



Analysis of error correction methods to improve the writing skill

Análisis de métodos de corrección de errores para mejorar la habilidad de escritura

Análise de métodos de correção de erros para melhorar a habilidade de escrever

Jennifer Karina Flores Galeano¹

jennifer.flores@epoch.edu.ec

Luis Fernando Barriga Fray¹

fernando.barriga@epoch.edu.ec

Johanna Isabel Barriga Fray²

jibarriga@unach.edu.ec

Kerly Yesennia Cabezas Llerena²

kerly.cabezas@unach.edu.ec

Escuela Superior Politécnica de Chimborazo, Ecuador¹
Universidad Nacional de Chimborazo, Ecuador²

Recibido diciembre 2019 | Revisado enero 2020 | Publicado 01 de abril 2020

ABSTRACT

In this investigation the correction methods were analyzed to improve the development of the writing skills in English students of the third year of Basic Education class "A" at Unidad Educativa "José María Román" during the school term 2017 - 2018. The purposes of this research were to identify how the teacher applies correction methods to improve the writing skill in students and describe its benefits. To reach these goals the ethnographic method and the observation technique were applied to 35 students of that school. The main results showed that a lack in the application of correction methods affects the development of writing skills in students, that correction methods such as: peer-correction, self-correction, and error code allow students to improve their writing and English learning, and the way in which teacher applies these methods benefits the students in the learning process.

Key words: Teaching methods; correction; development; skills, writing

RESUMEN

En esta investigación se analizaron los métodos de corrección para mejorar el desarrollo de las habilidades de escritura en los estudiantes de Inglés del Tercer año de Educación Básica paralelo "A" de la Unidad Educativa "José María Román" del año lectivo 2017 - 2018. Los objetivos fueron identificar cómo el maestro aplica métodos de corrección para mejorar la habilidad de escritura en los estudiantes; y describir sus beneficios. Para alcanzarlos, se utilizaron el método etnográfico y la técnica de observación aplicados a 35 estudiantes de la mencionada Unidad Educativa. Los principales resultados mostraron que la ausencia en la aplicación de métodos de corrección afecta al desarrollo de la destreza de la escritura en los estudiantes, que los métodos de corrección como peer-corrección, self-correction, y error code permiten mejorar la escritura en los estudiantes y el aprendizaje del idioma Inglés, dependiendo en cómo el profesor los aplica.

Palabras clave: Métodos de enseñanza; corrección; desarrollo; habilidades, escritura

RESUMO

Nesta investigação, os métodos de correção foram analisados para melhorar o desenvolvimento das habilidades de escrita em estudantes de inglês do terceiro ano da turma de Educação Básica "A" na Unidad Educativa "José María Román" durante o período letivo de 2017 a 2018. As pesquisas foram para identificar como o professor aplica métodos de correção para melhorar a habilidade de escrever nos alunos e descrever seus benefícios. Para atingir esses objetivos, o método etnográfico e a técnica de observação foram aplicados a 35 alunos daquela escola. Os principais resultados mostraram que a falta de aplicação dos métodos de correção afeta o desenvolvimento das habilidades de escrita nos alunos, que métodos de correção como: correção por pares, autocorreção e código de erro permitem que os alunos melhorem sua escrita e o aprendizado de inglês, e a maneira pela qual o professor aplica esses métodos beneficia os alunos no processo de aprendizagem.

Palavras-Chave: Métodos de ensino; correção; desenvolvimento; habilidades, escrita

INTRODUCTION

This research pretends to develop the writing skills in the English language students analyzing the correction methods so that students may improve their writing and their knowledge of English. The common mistake is that students write as they pronounce, and they do not correct the writing in an appropriate way. This paper will allow to verify if correction methods are being applied by teachers in students of third year of Basic Education class "A" at Unidad Educativa "José María Román" situated in Riobamba city, Province of Chimborazo, during the academic year 2017-2018."

The study applied a qualitative method with an exploratory level because it helped the researcher to choose the best way to solve the proposed research problem. In this

process an ethnographic analysis was necessary due to the relationship between the qualitative method and the direct observation which was useful at the moment of analyzing students in natural environments to make a detailed description of what happened in the class.

