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DEPARTAMENT DE FILOLOGIA ANGLESA I DE GERMANÍSTICA

**The Role of Corrective Feedback (CF) in a Classroom
Context and How it Affects Adolescent Learners of
English**

Treball de Fi de Grau/ BA dissertation

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Abstract

Previous research has explored the effectiveness of CF and its benefits concerning language acquisition. However, there is a need to do further research on how CF could be best used with adolescent learners of English taking into account their characteristics and their individual differences. The overall aim of this dissertation is to explore the benefits that CF could provide to adolescent learners of English and reflect on how it may enhance second language acquisition by being implemented in the classroom. In order to do so, a thorough review of the nature of learners and the types of CF as well as the multiple aspects that comprise these procedures will be essential to understand the relation between the two and the effects and consequences of the implementation of CF in the classroom. Finally, strategies and activities to successfully accomplish the implementation of CF will be presented in an attempt to improve current teaching methodologies.

Keywords: Corrective Feedback, adolescent learners, English, teaching, acquisition, classroom

1. Introduction

The research landscape in regard to language teaching has evolved and has been affected by several changes throughout the years. Despite an extended list of studies analysing teaching techniques and strategies that could be implemented within the classroom context, further research on details such as the type of feedback employed would be of vital importance. Furthermore, it is significant to note that Corrective Feedback (CF) plays a crucial role in language learning environments, in shaping learners' improvement of their communication skills, and in considering individual differences (Mackey, 2020). Consequently, it results in an extremely beneficial tool to help learners enhance and develop their overall linguistic proficiency. Moreover, the relationship between CF and L2 development not only has been reported to have positive effects but also to be a frequent topic in SLA in modern-day research (Mackey, 2020). Therefore, the effectiveness of CF and its impact on adolescent learners might be extremely significant. In spite of the implementation of this aspect in a teaching environment, which can be achieved in various ways and by following different approaches, CF constitutes a controversial topic since some perspectives do not believe it to be beneficial (Nassaji & Kartchava, 2021).

The purpose of the present dissertation is to provide an overview of previous research in relation to the types of CF and the benefits that it might provide to learners and to reflect on how it may enhance second language acquisition by being implemented in the classroom. Thus, this study will intend to contribute to the landscape of language education, in this case, focused on adolescent learners of English, by connecting the theoretical knowledge in the domain with the practical application of different types of corrective feedback depending on the expected goal.

Initially, the paper will address the general theoretical background in regard to what is understood by the term *adolescent* and how it is related to the acquisition of the English language at the teenage stage of life. The dissertation will then move on to the notions of CF, its historical background and emergence, its usage, its types, and the effect that it might have on learners of English within a classroom context. Following these considerations, the dissertation will then focus on different strategies to implement CF in Secondary Education, the type of environment in which adolescent learners of English will be experiencing language learning. Finally, a conclusion section will summarize the dissertation and further lines of research will be proposed too.

2. Adolescent Learners of English

The present research will investigate CF and its impact on adolescent learners, therefore, it is essential to acknowledge the onset of this period and the changes it may provoke in the development of individuals. Although there might be differences in the way each culture perceives and understands the concept of adolescence, it is a period of development characterised by huge “physical, cognitive, emotional, and social change” (Erlam et al. 2021, p.1). According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the stage of adolescence begins at approximately 10 years of age, lasting until 19 years old, and it directly affects how humans “feel, think, make decisions, and interact with the world around them” (WHO, 2019). Consequently, adolescents’ brains also experience alterations and adjustments that are provoked by cognitive change and development. Moreover, the cognitive stimulation of the adolescent is important since their brains are still malleable and synaptic connections are strengthened, although some cognitive functions may be lost or diminished if unused (Erlam et al., 2021). Furthermore, since

the teenage years are a stage characterized by huge changes in the individual, it is key to acknowledge both the positive and negative outcomes that may affect adolescent learners during this period of their lives. A large body of evidence about the development of the human brain, and a handful of studies on the pubescent period have demonstrated how the prefrontal cortex of the brain, which is responsible for functions such as “attention, setting priorities, repressing impulses, and making plans”, experiences a massive development during this time (Crone 2011, quoted in Erlam et al. 2021, p.2). Therefore, this alteration in the cortex and the dramatic growth of the amygdala, another part of the brain that regulates anger and fear, are significantly affected and may provoke difficulties in the youth. In addition, as a result of these variations in their minds and also their physical changes, it is common for adolescents to often experience anxiety when speaking in front of other people, which can affect their performance if they have to interact with other classmates or speak in front of the whole class (Sumter et al., 2009). Nevertheless, although it is essential to be familiar with the challenges that teens may experience during this life stage, it is crucial to note that adolescence also represents an ideal interval for the acquisition of language skills and the process of language learning. As multiple contributions provided by McDevitt & Ormrod (2013) and Duchesne & McMaugh (2018) in collecting and analysing different data point out, this is due to adolescents’ new capacities to distinguish between literal and figurative speech, their better understanding of their L1 and the capability to compare it with a new language, and their improvement of memory and motor skills, and their metalinguistic awareness.

