

**ERROR CORRECTION STRATEGIES AND THE DEVELOPMENT
OF METACOGNITIVE COMPETENCE IN GERMAN LANGUAGE
LEARNING**

Khasanova Ozodakhon Kurvonali kizi

Fergana state university, Doctor of pedagogy (DSc)

Abstract: Error correction remains one of the most debated issues in foreign language teaching. While errors are considered a natural component of language acquisition, the effectiveness of correction depends largely on how, when, and why the correction is provided. Particular attention is paid to communicative correction techniques and game-based activities such as *Klebezettel-Korrektur*, *Korrekturwimmel*, and *Football Error Correction*.

Keywords: error correction, German language teaching, metacognitive competence, corrective feedback, communicative games, foreign language learning, learner autonomy.

INTRODUCTION

The question of how errors should be corrected has attracted considerable attention in foreign language pedagogy. Errors are no longer viewed solely as signs of failure but rather as indicators of learners' developmental stages in acquiring a new language. Consequently, the primary purpose of error correction is not simply to provide the correct answer but to create learning opportunities through which learners can improve their linguistic competence.

Error correction may be carried out directly or indirectly through verbal explanations, examples, gestures, facial expressions, and various forms of feedback. Regardless of the technique employed, the ultimate goal remains the same: enabling learners to gain new knowledge and improve their language performance through the correction process.



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TIMING OF ERROR CORRECTION

An equally important issue concerns the timing of error correction. Teachers may choose to correct errors immediately after they occur or postpone correction until the learner has completed speaking. According to Jalolov, monitoring learners' speech and encouraging self-correction play a crucial role in the development of speaking skills. However, interrupting learners during communicative activities may negatively affect fluency and confidence. Therefore, correction is often more effective after the learner has finished expressing their ideas.

The debate regarding immediate versus delayed correction continues among language educators. Some researchers argue that immediate correction prevents the reinforcement of incorrect language forms, while others emphasize the importance of maintaining communicative flow. In practice, both approaches can be beneficial depending on the instructional context and learning objectives. Our classroom observations revealed that learners differ significantly in their preferences. Some students expect immediate feedback and actively seek assistance from the teacher as soon as they recognize an error. Others prefer to complete their speech before receiving corrective feedback. Therefore, teachers should adopt a flexible approach and consider learners' individual needs.

One effective strategy is to designate a specific phase of the lesson for error correction. Such an approach is particularly valuable in speaking classes, where interruptions can interfere with communicative competence development. Additionally, regular review lessons can be organized to revisit common errors and discuss them collectively with learners. An important but often overlooked aspect of error correction concerns what happens after the correction has been provided. Correcting an error does not automatically guarantee that learners will avoid the same mistake in the future. The effectiveness of correction depends on whether learners understand the source of the error and develop strategies to prevent its recurrence. Errors provide valuable diagnostic information for teachers. They indicate which linguistic structures have not yet been fully mastered and which areas require additional instruction. For this reason,



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teachers should return to problematic areas, explain the causes of frequent errors, and provide targeted practice activities. Although metalinguistic explanations can sometimes be helpful, they are not equally effective for all learners. Instead, increasing the number of exercises related to problematic structures and incorporating these areas into independent learning tasks may produce better results.

Collaborative learning can also contribute significantly to error reduction. Mixed-ability groups consisting of stronger and weaker learners create opportunities for peer support and knowledge sharing. Such collaboration encourages reflection and promotes deeper understanding of linguistic structures. One of the primary objectives of contemporary language education is the development of metacognitive competence. Metacognitive competence enables learners to monitor, evaluate, and regulate their own learning processes. In the context of German language learning, this competence helps learners identify linguistic errors independently and apply appropriate strategies to overcome them.

Educational strategies may be defined as conscious, systematic, and purposeful actions selected by teachers to achieve specific learning objectives. In foreign language learning, strategies guide learners toward effective language use and autonomous learning.

The present approach incorporates several metacognitive methods, including:

- Metacognitive monitoring;
- The Five-Step Error Correction Procedure;
- Error Workshops;
- Korrekturwimmel;
- Klebezettel-Korrektur;

These methods aim to transform learners from passive recipients of correction into active participants in the error correction process.

Effective error correction should extend beyond regular classroom instruction. Teachers are encouraged to dedicate additional time each week to

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focused error correction activities. Such sessions may be organized as extracurricular workshops specifically designed to address learners' recurring difficulties.

In Germany, specialized "Error Correction Workshops" have been successfully implemented in language education. Similar initiatives could be introduced in other educational contexts. During these workshops, learners work collaboratively on their most frequent errors, exchange ideas, and support one another in finding solutions. Advanced learners may also participate as peer tutors, thereby enhancing both their own and their classmates' learning experiences.

PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE ERROR CORRECTION

To ensure successful correction processes, several principles should be observed:

1. Feedback and correction should always be integrated.
2. Errors should be corrected in a timely manner. Corrections provided weeks after the occurrence of an error often lose their pedagogical value.
3. When correcting written work, teachers should rewrite the entire sentence rather than correcting isolated words. This helps learners understand the linguistic structure within its context.

COMMUNICATIVE GAMES FOR ERROR CORRECTION

Many scholars agree that games create an engaging and motivating learning environment. Nevertheless, some teachers believe that correcting errors during games is difficult and less effective than traditional instructional approaches. Our findings suggest that games can significantly enhance error correction when they are designed with specific pedagogical objectives.

KLEBEZETTEL-KORREKTUR (STICKY NOTE CORRECTION)

This activity is conducted in groups and usually lasts between twenty and thirty minutes. Learners receive sentences containing grammatical or lexical errors together with correction cards. Each group rewrites the corrected



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sentences on colored cards and attaches them over the incorrect versions displayed on a poster.

After all groups have completed the task, the class reviews the corrections collectively. Correct solutions remain on the poster, while incorrect ones are removed. The group with the highest number of correct corrections is declared the winner.

The activity promotes:

- self-correction skills;
- error awareness;
- learner autonomy;
- motivation through competition.

KORREKTURWIMMEL

Korrekturwimmel is another communicative activity designed to encourage active engagement with linguistic errors. Half of the cards contain incorrect sentences, while the other half contain the corresponding corrections. Learners move around the classroom searching for the card that matches their own.

A variation of this activity involves small-group collaboration. Learners collectively identify and correct errors before exchanging cards with other groups for peer evaluation. This approach encourages metacognitive reflection and collaborative learning.

CONCLUSION

Communicative games such as Klebezettel-Korrektur, Korrekturwimmel, and Football Error Correction provide innovative opportunities for learners to engage actively with their errors. By combining corrective feedback, metacognitive strategies, and collaborative learning, teachers can transform errors into valuable learning resources that contribute to sustainable language development.



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