Szakdolgozat

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angol nyelv és kultúra tanára - biológiatanár

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EÖTVÖS LORÁND TUDOMÁNYEGYETEM

Bölcsészettudományi Kar

Szakdolgozat

An Analysis of the Relationship Between Hungarian Secondary Grammar School Teachers' Oral Error Correction Practices and their Belief Systems

Magyar gimnáziumi angoltanárok szóbeli hibajavításról alkotott hitrendszerének és ennek a gyakorlatban való megvalósulásának összehasonlító elemzése

Témavezető:

Dr. Dóczi Brigitta

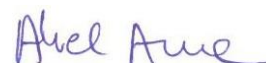egyetemi adjunktus

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2023

Certificate of Research

By my signature, I certify that my ELTE Undivided Teacher Training Programme (OTAK) thesis, entitled *An Analysis of the Relationship Between Hungarian Secondary Grammar School Teachers' Oral Error Correction Practices and their Belief Systems*, is entirely the result of my own work, and that no material is included for which a degree has previously been conferred upon me. In my thesis I have faithfully and exactly cited all the sources I have used, including books, journals, handouts and unpublished materials, as well as other media, such as the internet.

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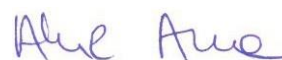
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Eredetiségi nyilatkozat

Alulírott Ábel Anna QJ465W ezennel kijelentem és aláírásommal megerősítem, hogy az ELTE angol nyelv és kultúra – biológia osztatlan tanári mesterszakján írt jelen diplomamunkám saját szellemi termékem, melyet korábban más szakon még nem nyújtottam be szakdolgozatként, és amelybe mások munkáját (könyv, tanulmány, kézirat, internetes forrás, személyes közlés, stb.) idézőjel és pontos hivatkozások nélkül nem építettem be.

Budapest, 2023. 04. 30.

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Abstract

Oral error correction has been in the spotlight for decades, as it is known for causing a great deal of discomfort to practising teachers. The main objective of the following thesis was to uncover whether beginner and experienced teachers view their oral corrective feedback practices differently and what might be the underlying reason for the probable discrepancies. In order to replicate an accurate picture of the two participants' actual practices, 15 of each teacher's lessons were observed and precisely analysed with the help of an observation worksheet. The data derived from the worksheets were compared with the results of two semi-structured interviews conveyed after the lesson observation sequences. The numerical data supported that the experienced teacher (ET) viewed her own practices more accurately, while the beginner teacher (BT) had a wider disparity between the two investigated areas. The two teachers' error correction rates corresponded with their beliefs: both participants believed that correcting their students might result in discouraging them. Therefore, they would choose to ignore a mistake when the aim of the exercise was fluency. When deciding to correct an error, both participants marked the reoccurrence of a serious mistake as the reason. The results of the current study indicate that language instructors with diverse levels of experience are all encouraged to engage in their own education about providing oral corrective feedback and continuously reflect on their own practices, as it may differ greatly from their belief systems.

Keywords: oral error correction, oral corrective feedback, comparative content analysis, beginner teacher, experienced teacher, secondary grammar school

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How I became interested in the research topic

As a teacher trainee, I promptly acknowledged that reflecting on our teaching practices is of key importance in most fields of education. During my short- and long-term teaching practices, I had the chance to teach in three secondary grammar schools that are held in high regard in Hungary. In these institutions, I was fortunate enough to work with inspiring language instructors who had been teaching for decades, thus having acquired a wide range of pedagogical tools to exploit. With their aspiration to strive for the better, my mentors paved the way for me to utilise my potential as a successful future language instructor.

Conversely, these professionals have displayed a remarkable range of self-reflection, especially when correcting their students' mistakes. Observing them—selecting from different methods that best suited the learning situation—helped me realise that the teaching profession indeed requires lifelong growth and learning.

One of the difficulties I have faced throughout the years I have been teaching is the unexpected nature of classroom moments: for me, these are mostly disciplinary actions, the provision of instructions, and immediate oral error correction. Without much experience in teaching entire groups, the largest concern I had when I started teaching English was being able to correct student errors without discouraging them. Firstly, I needed to inspect my own error correction methods. I came to the realisation that I tend to provide partial compliments for my students even after they have made an apparent mistake. This is followed by a polite correction in the form of an explicit provision of the correct version. Typically, these oral error corrections are also followed by a brief grammatical explanation regarding the correct form.

The following example aims to illustrate my general attitude towards immediate error correction. The student error and the feedback provision were written down by my mentor teacher who observed the lesson. The asterisk marks the student's erroneous utterance in the sentence, while the underlined word was stressed in order to draw the student's attention to the correct form.

Student: George usually drink* black coffee in the morning.
Teacher: Great! However, pay attention to the verb, please. George usually <u>drinks</u> black coffee.

The reason I immersed myself into the topic of error correction might stem from the lack of awareness of my own practices: it is crucial to be familiar with a wide range of error correction methods in order to best cater for the students' needs. I aimed to seek out methods that could benefit not only my students but my evolving teacher persona as well. Therefore, I reached out to in-service teachers to gain valuable insight on the research topic.

Having numerous discussions with my colleagues (teacher trainees and practising teachers alike), I realised that error correction induces a general uneasiness in the majority of language instructors. This general hesitancy might originate from the confrontational manner of immediate corrective feedback: all the ongoing actions cease for a second, and in that moment, the language instructor needs to decide whether to correct the occurring mistake or leave it untreated. The confrontational nature of error correction causes uncertainty and distress to me that I am striving to overcome with awareness, learning about giving appropriate corrective feedback, and engaging in meaningful conversations with my colleagues. These instantaneous classroom moments should not be feared, but rather exploited, so they aid the language acquisition processes of the learners.

The most fundamental goal I set for myself is to be as prepared as possible when teaching English in a classroom setting. However, one cannot plan every aspect of the lesson: teachers might find themselves in positions where they need to make split-second decisions in order to continue the lesson with no harm caused. In my opinion, error correction may strengthen, or on the contrary, damage a well-functioning student-teacher relationship. My aim with this thesis is to dedicate time to uncover how other professionals tackle this sensitive problem, as I firmly believe that teachers serve as the best support for their colleagues. Acknowledging the experience and expertise surrounding us and reflecting on our own inner workings may help us solidify our position in the teaching profession. This case study embarks on shedding light on a very important area of language teaching, whose thorough understanding requires self-reflection, observation, and comprehension.

1   Introduction

Similarly to numerous skills that humans master, language learning arguably happens via trial and error. Researchers in the 1960's and 1970's expressed that errors made by students act as clear signs that language learning is in progress (Corder, 1967 as cited in Hendrickson, 1978, pp. 388-389). Conversely, others shared the notion that errors are by-products of language acquisition, and thus should be avoided. Language teachers at the time were encouraged to get their students to a level of proficiency where errors no longer occur (Hendrickson, 1978, p. 387).

Various ideologies and attitudes have surfaced throughout the decades in which the topic of error treatment has been in the spotlight. Consequently, today's stakeholders have contradictory views when it comes to the practice of oral error correction. On one hand, professionals believe that the key to advancement in language acquisition is to correct every occurring mistake. On the other hand, a number of teachers consider fluency superior to accuracy. In this ideology, in order to improve the self-confidence and fluency of the language learner, one must not be discouraged by constantly being corrected. Others view error correction as an essential part of language development and seek to maintain a healthy balance between overcorrection and the total lack of providing corrective feedback (Khansir & Pakdel, 2018, p. 190).

This investigation aspires to exhibit an objective portrayal of two language teachers on how they perceive their oral error correction methods and how it truly occurs in the classroom setting. After reading and evaluating plenty of studies conducted in the research topic, a hiatus in Hungarian literature emerged and provided a solid base for the current investigation. This thesis aims to reveal the attitudes and belief systems of two EFL teachers in one of Hungary's prestigious secondary grammar schools. In the study, the two participants' lessons were analysed with the help of a meticulously designed observation worksheet. After the sufficient amount of information was gathered (by observing 15 lessons of each teachers), the following phase was the conduction of the interviews with the aim of exposing the participants' views on their own error correction methods. The main goal of the interview was to report on the awareness of a novice language teacher and a language instructor who has been teaching English for more than two decades.

Would it be possible to compare the findings of the interviews and observed language lessons, it could also move forward a deeper reflection process of fellow language teachers. Eventually, stakeholders in education could gain valuable insight on

their own error treatment preferences. Teachers with diverse professional backgrounds could all benefit from gaining worthwhile understanding on how they correct their students. The findings of this investigation could also illustrate how bottomless the toolbox of oral error correction certainly is.

As linguists have begun to show interest in the topic of oral corrective feedback in the past 50 years, a great number of research papers emerged with the aim of investigating the topic from different angles. However, merely a handful of them tackled how the belief systems of language teachers correspond with their teaching practices. In fact, corresponding Hungarian case studies are a rare find. Hence, the current thesis aims to fill this hiatus as it provides an insight into an acclaimed Hungarian secondary grammar school's workings.

This investigation was partially inspired by Hanif's 2021 work that outlined a similar research area. Even though Hanif (2021) narrowed the research scope to the Saudi Arabian educational context, the research questions of the study suited the research area of this investigation well, resulting in the adaptation of them (p. 63). The current thesis was conducted alongside the following research questions:

- *What are the Hungarian grammar school EFL teachers' reported beliefs about oral corrective feedback?* (Research question 1)
- *What are these teachers' empirically observed oral corrective practices?* (Research question 2)
- *To what extent are the observed teachers' belief systems about their oral corrective methods congruent with their observed teaching practices?* (Research question 3)

In this thesis, Section 2 (Literature Review) consists of a wide cross section of studies ranging from previous works of the early days to the more recent research papers investigating similar questions as the present paper does. Beginning with the definition of oral corrective feedback, the Literature Review serves as a foundation for this research. In order to attain the sufficient knowledge about the research topic, a number of diverse investigations were compiled varying in the educational systems they were set in and the diverse groups they were administered to. The reviewed data served as an excellent base for the empirical investigation of the thesis.

In Section 3 (Methods) the institution, the observed teachers and the students are introduced. The methods of the research (the classroom observation sequence and the interviews) are also described in detail. In order to increase the replicability of the investigation, detailed methods of data analysis are explained in the section. The most essential ethical considerations are also described.

Section 4 (Results) serves as a channel to convey the findings of the research. Based on the empirical findings, an attempt will be made to unravel the research questions and paint a detailed picture of the two EFL teachers partaking in the investigation. In the Results section, the arising concepts are reported on, illustrated by tables and figures derived from the collected data. Corresponding research works are addressed to give possible explanations to the observed phenomena.