In addition, in examining the process of learning the English language, it is essential to understand the similarities and differences between the two different groups

learners may belong to: English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Although both ESL and EFL share a relation to learning an additional language, they differ in context. While the former refers to learning the language “in an English-speaking country, where English is the official or dominant language” (Oxford International Digital Institution, 2024), the latter refers to the opposite, i.e. the acquisition of, in this case, English in a country where it is not the national or predominant tongue. Therefore, it is primal knowledge to distinguish between these two types of acquisition and to consider both categories when dealing with the adolescent learners of English. In spite of some students having more exposure to the language than others due to the type of learning (ESL or EFL), the main goal of both groups will be to integrate into the speaking community and communicate accurately and fluently with other people.

Furthermore, during the process of instructed second language acquisition (ISLA), the impact of Individual Differences (IDs) has been of great interest among researchers. According to Dörnyei (2005, p.4), IDs are understood as “enduring personal characteristics that are assumed to apply to everybody and on which people differ by degree”, which illustrates the significant role of IDs and the need to understand how they affect learners when acquiring a new language. Therefore, individual differences are considered predictors of learning success (Dörnyei, 2005) due to their huge impact in the field of L2 acquisition. Moreover, according to different psychologists, individual differences can be divided into three different concepts, which include cognition, conation, and affect. The first one refers to how the human mind processes and learns information, the second one deals with the human’s use of will and freedom in order to make choices that generate new behaviours, and the third one is

related to human emotions and feelings towards information, thoughts, people, and temperament issues (Ortega, 2009). Among all the different notions that IDs include, motivation is considered one of the most relevant aspects in relation to learning and language acquisition. Motivation refers to “the desire to initiate L2 learning and the effort employed to sustain it” (Ortega 2009, p.168). Additionally, motivation can be quantified via three dimensions: motivational intensity, attitudes towards learning the L2, and the desire to learn; and the variables that contribute to the increase or decrease of motivation are called antecedents or motivational substrates (Ortega, 2009). Among these variables, integrativeness seems to play the most significant role in the development of motivation since it is an attitude defined as “a genuine interest in learning the second language in order to come closer to the other language community” (Gardner 2001, p.5). At the same time, Gardner also highlights another significant variable consisting of orientation, which takes into account the individual’s reasons for learning another language. Although these reasons are not mutually exclusive, the most common orientations are the following ones: *instrumental* in order to get a better job or pursue a higher level of education, for *knowledge* to become more enlightened, to facilitate *travel*, for fostering general *friendship*, and for *integrative* reasons to identify with the target culture and its members. Gardner also notes that motivation can be either intrinsic or extrinsic, the former making reference to “when individuals engage in behaviour that they understand as self-initiated by choice and largely sustained by inherent enjoyment in the activity” (Gardner 2001, p.176) and, the latter, referring to when an external force guides the individual towards the acquisition of that language. Therefore, it is important to understand and analyse the purpose and type of source of motivation that individuals have when trying to acquire a new language. What is more,

IDs play a significant role in adolescents' sensitivity towards corrective feedback since "individual difference variables [...] influence learner's receptivity to error correction and thus the effectiveness of the feedback" (Sheen 2011, p.129). Therefore, IDs might affect not only the language learning process of adolescents but also their response and perceptibility to the different types of feedback to which they are exposed. Among other individual differences aside from the type of motivation that might lead the adolescent to acquire another language, other factors such as personality traits, language aptitude and anxiety also have a huge impact on learners. Furthermore, in relation to the previous IDs, according to linguists "corrective feedback was likely to benefit learners who had a positive attitude towards error correction and high language ability" (Sheen 2011, p.129). Consequently, individual differences are significant to notice and take into account in the context of language learning for adolescents, since teachers will be able to "adapt materials, change their teaching style, adopt new instructional strategies, and give feedback" that adapts to each type of learner in the classroom, which will allow the teacher to "provide options for an optimal learning environment for every student" (Griffiths & Soruç 2020, p.2).

