

Research on Self-correction Ability Of Oral English Learning for English Majors

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Abstract. By analyzing the collected final scores of English major students' oral English test and the scores on their self-correction checklists, the author finds that there is a high and positive correlation between English major students' self-correction ability and their oral English ability. This result confirms the author's hypothesis before doing the present empirical study and the results of some previous studies. What's more, the research provides proper strategies which can help students develop self-correction ability and the correlations between self-correction ability and oral English ability.

Introduction

Several researchers and teachers are paying attention to college English Major's students in specific ways. For instance, Yang Liuqun (2002) studied self-corrections made by college English majors in China. She adopted Levelt's classification and classified self-correction into three main types which are error-correction, different-information-correction and appropriateness correction. Furthermore, she added morphological error correction to Levelt's category of error-correction. Based on the related studies in previous years, the author claims that self-correction is a very useful way to develop oral English ability and does a study which focuses on self-correction ability of oral English learning for English majors, and the methods English majors and their oral English teacher respectively adopted which can help students develop their self-correction ability. This research is an empirical study on self-correction ability of oral English learning for English major students. This research focuses on the English major students because their oral English is important in communicating smoothly.

Methodology

Research questions

This research paper means to solve the following questions:

- What is the classroom performance of English major students on self-correction and which types of self-correction that English major students mainly focus on when they are doing a speech?
- What are the views of English major students and the oral English teacher towards self-correction?
- From the perspectives of both English major students and oral English teacher, which kinds of strategies can help English major students to develop self-correction ability?

Subject

The subjects of the present study are 62 English major students and their oral English teacher from Wuhan Textile University (WTU)

Questionnaire

The author designed two questionnaires based on the studies of Levelt (1983), Wen Qiufang and Zhuang Yilin (2005), Zhang Mengmeng (2007). The questionnaire for English majors aims to obtain: 1) the views of English major students towards self-correction in their oral English learning; 2) the types of errors they mainly focus on when they are doing self-correction; 3) the information about the methods that they want to use to develop their self-correction ability; 4) the ways that they hope their oral English teacher adopt to help them develop self-correction ability. The data of the former two parts is analyzed with the help of SPSS17.0 and showed in the following tables (Table 1) and figure (Figure 1).

Data collection and treatment

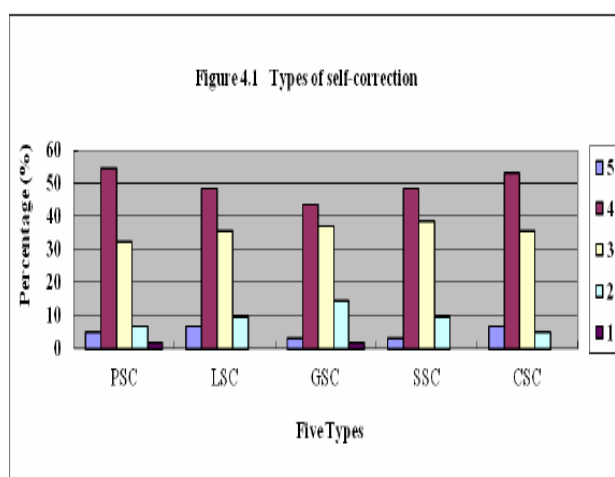
The questionnaire for English major students aims to get the views of them towards self-correction in the process of their oral English learning, the types of errors they mainly focus on when they are correct errors by themselves, the methods they prefer to use to develop their self-correction ability, and the ways that they hope their oral English teacher to adopt to help them improve such an ability. The purpose of the questionnaire for oral English teacher is to gain her views towards self-correction of the students, and the information about the types of errors that she thinks students should focus on. At last, the author will compare the questionnaire for students with the one for teacher, and find both the same and the different views of them. The present study is conducted with the help of Statistics Software — SPSS17.0 and Microsoft Excel. All the data will be analyzed by the software.

Results and discussion

The results of English majors

The result of the research shows that there are 67.7% students who choose “totally agree” on the first view; 30.6% students who choose “agree”; one student who choose “not sure”; and none of them choose “disagree” and “totally disagree”. There are 50% students who choose “totally agree”; 40.3% students who choose “agree”; 9.7% students who choose “not sure”; and still nobody choose “disagree” and “totally disagree”. It means that half of the students have the strong agreement with the view mentioned at the beginning of this paragraph, and no one holds the oppositional idea. The result also shows that self-correction will be more helpful than teacher-correction for students to improve their oral English ability, there are 14.5% students choose “totally agree”; 30.6% students choose “agree”; 40.3% students choose “not sure”; 14.5% students choose “disagree”; and also no one choose “totally disagree”. The data shows that almost half of students hold the same idea with the view mentioned before. And there are nine students who think that teacher-correction will be more useful than self-correction for them to improving oral English ability.