In the Conclusions (Section 5), all three research questions are briefly discussed alongside the following relevant points: limitations of the study, pedagogical implications and possible future research avenues. Finally, the comparison between the anticipated outcomes and the actual results of the research are acknowledged.

Additional data can be found in the form of tables and figures in the Appendices section. In the section there are samples of the observation worksheets, the collected and categorised data, and also the set of interview questions.

2   Literature Review

This section begins with the definition of the key term of this research, followed by the different approaches introduced over the past decades. The corresponding literature is viewed chronologically, providing a detailed illustration of the changing viewpoint in error treatment. The two widely acknowledged typologies are also presented with example sentences to aid comprehension. Finally, a number of case studies are introduced to exemplify how error treatment is viewed in different educational systems.

2.1 Definition of oral corrective feedback

Oral corrective feedback (also known as *oral error correction* or *oral error treatment*) has been in the spotlight for academic discussion for many decades. Researchers have recognised its relevance, as a great number of academic research has been pursued in various countries, investigating diverse groups of language learners. Error correction therefore has become an area of interest in the field of foreign language teaching, with more emphasis placed on how the stakeholders view their roles and attitudes in the topic.

Firstly, what the current thesis means by 'corrective feedback' needs to be defined. Based on Chaudron (1977, as cited in Coskun, 2010), providing corrective feedback is the "teacher reaction that transforms, disapproves or demands improvement of the learner utterance" (p. 1). Upon defining the term, the two most important stakeholders are introduced: the language instructors or teachers and their students, whose performance needs to be altered by the correction.

2.2 Approaches that influenced how scholars view oral error correction

In a chronological view of the corresponding literature, the most relevant arguments are presented in the following subsection. Russel (2009) provided a general overview of the history of error correction in two principal fields: Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and Second Language Teacher Education (SLTE). In the 1950's and 1960's, errors were viewed as inevitable but also avoidable parts of language acquisition, which needed to be corrected immediately (p. 21).

Decades later, scholars started to argue against the instantaneous error correction, emphasising its harmful effects on the language learner. The concept of the *Affective Filter Hypothesis* was first introduced to shed light on the possible adverse effects (Dulay &

Burt, 1977, as cited in Krashen, 1982, p. 31). Krashen (1982) identified the said affective variables that presumably influence the learners' success in second language acquisition. The three main areas are the following: motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety. The third affective variable is the most relevant to this research, as oral error correction is said to raise anxiety levels in students. According to the author, the three affective variables act as a filter that prevents language "input from being used for language acquisition" (p. 32).

This hypothesis shifted the role of the language teacher from having to correct every occurring mistake to being able to create a safe learning environment where anxiety levels are reduced. Even though this work was written more than 40 years ago, it still holds a message relevant to today's education: maintaining a learning environment with lower affective filters not only decreases learner anxiety, but it promotes language acquisition as well.

The importance of communicative skills and the elimination of speech anxiety are essential elements of the approaches and theories that reigned over the 1980's and 1990's. Similarly, Krashen and Terrell (1998) viewed communication as the fundamental function of language usage when they introduced the *Natural Approach*. The approach aimed to provide the opportunity for conversational language exchange, as similar to natural exchanges as possible, mirroring real-life communicative situations (p. 178). The Natural Approach declared that oral errors, which do not hinder the comprehension and communication itself, are not to be corrected (p. 20). Additionally, error correction aimed to help the students adapt their "conscious mental picture" of a grammar rule (p. 177). Krashen and Terrell (1998) pointed out that direct error correction tends to affect students negatively, as it hinders their willingness to communicate. At the time, language instructors were advised to weigh the anticipated positive effects and "the intrinsic negative effects with regard to raising the affective filter" when deciding to correct an error or to leave it untreated (p. 177).

2.3 Fluency and accuracy (the inherently confrontational nature of error correction)

Language instructors tend to waver between two essential components of language learning while assisting their students' language acquisition: these are *accuracy* and *fluency* (Scrivener, 2005, p. 160). Scrivener (2005) represented this hesitation with a drawing of a switch with the two settings labelled as the two language aspects mentioned above. Immediate error treatment is frequently neglected, as numerous language teachers

display a tendency to focus on fluency rather than accuracy during speaking activities. Their decision is justified by the belief that overcorrecting their students would damage their enthusiasm. This view was also supported by stating that when fluency is in the language focus of an activity, immediate error correction might inhibit the learner as well as the learning objectives of the said activity (p. 160).

Scrivener (2005) emphasised the importance of clarity and overview on the main goal of the activities that a language teacher intends to use in their classes. For those professionals who refuse to correct oral errors instantaneously (for fear that it would discourage students), Scrivener (2005) introduced a method called "*scaffolding*". This technique requires a skilled language speaker guiding the less skilled learner by encouraging them in manifold ways. Without disrupting the flow of the conversation, the skilled language user aids their less skilled partner by nodding, keeping eye contact, echoing the last word or the key ideas of the learner. One can also encourage a learner by asking prompting questions that "oil a conversation" and advance their learning process (p. 162).

The author also placed strong emphasis on students recognizing their own errors, and self-correcting them instead of teachers giving them the solutions (p. 298). Finally, according to Scrivener's standpoint, errors show that students are making progress in their language learning. These attempts of information exchange (and the errors that occur in the process) signal the reached proficiency level of the learner. A new angle was also introduced when the author prompted that student errors also help the teacher outline the upcoming learning materials (p. 298).

By the early 2000's, errors were viewed with significantly more acceptance. Oral errors were observed as definite signs that attempts are being made to communicate, and progress is evidently taking place.

2.4 To correct or not to correct (a scientific dispute)

Oral error correction is viewed as one of the most inherently confrontational activities in language teaching (Magilow, 1999, p. 125). Therefore, several case studies and research articles have surfaced over the last two decades whose aim was to uncover the attitudes of the two most influential stakeholders in education: students who intend to master a language, and their teachers who help them along the way. Plenty of researchers have sought to identify the most appropriate methods to correct student errors in order to

achieve a desirable outcome. For these stakeholders, error correction serves as a way of connecting with their students and cultivating their knowledge.

By contrast, Magilow (1999) viewed corrective feedback as a "power display", which highlighted the asymmetry between the teacher and their group (p. 125). For this reason, Magilow suggested a deep inquiry into the matter of error correction. His 1999 case study also served as a fit tool for this thesis, as he investigated the attitudes of beginner teachers. Novice teachers were appropriate candidates for such an inquiry, as gaining their students' respect and avoiding error correction for fear that they would lose their rapport is a typical concern for them.

With the help of his fellow teachers, Magilow observed his own error correction style as well. The research also required self-reflection, as part of his case study was to record his expectations prior to teaching. Later, he reflected on his impressions, accompanied by his students' feedback after each class. Based on his colleagues' observations, he seemed hesitant and unassertive when deciding to correct his students' mistakes or leave them untreated. Another typical beginner teacher flaw raised by the author is the increased teacher talking time at the expense of their students. As teachers aspire to create a safe and positive learning environment, students have fewer opportunities to communicate, therefore, to make mistakes (Magilow, 1999, pp. 126-127).

Opinions about whether to correct errors differed widely among researchers. Truscott (1999) displayed strong aversions towards error correction when he claimed that teachers "should seriously consider the option of abandoning" it altogether (p. 437). According to the author, teachers who intend to correct errors face various issues. Firstly, they need to understand the nature of the occurring error to give appropriate feedback on it. As anticipated, this requires a deep knowledge of the language. Not being able to correct properly might also stem from the circumstances that teachers need to work in: a noisy environment, quickly uttered errors and unclear pronunciations are only a few aspects to register. The combination of these circumstances might result in correcting a "non-error" (pp. 438-439).

Truscott (1999) also stated that the presentation of the error correction is also a crucial factor, which needs to be taken into account. The students' ability to comprehend the corrective feedback has a serious impact on their performance. Teachers also face difficulty for being inconsistent with error correction that may well result in unwanted classroom moments. Truscott also raised awareness to the dangers of overcorrection, which might evoke an inner feeling of inferiority in the particular student (p. 439).

Truscott's view focused on the disruptive manner of error correction: he viewed it as an action that interrupts the fluidity of the lesson, rather than seeing error correction as an inevitable part of the learning process. This gives an overall negative disposition to the study.

Numerous scholars disagreed with Truscott's (1999) views on error correction. A swift and witty response was published by Lyster et al. in the same year (1999) in which they regarded Truscott's work as "impressionistic and unsubstantiated" (p. 457). The authors advocated for the achievability and necessity of error correction, stating that it can reportedly make the right form more salient to the language learner. Their most compelling argument against Truscott's (1999) claim (that oral error correction disrupts the fluidity of a lesson) is that integrated error correction does not have such an effect on a lesson (Lyster et al., p. 458).

Lyster et al. (1999) also contradicted Truscott's opinion on how error correction affects students. The authors raised awareness to the fact that all elements of language teaching involve taking students' individual differences into consideration, not only error correction. Responding to Truscott's controversial views on error treatment, Lyster et al. highlighted the importance of feedback provision, as it is proven to be a "feasible discourse move" (p. 460). Having read the substantiated arguments of the three scholars, this thesis sides with the work of Lyster et al., and regards Truscott's views as obsolete and rather extreme.

2.5 Typology of oral error correction

Researchers grasped the concept of oral error correction in diverse ways. However, the widely accepted typology (applied by many scholars) originates from Lyster and Ranta's (1997) work. As a result of their research, the authors identified six distinct types of corrective feedback, and linguists still commonly adapt the typology for their work. Numerous studies apply the said typology, showing its value and usability. The six categories created by Lyster and Ranta (1997) are discussed below.

1. *Explicit correction* encompasses the "explicit provision" of the right and grammatically correct form. While providing the correct form, the teacher signals the error transparently to the student by saying helping sentences such as: "Oh, you mean," or "You should say…" (p. 46).

2. *Recasts* require the teacher to reformulate the student's utterance partially or entirely, including the error only. Recasts may also be translations as a reply to the use of mother tongue in the classroom (p. 47).

3. *Clarification requests* signal misunderstanding on the part of the teacher and usually result in repetition or the reformulation of the utterance by the student. A clarification request is a clear indication that the student made an erroneous utterance in their speech, which needs to be corrected. Students are usually led to the realisation via questions such as "Pardon me" or "Come again?" or repetition of the erroneous utterance as in "What do you mean by …?" (p. 47).