Similarly, another factor that plays a crucial role in the acquisition of another language is metalinguistic awareness, which "implies that attention is actively focused on the domain of knowledge that describes the explicit properties of language" (Bialystok 2001, p.127). Therefore, this type of language awareness will be essential to analyse since it refers to the individual's ability to reflect upon language and evaluate it as an object of study. Regarding knowledge about a language, there is a "categorical distinction between explicit knowledge [...] and implicit knowledge" (Roehr-Brackin 2018, p.2). On the one hand, explicit knowledge "consists of knowledge that learners

are consciously aware of and that is typically only available through controlled processing” (Ellis et al 2006, p.340), in other words, the knowledge that can be verbalized since the learner is conscious and aware of it. On the other hand, implicit knowledge “is tacit, intuitive and non-conscious, reflecting the speaker/learner’s sensitivity to the statistical structure of learned material”, therefore, learners are not aware that they do know certain aspects or characteristics of a language and are not able to report it verbally (Roehr-Brackin 2018, p.2). As a consequence, the acquisition of different areas of language that involve grammatical rules, syntactic constructions, and vocabulary items might be acquired based on the explicit-implicit distinction, which will further be developed into a type of instruction depending on the learners’ needs and previous knowledge. Additionally, it has been demonstrated that at the beginning stages of L2 learning, “learners lack the metalinguistic awareness that is essential for processing corrective feedback” (Sheen 2011, p. 21), which suggests how essential it is to address the concept of metalinguistic awareness in order to seek and achieve successful goals during adolescence. The impact of metalinguistic awareness in adolescents is hugely significant since it has been argued that “metalinguistic aware learners are thought to be able to classify words into parts of speech; switch focus between form, function, and meaning; and explain the particular function of a word” (Griva et al. 2011, p.206). Consequently, adolescents’ skills to acquire a new language are more developed and having metalinguistic awareness might enhance their learning process. Corrective Feedback will certainly be effective in raising adolescents’ metalinguistic awareness.

3. Corrective Feedback (CF)

Within the realm of classroom teaching and instructional practices, feedback holds significance as a crucial aspect of classroom dynamics (Sheen 2011). Also, many scholars such as Good and Brophy (2000) have argued that feedback motivates students to learn by acknowledging their mistakes and, therefore, it should be always provided by the teacher whether the learner's response is correct or incorrect. More specifically, in the case of language teaching, we will focus on *corrective feedback*, which is the one that "follows an incorrect (ungrammatical) response" (Sheen 2011). Corrective feedback (CF) is a highly frequent subject of study in SLA research in the present day due to its fast growth in recent years and its impact on students of an L2 (Mackey 2020). As a consequence, there has emerged a need for investigation on CF variables and also its effectiveness on the learners that are exposed to it (Li 2010). CF usually takes place "as a response to a particular learner's incorrect utterance and is addressed to that learner, but in the school context his classmates are also expected to learn from the correction" (Havranek 2002, p. 259). Therefore, CF manifests in a classroom environment where a language teacher intends to correct the learner. As a result, it can be said that CF promotes the "modification of learner's linguistic output and L2 learning" (Mackey 2020, p.1) since through interactional processes it creates learning opportunities. Hence, CF could also be defined or referred to as – "a teacher's reactive move that invites learners to attend to the grammatical accuracy of something they have said or written" (Sheen 2011, p. 1). Additionally, it is important to note that the process of learning through CF can also occur not only by actively participating but also silently. As previously mentioned, some adolescent students may experience anxiety in the classroom context, and although they should be encouraged to try and make

mistakes, it is true that through the role of an “auditor”, they can also learn and acquire the knowledge that the teacher is giving to other students (Havranek 2002). Therefore, even though the classroom should be seen as a safe place where everyone is allowed to give incorrect answers and learn from them, by correcting different students and addressing the most common mistakes in an overt and general way, learners can also learn and benefit from CF.

3.1 Explicit/direct CF versus implicit/indirect CF

In order to fully understand CF it is important to take into account the multiple aspects and divisions that comprise this teaching procedure. According to Nassaji and Kartchava (2021), researchers have explored two different dimensions of CF, which are explicit CF versus implicit CF. While the former is a direct and clear correction in order to make the student aware of the mistake, the corrective force in the latter is “masked because it is potentially performing some other function (e.g. topic continuation or the negotiation of meaning)” (Nassaji & Kartchava 2021, p. 341). Therefore, the difference between the two dimensions is that, on the one hand, explicit CF involves direct identification of the error and clear instructions on how to correct it, and on the other hand, implicit CF refers to subtle indications signalling that there might be an error but without openly mentioning it.

