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# DIPLOMARBEIT

Titel der Diplomarbeit

“Error and error correction in classroom conversation  
– a comparative study of CLIL and traditional lessons  
in Austria”

Verfasserin

Magdalena Hampf

Angestrebter akademischer Grad

Magistra der Philosophie (Mag.phil.)

Wien, im März 2011

Studienkennzahl lt. Studienblatt: A 190 344 353

Studienrichtung lt. Studienblatt: UF Englisch und UF Spanisch

Betreuerin: Ao. Univ. Prof. Mag. Dr. Christiane Dalton-Puffer



## **Abstract**

This thesis deals with errors and their treatment in classroom conversation in traditional EFL and CLIL classrooms. In the first part, the usefulness of error correction according to various language learning theories is discussed before a brief review of research results regarding this issue is provided. It has been found that focus on form is an important factor regarding second language learning development in both settings. Next, attitudes and expectations of teachers and students towards errors and error correction are presented before the teaching contexts are outlined.

After that the theoretical framework for the final practical part is provided which includes definitions of errors and feedback types as well as an extensive discussion of their nature. Finally uptake and reinforcement are approached.

In the second part of the thesis an empirical study is described. The aim was to investigate the nature of oral error correction in Austrian CLIL and EFL classrooms. For that reason transcripts of six EFL and six CLIL lessons, recorded in grammar as well as vocational schools, were analysed. The classes of interest range from the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 11<sup>th</sup> grade. The study has shown that in general the number of errors in CLIL lessons is significantly higher than in the other setting, however, the amount of errors varies highly in the individual lessons. The enormous number of errors in the CLIL setting can be attributed to the fact that much more students' talk took place compared to the other teaching context. Moreover, the results indicate that in CLIL lessons the distribution of error types was more even. Grammatical errors prevailed like in the other context, followed by pronunciation and vocabulary repairables. Regarding the initiation of error treatment, it was observed that not a single student-initiation took place in the EFL lessons. A possible explanation why in some CLIL lessons student-initiated treatment occurred and in others not, might be the students' level of proficiency. More advanced learners tend to initiate error treatment more frequently. As suspected, errors were much more frequently corrected in EFL than in CLIL classrooms. The frequency of error treatment seems to depend on the specific focus of an activity and the role which a teacher takes up. An interesting outcome is the low feedback rate for

grammatical errors in form-focused lessons. It has been found that in both settings errors of those areas which were of importance received feedback. An analysis of the distribution of corrective feedback types has revealed that in EFL classes metalinguistic feedback was the second most frequent way to treat errors. The general low level of uptake can be explained by the frequent topic continuation following corrective feedback.

Certain tendencies regarding the nature of oral error correction could be revealed. However, it is inevitable to conduct more extensive studies over a long period of time in order to investigate the real effectiveness of various feedback types.

## **Declaration of authenticity**

I confirm to have conceived and written this paper in English all by myself. Quotations from other authors and any ideas borrowed and/or paraphrased from the works of other authors are all clearly marked within the text and acknowledged in the bibliographical references.

Vienna, March 2011

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank my supervisor Prof. Christiane Dalton-Puffer for supervising my diploma thesis, providing material and particularly for her patience.

This thesis is dedicated to my parents who permitted me to make my dream come true and study at the University of Vienna in order to become a teacher. I owe my deepest gratitude to them for their unconditional support in all respects throughout these years. Their faith in me as well as their patience and understanding is greatly appreciated. I know, at times, my temper is particularly trying.

Finally, Felipe receives my sincere gratefulness for his emotional support in times when it was most required.

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## 1. Introduction

Learning foreign languages has become an essential part of the curriculum in Austria because one of the priorities of the European Union is to promote multilingualism. Therefore children start learning foreign languages at a young age for example when they are in primary school or even earlier in kindergarten. Many people do not learn only one foreign language but more. The lingua franca English is usually emphasised most and thus taught first.