4. *Metalinguistic feedback* can also be listed among the implicit forms of corrective feedback, where the teacher deliberately refrains from providing the correct form of the erroneous utterance for the student. Instead, what instructors present are comments, questions, or information "related to the well-formedness of the student's utterance" such as "Is it feminine?" or "No, not X is the error" (p. 47). This implicit way of error correction aims to elicit the correct version from the language learner without being too concrete.

5. *Elicitation* is used to explicitly draw out information from the student. This might come in the form of an unfinished sentence that the student is supposed to complete with the correct form (indicated by a strategic pause). Teachers also aid their students' development by asking questions (whose aim is to elicit the correct form) such as: "How do we say X in English?" Such questions differ from *metalinguistic questions* (see above) in a way that they cannot be yes/no questions (p. 48).

6. *Repetition* includes an isolated reiteration made by the teacher that focuses solely on the erroneous utterance. Adjustments in intonation might also be cues for the student in order to spot the error (p. 48).

7. *(Multiple feedback)* refers to the combination of two or more corrective feedback types discussed above, but this correction type is not incorporated organically in the six fundamental categories created by the two authors, mainly because the use of multiple feedback is infrequent (p. 48).

Scrivener (2005) also provides ideas on indicating and correcting errors made by the students. These suggestions are arguably more digestible for readers than the previously

mentioned typology as they are illustrated by lifelike examples (pp. 300-301). The categories are the following:

1. *Informing* students that an error occurred during an utterance (e.g., 'There was an error in what you have just said.').

2. Using *mimics and facial expressions* to indicate the erroneous utterance: "surprise, frown, raised eyebrow", showing interest in the student's performance, etc. (p. 300).

3. Combining mimics with *gestures* (e.g., the teacher 'holds' onto an incorrect sentence indicating that the sentence is erroneous The teacher signals that the lesson cannot continue unless the error is corrected and the erroneous sentence is let go (pp. 321-322).

4. Using the "*finger correction" method*: this method is simple yet illustrates errors made in the sentence structure suggestively. This error correction method requires the teacher to hold up their hand, with each finger representing one word of the uttered sentence. Consequently, the teacher is able to refer to the erroneous word precisely by marking the corresponding finger (or even the erroneous syllable of the word by pointing to the adequate joint of the finger) (pp. 321-322).

5. *Repeating the erroneous "sentence up to the error",* leaving it unfinished (p. 301) (e. g. 'She went to the ...?'). This method is considered equivalent to Lyster and Ranta's (1997) *elicitation*.

6. *Echoing* the sentence only changing "the intonation or the stress" (p. 301) (e. g. 'He wants to be *an** doctor?').

7. Asking a *multiple-word question* (e. g. 'Are you sure about this?' or 'Do you think the tense is correct?')

8. "Asking a *one-word question*" (p. 301) (e. g. 'Tense?')

9. "Drawing a *timeline* on the board" (frequently used when explaining tenses or when other grammar-related problems arise)

10. "Drawing *spaces or boxes* on the board" indicating the number of words in a sentence (p. 301). This method is similar to the finger technique in a way that it

aids indicating which word in a sentence is the erroneous one and needs the student's attention.

11. Writing the erroneous sentence on the board and offering the error correction to the peers via *open discussion.*

12. "*Utilising the humour* that the error provides" (p. 301).

13. "*Using the phonemic chart* to point at an incorrect phoneme" (p. 301).

This study combined Lyster and Ranta's (1997) and Scrivener's (2005) typology to describe the error correction that happened during the observed secondary grammar school EFL lessons. The decision to apply a combination of the two typologies was based on the aim to create a detailed picture of the actual practices of the observed participants.

2.6 Case studies related to oral error correction

In the following subsection, the findings of case studies done in different educational systems will be discussed chronologically. The investigations were chosen from the past decades in order to present fairly recent findings.

The results of the following Turkish small-scale study rely heavily on self-observation. Using Lyster and Ranta's (1997) typology, Coskun (2010) emphasised the importance of self-reflection, encouraging other professionals to engage in self-observation in order to register their most preferred practices (p. 1). By videotaping his lessons during a sentence formation activity, Coskun (2010) documented 15 mistakes made by his students, 10 of those being grammatical and five of them related to punctuation (pp. 4-5). His preferred way of error treatment turned out to be *repetition*, which proved to be an effective method of error correction based on his observation. Repetition resulted in self- and peer-correction, making the students responsible for their own learning processes and promoting self-sufficiency (p. 7). Taking everything into account, the author emphasised how a language teacher is ought to take up the role of a "pedagogic explorer" who is interested in the workings of their class, and is willing to experiment with unfamiliar methods (p. 8).

Another factor that captured researchers' attention was the attitudes of the stakeholders. The following research employed different methods from the previous one. Zhu (2010) conducted an analysis investigating Chinese college students' attitudes toward error correction. The researcher administered a survey that was created along the lines of

self-correction, peer-correction, and teacher-correction to depict the attitudes of the subjects. The results of the survey revealed that teacher-correction is prevalent in Chinese education, as students displayed being accustomed to it (p. 129). As the Chinese educational system favours a teacher-centred structure in education, the survey supported the initial ideas about the anticipated results.

Zhu (2010) also draws the attention to uncovering the error correction preferences of students prior to teaching them. This might bring about decisions into what error corrective methods should be used in the classroom, resulting in content students whose individual needs are met with. The author also favours systematic error correction, which he defines as correcting those mistakes that prohibit learning and "hinder communication" (p. 129).

The issue was also addressed by Hernández Méndez and Reyes Cruz (2012). Their investigation combined the methods of the formerly mentioned two studies. They investigated EFL instructors at a Mexican university with the help of a "semi-structured interview and a questionnaire" (p. 63). The authors emphasised a previously untouched point: language teachers need to make critical decisions about which corrective method to use with different groups, catering for the individual differences and language proficiency levels (p. 67).

In many aspects, their case study formed a solid base for the current thesis. The subjects of their investigation targeted language instructors with teaching experiences ranging from four to 20 years. The majority (80 %) of the instructors participating in the research agreed on the notion that giving corrective feedback is a necessity in language teaching (mainly in promoting accuracy) (p. 69). Regarding whether error correction can have a negative impact on students, 80.1 % of the subjects fully or partially agreed that frequently given corrective feedback might be a source of frustration and dissatisfaction (p. 70). The study shed light on the problems arising from the provision of corrective feedback: the correction methods being "unsystematic" and baseless can make students anxious and distressed. Consecutively, with the aim of minimising speech anxiety levels in students, teachers are encouraged to invest time into broadening their knowledge about corrective feedback. Language instructors are also encouraged to help the learners get to know these methods, and acknowledge the learners' individual differences (p. 74).

A fairly recent study from 2021 tackled a similar research area as the current thesis does. Yüksel et al. investigated how congruent the belief systems of 20 language instructors are with their practices, supported by video-recorded observations. The researchers detected significant inconsistencies in the participants' self-perceptions. The

observed language instructors did not view their own practices adequately, resulting in discrepancies between their preferences and their observed practices. Interestingly, when confronted with the reality, the participants still stood by their believed preferences (p. 376).

After studying various case studies and research articles tackling the different aspects of oral error correction, the current thesis formulated a set of research questions to investigate the situation of one particular Hungarian grammar school. In order to outline the participants' knowledge and portray how accurately they see their own oral error treatment practices, it was crucial to get engrossed in the contemporary research findings. Upon reading these, the research method structure suitable for the current investigation was formulated. The research structure is presented in Section 3 below.

3   Methods

In Section 3, an attempt is made to provide a rich description of the participants, the research instruments, the procedures, and the methods of data analysis in order to ensure the replicability of the study. The section begins with the introduction of the anticipated outcomes of the study, focusing on three main areas that are detailed under the first title. The section concludes with the ethical considerations of the research.

3.1 Anticipated outcomes

The former investigations that focused on the phenomenon of oral error treatment raised many intriguing questions. Upon reading the past and contemporary research articles done in the field, three main areas emerged that could be further investigated:

- The first area is the *error correction rate*, which is calculated by dividing the number of errors corrected by the teacher with the total sum of the errors spotted by the observer.
- The second important aspect that needs to be considered is the *variety of methods used* while correcting the mistakes.
- Thirdly, special attention will be devoted to the third research question: *how accurately the subjects view their own practices.*

Firstly, when estimating the individual error correction rates, an experienced teacher would possibly surmount to an inexperienced instructor, as a beginner teacher's focus is divided over different stimuli coming from various sources. Instructing students, taking disciplinary actions and time-management are only a fraction of the demanding decisions that need to be made on the spot. Furthermore, novice teachers are believed to prioritise rapport for fear that correcting students' mistakes would result in losing face. As Nycyk (2021) recalled in his autoethnography, the hardest part of being a beginner teacher was not to induce unnecessary anxiety in the student with his error correction (p. 196). It follows that the anticipated error correction rate of the experienced teacher is believed to be higher.

Secondly, predicting the variety of the oral corrective methods used is a rather difficult task, for the reason it can be approached from two different perspectives. One could say that beginner teachers are closer in time to their academic training, which might equip them with a wide range of contemporary methodology on how to correct errors.

Teachers lacking the experience also show eagerness to improve their active knowledge on education-related topics in order to fill the hiatus in their knowledge. Additionally, one could argue that over the course of decades spent in language instruction, an experienced teacher has mastered an array of tools and methods and narrowed it down to those that are indeed useful. Therefore, it is assumed that the beginner teacher will use a greater number of different techniques, whereas the experienced teacher will rely on the already proven teaching instruments.

Finally, the question of awareness needs to be considered. A great number of people would plausibly believe that an experienced teacher is entirely mindful about their teaching practices, including oral error correction. This thesis however presumes that the solution to this question might lie in the lack of experience, thus clinging onto any given help. This support might be the detailed lesson plans, academic papers, and pieces of advice given by colleagues. Consequently, an inexperienced teacher might possess the determination to differentiate error correction to best advocate for their students. Enthusiastic and passionate beginner teachers show a tendency to adjust their teaching to serve all learning styles and personalities. They also devote time and energy to self-reflection and supervision. Therefore, this thesis shares the assumption that the beginner teacher will show a greater awareness when it comes to justifying their choices and reflecting on their actual practices. Since the investigated school takes great pride in employing committed teachers, their recurrent act of self-reflection and participation in training programmes might smooth out the differences between their belief systems and actual practices.

3.2 Participants

The research was conducted in a prestigious secondary grammar school in the centre of Budapest. This highly selective institution promotes 21st century skills such as life-long-learning, critical thinking, creativity, problem solving and decision making among several others. The investigated school takes great pride in the excellence of its teaching staff as well as their approach to modern teaching methodology.