Ellis (2008) has also addressed the issue of CF but made the distinction between *direct CF* and *indirect CF*. These two terms convey the same exact meaning as *explicit* and *implicit* and they also refer to the same type of distinction. Therefore, while in the case of direct CF “the teacher provides the student with the correct form” (Ellis 2008, p.99), indirect CF “involves indicating that the student has made an error without

actually correcting it” (Ellis 2008, p. 100). The dimensions of explicit versus implicit and direct versus indirect will play a significant role in shaping the types of CF that can be provided within the classroom context.

3.2 Focused and Unfocused Corrective Feedback

Another remarkable distinction within CF consists of *focused* versus *unfocused* feedback. The former term has been used in order to refer to “intensive corrective feedback that repeatedly targets one or a very limited of linguistic features” (Sheen 2011, p. 8), thus, it identifies a particular error made by the learner and targets its specific improvement. In contrast, unfocused CF is a term that refers to “extensive corrective feedback that targets a range of grammatical structures” (Sheen 2011, p.8), therefore providing overall comments for improvement without addressing specific mistakes but more general issues. In addition, both focused and unfocused CF will be essential when differentiating the types of CF that will be presented throughout the paper since they apply to both oral and written CF.

3.3 Types of Oral Corrective Feedback Strategies

Oral CF can be defined as the oral response provided by teachers or peers to language learners “when their output is erroneous, nontarget-like, and/or not appropriate or ambiguous” (Nassaji and Kartchava 2021, p. 188). Therefore, oral CF indicates in an oral mode that what has been verbally expressed is ungrammatical or erroneous in some way.

Moreover, oral CF presents a wide variety of strategies in which it can be implemented in an adolescent learners' classroom context. In this section, we will define and exemplify each type of oral CF.

3.3.1 Recasts

Sheen (2011) defines a recast as “a reformulation of the learner’s erroneous utterance that corrects all or part of the learner’s utterance and is embedded in the continuing discourse” (p. 2). Consequently, recasts reflect the intended meaning of the original utterance prompted by the learner but indicate not only that there is a problem in the way the sentence was constructed but also provide “a model of how it should be said” (Nassaji & Kartchava 2021, p. 192), as (1) and (2) illustrate:

(1) Student: How many people in your picture¹?

Teacher: How many people are there in my picture? Er, three people.

(Sheen 2011, p.2)

(2) NNS²: The boy is holding the girl hand and the boy...

NS³: The boy is holding the girl’s hand?

NNS: Yer.

(Oliver, 1995, p.475)

It is important to note that, as Sheen (2011) demonstrates, recasts can be *partial* (i.e., only part of the learner’s erroneous utterance is reformulated) or *whole* (i.e., the learner’s complete utterance is reformulated). Furthermore, Sheen illustrates how

¹ Ungrammatical examples will not be signalled because the present paper does not deal with ungrammaticality.

² NNS: Nonnative speaker

³ Native speaker

recasts can also be classified as *didactic* or *conversational*. Additionally, conversational recasts “become somewhat more implicit when they serve as a confirmation” (Sheen 2011, p. 4). Nevertheless, didactic recasts are usually regarded as explicit (Lyster et al. 2013) since the teacher directly provides the correct linguistic feature to the learner.

A didactic recast can be partial or whole and intends to draw attention to the exact location in which the error was produced, as seen in (3). This type of CF proves to be explicit since the teacher is overtly stating the correction and indicating which exact form the learner should have used.

(3) S: Women are kind than men.

T: Kinder. (partial recast)

(Sheen 2011, p. 3)

A conversational recast occurs when the corrector fails to understand something in the utterance produced by the student. As a result, the teacher reformulates the sentence in order to check what the learner intended to mention in the first place, making it an implicit correction, as (4) indicates.

(4) S: How much weigh?

T: What?

S: How weight are you?

T: How much do I weigh?

(Sheen 2011, p. 3)

3.3.2 Explicit correction

As mentioned earlier in the paper, an explicit correction consists of directly making aware the learners of the error they have made and providing the correct form that should be used instead. It does not offer any further explanation of why it was considered an error, it is only employed to offer the grammatical form, as in (5).

- (5) S: I goed camping with my family.
T: You should say 'I went' not 'I goed'.

3.3.3 Explicit correction with metalinguistic explanation

Explicit correction with metalinguistic explanation is similar to plain explicit correction in that both signal the error in the utterance and provide the correct form. Nevertheless, this type of CF also provides a metalinguistic comment explaining the reason why the form that the student employed is regarded as a mistake. This is illustrated in (6).

- (6) S: Lion is big.
T: The lion is big. You should use the definite article 'the' because the lion has been mentioned.