This study aims to develop writing skills through the use of correction methods in order to produce a coherent text. The research allowed the students to improve their level of writing, at the same time the observation sheet was a necessary instrument that let the researchers know if the correction methods were correctly applied by the teacher in students of third year of Basic Education class "A" at Unidad Educativa "José María Román".

The Unidad Educativa "José María Román" is located in the Chimborazo province, city of Riobamba, La Victoria neighborhood. It was created in 1971. Nowadays, this public institution has about fifty five teachers, four of them are English language teachers, three of them are female and a male. There are eight hundred seventy-two students, the majority of them come from the urban sector and one hundred students come from the rural sector. The number of classrooms is enough to cover the amount of students. At Unidad Educativa "José María Román", teachers did not apply correction methods to correct the students' writing skills in such a way that the results showed that they wrote incorrect words due to teachers lacked the methods to improve the written production of their pupils.

On the other hand, in the third year of Basic Education "A" at Unidad Educativa "José María Román", during the teaching and learning process, the students showed problems with the methods that teachers applied, due to the majority of them were not interested in learning English. The main

problem was that the students in the third year of Basic Education "A" did not correct the misspelled words and showed no interest in practicing writing. The present study explored and obtained more information about how the correction methods helped students to acquire new ways of correction and put them into practice.

Also, this research helped the teaching staff at Unidad Educativa "José María Román" to improve their methodology. Moreover, the study was useful for the researchers, as the application of these methods constitute a positive element to update their competence in the field of education.

The researchers pretended to investigate the application of correction methods through the student's participation in the teaching-learning process, to be able to observe their different reactions during a specific written exercises.

The present study manifests its importance as it enriches the methodological area of the writing skill; in addition, it helps to know the appropriate method to correct the students' writing skills and factors that could help students in the third year of Basic Education class "A" to spell words correctly in L2.

The instrument used to develop this investigation was an observation sheet, which was created by the researchers, it was elaborated to obtain adequate and necessary information to conduct the study, and analyze the results obtained during the class.

This investigation helped the researchers to recognize the different aspects that any teacher must bear in mind to teach writing and the possible solutions that can be applied in their professional life. In addition, when teachers apply correction methods to improve the students' writing skills in the teaching learning process, the most important element that they must take into account is

motivation everyone enjoys being corrected in a positive manner.

The study was possible to be developed since the researchers obtained necessary and adequate knowledge about the methodological aspects to teach writing, among other elements related to the problem. The research was developed by observing practical classes and the respective reports in which the beneficiaries were; a teacher and thirty five students, not to mention, the researchers who took part of the investigation.

Analysis. Is defined as the decomposition of a complete document into parts or components, examining data and facts to discover and understand cause-effect relationships, providing the basis to solve problems and make decisions. (Ritchey, 1991).

Correction. The action of correcting something, to change and rectify the misspelled words. It is used to modify something that someone says or writes in an incorrect way, showing an adequate result that allows a correct clarification of the words. (English Oxford Living Dictionary, 2018).

Error Correction. Is when the teachers focuses on errors during and after the activities, also they can take notes on a common mistake that students make during an activity so as not to disrupt the communication and not demotivate students and at the end of the class, the teacher can present a mini grammar lesson on these common mistakes. (Nassaji. H, 1999 and Gordon. T, 2006).

Methods. A method is a series of steps to follow that is established as part of a class, a class can have more than one method. A

method can access the information known by the object, and it can also be reused in multiple objects, guaranteeing the data through an application. (Rouse, 2005).

Skills. Capacity that is acquired through the determined effort and ordered to perform complex activities or work functions that involve creative ideas (cognitive skills), things (technical skills) and people (interpersonal skills). (Business Dictionary, 2018).

Writing. Is a form of communication through a set of words that are related, according to a particular structural level of language, and is also the representation of symbols and signs in written language. (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2018).

Writing Skill. This is an important part of communication, as you develop writing skills; this helps you communicate your message clearly and easily. Nowadays, people express their ability to write through books or articles that they write or publish. (Skills, 2018).

Sentences. These allow us to see the clear written expression of our ideas. The main objective is to write complete sentences that are correctly punctuated, and that make sense, always begin with a capital letter and end in a period, exclamation point or question mark. A complete sentence must contain; subject, verb, and complement, to understand the sentence. (University of Leicester 2009).

