

**TEACHER'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS MISTAKE CORRECTION IN
TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

Ключові слова: виправлення помилок, обмовка, психологічний бар'єр, самооцінка.

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It goes without saying that foreign language teachers in higher educational establishments in the overwhelming majority of cases have to tackle the difficult dilemma of what to do with proper error correction. The problem of when to correct, how often and what kind of mistakes are to be corrected should be given due consideration. It is certain that error correction process poses a significant challenge to any foreign language teacher.

It is necessary to stress that the top-priority task of a teacher is to make students understand that making mistakes while learning foreign languages is a natural and inevitable process. If students make mistakes, it does not mean that they are not able to learn languages. Everyone makes mistakes when acquiring new skills. Thus, we should consider mistakes to be an integral and essential part of any learning process. Moreover, it would not be an exaggeration to claim that it is mistakes that turn out to be an unmistakable indication to students of what needs to be improved. Without making mistakes one would not know what is necessary to work on. It would be appropriate to quote American writer Garry Marshall who wrote: "It's always helpful to learn from your mistakes because then your mistakes seem worthwhile."

Students should not be afraid of making mistakes, otherwise we will definitely have to deal with so-called psychological barrier that can become a serious stumbling block for any student. It is better to speak a foreign language with errors than not to speak it at all! Needless to say that it is the task of a foreign language teacher to create a favourable friendly atmosphere in the class, where no student, even the shiest one, will be afraid to get in awkward situation while speaking a foreign language.

Let's now have a closer look at mistake correction in different types of learning activities. It should be emphasized that in writing, as a rule, almost all errors (grammar, spelling, vocabulary, punctuation) are to be corrected, though there definitely can be some exceptions, e.g. it won't make any sense to correct mistakes that occur in students' writing tasks because of the fact that they are not familiar with structures or grammar pieces.

As the experience shows it is a great idea not to correct mistakes in writing, but to underline incorrect grammatical structures or inappropriate words and give students a chance to correct mistakes by themselves. Some written symbols along with underlinings (S=Spelling, WO=word order, etc.) used as hints can be agreed on with students [2, 84]. This method can actually have a lot of advantages - firstly, students won't be frustrated when they get a piece of written work back with overwhelming amount of teacher's notes, crossing-outs, comments etc. Secondly, very often they can correct mistakes by themselves when they know there is a mistake (teacher's underlining would give them a hint where the problem is). Usually, it works very well when we deal with mistakes made by students because of inattentiveness, lack of concentration, distraction or haste. Moreover, if a student manages to correct his/her own mistakes, it can boost confidence and encourage to move forward. Finally, it is also a good way to save teachers' time when we deal with the necessity to check pieces of written work of large groups of students. It should also be noted that teachers can switch from using red-ink pens to more "student-friendly" colours, e.g. green or pink.

Let's now focus on mistake correction in speaking activities. First of all, it is necessary to mention that it is not recommended to interrupt speaking activity in case it is quite obvious for a teacher that the error made by a student is so called slip of the tongue error. Consequently, while students perform some speaking activities the teacher's role resolves itself to a "stander-by mode" - just watching and listening, while making notes using tear-off notepads. Later on, a teacher can hand out a corresponding notepad with mistakes made to each student asking to revise the topic or analyse mistakes. Moreover, in some cases it would be beneficial to assign some additional work on the topic. The most common or repetitive mistakes can be discussed with the whole class. Undoubtedly, in some cases teachers can ignore mistakes when passionate discussion that takes place in the class can be ruined because of teacher's constant interruptions.

All in all, it should be pointed out that dealing with students' mistakes a teacher should always rely on sense of delicacy, abilities to assess students' self-esteem, teaching experience, ability to analyse psychological factors affecting the efficiency of students' progressing in acquiring language skills, etc. A foreign language teacher dealing with mistake correction in class has to adopt a mixture of solutions meeting the needs of both advanced and average students, simultaneously facilitating favourable and friendly atmosphere among all members of the academic group.

References:

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