Learning something new like a foreign language always means that errors are made. They are a part of human life as nobody is perfect and even highly educated people get something wrong from time to time. Being a part of our life errors, actually, should be considered a neutral concomitant phenomenon of each learning process, however, this is not the case. Before dealing with the ways of judging errors, it makes sense to clarify what an error is. One might suppose that the term *error* can be easily defined as 'not correct', however in reality it is more complicated. A non-linguistic nevertheless very demonstrative example will show this: a resident of a Cameroonian village was asked to talk about a severe mistake which she had committed in her life. She answered as follows:

[w]hen I was still young, my mother prepared food and I went and stole the meat that was inside. When my mother came back, she did not beat me. But when my father came, she reported to him and he had me well beaten. From then on, I never did that again! (Nebah 2002: 55)

If the same happened nowadays in Austria it would not be considered a mistake, probably it even would pass unheeded. It can be seen that defining an error is difficult and what is regarded as an error highly depends on the context in which it occurs.<sup>1</sup> Similar the judgement of errors is subject to the context. A survey in 61 states was conducted in order to find out how errors are seen in different cultures. Germany came almost last which means that negative ideas are associated with errors and consequently Germans do not want to deal with them (Lotter 2007: 51). Due to the fact that the German and the Austrian cultures are very similar one may wonder if Austrians were different. Nevertheless there are also more positive attitudes towards errors like in the

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<sup>1</sup> A definition of the term 'error' as it is used in the present paper will be presented later in chapter 6.1.

Anglo-American region where a more pragmatic error culture was observed. This is how it should be as had already been proposed by Sir Karl Popper in 1945 when he created his model of the *open society* which is able to deal with errors and deviations from the norm (Lotter 2007: 47). Errors should be seen as starting points for further improvement in general and particularly in the classroom. In order to improve one needs to gradually get rid of errors. To achieve this aim, teachers provide corrective feedback on errors. Error treatment is done in almost every lesson which means that it is a very common teaching technique. Nevertheless hardly any explicit attention is paid to this crucial element. While much thought is given to grammar and vocabulary in terms of how to present, practise and finally assess it, error correction is usually done without being aware of it. This highly neglected matter in teaching and teacher training needs to be dealt with. The purpose of the present paper is to provide insights into the field of errors and their adequate treatment as only by having a profound knowledge of this issue teachers can exploit the potential of errors and contribute to their continual reduction in the language classroom.

The importance of foreign language learning has led to the development of different forms of teaching contexts. Two types prevail in Austria, the traditional English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) in which non-linguistic subjects are taught in the foreign language. Obviously, the two settings are distinct but one may wonder if there are differences regarding errors and error treatment as well. In order to find this out an empirical study has been conducted which will be presented in detail at the end of the paper and possible differences as well as similarities between the settings will be revealed.

In order to make more apparent the structure which I have followed throughout the thesis, I would like to briefly present the individual parts of the paper. Providing a very general outline it can be said that the thesis is divided into three main parts. In the first preliminary considerations will be exposed. Then the theoretical framework will be depicted in order to prepare for the final part, the data analysis.

In detail, this means that in chapter 2 important terms which are used throughout the thesis, will be clarified in order to avoid confusion and make subsequent explanations and discussions more comprehensible. In chapter 3 the most essential question has to be answered, namely if error correction and consequently its empirical investigation can actually be justified. For that reason numerous learning theories particularly relevant for CLIL and EFL will be explained with focus on errors and error correction. Moreover, a review of previous studies which concentrate on the effectiveness of error correction will be presented in chapter 4 in order to find out if further examinations on this issue are reasonable. Another important aspect will be dealt with in chapter 5, this is teachers' beliefs and even more significant students' beliefs. In this section it will be commented on what instructors as well as learners think and expect with reference to the language classroom and errors which occur inevitably. Chapter 6 presents a description of the nature and particularities of the two settings, which are focal points of the present analysis because a good knowledge of the characteristics found in each context is necessary to comprehend the results of the empirical study. Chapter 7 discusses the theoretical and conceptual framework used for analysing the data in the final part. This framework is generally speaking Lyster and Ranta's analytic model but it was adapted to fit the present data. Then the individual parts of the model will be defined and discussed beginning with error categories which are considered in the analysis afterwards. This is followed by a very detailed description and discussion of different feedback types and finally various types of uptake are outlined. Chapter 8 includes a precise description of the study's intention, in other words, the research questions and information about the data is provided as well. In chapter 9 the results are presented in detail and finally they are discussed with particular reference to the nature of the two instructional settings in chapter 10. Chapter 11 finally draws general conclusions in regard to pedagogical implications of the present results and considerations for future research.

## 2. Definition of terms

In SLA literature the terms *corrective feedback*, *negative feedback* and *negative evidence* are used to refer to the indication or correction of a learner's erroneous utterance by a more competent speaker or "expert" as Schachter (1991: 90) puts it. A brief review of the use of these terms in literature will be provided to assure comprehensibility.