3.3.4 Clarification requests

The main purpose of a clarification request is to signal that there is an error in the learner's utterance. However, unlike the previous types of CF, this strategy takes the form of a request such as 'sorry?' or 'I don't understand, could you repeat it?'. This type of oral CF, exemplified in (7), is implicit (Lyster et al. 2013).

- (7) S: Where do the dog?
T: Sorry?

3.3.5 Repetition

Repetitions consist of “mimicking the learner’s erroneous utterance” (Sheen 2011, p. 4) completely or partially in order to make the student, for instance, understand that something is ungrammatical in what they have said. Therefore, the error or mistake is highlighted “by means of emphatic stress” (Ölmezer-öztürk & Öztürk 2016, p. 114) in order to draw attention to it. Additionally, this type of oral CF is also considered implicit (Ellis, 2009). Example (8) illustrates a repetition:

- (8) S: I will showed you.
T: I will SHOWED you?
S: I’ll show you.

(Ölmezer-öztürk & Öztürk 2016, p. 114)

3.3.6 Elicitation

According to Sheen (2011), “elicitation refers to a repetition of the learner’s utterance up to the point where the error occurs as a way of encouraging self-correction”(p. 4). Therefore, by pausing at a certain point in the sentence, “the student can fill in the correct word or phrase” (Lyster et al. 2013, p. 4). According to Ellis (2009), this is an explicit type of oral CF and is illustrated in (9).

- (9) S: Once upon a time, there lives a poor girl named Cinderella.
T: One upon a time, there...

(Sheen 2011, p.4)

3.3.7 Metalinguistic clue

When using metalinguistic clues, the teacher provides the student with a brief metalinguistic explanation but without offering the correct form so the student can self-correct the error (Sheen 2011, p. 4). Therefore, it is an explicit way of correcting the

student as a result of providing “technical linguistic information about the error” (Ölmezer-öztürk & Öztürk 2016, p. 114), as seen in (10).

(10) S: He kiss her.

T: You need past tense.

(Sheen 2011, p.4)

3.4 Types of Written Corrective Feedback Strategies

Written CF can be defined as “a written response to a linguistic error that has been made in the writing of a text by an L2 learner” (Bitchener & Storch 2016, p.1). Therefore, written CF refers to the process of correcting students’ written language productions by providing comments and rectifications so learners can improve their writing skills. Similarly to oral CF, written CF can be given in the form of a direct or an indirect response (Yunus 2020), which will depend on the type of written CF strategy that the teacher employs within the classroom context. In this section, we will define and exemplify each type of written CF.

3.4.1 Direct non-metalinguistic written correction

This type of error correction only provides the learner with the grammatical or proper form that should be used in their text. This type of correction can be implemented in several ways such as “crossing out an unnecessary word, phrase or morpheme, inserting a missing word or morpheme, and writing the correct form above or near the erroneous form” (Sheen 2011, p. 5). Figure 1 illustrates this kind of CF.

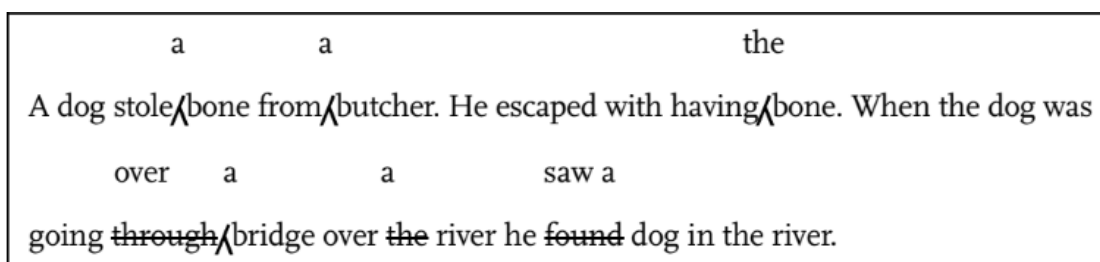


Figure 1 Example of direct non-metalinguistic written correction by Ellis (2008, p. 99)

3.4.2 Direct metalinguistic written correction

Similarly to the previous type of written CF, this strategy corrects the error in the text and provides the learner with the correct form that should be used instead. Nevertheless, this method also offers a “brief metalinguistic comment (...) below the written text” (Sheen 2011, p. 5), where the reason behind the mistake is explained. Figure 2 shows examples of direct metalinguistic written corrections.