The main goal of this research was to uncover the extent to which two professionals working in the same institution view their attitudes towards error correction differently than what happens in actuality. In order to get a colourful representation of the research topic, two categorically different professionals were chosen as the subjects of the investigations (see Table 1 *Basic Data of the Participants*).

Table 1

Basic Data of the Participants

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	L1	Other major taught in the institution	Levels taught in English
BT	Male	31	Hungarian	Hungarian Literature and Grammar	Beginner to Pre-Intermediate
ET	Female	48	Hungarian	-	Pre-Intermediate to Advanced

The participants were selected based on their availability and willingness to partake in the investigation. During the initial planning stages of the research, a few teachers turned down the opportunity to be part of this investigation, for fear that their students would behave differently with an observer being present in the classroom.

Both of the selected participants were in-service teachers in the said institution. The first teacher suitable for the research purpose was an energetic beginner teacher, who was not only enthusiastic about partaking in the upcoming investigation, but he also let all his lessons be observed. This ensured the credibility of the results, as this beginner teacher (later: BT, a pseudonym used for 'Beginner Teacher') showcased complete transparency while teaching. BT had prior work experience in private tutoring, and he also worked as a part-time teacher in a different institution.

The second teacher was a more experienced professional (later: ET, a pseudonym used for 'Experienced Teacher') who had been working in the institution for more than two decades. Her impressive past in language education opened many doors for the investigation. Due to her reduced lesson numbers, the majority of her lessons were visited over the course of the lesson observation sequence.

Both of the participants were eager to help the investigation with their flexibility and open-mindedness. The original observational goal was to find beginner language groups consisting of younger learners who need elaborate instruction and thorough immediate error correction in order to develop. The selected language groups consisted of seventh and ninth grader students, with a total of 16-17 people present in both groups. The target groups were chosen based on their language proficiency levels. As the institution places strong emphasis on language education, the majority of the students gain the desired

language proficiency during their second or third academic year. Therefore, choosing a seventh and a ninth grader group seemed plausible for the objective of the investigation.

3.3 Instruments

In order to arrive at a substantial understanding of how accurately the two participants view their teaching practices, qualitative methods were used with the exception of a few quantitative elements. The first phase of the research was an immersive lesson observation sequence, followed by a semi-structured interview, whose purpose was to compare the results of the observations with the actual belief systems of the teachers. The order in which the two research phases were delivered (first, the observation sequence, then the interview) was meant to ensure the transparency of the results and to minimise the probability of revealing the research objective of the investigation to the participants and thus manipulating the data. The summarised research aims and the corresponding research methods are displayed in Figure 1 (*The Visualisation of the Research Aims and the Methods Applied in the Investigation*).

Figure 1

The Visualisation of the Research Aims and the Methods Applied in the Investigation
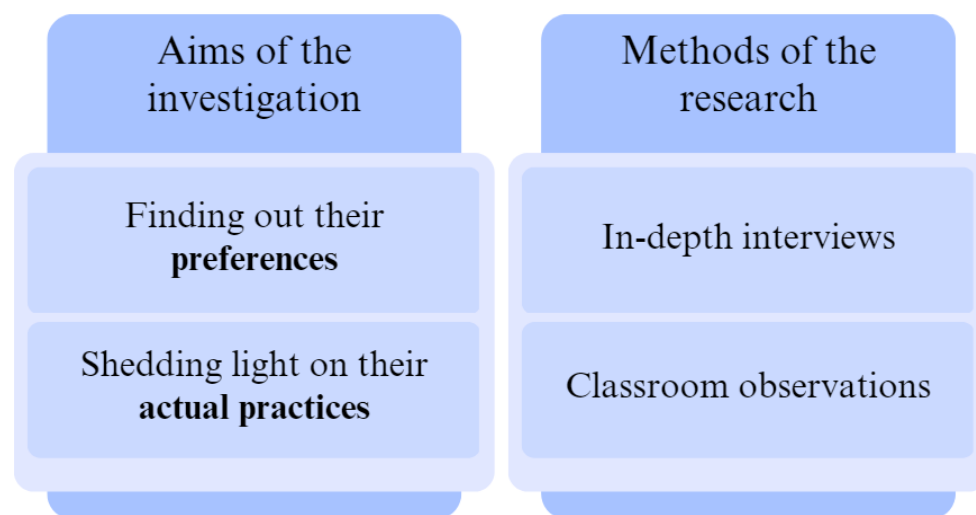
3.3.1 The classroom observation worksheet and field notes

The observations took place in the natural learning environment in the assigned classrooms, ensuring that under no circumstances were the students' reactions manipulated. The main focal point of this thesis was to observe immediate error correction in the classroom setting and shed light on the actual practices of the subjects. Afterward, these practices were compared with the possible preconceptions. In order to get an image about their actual practices, detailed field notes were taken, whose sole purpose was to record the error and describe the error correction type chosen by the teacher. These meticulous field notes entailed the context of the occurring error, how it was worded by the student and the error correction that followed the utterance. Special attention was paid to self and peer correction. The lesson observations were not videotaped in order to ensure the natural behaviour of the students.

These field notes were later transcribed into the classroom observation checklist. Hence, the checklist displays the thorough observations with the carefully categorised, quantifiable data. Instead of completing a coding system prior to the observation sequence, the observation checklist used for scoring the errors were only later developed. The reason for this was to eliminate the unnecessary categories that had not occurred during the observed lessons, making the checklist easy to comprehend. The checklist entails ten elements: all six of Lyster and Ranta's (1997) typology and four retrieved from Scrivener's (2005) work. The following adapted typology applied to this thesis:

01. Explicit correction
02. Recast
03. Clarification request
04. Metalinguistic feedback
05. Elicitation
06. Repetition
07. Mimics / facial expressions and gestures
08. Finger correction
09. Drawing a timeline / boxes on the board
10. Utilising the humour of the error

The two typologies were altered significantly after the lesson observations: those categories that had not occurred during the observations were omitted from the checklist in order to simplify the comprehension of the displayed data. Given all of the above, every category in the checklist occurred over the course of at least one of the observed lessons. In order to increase the replicability of the study, two samples of the observation worksheets are displayed in the Appendices section (Tables 2-3), representing the lessons of both of the participants.

3.3.2 The classroom observation sequence

What Dörnyei (2007) addresses as the "insider perspective" entirely came about while observing the lessons (p. 38). Almost every observed group of students had already been introduced to the observer by the time the observations started. Therefore, the students' behaviour was not negatively impacted by a stranger observer's presence. The grammar school was also a reasonable choice in this regard, as all classes are accustomed to being observed by trainee teachers, as well as members of the school board from the first academic school year. According to the teachers of the institution, students behave identically when they are observed compared to regular classes when only their teacher is present in the classroom. With a non-participatory observer present, consistently sitting in the back of the classroom, students did not behave differently, and were not afraid to express their thoughts and make errors in the learning process. Both teachers seemed to behave naturally, with no sign of anxiety or uneasiness. In this regard, the difference in the experience did not alter the findings of the investigation.

The first classroom observation sequence was done in BT's classes, and the initial choice of observed classes were seventh graders. This age group (12-13-year old) seemed like a reasonable choice, as they are believed to need guidance and correction. However, lesson observations with the initial group needed to be suspended, as the students were entirely beginners, who did not have the means or the willingness to communicate in the target language. As there was a rather limited amount of student language production, error correction could not have been observed. After three lessons, no further observations had been done with this group, and no field notes had been taken: the group was excluded from the investigation. This experience served as a lesson, highlighting the importance of the choices a researcher needs to make.

Ultimately, another seventh grader group was chosen, this time it being the second strongest group in English based on the language aptitude test administered in the beginning of the academic year. This group consisted of 17 students with a more consistent English knowledge and an outstanding willingness to communicate. This group had four English lessons a week, with every lesson lasting for 45 minutes. BT had known this group for only 4-5 months at the time of the classroom observations, yet a supportive and safe environment had been established. Their lessons were mainly grammar-focused with additional vocabulary building exercises. All of the 15 lessons of BT had been observed with the said group to ensure the consistency of the retrieved data.

The other 15 lessons taught by the experienced teacher (ET) were also observed in one group. This time, the group consisted of 16 ninth graders who had also been in this institution for half a year. Their proficiency level was naturally much higher than the seventh graders, but the same conditions applied to both groups: an established safe learning environment and a warm-hearted tutor guiding the group members. These circumstances also resulted in a high willingness to communicate. Their lesson objectives usually entailed communicative exercises; less emphasis was placed on grammar-related tasks.

Both teachers used the New English File books (while BT used the Elementary, ET used the Upper-Intermediate level with her students). After consulting with the participants, it turned out that BT did not find this course book suitable for his students, for the reason that less emphasis was put on developing lifelike communication skills, and BT's students did not seem to appreciate what the book could offer. On the other hand, ET regarded the New English File book as a great companion for her students, as it provided a great range of useful vocabulary for the learners. In a large number of cases, both of the participants introduced supplementary exercises to the lessons which the students thoroughly enjoyed (ultimately benefitting their willingness to communicate).

3.3.3 The interview

The interviews were conducted after the lesson observations concluded so as not to influence the participants in any way. Maintaining the integrity of the results was assured by arranging the order of the two research phases. Therefore, the participants' views were not manipulated by informing them about the research topic.

The semi-structured interviews followed a set of questions that had been finalised and piloted beforehand. The subject of the pilot was a pre-service language teacher in the same institution. A few of these questions were either too vague or too suggestive and needed to be altered. The pilot interview raised another issue: a more detailed list of corrective feedback techniques were required, supported by examples of the given technique. The list served as a support for the interview subjects to recognise the differences between the corrective feedback types.

The interview had two subsections, with a total sum of 20 questions, which are displayed in Table 4 in the Appendices (*The Interview Questions*). The first four items on the list were categorised as 'general questions'. These items aimed to create a safe environment in which the subjects could openly describe their attitudes toward being language instructors. These questions targeted their background in teaching English and their history in the institution. In order to hit a personal note, the interviewees were asked about the enjoyable and the unenjoyable aspects of being a teacher.

The following questions addressed oral error correction practices in an attempt to help the interview subject reflect on their own practices. Questions nr. 2, 11, and 12 were directly adopted from Hanif (2021, p. 85). After answering question nr. 8, the subjects were given a detailed table with all the observed corrective methods including examples. Upon reading the list of techniques, they were asked to rank the categories in order of the extent to which they use them. There was always room for elaboration and adding supplementary information.