Schachter (1991: 89) points out that the term corrective feedback is a pedagogical one used in the area of second language teaching, negative data or evidence are used in the linguistic field of language acquisition and negative feedback in cognitive psychology. However, as can be observed in literature, the terms are often used interchangeably.

This somewhat indifferent use of terms by several researchers is perhaps a result of their relatively open definition. Chaudron (1988: 150) points out that the term *correction* is multiple and can range from very broad to rather narrow denotations. He argues that in a very general sense, it can refer to "any teacher behaviour following an error that minimally attempts to inform the learner of the fact of error" (Chaudron 1988: 150). It may be that the learner does not notice the corrective nature as no response is required. This definition of correction can be equated with "treatment of error". On the other extreme, correction can refer to a real modification of the learner's interlanguage which leads to the elimination of this error; Chaudron defines it as "true" correction.

Lightbown and Spada (1999: 171) describe corrective feedback as "[a]ny indication to the learners that their use of the target language is incorrect." This can happen explicitly or implicitly and optionally metalinguistic information may be used or not.

A more comprehensive perspective of feedback is provided by Long in 1996. He argues that input by the environment provides the learner with positive and negative evidence about the target language. Positive evidence refers to models of what is grammatical in the target language. Negative evidence informs the learner about what is ungrammatical. The latter may be explicit or

implicit. Long (1996: 413) suggests “grammatical explanation” and “overt error correction” as examples for explicit negative evidence. The researcher mentions the following examples of implicit negative evidence:

failure to understand, incidental error correction in response, such as confirmation check, which reformulates the learners’ previous utterance without interrupting the flow of the conversation in which case, the negative feedback simultaneously provides additional positive evidence-and perhaps also the absence of items in the input. (Long 1996: 413)

The topic of the present paper is strongly related to language acquisition as well as language teaching, therefore corrective feedback and negative evidence will be used interchangeably in order to refer to a teacher’s indication that the learner’s use of the target language is incorrect as Lightbown and Spada put it. A detailed description of the types of corrective feedback under analysis will be provided later, in chapter 7.3.. However, before looking at different feedback types, it is necessary to discuss if their existence can be justified at all.

### **3. The role of focus on form, errors and error correction in various language learning theories**

The field of second language acquisition (SLA) has witnessed changing perceptions of corrective feedback in the course of time. This is due to the fact that various language learning theories have been proposed and within each of them different aspects are considered of utmost importance regarding language acquisition. Consequently the role of focus on form in general and error correction in particular are viewed as being more or less important in terms of contributing to interlanguage development. In the following, an overview of language learning theories is provided together with the corresponding perspectives in regards to focus on form, errors and corrective feedback. The overview begins with learning theories which were very popular in the past, in order to highlight the changing attitude towards error correction and then those theories will be presented which are especially relevant for CLIL and traditional EFL classes.

### **3.1. Popular language learning theories of the past**

#### **3.1.1. Behaviourism**

In second language classrooms, the necessity of corrective feedback was taken for granted for a long time. Looking back to the 1950s, behaviourism was very popular. According to this learning theory all learning, consequently language learning as well, was regarded as habit formation. It was argued that in order to learn a second language, the frequent repetition of correct models was necessary. If accurate imitations were followed by positive feedback during the learning process, they would turn into habits. Inaccurate imitations, on the other hand, should be followed by correction in order to eradicate errors before bad habits could be developed (Van Patten & Williams 2007: 19-21). In this line, Brooks (1960: 56) writes that

[I]ike sin, error is to be avoided and its influence overcome [...] the principal way of overcoming is to shorten the time lapse between the incorrect response and a presentation once more of the correct model.

Thus, the author argues that errors need to be avoided and appropriate feedback has to be provided immediately and in a consistent way. In short it can be said that error correction was inevitable in behaviourism.

#### **3.1.2. Chomsky: “Universal Grammar Theory”**

However, in the 1960s and 1970s, new insights in SLA research threw doubts on the behaviourist perspective of instruction. Suddenly, error correction in SLA was seriously questioned. Researchers then claimed that an innate facility was available to all human beings which made first as well as second language acquisition possible, thus it was an “internally driven” process (Van Patten & Williams 2007: 24). Chomsky (1965: 4) called these innate abstract principles which governed all natural languages *Universal Grammar*. Advocates of the innatist perspective claimed that formal instruction including corrective feedback, hardly played any role at all as it would change the language behaviour temporarily but not the interlanguage grammar. Real changes were due to the influence of input (Carroll 2007: 167).