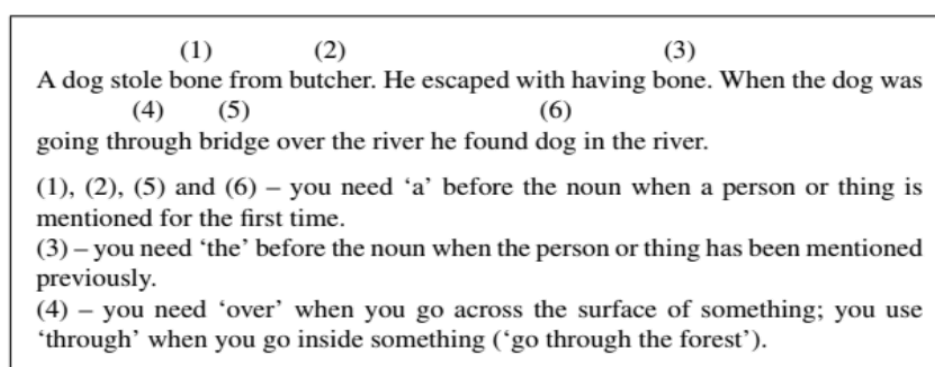


Figure 2 Example of direct metalinguistic written correction by Sheen (2011, p. 5)

3.4.3 Indirect written correction

Indirect CF “involves indicating that the student has made an error without actually correcting it” (Ellis 2008, p. 100). According to Ellis, this can be accomplished in several ways such as underlying the errors in the text, using cursors to signal omissions

or placing indicators in the margin. Therefore, it will be easier to locate the error within the written text depending on the teacher. Figure 3 exemplifies an indirect written correction that is not located, meaning that although it indicates that there is a number of errors in each sentence, the location and correction of them is not provided. Therefore, this type of written correction allows students to “locate the errors they have made themselves” (Sheen 2011, p. 5) and think how they can be corrected.

XXX	A dog stole bone from butcher. He escaped with having bone.
XX	When the dog was going through bridge over the river he
XX	found dog in the river.

Figure 3 Example of indirect written correction (not located) by Sheen (2011, p. 6)

In contrast, in Figure 4 the teacher indicates the location of the errors by signalling in different ways where something is missing or incorrect. Nevertheless, since the correct forms are not provided, the written correction is still given indirectly.

A dog stole X bone from X butcher. He escaped with X <u>having</u> X X bone. When the dog was going X <u>through</u> X X bridge over X <u>the</u> X river he found X dog in the river.
X = missing word
X __X = wrong word

Figure 4 Example of indirect written correction (located) by Ellis (2008, p. 100)

3.4.4 Indirect written correction using error codes

In the case of indirect correction using error codes, the teacher provides the learner with metalinguistic clues about the errors in the text. The way in which this is accomplished is through the use of error codes, which consist of “abbreviated labels for different kinds

of errors” (Ellis 2008, p. 100). Figure 5 illustrates the use of error codes that signal what type of mistake there is in a specific part of a sentence, for instance, missing articles (art.) or a wrong preposition (prep.). Although the teacher does not directly state which is the mistake and how to replace it, the metalinguistic clues regarding the nature of the errors will help students “to improve their accuracy over time” and understand the type of error they have made. Nevertheless, it is significant to note that despite this type of written correction being indirect because the correct forms are not given, the metalinguistic information that error codes provide could be considered explicit since it orients the learners on which type of error they have made.

art.	art.	WW art.
A dog stole bone from butcher. He escaped with having bone. When the dog was		
prep.	art.	art.
going through bridge over the river he found dog in the river.		

Figure 5 Example of error codes in indirect written CF by Ellis (2008, p. 101)

3.4.5 Reformulation

Reformulation is a technique that involves reformulating “the entire sentence or paragraph that contains erroneous forms” (Sheen 2011, p. 7). Moreover, since this method provides the learners with the correct forms, it can be regarded as a direct strategy of written CF, as Figure 6 shows.

Original version:	As he was jogging, his tammy was shaken.
Reformulation:	As he was jogging, his tummy was shaking. tummy shaking
Error correction:	As he was jogging his tammy was shaked .

Figure 6 Example of reformulation by Ellis (2008, p. 104)

Ultimately, examining the distinction between oral and written CF and the strategies that each type of correction employs reveals multiple ways in which teachers can approach the process of providing feedback in the classroom context. Moreover, each type and strategy will benefit learners differently and also allow teachers to tailor their instructional methods to adapt to students' needs and IDs. Therefore, the teacher will be able to choose which type of CF to apply in multiple settings in order to maximise profitability and ease the language acquisition process for the learners.

4. How to implement CF in language teaching for adolescents

As indicated in the introduction, the goal of this study is not only to explore the role of CF in language acquisition for adolescents but also to contribute to the landscape of language education. In order to do so, this section will intend to suggest and provide different activities and methods to implement CF in the English language classroom of adolescent learners.