3.4 Procedures

Over the course of two months (beginning in November and concluding at the end of January), 15 lessons of each participants were observed. The majority of the observed lessons were 45-minute-long. Approximately 3-4 lessons were observed weekly on average over 10 weeks.

The lessons were not audio-recorded nor videotaped. In order to protect the anonymity of the students and the two observed teachers, only field notes were taken, which contained the subtle details of the immediate interactions between the teachers and their students. After each lesson, the field notes were finalised and given the proper format, including the date, pseudonym of instructor, and objective of the lesson to facilitate the classification. The field notes were then transcribed into observation worksheets, marking

the number of occurrences as well as the example of how the corrections occurred. Finalising the transcripts included filling the tables with the collected data and tallying the number of the corrective feedback techniques used.

Individual error correction rates were also calculated based on the number of marked error corrections divided by the total number of observed errors. This rate was based on the entire lesson observation sequences and thus applies to 15-15 lessons. Therefore, both of the participants were assigned an individual error correction rate in the form of a number between 0 and 1, which could easily be transformed into a percentage.

The interview phase began with the pilot interview, which took an hour to complete and resulted in the reformulation of a number of questions. Following the pilot phase, a number of questions were tailored as the pre-service teacher verbalised relevant concerns about the said questions.

The two interviews were conducted in the same room, on two separate days of the same week. The objective of the research remained concealed, as the interviews followed the observation sequences, and the order of questions introduced the topic in a subtle manner. The interviews were recorded over the course of half a week, and were later transcribed with the help of the audio-recordings. The interviewees had been assured of their anonymity and gave their consent to being recorded. BT's interview was 38 minutes long, while ET talked for 31 minutes.

The gathered data was analysed the following month guided by the research questions. While working with the compiled data, new concepts were introduced to the research to make the case study even more descriptive. Corresponding data was put into tables and illustrative figures to aid comprehension.

3.5 Methods of data analysis

A physical notebook was used for storing all the relevant occurrences that happened during the lesson observation sequence. The data of the lesson observations were analysed manually, whereas the findings of the interviews were transcribed with the help of an online program. The data retrieved from the classroom observations were put into tables, and the occurrences were counted (see Tables 5-6 in the Appendices).

Based on the total sum of recorded errors and the number of errors corrected by the instructor, an *individual error correction rate* was also calculated, resulting in a number between 0 and 1, which was also turned into a percentage (see Table 7 in the Appendices).

The distribution of the error correction types used by the participant was divided by the total number of errors corrected during the lessons, which were turned into percentages (see: Figures 5-6 in the Appendices). The two corresponding pie charts depict the differences between the two participants' corrective methods. These were contrasted with the preference ranks established during the interviews and the individual distances between the preferences and actual practices were born (see Tables 8-9 in the Appendices).

The transcripts of the interviews were analysed with ATLAS.ti, a program designed for qualitative data analysis. With the help of the computer program, new concepts arose, as the data were coded and categorised into larger code groups. ATLAS.ti also made it possible to support the findings with illustrative features: networks built with the different coded information demonstrated the semantic linkages between concepts.

3.6 Ethical considerations

An analytical case study that aims to understand a sensitive phenomenon inevitably accesses private information on the part of its participants. For the reason the researcher gained full access to a wide range of data about the observed participants and their students alike, all parties involved needed to be assured of the fair use of the collected data and shared information. Therefore, the institution and all of the participants remained anonymous throughout the entire process of the investigation, including the collection and analysis of the data, and the presentation of the findings.

All of the participants had been informed about the protection of their identity prior to the particular phases of the study. Both of the participants voluntarily consented to join the makings of the research. They were aware of the interviews being audio-recorded and gave their consent. No sensitive matter was touched upon and both interviews ended on a positive note. No data had occurred that would have raised ethical questions or would make the participants uncomfortable. The researcher selected those data carefully that suited the purpose of the investigation and those that did not cause any feeling of unease to the parties.

4   Results

In the Results section after returning to the question of self-awareness, the anticipated outcomes will be compared with the actual findings of the study, supported by excerpts retrieved from the interviews' transcriptions. The questions of 'when to correct' and 'when to ignore an error' will be discussed. Finally, two subsections will be devoted to two new concepts that arose while conducting the interviews: in order to explore whether the age of the students or the number of the learners have an impact on how the two professionals correct the occurring errors, a deeper self-inspection was involved in the research process.

4.1 The participants' awareness of their own practices

Quantifying the difference between the belief systems and the practices of the participants was challenging, as both of these concepts are difficult to measure. However, after inspecting the percentages of the error correction methods used during the classroom observations, a rank order was established. Except for the few instances where two error correction types had the same percentage, a clear rank stood out. These rank orders were compared to the participants' preferences derived from the interviews. The distance between the two numbers were then summed, resulting in a final number that essentially shows how accurately the two subjects view their practices. The data are displayed in Tables 8-9 in the Appendices.

In those cases where two error correction types gained the same percentage (therefore were given a shared position of two rank numbers), a mean average was calculated. For instance, in the case of ET, both 'Repetition' and 'Drawing timelines / boxes on the board' placed 7-8th as both of these techniques were used the same number of times (see Table 9 in the Appendices). ET's preference toward 'Repetition' was 10, so subtracting 10 by 7-8 is 2-3. In these cases, a mean of the two numbers was calculated (with 'Repetition' it was 2,5). The differences were summed and evaluated. Eventually, the smaller the number, the greater the awareness of the oral error corrective methods used.

After calculating the numbers of the two subjects, the beginner teacher was assigned 48, whereas the experienced teacher had 33 points. The current findings suggest that ET has a clearer understanding of her own practices, as her number is smaller than BT's, with 15 units. The reason for the perceived discrepancy might lie in the professional development of language instructors. Okas et al. (2014) explained this phenomenon with

the widely accepted viewpoint that a novice teacher undergoes a long-term developmental phase before acquiring the proper skills needed for effective teaching. According to the authors, these skills entail a "combination of theoretical and practical knowledge" (p. 330). Consequently, an experienced teacher is in an advantageous position, as their professional decisions are supported by the years spent in the classroom. They have encountered various pedagogical situations, and had the opportunity to experiment with the available methodology.

Anticipating that the experienced teacher would be more aware of her practices was a plausible outcome. This provides a general answer to the most important research question of the study: the numbers show that even a more experienced teacher can display disparities between her notions and actual practices. Excerpts from the interview with ET also support this finding. The experienced teacher stated the following at the end of the interview:

> When I first realised during the interview [that the topic is oral error correction], I told you I don't even do this. And I realised that I do, but I wasn't really aware… And I think that's an important point here. So after teaching [for] so many years, I had no idea that I do that. (Excerpt retrieved from the interview with ET)

The participant stated that after two decades spent in the institution, there are still areas of language teaching she regards as uncharted territory. Overall, spending years in the educational system and encountering various situations, a more experienced teacher is equipped with a clearer judgement of their own procedures.

4.2 The comparison of the anticipated outcomes and the actual findings of the study

In the following subsection, the anticipated results (displayed in the beginning of Section 3) will be reviewed and compared to the actual findings of the study. In order to arrive at the presented research findings, the analysed data of the observation worksheets were examined in contrast with the transcribed interview texts.

4.2.1 The analysis of the individual oral error correction rates

The first anticipated result addressed the individual error correction rates of the participants. It was assumed that the correction rate of the experienced teacher would be naturally higher, as a beginner teacher's attention is divided over many factors as soon as he steps foot into the classroom. During the interview, when asked about what he finds

challenging about the teaching profession, the beginner teacher stated that his efforts fall short when discipline issues are needed to be taken care of. He disclosed: "keeping discipline or keeping order in the classroom is a challenge for me" (excerpt retrieved from the interview with BT).
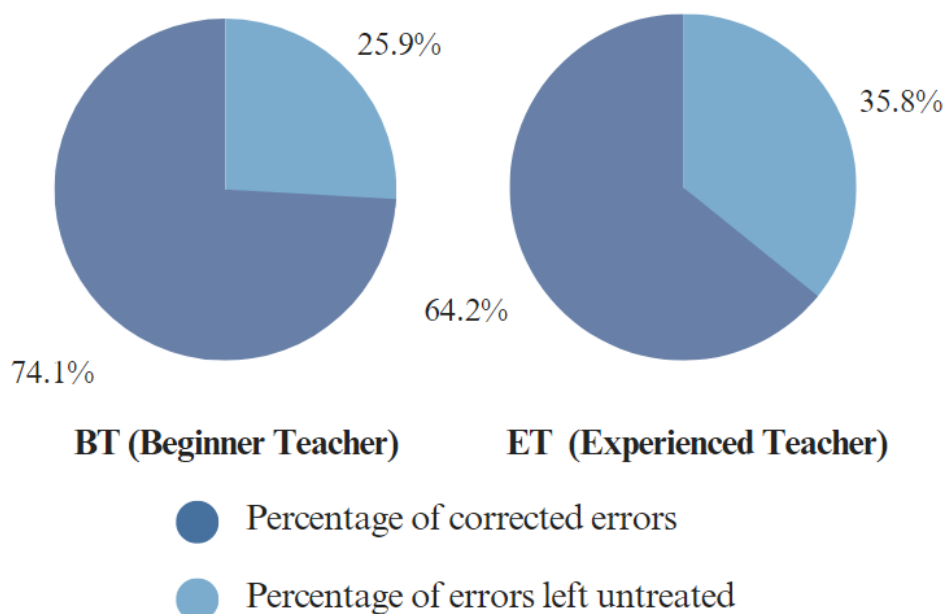
Having a calm classroom atmosphere is crucial for all of the stakeholders. Therefore, BT stated that he feels frustrated when his students misbehave. Research papers written throughout the decades also support his concerns. According to Fuller (1969, as cited in Okas et al., 2014), novice teachers have hardships with classroom management. Without years of teaching experience, having to control entire groups of students can be extremely challenging (p. 329). As Fuller states (1969, as cited in Okas et al., 2014), until novice teachers overcome this problem (by spending more time in the education system and facing new challenges), they will not be able to "handle later phase concerns". These concerns become apparent when a teacher is more experienced. Equipped with years of teaching, a professional has the ability to see the student as a social being and cater for their emotional and intellectual needs (p. 329).

During the classroom observation sequences, BT's classes were overall noisier due to the frequent instances of misbehaviour. The observed teacher displayed tension and frustration, which proved the previously stated points. Considering that focusing on the various aspects of a lesson can be challenging for a novice teacher, it was initially anticipated that the experienced teacher would correct a higher number of occurring mistakes, for the sole reason she is able to pay attention to more things than her beginner colleague.