It can be seen that in these learning theories extreme positions regarding error correction were taken up. While according to Behaviourism every single error needs to be corrected, Chomsky argues in his Generative Grammar Theory that error correction does not influence language development at all. Passing on from these theories to more recent and more relevant ones for CLIL classes, a change can be observed from an extreme perspective towards a more moderate view of error correction.

### **3.2. Language learning theories relevant for CLIL**

It is not uniquely defined which learning theories constitute the conceptual background for CLIL, however, Dalton (2007a: 258ff) proposes some theories which are essential according to her.<sup>2</sup> She distinguishes input-output theories and participation-based theories. The first refer to Krashen's Monitor Model, Long's Interaction-Hypothesis and Swain's Output Hypothesis. I would add Schmidt's Noticing Hypothesis to this category which can be considered as being interwoven with the Interaction Hypothesis and the Output Hypothesis. In addition, "noticing" is an important aspect in error correction as can be seen later on in the thesis. The participation-based theories contain Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory and Givon's Discourse Hypothesis. The latter does not contain information about errors and error treatment and will therefore be disregarded from now on. In the following conceptual descriptions of the learning theories will be provided with focus on error and error correction in order to find out if the provision of feedback on errors is useful from a theoretical perspective.

#### **3.2.1. Krashen's Monitor Theory**

Seemingly connected to Chomsky's theory, is that of Krashen. According to his Monitor Theory, it is the innate faculty for language acquisition which is important together with linguistic information from comprehensible input which is processed and controlled by innate mechanisms. With the Monitor Theory, Krashen proposes five hypotheses about language learning. In one of them he

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<sup>2</sup> For more details about the reasons why these theories are considered relevant for CLIL, see Dalton 2007a: 258-265.

argues that acquisition, as a subconscious process, and learning, as the opposite, have to be distinguished. The researcher claims that learners cannot draw on learned knowledge in spontaneous communications; it only functions as a monitor that edits the output of the acquired system. Furthermore, in the Natural Order Hypothesis, he suggests that linguistic forms and structures are acquired in a natural order which cannot be influenced by instruction. It can be said that according to these hypotheses formal instruction and thus corrective feedback on errors included, are rather negligible as they have only peripheral effects on interlanguage development (Van Patten & Williams 2007: 24-28). Corrective feedback has not only hardly any effect on second language acquisition but Krashen and Terrell (1983: 177) argue that it even might “have a negative effect on the students’ willingness to try to express themselves.” This can be explained by Krashen’s Affective Filter Hypothesis which refers to the assumption that the learner’s affective filter can be up as a consequence of anxiety which then impedes fluency in the L2. This idea was supported by Terrell who applied Krashen’s theory in classroom. According to her

[...] there is no evidence which shows that error correction is necessary or even helpful in language acquisition. Most agree that the correction of speech errors is negative in terms of motivation, attitude, embarrassment and so forth even when done in the best of situations (Terrell 1977: 330).

Thus, it can be said that error correction is not only unnecessary but even counterproductive according to Terrell and Krashen.

Moreover, the researchers found that in natural conversations native speakers react to an incomprehensible utterance produced by a non-native speaker in the way that they try to make sense of what has been said in form of a “reformulated question, of using some of the non-native’s words in a possible sentence, or simply restating what they believe the non-native has said” (Krashen & Terrell 1983: 177). The aim is to organise class activities as natural as possible therefore, the instructor should react similar to a native speaker. However, the researchers concede that learners may use this direct natural feedback for conscious inductive learning but they claim that this is due to the more comprehensible input. Although in general Krashen and Terrell argue against the correction of errors, they say that it should be used for conscious

learning but it needs to be confined to rules and circumstances in which monitoring is appropriate (Krashen & Terrell 1983: 177f).