Pictures and Words. The images always communicate something, and they have a lot of visual importance, but only if the words are focused, we will be able to know what the image is about. Trying to understand an image is to impose a language on it; interpreting visual information is communicating in verbal terms; Reading

images is to give meaning to the narrative by applying the understanding of the words. Words and images will always have a connective relationship. (Lewis, 2001).

Self-Correction. The best way to correct mistakes is to have students correct themselves. Ideally a student will realize a mistake has been made and fix it automatically. Give students a chance, and time, to correct themselves. One of the ways to do this is to repeat what the student said placing emphasis on the incorrect portion, and saying it in a questioning way. At this point the student has an opportunity to think about and revise his initial response. You may have your own method of prompting students with a facial expression or phrase which they associate with being incorrect. (Arntsen, 2007).

Peer Correction. When a student is unable to self-correct, peer correction might be appropriate. If a student raises his hand while you are waiting for a student to self-correct, you may want to call on that student for the correct answer or, after waiting a short time for a student to self-correct, you could ask the whole class the same question and encourage a choral response. Especially with challenging questions, this is a good method because then it is unknown who in the class has the right answer and who does not. Just repeat and emphasize the correct answer by writing it on the board and explaining why it is correct, it often helps to create a positive class atmosphere as students realize you are not the only source of error correction and they can learn a lot from one another. (Arntsen, 2007).

Correction Slots. One way to focus on students' mistakes is to take 'time out' of an activity and look at mistakes as a group. When

students are doing a task in pairs or groups, often the teacher may monitor the students and take a look at what they're writing. Students will get used to you hovering around them. The teacher can take notes on the mistakes that he sees; then the teacher writes a list of errors on the board and stop the activity for the students to correct it. If students are working in pairs and the teacher has a left over student, why not assign them the role of assistant teacher? They can have a notebook and pen and make notes of mistakes they hear. If they do their job well they could even run the correction slot with their mistakes instead of the teacher. Usually most of the mistakes can be corrected by the students themselves. (Jo, 2008).

On The Spots Correction. Correcting mistakes during the moment they are made, has the advantage that you don't have to bring the activity to a stop as is the case with a correction slot. Students often appreciate instant correction. Think about what type of activity it is before deciding whether or not it's appropriate to correct on the spot. Students can also be responsible for on the spot correction if they are encouraged to pick up on each other's mistakes. (Jo, 2008).

Providing the Answers. Sometimes individual students as well as entire classes have no idea what the answer to your question is. If providing hints and examples does not lead them to the correct answer, you will have to provide it. Generally this is a last resort and means that a lot of review activities may be in order but keeping a positive attitude and explaining the answer good-naturedly will do a lot to keep your students positive about learning English. Asking similar questions in a simpler form will build student confidence again so that the

lesson can continue smoothly. (Arntsen, 2007).

Error Codes. Helps students correct their writing has often been proved to be an effective method to facilitate error correction. For example, the correction code, "which is a list of grammatical items such as nouns, articles, prepositions and so on. It is believed to be a useful method of helping students correct their own errors, as students need to be guided in discovering the nature of their errors. Moreover, the students get more opportunity to participate actively in the lesson and get opportunity to learn how to write correctly with appropriate punctuation, spelling, grammar, text organization, capitalization and word order. (Lee, 2004).

Whichever way the teacher applies the correction methods in the students; he should try to keep the experience positive for the learner. Being corrected constantly can be a really be-motivating, as every language learner knows. At the moment the teacher sees the students' errors, he should make sure also that they see out for really good uses of language and highlight these to the group too. (Jo, 2008).

Mini-Lessons. The mini lessons are "teaching moments". Students perform sentences as writing exercises, the sentences with grammatical errors are used to develop the discussion, edition and revision of errors for promoting the student participation. The teacher's objective is to have the student work in 5 sentences per class focusing on the correct pronunciation of the sentences. (Agbesi, 2016).

METHOD

It was a qualitative study as it becomes a natural procedure in the educational field, it

focused on data collection based on the observation of students' natural behavior in relation to vocabulary learning. The study consisted of compiling data, the revision of relevant information, textbooks, journals and results of other studies, interviews, surveys, guides or observation sheets, among others.

The level of this research was exploratory because the data collected was sufficient to carry out the research study, to determine the problem, the objectives and purposes of the research to obtain results and conclusions.