The numerical data, however, proved otherwise: BT had a higher error correction rate (74.1 %) than his experienced colleague, who had 64.2%. This would suggest that the observed novice teacher was able to perceive and correct more mistakes than the experienced teacher. The data are displayed in the form of two diagrams under Figure 2. The method used to calculate the individual error correction rates are shown in Table 7 in the Appendices (*Individual Error Correction Rates of the Participants*). In the following subsection, an attempt will be made to uncover the underlying reason for the present findings.

Figure 2

Individual Oral Error Correction Rates of BT (Beginner Teacher) and ET (Experienced Teacher)

BT (Beginner Teacher): 25.9%, 74.1%
ET (Experienced Teacher): 35.8%, 64.2%

- Percentage of corrected errors
- Percentage of errors left untreated

4.2.2 The possible underlying reason for the differences in the anticipated outcomes and the actual findings

Based on the two interviews, the reason why they did not strive for correcting every occurring mistake lies in how they perceive the learning aims of the lesson. Their actual practices correctly reflect their beliefs in this case: both interviews showed that in the majority of the observed English lessons, the learning objective of the lessons was fluency, rather than accuracy. Both of the participants stated that they usually refrain from correcting their students when the aim of the activity is to encourage students' language use and self-expression. In the interviews, the two participants mention that they usually opt to minimise the provision of corrective feedback so as not to discourage their students.

The question of when to ignore the mistake is illustrated by Figure 3 (*The Underlying Reason for Choosing to Ignore an Error Based on the Interviews*) whose data was derived from the interviews. In both interviews, the participants shared their notions about their own error correction practices. Oftentimes, after noticing a pronunciation error, they chose to ignore it for fear that it would discourage their students and induce frustration in them. BT and ET also mentioned that interrupting a student with error correction mid-speaking would seriously hinder the fluidity of the student's speech, therefore, they either choose to correct the mistakes post-speaking, or they ignore the

mistake altogether. ET expressed that correcting a speaker mid-speaking would imply that she is merely interested in the form of the communication and not the message itself that the student wants to convey, evoking negative feelings in the speaker.

The classroom observation sequence supported their beliefs, as pronunciation-related errors were largely left untreated. ET corrected fewer mistakes, as her lessons consisted of a higher number of speaking tasks and fewer grammar-focused tasks. The reason why BT had a higher error correction rate might stem from the fact that seventh graders need continuous guidance and repetitive practices, which leave more room for errors to occur.

Hendrickson (1978) supports the belief systems of the teachers when he states that error correction should be reserved for grammar tasks, and during communicative exercises, the majority of errors should be tolerated (Birckbichler, 1977, as cited in Hendrickson, 1978, p. 390). If so, students' language-related confidence is ultimately boosted. Instead of stigmatising error production, tolerating a number of student errors can certainly be beneficial for students, as their self-confidence in language acquisition is reassured and supported. Hendrickson (1978) also emphasises the importance of "periodic, supportive feedback" provided by the instructor (p. 388).

Figure 3

The Underlying Reason for Choosing to Ignore an Error Based on the Interviews
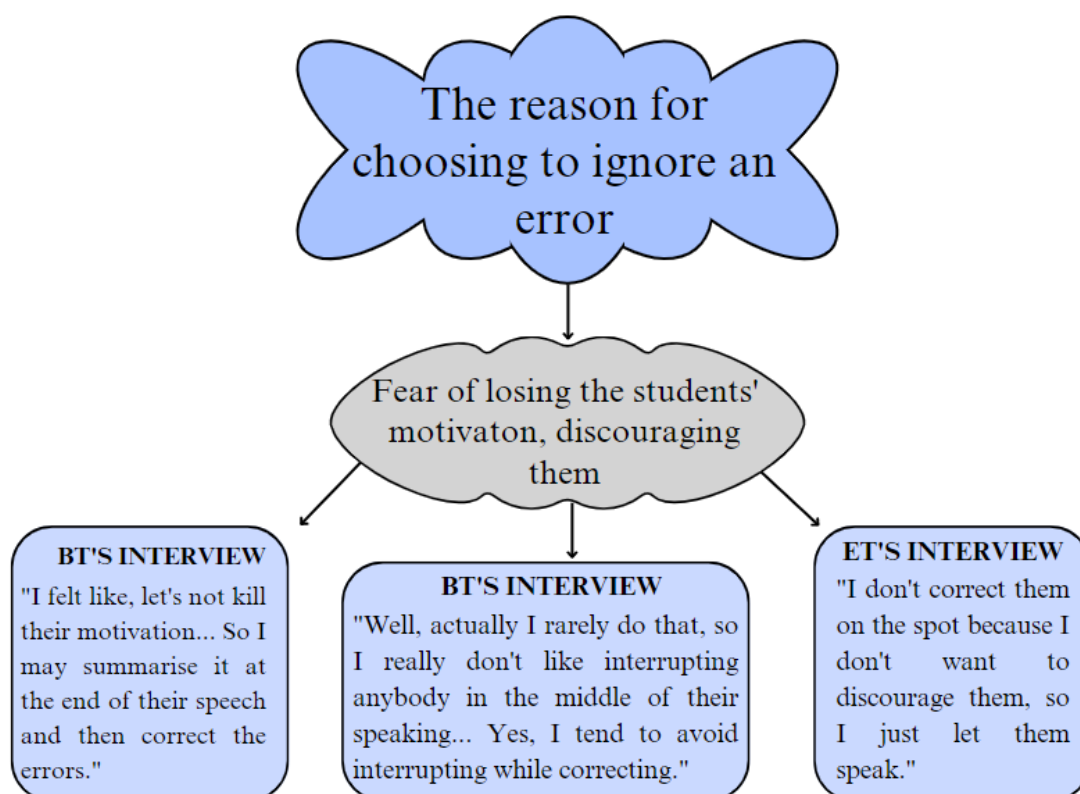
4.2.3 The comparison of the variety of the oral error correction methods used

During the classroom observation sequence, the participants used several types of oral error correction methods that were later classified into the established ten categories. The types of methods and the percentage of their use are displayed in two corresponding pie charts in the Appendices (Figures 5-6). It was anticipated as an outcome that the novice teacher would use a greater number of different techniques as beginner teachers tend to experiment with the available methods. On the contrary, an experienced teacher is believed to have tested out the methods in various classroom settings and only uses those that are proven to be effective. Therefore, it was anticipated that while the experienced teacher would reserve to a frequently used repertoire with a limited number of techniques, the beginner teacher would use a wide array of methods.

In reality, both of them used 9 out the 10 displayed techniques. On the other hand, the distributions of the methods exploited were certainly different. BT did not use mimics and facial expressions as a means of error correction, whereas ET refrained from using the finger correction technique. Consequently, there was no difference in the number of method-types used.

The distribution of the applied techniques are more intriguing: the beginner teacher's distribution consisted of four almost equally large parts which implies that he prefers to use explicit correction, recast, clarification request and metalinguistic feedback. On the other hand, the experienced teacher's use of error correction types had a different distribution: more than a third (36.05%) of the entire distribution consisted of recasts, which might indicate a shift toward those techniques that are proven to be useful or convenient to use. BT's somewhat even distribution and ET leaning towards one category forecasts that as teachers gain more experience, they tend to narrow down the use of various teaching methods. BT's (and presumably the majority of his novice colleagues') first years in the education system entails finding their own paths via trial and error. This includes experimenting with classroom management tools, trying out various types of instructions, work modes and exercises.

4.2.4 The question of how accurately the subjects view their own practices

It was anticipated that the beginner teacher would possess a more accurate view of his error management. During the interview session, BT mentioned several pieces of the terminology connected to error correction: he recollected the difference between implicit

and explicit correction, repetition, and even mentioned Scrivener's work. The most compelling explanation for the present finding might be that BT is closer to his academic years and is more reliant on research papers and academic articles. During the last semesters of the teacher-training programme, teacher trainees are asked to reflect on their practices and write professional development plans. These require the establishment of clear goals and studying applicable resources.

Reviewing how accurately they perceive their practices in actuality became even more insightful when the first two error correction techniques (explicit correction and recast) were in the research scope. Interestingly, both BT and ET placed these two techniques at the bottom of their preference list, yet in actuality, both of them used these error correction methods frequently (accounting for almost half of all error correction occurrences). When the participants were asked to elaborate on the said two categories, they expressed that they usually refrain from using them, as they only provide an instant solution to the problem but do not benefit the students' development.

In order to unravel the reason how these two categories are viewed, a new idea needs to be introduced. *Learner uptake* is a concept of primary importance raised by Lyster and Ranta (1997). The authors describe learner uptake as the student's expression that follows the teacher's error correction (p. 49). This serves as feedback to the teacher whether an erroneous utterance was corrected. According to Lyster and Ranta (1997), recast and explicit correction do not result in student responses; therefore, their learner uptake is highly questionable (p. 54).

The reason the participants chose these techniques (even though they believed their practices do not involve them organically) might be that it requires less time to recast the correct utterance or explicitly correct the erroneous item. Such discrepancies in belief systems and the actual practices serve as signals to engage in deeper self-reflection and examine one's decisions made in the classroom.

4.3 The question of when to correct

According to the participants, when the learning objective of a speaking task was fluency, they usually decided not to correct the occurring mistakes so as not to affect the students' motivation negatively. Later, they were asked to recall instances when they corrected their students. Both of them mentioned that they tend to correct recurring errors (errors their students continuously make). This recurrence signals a blockage in their

language acquisition that they need to be guided over. BT explained his attitude toward error correction as the following: "I tend to correct errors they continuously make. So probably these are some gaps in their knowledge or something they didn't learn before or something they don't know how to say correctly yet." (Excerpt retrieved from the interview with BT)

Hendrickson (1978) draws the reader's attention to the fact that students indeed require error correction, as their errors would go unnoticed without the guidance of the language instructor (p. 389). In order to acquire the target language sufficiently, the provision of corrective feedback is more than necessary (Kennedy, 1973, as cited in Hendrickson, 1978, p. 389). That is exactly what the two participants have expressed during their interviews and their practices are in accordance with it. Based on their impressions, when students continuously make the same mistakes that indicates a gap in their knowledge. According to BT, it is the teacher's task to notice this gap and fill it as sensitively as possible, as his biggest concern was damaging his students' motivation. BT also stated that when he teaches new grammar parts, he places great emphasis on practice: during the drilling exercises, he aims to correct all the occurring mistakes, so only the correct forms solidify in his students' minds. BT's approach to error correction is about efficacy and sensitivity.