FIGURE 1 TYPES OF SELF-CORRECTION



Note: (5=Frequently; 4=Often; 3=Sometimes; 2=Occasionally; 1=Never. PSC=Phonetic Self-correction; LSC=Lexical Self-correction; GSC=Grammatical Self-correction; SSC=Syntactic

Self-correction; CSC= Self-correction of content.)

This figure mainly shows the percentage of each type of self-correction on the five-point scale.

According to the descending order of “Frequently”, the five types of self-correction are ranked in LSC (6.5%), CSC (6.5%), PSC (4.8%), GSC (3.2%), SSC (3.2%). As for “Often”, the five types of self-correction are ranked in PSC (54.8%), CSC (53.2%), LSC (48.4%), SSC (48.4%), GSC (43.5%). As for “Sometimes”, the five types of self-correction are ranked in SSC (38.7%), GSC (37.1%), LSC (35.5%), CSC (35.5%), PSC (32.3%). As for “Occasionally”, the five types of self-correction are ranked in GSC (14.5%), LSC (9.7%), SSC (9.7%), PSC (6.5%), CSC (4.8%). As for “Never”, there is only one student choose “Never” for PSC, and there is also only one choose “Never” for GSC. Obviously, most students choose “Often” and “Sometimes” for the five types of self-correction; only two students choose “Never”.

TABLE 1 TYPES OF ERRORS STUDENTS MAINLY FOCUS ON WHEN THEY ARE DOING SELF-CORRECTION

	Phonetic Self-correction	Lexical Self-correction	Grammar Self-correction	Syntactic Self-correction	Content Self-correction
N	62	62	62	62	62
Mean	3.5484	3.5161	3.3226	3.4516	3.6129
SD	.76131	.76269	.82530	.71695	.68604
Min	1.00	2.00	1.00	2.00	2.00
Max	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00

According to the descending order of Mean value, the five types of self-correction are ranked in self-correction of content (3.6129), phonetic self-correction (3.5484), lexical self-correction (3.5161), syntactic self-correction (3.4516), and grammar self-correction (3.3226). The questionnaire shows that self-correction of content and phonetic self-correction are often carried out by English major students rather than lexical and grammatical self-correction.

The collected data of the questionnaire for oral English teacher

The purpose of the questionnaire for oral English teacher is to gain: 1) her views towards self-correction of the students; 2) the information about the types of errors that she thinks students should focus on.

TABLE 2 THE MAIN VIEWS OF ORAL ENGLISH TEACHER TOWARDS SELF-CORRECTION

It's necessary for teachers to correct errors for students.	Totally agree
It's necessary for students to develop self-correction ability.	Agree
It's necessary for teachers to help students develop oral English self-correction ability.	Agree
Students prefer the teacher to correct their oral English errors rather than do self-correction during their speech.	Agree
It's better for students to do self-correction than to be corrected by the teacher, if they want to improve their oral English ability.	Disagree

The data from the above table presents us that it will be more helpful for oral English students to be corrected by the teacher than to do self-correction.

The author finds out that the sixty-two English major students' classroom performances on self-correction are consistent with their answers on the questionnaires which are collected by the

author after the classroom observation. What's more, the results of the two open-ended questions for English major students show us that they mainly focus on self-correction of content and phonetic self-correction.

Views of English majors and their oral English teacher towards self-correction

The results indicate that English major students have recognized the necessity of self-correction. However, not everyone of them have the preference of self-correction and some students prefer to teacher-correction. The reason may be that they don't have the confidence to do self-correction, which is understandable that almost half of them are willing to be corrected by the oral English teacher. In the opinion of oral English teacher, the English major students definitely need to be corrected by their teacher when they are making a error. The author holds the view that the reason why the oral English teacher in the present study has different idea is that the students' back knowledge of English is not enough to improve their oral English ability through self-correction without the teacher's help.

Strategies in developing self-correction ability

According to English major students, listening to English news, watching English movies or TV shows, and reading English novels or English newspapers to imitate the Standard English pronunciation and expressions can help them develop self-correction ability. They also need some oral English activities to practice self-correction. From the perspectives of oral English teacher, both elicitation and clarification requests can be used by oral English teacher to help oral English major students to develop self-correction ability.

Conclusion

The results of questionnaires show us that the English major students and their oral English teacher have realized the necessity of developing students' self-correction ability. Most students think that the oral English teacher has the obligation to help them with developing self-correction ability. However, the oral English teacher and almost half of the students hold the view that teacher-correction is more helpful for improving the students' oral English ability than self-correction. The reason may be that they don't have the confidence to do self-correction. And because English is taught and learned as a foreign language in China, there is a lack of English language communicating environment. The limitation of this research is that it only used questionnaire as the instrument in this study.

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