In addition, it was carried out under a field study because it took place where the events occurred, it had a direct relation with the people who became the problem that was investigated. In this type of research, the direct information was obtained through several techniques of data collection (observation sheet) in order to provide answers to the problem. This research was carried out in the educational field because the researchers identified the problem in students of the third year of Basic Education class "A" at Unidad Educativa "José María Román", city of Riobamba, Chimborazo province, during the academic year 2017-2018. In the study, the entire population or universe was considered, in other words, the totality of actors involved in the research problem, they are; thirty five students of third level of Basic Education and a teacher. A sample was not necessary since the universe is less than one hundred individuals. As a procedure for the development of the activities applied during this research, they were divided into different stages: preparatory, field work, analytical and informative stage.

Preparatory Stage

First of all, the researchers considered the selection of the area of study: Methodology and Linguistics. The researchers

chose these areas because during their pre-teaching practice service, they observed the problem during their experience. The researchers noticed that in this course the students showed problems to write words in English.

Once the problem was identified, the researchers analyzed information about correction methods for teaching writing along with some other important aspects. It was useful to acquire knowledge about correction methods for teaching English writing and the important aspects of it because it helped to have a clear idea about the necessary steps to guide the process,

For the problem definition, first, the researchers determined the problem at a macro level; for doing this, the researchers visited the institution; the information was gathered through interviews. Second, for the meso level of the problem definition, the researcher asked questions about the students of third year of Basic Education in class "A", the information was gathered through a survey to the students. Finally, in the micro level, the researcher determined the problem through a previous observation during the pre-professional practices which deals with the way that teachers apply correction methods during the teaching and learning process of writing. Among different qualitative research methods, the researchers chose the ethnographic method because the researcher observed during their practices what happens in third year of Basic Education "A".

Field Work Stage

To develop the study, the researchers first did a previous observation in the Unidad Educativa "José María Román" and selected the third year of Basic Education class "A". The research was conducted with a single course as there are a

lot of students in the institution and to work with them should have been difficult.

The researcher asked the director of the institution: Mr. Giovany Borja, for the authorization for develop the study, along with the assistance of Mr. Dennys Daqui who is an English language teacher plus the students of third year of basic education class "A".

The information was collected from the facts that the researchers observed and documented in the observation sheet that was previously elaborated and was based upon two principal reasons: first, to determine the methods that the teacher uses to correct students' errors in English writing, and second, to analyze the use of correction methods when writing different words from children's stories.

Analytical and Informative Stage

The researchers processed all the information in order to prepare the final report. The researchers presented the final results to the educational community.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The information was obtained through observation sheets that were applied in the Unidad Educativa "José María Román" with students of third year of Basic Education class "A" on April 03rd 2018, and April 10th 2018 and April 17th 2018, this process helped to identify how correction methods are used by the teacher to foster the students' writing skills.

Correction methods used by the teacher

During the observed class, the teacher started the class, reinforcing the topic of the previous class and using different methods of correction, in which the students showed deficiencies when writing because the teacher

did not apply the right methodology. Some students asked their teacher and others asked their classmates for help as they were not able to correct their mistakes. The methods used by the teacher were: self-correction, peer-correction, correction slot and on the spot correction.

The correction methods used by the teacher are programmed procedures developed in the class to modify errors and obtain better results, this ensure the students' learning and the improvement of their writing. Teacher can use more than one method to correct the students' errors. (Rouse, 2005). The teacher thought it was convenient the use of different correction methods during the class to obtain better results in the development of the teaching-learning process.

Self-correction

During the class activity, the teacher did not stop the students, when mistakes appeared, he did not say who did it, and he did not modulate the voice when the error occurred, for this reason, they did not focus on correcting the incorrect words.

The best way to correct mistakes is by letting students doing on their own. Give students a chance, and time, to correct themselves. One of the ways to do this is to repeat what the students said placing emphasis on the incorrect word. (Arntsen, 2007).

Peer-correction

When a student cannot correct his or her mistakes, peer correction may be appropriate, the student may want to call another student to respond correctly, and after a short time the student can do it on his or her own. The teacher may ask the same question and encourage a choral response by simply repeating and emphasizing the correct

answer by writing it on the board and explaining why it is correct. (Arntsen, 2007). The teacher did not give the students a clear explanation of this correction method because the students worked in groups and they had to help each other to solve the problem.