The experienced teacher's attitudes towards when to correct an error had similarities with how BT viewed the topic: she also expressed her concerns about overcorrection and how easily it can discourage students and deter them from speaking confidently. As she explains:

> I don't correct every mistake, because I don't want to discourage them, so I just let them speak. And if I feel that something reoccurs or is of that importance, then I correct it. Or maybe, if their facial expressions require help or express uncertainty, then I either correct them or approve what they say. (Excerpt retrieved from the interview with ET)

Additionally, ET also articulated another aspect that needs to be taken into account. She does not expect her students to be perfectionists, because in the future, chances are they are going to encounter non-native speakers with the same or even lower level language skills. She stated that her language focus is fluency, and as long as her students' messages are comprehensible, her continuous error correction would be disheartening for them. ET could clearly point out the three instances when she decides that a mistake cannot

remain untreated: the number of occurrences, the significance of the error and the possibility of misunderstanding the message.

A new aspect that arose was the personal matter of the student's speech: if an error occurs while the student is conveying a personal message, correcting their error would imply that the teacher is more interested in how the student uses English rather than the message itself. Therefore, ET tends to leave errors untreated if they are present in a personal context.

4.4 Other factors that influence the way teachers correct occurring errors

In this subsection, two important aspects will be covered that might influence how a teacher delivers oral error correction. Figure 4 (*Other Factors That Influence the Way Teachers Correct Occurring Errors*) displays the two factors and how the two participants viewed them.

4.4.1 The age of the learners

When asked about the age of the learners, the two teachers' attitudes differed from one another. BT stated that adults tend to become more dispirited when their attention is drawn to their errors. What BT experienced as a private tutor led him to believe that adult EFL learners have a tendency to feel worse about their errors as younger learners. According to Shumin (2002), the reason for this lies in the fact that different affective factors influence adult learners: namely, being judged by their peers. Adults display anxiety when making errors, as it could come across as "a public display of ignorance" (p. 206). The result of an erroneous utterance could easily be humiliation and the feeling of shame. BT also added that other factors, including the language aptitude and the language proficiency of the adult learner, as well as the personality type could also alter how a person reacts to their errors being corrected.

The experienced teacher stated that the method of error correction used when providing feedback does not change with respect to the age of the learner. The only difference she mentioned was the tone of the feedback: with younger learners, sensitivity is of key importance, whereas upper grade learners or adults are usually familiar and comfortable with irony, and can reflect on their own errors without feeling distressed.

4.4.2 The number of the learners

Private tutoring and teaching entire groups of students differ greatly from one another: private tutors usually teach one student at a time and correct all of their occurring mistakes, while in a classroom, the teacher needs to instruct approximately 16-20 students.

In a classroom setting, a teacher simply cannot accommodate for all of their students' needs: time and energy constraints limit the number of student-teacher interactions, and some errors remain untreated. BT stated that during his private tutoring sessions, his attention is not distributed over discipline issues, therefore he can fully pay attention to his students and their occurring mistakes. In a private lesson it is also easier to create and maintain a safe learning environment, as this one-on-one situation eliminates an important affective filter: the peers.

The experienced teacher stated that the number of the learners do not affect how she performs errors correction: she uses the same methodology. Even though both of the participants invest energy into group bonding activities and icebreakers, there are still a number of students whose anxiety cannot be reduced with the help of these measures.

Figure 4

Other Factors That Influence the Way Teachers Correct Occurring Errors

Factor	BT (Beginner Teacher)	ET (Experienced teacher)
The age of the learners	He stated that **adults** tend to **become more dispirited** when their attention is drawn to their errors.	The only difference might be in the **tone** of correction.
The number of the learners	She does not believe that the number of students alter how she corrects the occurring mistakes.	During a one-on-one **private tutoring** he can fully pay attention to his student's mistakes.

5   Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of the internal decision makings of two Hungarian EFL teachers from the same institution. In order to achieve this, the participants' lessons were observed and analysed thoroughly. The lesson observation sequence shed light upon how they provide oral feedback in the classroom. The categorised data retrieved from the observations were compared with the two in-depth interviews and conclusions were drawn. In this section, all three research questions will be revisited, and the conclusions of the research will be presented.

5.1 Addressing the research questions

Research question 1. *What are the Hungarian grammar school EFL teachers' reported beliefs about oral corrective feedback?*

Based on the classroom observations and the in-depth interviews, it can be safely declared that the provision of oral corrective feedback is indeed a crucial part of language teaching, and both of the participants have pondered about the pedagogical background of it, as well as they have evaluated their own practices to some extent. What might surprise some readers is the fact that the novice teacher (BT) was more aware of the researchers' stance in the topic: he was able to identify a number of error correction methods and was familiar with the work of Scrivener. According to BT, explicit error correction methods serve as a way of making the errors salient for the learners. On the other hand, the experienced teacher (ET) had difficulties verbalising what type of corrective feedback she uses. Only with minor help (a chart with the different error correction types listed) was she able to differentiate between one or another.

One of the most important findings of this research was the insight the two participants gained from partaking in the investigation. Arguably, the provision of corrective feedback is an area of language instruction that is not given much attention. After concluding the interview phase, they both stated how unaware they were of their own practices, and drawing their attention to the topic fired their enthusiasm. Ultimately, the two observed teachers stated that the study assured them in their attempt to become more conscientious about their practices and to frequent self-reflection.

Research question 2. *What are these teachers' empirically observed oral corrective practices?*

It was observed that the participants use several types of error correction methods during an average English lesson. The error correction instances were sorted into 10 different categories following the lesson observation sequences. Respectively, nine-nine methods were observed out of the ten recorded, exhibiting the legitimacy of the various types in a real classroom setting. While BT's error correction choices distributed over the four first categories mainly, ET heavily relied on using recasts and providing metalinguistic feedback. In conclusion, both of the observed participants used mainly techniques of explicit error correction.

As teachers attempt to cater for the needs of their students during the lessons, they explore various areas of language teaching, including error correction. Although the participants used the majority of the listed techniques, both of them stated that they need to improve in the area and broaden their knowledge about the topic.

Research question 3. *To what extent are the observed teachers' belief systems about their oral corrective methods congruent with their observed teaching practices?*

By comparing the answers to the previous questions, the experienced teacher turned out to be more aware of how she corrects her students, whereas the beginner teacher's view differed to a greater extent from the gathered data. The distributions of error correction methods (see Figure 5 in the Appendices) suggest that the beginner teacher is still experimenting with his application of knowledge, whereas the experienced teacher has decided on her most preferred type and applies that in most situations (see Figure 6 in the Appendices).

Both of the participants' notions about which errors they correct aligned with their practices, stating when fluency is the aim of an activity, constant error correction can be debilitating or disheartening. Newly learned grammar, or drilling exercises however, need more feedback provision on the part of the language instructor.

The research made both participants more aware of their own practices, shedding light on the fact that the majority of the instantaneous decisions made in the classroom are made subconsciously. Without proper self-reflection, the inner motives remain hidden. In order to achieve professional and academic growth, the first step to take is to immerse oneself in the topic of this pedagogical aspect, learn the different methods and reflect on

what might suit the purpose of an exercise or the needs of the learners. Language instructors are advised to engage in learning about and adapting various corrective feedback methods. At the same time, they should be supported externally by available contemporary manuals or textbooks including detailed scenarios in which these error correction techniques are used.

5.2 Limitations of the study

This thesis investigates a distinct phenomenon with two subjects. For this is obviously a small-scale investigation, the question of generalisability is discarded. The size of the sample is regarded irrelevant as the investigation aims to uncover a very specific phenomenon in the said institution. The findings of this study are not to be transferred onto the larger pool (Hungary's educational system, all teachers included), as the study aims to explore these two professionals' attitudes towards the research topic.

One might question the accessibility of the research, as the participants come from the same economic and educational backgrounds. To extend the scope of the study, researchers might want to reach out to professionals employed in different institutions with diverse teaching histories. The present study represents a first attempt to address these issues. Further research examining error correction in other contexts (for instance during private tutoring, or with different age groups) may shed light on how the context of the language learning affects the provision of feedback.

Despite these limitations, this current thesis might be seen as a first step towards understanding our teacher personas. This study was meant to enhance our understanding of the connection between what teachers perceive of themselves and what actually occurs in a classroom.

5.3 Pedagogical implications of the study

There might be a distinct difference between the practices of novice teachers and those who have been teaching for decades. The main goal of the current study was to uncover the scale of this discrepancy. All educators agree on the sentiment that the attitudes towards teaching change overtime: focal points shift, emphases are modified. The pedagogical aim of this study was to uncover the differences a beginner and an experienced teacher might have in oral error correction and looking at the results of this investigation, the two subjects differed greatly in their own practices.

In order to enhance teaching and learning practices, a solution should be sought in the Hungarian teacher training: over the course of 6 years, a greater emphasis should be placed on contemporary methodology and research. By developing and perfecting the curriculum, the training of future teachers might be modernised. Consequently, novice teachers might already possess the skill of self-reflection, supported by modern background knowledge. At the same time, experienced teachers should also be encouraged to partake in professional development programmes to foster their improvement.

5.4 Future research avenues

As a future implication, researchers are encouraged to mould their qualitative instruments so that they best suit their research purpose. In the case of the current research, the lesson observation worksheet combining two typologies favoured the research purpose the most. Presumably, with other subjects, or even with the same participants but observing different lessons, different error correction techniques would have been displayed on the error correction worksheet. Researchers are encouraged to experiment with various methods and discover those that benefit their research aims.

With data retrieved from an in-depth research such as this, meaningful conclusions can be drawn about the current state of the Hungarian education system and its essential stakeholders: the teachers. What might benefit the perception of language instructors is expanding the current research by introducing teachers from different institutions, with heterogeneous backgrounds and teaching experiences. Based on this larger sample, all stakeholders in education could express their own perceptions about what could be done to improve the effectiveness of education. By expanding the pool of research participants, a wider cross section of the Hungarian language instruction practices could be explored.

By all means, not only the pool of the subjects could be extended, but the topic of the investigation could also be altered. For instance, the research topic could entail classroom management and discipline, time management, or even instructing students. In short, almost all areas of language instruction are viable for inspection, where the subconsciously made decisions are of primary importance.

