on repair or even remembering the correction a few minutes later. Approaching feedback and repair in a different way leads to a permanent modification of learners' language which in turn affects their interlanguage positively.

The type of feedback used in this research (explicit) was crucial to obtain repair from learners, however, another type may be considered depending on learners' proficiency. Nevertheless it is worth mentioning that the ultimate goal of any language course is to enable learners to use the foreign language in an accurate and effective way and this type of feedback may be especially helpful in communicative courses where the focus is not a systematic learning of grammar rules as it is in courses for those who will be teachers.

Language learners, especially beginners, need to notice how the target language works. Generally when they make mistakes, little or no attention is paid and students do not perceive their failure to communicate effectively. The present research suggests that repair can lead them to notice the mechanics of the language; thus, incorporating the target forms.

Based on the evidence presented by some researchers, the effectiveness of repair may vary depending on the aspects of the language to be treated. Although in the present research students' pronunciation was positively affected by repair, it may not work similarly when addressing grammatical errors since this language element implies a more complex process of learning.

Finally, since nowadays the development of receptive and productive skills in language learners is being promoted, *repair* can become a way to push students produce language no matter if its effectiveness is still being proven. If learners are able to produce comprehensible output and reflect on their performances focusing on ways to repair their errors, a great step has been taken in the effective development of communicative competence in EFL settings, a goal that seemed difficult to achieve. A new generation of teachers and students who change roles, support each other in the teaching-learning process, take responsibility for their progress and feel encouraged to work independently and to actively use the L2 may bring about important changes in the way a foreign language is taught; it is valuable that those changes start with teachers and students at the University of Nariño since this must be the place where the application of contemporary trends in teaching is carried out and analyzed.

#### *Recommendations*

Based on the results gathered in this research, it can be said that teachers should not take students' comprehension for granted, instead, they should work on ensuring effective feedback that is noticeable for students and provide them with opportunities to adjust their language



production. However, regarding the attitude from the teacher when eliciting repair, it is important to look for strategies that do not interrupt abruptly learners' language production.

Considering different studies conducted in the field and the evidence in the present research, it can be said corrective feedback and repair are worth taking into account in the process of language learning since they help students be more accurate when using the L2. It does not mean that the teacher should not allow mistakes and that students should produce completely accurate speeches and pieces of writing, it means that feedback and repair are a tool to treat the linguistic problems that learners can have, promoting comprehensibility and improving their interlanguage.

Since the effect of repair in aspects of language such as grammar can vary, it might be convenient to conduct a subsequent study aimed to prove whether or not this hypothesis is true.

Further studies on *repair* could include some modifications in terms of design. Given the population involved in this study, it would be advisable to conduct a similar research taking as a sample a more homogeneous population in order to determine if the results are similar

to those obtained in the present one, which could help to confirm the efficacy of repair or its absence.

In addition, if the efficacy of repair is confirmed, it would be advisable to conduct a delayed post-test in order to find out if the improvements made by learners remain.

For further research, it may also be suitable to work with two groups: an experimental and a control group with the aim of measuring the progress made by the former compared to the latter.

## TABLES

TABLE 1: Absolute frequency. Number of student turns with error in pre-test. Group of words that received corrective feedback plus repair.

Word	Wrong	Right
	N°	N°
1. Lived	15	0
2. Died	13	2
3. Studied	14	1
4. Traveled	15	0
5. Worked	15	0
6. Loved	15	0
7. Proposed	15	0
8. Wanted	15	0
9. Graduated	15	0
10. Visited	15	0
Total of student turns	147	3

TABLE 2: Relative frequency. Percentage of student turns in pre-test. Group of words that received corrective feedback plus repair.

Word	Wrong	Right
	%	%
1. Lived	100%	0%
2. Died	86,66	13,33%
3. Studied	93,33%	6,66%
4. Traveled	100%	0%
5. Worked	100%	0%
6. Loved	100%	0%
7. Proposed	100%	0%
8. Wanted	100%	0%
9. Graduated	100%	0%
10. Visited	100%	0%
Total of student turns	98%	2%

TABLE 3: Absolute frequency. Number of student turns in pre-test. Group of words that would receive only corrective feedback.

Word	Wrong	Right
	N°	N°
1. Think	13	2
2. Thin	15	0
3. Thing	14	1
4. Three	15	0
5. Thought	15	0
6. Thanks	12	3
7. Thirty	15	0
8. Thousand	13	2
9. Something	15	0
10.Nothing	14	1
Total of student turns	141	9

TABLE 4: Relative frequency. Percentage of student turns in pre-test. Group of words that would receive only corrective feedback.

Word	Wrong	Right
	%	%
1. Think	86,66%	13,33%
2. Thin	100%	0%
3. Thing	93,33%	6,66%
4. Three	100%	0%
5. Thought	100%	0%
6. Thanks	80%	20%
7. Thirty	100%	0%
8. Thousand	86,66%	13,33%
9. Something	100%	0%
10.Nothing	93,33%	6,66%
Total of student turns	94%	6%

TABLE 5: Absolute frequency. Number of student turns in post-test. Group of words that received corrective feedback plus repair.