Correction -slot

While the activity was going on, the teacher monitored the whole class to observe what the students wrote, but when the teacher observed the errors as a group, he stopped the activity so that the students could correct the errors they had made, but the teacher forgot to write the errors on the board and the students did not know which were the errors that they had to correct, then the students felt insecure when developing the activity.

One way to focus on students' errors is to take 'time out' of an activity and look at mistakes as a group, often the teacher can be the monitor the students, and take notes on the errors; then the teacher writes a list of errors on the board and stop the activity to let the students to correct them. (Jo, 2008).

On the spot correction

The teacher developed a classroom game so that students have fun during this activity. This technique applied by the teacher motivated students to do a good job, but it did not get good results in the teaching - learning process because the teacher did not use the words that the students learned and when he checked each student's homework, he did not mark the errors that they had made.

Correcting errors at the moment they are made, has the advantage that you don't have to stop the activity as in the correction slot. Think about what type of activity it is before deciding whether or not it is appropriate to correct on the spot. Students can also be

responsible on the spot correction if they are encouraged to pick up on each other's errors. (Jo Budden, 2008).

The correction methods applied by the teacher to improve the students' writing skills were adequate due to they were able to help each other to find out their errors, and learned how to correct them in different ways through the identification of each one of the correction methods.

IN CONCLUSION

Teachers must always apply the correction methods in the teaching-learning process to motivate the students to spell words correctly, and take into account their level to not overload them with hard work.

Teachers must innovate their teaching methodology so that the students show interest when learning new words, and also give clear instructions, as this will allow the students to put into practice what they learned to develop their writing skills.

Acknowledgments

To the authorities of the "José María Román" school.

To teachers, parents and students of the institution.

REFERENCES

- Arntsen, T, (2007). How to Correct Mistakes. Busy Teacher. Recovered from: <https://busyteacher.org/3723-how-to-correct-mistakes.html>. On 10th/ February/ 2018
- Agbesi. A. (2016), Attending to the Grammatical Errors of Students using Constructive Teaching and Learning Activities. Mini Lessons. Recovered from: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1095256.pdf>. On May 23th 2018
- Business Dictionary. (2018). Definition of skill. Recovered from:

- <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/skill.html>. On May 16th 2018
- Encyclopedia Britannica. (2018). Definition about writing. Recovered from: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/writing>. On May 16th 2018
- English Oxford Living Dictionary. (2018), Correction. Recovered from: <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/correction>. On June 19th 2018
- Jo, B. (2008). Error Correction in British Council BBC. Recovered from: <https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/error-correction>. On 13th/ January/2018
- Lee. I. (2004). Department of Education Studies, Hong Kong Baptist University How Do Hong Kong English Teachers Correct Errors in Writing? Recovered from: http://hkier.fed.cuhk.edu.hk/journal/wpc/content/uploads/2009/10/ej_v31n1_153-169.pdf on 13th/ January/ 2018
- Lewis, D. (2001), READING CONTEMPORARY PICTUREBOOKS. Picturing text. Recovered from: https://books.google.com.ec/books?id=ifsAG_j3iD8C&pg=PA45&lpg=PA45&dq
- Nassaji, H. (1999) and Gordon. T. (2006) The Role of Grammar and Error Correction in Teaching Languages to Young Learners. Recovered from: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Hacer_Hande_Uysal/publication/220048879_The_Role_of_Grammar_and_Error_Correction_in_Teaching_Languages_to_Young_Learners/links/0c960532757a477b22000000.pdf. On 20th June 2018.
- Ritchey. T, (1991) Analysis and Synthesis on Scientific Method - Based on a Study by Bernhard Riemann. Recovered from: <http://www.swemorph.com/pdf/anaeng-r.pd>. On 02nd/ March/ 2018
- Rouse. M. (2005) Definition of Method on WhatIs.com. Recovered from: <https://whatis.techtarget.com/definition/method>. On 13th June 2018
- Skills You Need. (2018). Definition about writing skills. Recovered from: <https://www.skillsyouneed.com/writing-skills.html>. On July 2nd 2018
- University of Leicester. (2009), Learning Development, Sentence Structure. Recovered from: <https://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/ld/resources/study-guides-pdfs/writing-skills-pdfs/sentence-structure-v1.0.pdf>. On June 18th 2018