It is important to note that knowing when and how to provide CF is a key factor in language teaching. Consequently, teachers need to take into account which is the most suitable moment to provide CF in order to make the most of it and that it results beneficial for the adolescent.

Furthermore, as we have seen in the previous section, there are multiple strategies to address error correction along a continuum from explicitness to implicitness, and, when designing a lesson plan, it is essential to decide which is the most adequate one that adapts both to the type of activity and the learner. As a result, choosing whether to give immediate or delayed CF will affect in different ways the outcome of the exercise. Moreover, the teacher needs to have a clear goal for each type of activity and know if the main purpose is to achieve accuracy or fluency. On the one hand, according to Suban (2021), accuracy refers to “applying good grammar rules, clear pronunciation, and appropriate choice of vocabulary” (p. 43). On the other hand, fluency is regarded as “smoothness and ease of oral linguistic delivery” (De Jong et al. 2013, p. 893). In reference to the main focus of the exercise, Harmer (1983), for instance, argued that if learners are participating in a communicative activity, the teacher should not intervene to correct a “grammatical, lexical or pronunciation error, since to do so interrupts the communication and drags an activity back to the study of language form or precise meaning” (p. 143). Therefore, if the objective is that adolescents are fluent in English, a delayed CF will be more appropriate in order not to interrupt the flow of their speech. Nevertheless, if the aim is to achieve accuracy, “then immediate correction is likely to be useful” (Scrivener 2005, p. 299) in helping the students notice mistakes.

An example of a communicative activity that aims to develop students’ fluency could be a role-play session, an activity in which learners will need to apply their communicative skills in order to negotiate for meaning and collaborate to create a story and perform it. In this case, since the goal is to improve adolescents’ oral skills, the teacher could take notes on the errors that arise and, at the end of the class or in the

following lesson, address them with all the students. This latter step of providing CF to the class based on the errors from the previous activity can be achieved through different strategies such as listing the errors and requesting clarification from the learners so they spot what is wrong, giving the correct forms explicitly or even providing the metalinguistic clues that will help them to identify the mistake.

An example of an oral activity that aims to develop adolescents' accuracy would be the practice of minimal pairs. This exercise consists of providing students with pairs of words that differ by one phoneme such as *ship/sheep* and *think/sink* (Levis & Cortes 2008, p.197). In undertaking this action, learners would have to practice the different pronunciations of each pair of words in order not to be misunderstood. Learners could be arranged in groups of four to train the articulation and vocalization to produce each word in order to test if their classmates identify the correct vocabulary item. The teacher could be walking around the class while monitoring the pronunciation of students and approaching each group of learners in order to provide CF in the form of clarification requests, explicit correction with a metalinguistic explanation or repetition of the word that has been pronounced incorrectly. At the end of the session, adolescents would have improved their accuracy in their oral skills.

Another instance of a useful and productive activity could be related to negotiating an information gap, a type of exercise in which “two students must exchange information to complete a writing task” (Hyland 2003, p. 128). This practice would benefit both their oral and written skills at the same time and the teacher monitoring each group of students could provide CF when noticing a mistake.

Moreover, the implementation of written CF in the classroom “continues to play a central role in most L2 and foreign language (FL) writing classes” (Hyland & Hyland

2006, p. 84) since it helps to “determine students’ learning experiences and their success in developing an understanding of texts and control of writing skills” (Hyland 2003, p. 112). Therefore, written CF can also help adolescent learners in improving their overall academic performance. Although many teachers might believe that it is necessary to always provide extensive feedback comments when correcting students’ written assignments, it has been proved that “teachers should not simply respond to grammar and content but should include comments of praise and encouragement on their written feedback” (Srichanvachon 2012, p. 13). Therefore, teachers should focus on students’ needs and IDs when offering written CF, which can motivate adolescents to improve and learn.

Examples of written exercises that could foster learners’ improvement and be suitable to provide written CF could be those in which the adolescent needs to face a real-life situation. For instance, writing an email, a letter, or even instruction texts where there is a need to clearly and concisely explain how to accomplish a particular task, allows learners to adapt to challenging circumstances and benefit from them. The teacher could apply any of the strategies that have been previously mentioned in order to make learners understand the errors and help them enhance their accuracy in written skills.

Finally, more mechanical and repetitive exercises such as filling in the gaps or completing sentences with the correct form of a verb could result in positive practice in becoming familiar with new lexical items or vocabulary. The teacher could provide more explicit or implicit written CF depending on the difficulty of the exercise, the needs of the student and the context.