Additionally, the research topic should also be taken into consideration. Even though many research articles generally agreed that oral error correction could induce anxiety in the learner, a significant number of investigations looked into how error correction in writing affect students, leaving a valuable research niche empty: investigating how

immediate oral error correction in various classroom settings affect the observed students. As the participants of this investigation continuously shared their reservations about how correcting student-errors affect the students' motivation, it would be an important research avenue to investigate the attitudes of Hungarian language learners.

Finally, research questions could focus on which techniques are favoured by students on the basis of efficacy. The results of the said investigations could benefit not only the language instructors, but ultimately their students as well. Apart from encouraging language instructors to engage in self-reflection, they could also partake in specialised training to improve their awareness of their own practices. These open future research avenues could certainly add to the growing body of research studies whose aim is to interpret various phenomena occurring in a language classroom.

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Appendices

Tables

Table 2

Observation Worksheet Example 1. Participant: BT (Beginner Teacher)

Teacher: BT (5)   Date of the lesson: 09/12/22

Objective of the lesson: practising present simple and present continuous (daily routine)

Total number of errors spotted: 11   Errors left untreated: 5

Type of error correction	Occurrence	Example of the observed error correction	Response to the error correction (S: student, P: peers)
01. Explicit correction	+	'Do you relax? Relax is the verb form, relaxing is an adjective.'	-
02. Recast	+	'What do you have for lunch?'	-
	+	'At what time do you finish lunch?'	-
03. Clarification request	+	'At?'	P: 'No, in the morning.'
04. Metalinguistic feedback	+	'You can correct this sentence.	S: 'She has cereal for breakfast. I said have. Has is the correct form'
	+	'A-ha, so how was it?'	S: 'At what time do you wake up?'
05. Elicitation / Repeating the sentence up to the error		'What's wrong with it?'	
06. Repetition			
07. Mimics/ facial expressions and gestures			
08. Finger correction			
09. Drawing a timeline/ boxes on the board			
10. Utilising the humour			

Note. The observation worksheets were transcribed after the lesson observation sequence was accomplished. Based on the detailed field notes, the worksheet contains the following elements: the total number of the errors during the lesson and the number of those that were corrected by the teacher. Subtracting the total error count with the number of the corrected errors revealed the number of errors left untreated, which was also displayed on the worksheet. By adding + marks in the corresponding cells, the instances of the various error correction methods used were tallied.

Table 3

Observation Worksheet Example 2. Participant: ET (Experienced Teacher)

Teacher: ET (3)   Date of the lesson: 14/12/22

Objective of the lesson: narrative tenses

Total number of errors spotted: 10   Errors left untreated by the teacher: 4

Type of error correction	Occurrence	Example of the observed error correction	Response to the error correction (S: student, P: peers)
01. Explicit correction	+	'Was driving? We would use this tense if it was in progress, but it isn't.'	-
02. Recast	+	'It could have been better.'	-
03. Clarification request			
04. Metalinguistic feedback	+	'Are we in the present?'	S: 'No, so we say: she crossed the street.'
05. Elicitation / Repeating the sentence up to the error	+	'She had ....?'	S: 'She had fallen off the horse.'
06. Repetition	+	'So, what do we use instead?'	P: 'She had been driving for hours.'
07. Mimics/ facial expressions and gestures			
08. Finger correction			
09. Drawing a timeline/ boxes on the board	+	Aiding students' learning processes by drawing a timeline on the board (narrative tenses).	-
10. Utilizing the humour			

Table 4

The Interview Questions

I.   General questions

1. How long have you been teaching English?

2. How long have you been teaching in this institution?

3. What is the most enjoyable aspect of being a foreign language teacher?

4. What is the most unenjoyable aspect of being a foreign language teacher?

II.   Questions related to oral error correction

1. Do you correct all the occurring mistakes during your lessons?

2. "What factors make you decide to correct or ignore oral errors?" (Hanif, 2021, p. 85)

3. Do you think the method of oral error correction can affect the behaviour of a student?

4. Do you prefer immediate or delayed oral corrective feedback provision?

5. Does the age of the learner affect whether you correct the occurring mistake?

6. Does the number of students affect how you correct a mistake?

7. What type of oral error correction methods do you know?

8. How do you usually correct your students' oral errors? Can you think of an example?

9. Is there a method in the list that you use in the majority of your lessons?

10. Is there a method in the list that you use in almost none of the lessons?

11. "What strategies have you found to be particularly effective for oral error correction?" (Hanif, 2021, p. 85)

12. "What strategies have you found to be particularly ineffective for oral error correction?" (Hanif, 2021, p. 85)

13. Why did you place those two methods at the beginning of the list?

14. Why did you choose to place these two methods at the end of the list?

15. Which of these methods result in the best learner uptake?

16. Would you like to add anything?

Table 5

The Data Retrieved From BT's Classroom Observations (Beginner Teacher)

Nr.	Type of corrective feedback	Number of occurrences	Percentage (number of occurrences/ total number of errors corrected
01	Explicit correction	22	(22/103)*100= 21,36 %
02	Recast	24	(24/103)*100= 23,30 %
03	Clarification request	21	20,39 %
04	Metalinguistic feedback	21	20,39 %
05	Elicitation	4	3,88 %
06	Repetition	6	5,83 %
07	Mimics/ facial expression	0	0 %
08	Finger correction	1	0,97 %
09	Drawing a timeline/ boxes	1	0,97 %
10	Utilising the humour of the error	3	2,91 %
Participant: BT		∑=103	∑= 100 %

Table 6

The Data Retrieved From ET's Classroom Observations (Experienced Teacher)

Nr.	Type of corrective feedback	Number of occurrences	Percentage (number of occurrences/ total number of errors corrected
01	Explicit correction	9	10,47 %
02	Recast	31	36,05 %
03	Clarification request	8	9,30 %
04	Metalinguistic feedback	12	13,95 %
05	Elicitation	7	8,14 %
06	Repetition	5	5,81 %
07	Mimics/ facial expression	3	3,49 %
08	Finger correction	0	0 %
09	Drawing a timeline/ boxes	5	5,81 %
10	Utilising the humour of the error	6	6,98 %
Participant: ET		∑=86	∑= 100 %

Table 7

The Individual Error Correction Rates of the Participants

Participant	Error correction rate (number of observed error corrections / total number of observed errors)
BT	103/139 = 0.741 = 74.1 %
ET	86/134 = 0.6418 = 64.2 %

Table 8

Quantifying the Difference Between Preference and Practice (Beginner Teacher)

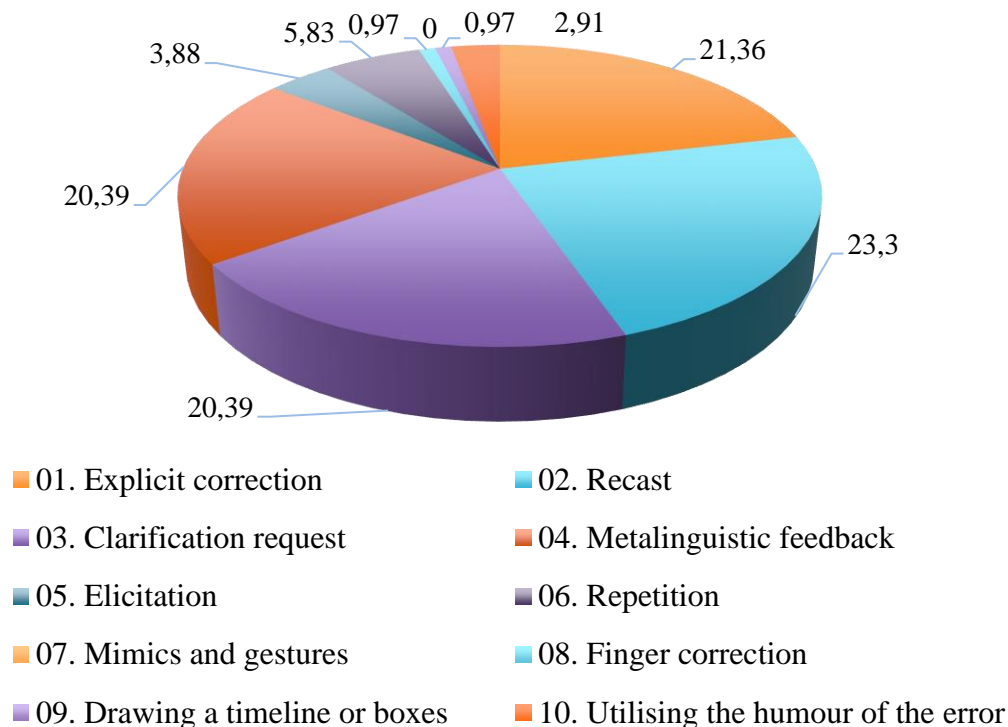| Type of error correction	Practice (**observations**)	Preference (**interviews**)	Difference
01. Explicit correction	2.	10.	8
02. Recast	1.	9.	8
03. Clarification request	3-4.	7.	3-4
04. Metaling. feedback	3-4.	8.	4-5
05. Elicitation	6.	1.	5
06. Repetition	5.	2.	3
07. Mimics	10.	3.	7
08. Finger correction	8-9.	4.	4-5
09. Timeline/ boxes	8-9.	5.	3-4
10. Humour	7.	6.	1
Sum of the differences: **48**			

Table 9

Quantifying the Difference Between Preference and Practice (Experienced Teacher)

Type of error correction	Practice (observations)	Preference (interviews)	Difference
01. Explicit correction	3.	8.	5
02. Recast	1.	9.	8
03. Clarification request	4.	2.	2
04. Metaling. feedback	2.	3.	1
05. Elicitation	5.	4.	1
06. Repetition	7-8.	10.	2-3
07. Mimics	9.	1.	8
08. Finger correction	10.	7.	3
09. Timeline/ boxes	7-8.	5.	2-3
10. Humour	6.	6.	0
Sum of the differences: **33**			

Figures

Figure 5

Percentages of the Error Correction Types Used by BT (Beginner Teacher)

- 01. Explicit correction
- 02. Recast
- 03. Clarification request
- 04. Metalinguistic feedback
- 05. Elicitation
- 06. Repetition
- 07. Mimics and gestures
- 08. Finger correction
- 09. Drawing a timeline or boxes
- 10. Utilising the humour of the error

Figure 6

Percentages of the Error Correction Types Used by ET (Experienced Teacher)

- 01. Explicit correction
- 02. Recast
- 03. Clarification request
- 04. Metalinguistic feedback
- 05. Elicitation
- 06. Repetition
- 07. Mimics and gestures
- 08. Finger correction
- 09. Drawing a timeline or boxes
- 10. Utilising the humour of the error