Word	Wrong	Right
	N°	N°
1. Lived	6	9
2. Died	3	12
3. Studied	4	11
4. Traveled	4	11
5. Worked	7	8
6. Loved	11	4
7. Proposed	13	2
8. Wanted	4	11
9. Graduated	8	7
10. Visited	12	3
Total of student turns	72	78

TABLE 6: Relative frequency. Percentage of student turns in post-test. Group of words that received corrective feedback plus repair.

Word	Wrong	Right
	%	%
1. Lived	40%	60%
2. Died	20%	80%
3. Studied	26,66%	73,33%
4. Traveled	26,66%	73,33%
5. Worked	46,66%	53,33%
6. Loved	73,33%	26,66%
7. Proposed	86,66%	13,33%
8. Wanted	26,66%	73,33%
9. Graduated	53,33%	46,66%
10. Visited	80%	20%
Total of student turns	48%	52%



TABLE 7: Absolute frequency. Number of student turns in post-test. Group of words that received only corrective feedback.

Word	Wrong	Right
	N°	N°
1. Think	11	4
2. Thin	12	3
3. Thing	13	2
4. Three	13	2
5. Thought	11	4
6. Thanks	10	5
7. Thirty	14	1
8. Thousand	13	2
9. Something	14	1
10.Nothing	13	2
Total of student turns	124	26

TABLE 8: Relative frequency. Number of student turns in post-test. Group of words that received only corrective feedback.

Word	Wrong	Right
	%	%
1. Think	73,33%	26,66
2. Thin	80%	20
3. Thing	86,66%	13,33
4. Three	86,66%	13,33
5. Thought	73,33%	26,66
6. Thanks	66,66%	33,33
7. Thirty	93,33%	6,66
8. Thousand	86,66%	13,33
9. Something	93,33%	6,66
10.Nothing	86,66%	13,33
Total of student turns	82,66%	17,33

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## APPENDIX A: PRETEST

This is the reading used to collect the data from students. First, learners were asked to read it allowed and then they were assigned another task which consisted in bringing the story to an end trying to make it funny or tragic.

Linda was a thin, sad-looking girl who lived in a small town with her mother because her father had died when she was a baby. Her mother worked very hard to pay Linda's school because she wanted her daughter to become an important person.

As a reward, Linda studied a lot, and one thing she loved doing was writing. She had one thing clear in mind: she wanted to become a famous novelist. One day, Linda's mother, Helena, traveled looking for a better job, leaving Linda alone, with nobody and nothing around her. Linda said to herself: "I think I will never become a writer". But what she thought was wrong!

One night, an old friend of her mother, Peter, visited Linda. He realized the poor conditions Linda was living in and decided to help her.

Thanks to Peter, Linda graduated from school. But he did something else for her: he gave her 30.000 (thirty thousand) pounds for her to live and study literature in a bigger

city. Just three years later, Linda published her first book and soon, a good-looking gentleman proposed her marriage.

But...





APPENDIX C

This is a fill in the blanks exercise but at the same time a production exercise in which students had to use the words selected for the treatment but in a meaningful way.

## My Childhood

Complete the following sentences, share the information with a classmate. Report to the class what your partner said.

I was born in \_\_\_\_\_.  
And/But I grew up in \_\_\_\_\_.  
When I was young, I lived with \_\_\_\_\_.  
I was a very \_\_\_\_\_ young boy/girl.  
I always liked to \_\_\_\_\_ with my friends.  
My favorite games were \_\_\_\_\_.  
On vacation, I usually travelled to \_\_\_\_\_  
with \_\_\_\_\_, we  
visited \_\_\_\_\_.

I remember that I once \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

When I was a child I wanted to \_\_\_\_\_.  
I studied the primary school in \_\_\_\_\_.  
I loved to \_\_\_\_\_ when I was with my classmates.  
I was a \_\_\_\_\_ student.  
My most memorable teacher was \_\_\_\_\_ from the  
\_\_\_\_\_ grade.  
In \_\_\_\_\_ I graduated from

and \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
After that, I \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

APPENDIX D: ORAL EXAM

The following set of questions was part of an oral exam to assess the use of past tense and comparisons.

1. Be ready to answer eight of the following questions with complete sentences and intelligible pronunciation.

When were you born?

Where were you born?

Where did you live?

Who did you live with when you were a child?

What were you like when you were a child?

What did you like to do with your friends?

When you were a child, what did you want to become or to study?

Where did you go to school?

What was your favorite subject?

When did you graduate from primary school/ high school/ college?

How often did you travel when you were a child?

Where did you usually go?

Name three things you loved to do in the past.

What did you do last weekend?

What did you do last vacation?

Tell a memorable event that happened to you in the past.

2. You will receive the pictures of places or people. Be ready to tell at least 5 sentences comparing them.