In addition, when deciding whether or not to provide metalinguistic clues to adolescents, it is key to consider the type of activity and its purpose as well as the level of usage of the English language by the learner. Since metalinguistic definitions and explanations require an understanding of language features, the implementation of metalinguistic feedback would be more appropriate and successful once the students have the necessary cognitive skills to understand complex descriptions or clarifications.

Moreover, according to Mourssi (2012) and in relation to the nature of metalinguistic CF, “engaging students in problem solving could further lead to greater cognitive and reflective engagement with linguistic forms that in turn promote effective language acquisition” (p. 115). Therefore, this active engagement with language enhances students’ proficiency and contributes to a deeper understanding of linguistic forms in order to learn when and how to use them. It is significant to mention that the provision of metalinguistic feedback to L2 learners has “a positive impact on encouraging and preparing learners to revise and redraft their written work” (Mourssi 2012, p. 122) in order to strengthen and upgrade the quality of their texts. Consequently, “the guidance provided by the teacher through this type of feedback can be a worthwhile investment of time and effort for teachers and students” (Tamayo & Cajas 2017, p. 174) due to the multiple benefits it can offer. In light of this, metalinguistic feedback can be useful in the context of an advanced stage of the lecture with activities in which learners are required to write a short story, a description or even a dialogue since the teacher can help by providing linguistic cues that make students aware of the type of error they have made.

Concerning the application of direct/explicit or indirect/implicit CF, it is essential to consider the learners’ proficiency level, the type of error, the IDs, and the

context. Explicit correction might be useful in early learning stages when adolescent learners are not yet able to correct their errors autonomously (Lu 2010). Moreover, directness “provides learners with sufficient information to resolve more complex errors” (Bitchener & Knoch 2009, p. 323), consequently, adolescent learners who struggle to notice errors and comprehend their nature might easily become aware of them in order not to repeat the same mistakes in the future. Thereby, the immediateness of explicit feedback proves to be a highly positive response towards adolescent learners during critical stages of their educational development in order to clarify certain concepts and reduce ambiguity.

Indirect/implicit CF, however, might result in confusion or be difficult to get used to when first introduced to students (Westmacott 2017). Nevertheless, once the student understands its purpose and how it works, indirect CF becomes significantly beneficial since it requires a proactive reaction or engagement from the learner (Westmacott 2017), thus leading to critical thinking and comprehension of, in this case, the English language. Therefore, a considerable and meaningful circumstance to best employ indirect CF would be when learners “have enough grammatical knowledge and the ability to analyze the error” (Lu 2010, p.17), which will help to encourage learners’ autonomy and promote reflection on the mistakes.

Drawing upon the preceding discussion, the implementation of CF in language teaching for adolescents emerges as an essential strategy for developing adolescent learners both oral and written skills. Despite the teacher’s need for awareness of the type of situation in which the CF is being delivered, by addressing students’ errors and adapting the feedback in different ways, adolescents can hugely benefit from CF and foster their academic growth. Moreover, the fact that there are multiple approaches to a

single error allows learners to increase their confidence and feel in a comfortable space in which, on some occasions, critical thinking will be promoted and, in other circumstances, the feedback provided will ease the recognition of the mistakes.

5. Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to provide an overview of previous research regarding the benefits of CF and to discover how it may enhance second language acquisition by being implemented in the classroom context of adolescent learners of English. Based on the research reviewed, it has become evident that CF plays a crucial role in improving students' language acquisition process and in particular the acquisition process of adolescent learners. The study confirms that CF motivates students to learn by acknowledging their mistakes and that the different approaches to the provision of feedback such as implicitly, explicitly or with metalinguistic explanations adapt to the learning style of each individual easing their understanding of the errors. Nonetheless, it is essential that the teacher identifies the purpose of each of the activities presented to the class and if their aim, for instance, is to enhance adolescents' fluency or accuracy. Furthermore, teacher flexibility in the implementation of CF will help in creating a supportive environment in which adolescents learn according to their needs and proficiency level. Moreover, the study also highlights the significance of providing CF that adapts to the several processes associated with adolescence and their possible outcomes such as anxiety. Additionally, we have seen how the numerous techniques and methods to employ oral and written CF result in a useful and productive procedure and are applicable in multiple settings, therefore maximising profitability and easing the language acquisition process for the learner. Ultimately, taking into account the types of

CF will also contribute to the learning process and help adolescents achieve greater communicative competence and improvement of their skills in the target language.

In light of these considerations, some of the main directions for future research should involve exploring innovative approaches to CF implementation concerning new technologies and their impact on students' engagement and perceptions. Moreover, further investigation on the effects of CF considering the role of the students' IDs could provide valuable insights into understanding different students' profiles and how they influence language learning.

6. References

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