### **3.2.2. Noticing Hypothesis**

In the previously mentioned theories the role of consciousness in regard to learning is viewed with scepticism. This perspective, however, has been criticised (Schmidt 1990). It is argued that input and comprehension indeed are important for language acquisition; however, consciousness is an essential aspect as well. Schmidt (1990: 131) emphasises the importance of conscious processes but he does not deny that unconscious processes contribute to interlanguage development as well. He suggests in his Noticing Hypothesis that “subliminal language learning is impossible, and that noticing is the necessary and sufficient condition for converting input into intake” (Schmidt 1990: 129). He adds that “[t]his requirement of noticing is meant to apply equally to all aspects of language (lexicon, phonology, grammatical form, and pragmatics)” (Schmidt 1990: 149). This means that in order to learn from input, some kind of noticing has to happen in advance. Nevertheless, noticing must not be equated with acquisition, it only facilitates the process. Furthermore, Schmidt (1995: 195) claims that through instruction, structures of the target language in the input become more salient so that the learners will notice them more likely. Corrective feedback, leads a learner to notice the gap between his incorrect utterance and the target language norm, then grammatical restructuring will be the consequence.

Gass (1991: 135) supports Schmidt’s idea and claims that an important factor in second language development is ‘selective attention’. According to the researcher, attention causes the learner to become aware of the discrepancy between the existing system and the target language. This does not result in an immediate change of the interlanguage system but it is “a first step in grammar restructuring” (Gass 1991:137). Especially in cases of negative evidence, the learner’s attention is drawn to the form which deviates from the target language norm, via direct or indirect corrective feedback. Consequently, error correction and similarly explicit grammar instruction on the more general level, serve as devices to draw the learner’s attention to certain linguistic aspects in order to

trigger a restructuring of the interlanguage grammar (Gass 1991: 138). However, this may not yet be noticed at that point of time (Gass & Varonis 1994: 299). Ellis' point of view is similar. According to him it is necessary to notice a particular linguistic form, then compare in order to detect gaps between the input and the learner's own mental grammar and finally integrate new aspects into the existing system. The researcher mentions that consciousness-raising results in explicit knowledge which is not directly useful for communicating but it facilitates its subsequent acquisition (Ellis 1991: 238). To sum up, it can be said that error correction is useful according to these researchers. However, if the process of 'noticing' must be 'conscious' or not is object to debate.

### **3.2.3. Interaction Hypothesis**

Like the researchers mentioned in the preceding section, Long argues against the sufficiency of comprehensible input alone as proposed by Krashen. However, Long (1996: 422ff) agrees with Krashen that input needs to be comprehensible in order to be accessible for acquisition. Long also supports Schmidt's idea of the importance of noticing. In his revised "Interaction Hypothesis", Long combines these aspects and argues for *negotiation for meaning*. He proposes that

[...] negotiation for meaning, and especially negotiation work that triggers interactional adjustments by the NS [native speaker] or more competent interlocutor, facilitates acquisition because it connects input, learner capacities, particularly selective attention, and output in productive ways. (Long 1996, 451 f)

In SLA research, the concept *negotiation for meaning* refers to conversational moves which are used to achieve comprehensibility of message meaning. These are assumed to facilitate second language acquisition (Lyster 2007: 103). Long (1996: 418) provides a more precise definition of negotiation for meaning. According to him it comprises the following types of interactional features: repetitions, confirmations, reformulations, comprehension checks, confirmation checks, clarification requests etc. The interlocutors have to modify what they want to communicate until mutual comprehension is reached. This implies that the learner can control the input to a certain extent by asking for modification and consequently the input can be accessed and turned into

uptake more easily (Long 1996: 418). Thus conversational interaction is a source of positive evidence and consequently an essential condition for second language acquisition. This means it is shown what is possible in the target language (Long 1996: 413). When participants have to work on “problem-solving tasks” related items have to be reprocessed again and again, thus target structures occur even more frequently which results in the fact that they become more salient and therefore are more easily noticed by learners (Long 1996: 452). At the same time, conversational interaction is a source of negative evidence. In regard to negative feedback, Long (1996: 414) claims that its facilitative role in L2 acquisition is rather probable and as mentioned by White (1987) it is even necessary in those cases where L2 overgeneralizations arise due to learner hypotheses on the L1 structure from which it is impossible to recover through positive evidence alone (White 1987: 283). Acquisition of such aspects requires negative evidence because the incorrect phrases are comprehensible and therefore will not result in a communication breakdown. Such disruptions usually lead learners to notice the existence of a linguistic problem, as a consequence they switch from focus on meaning to focus on form and finally the correct form is noticed in the input (Long 1996: 425). As this does not happen without a communication breakdown, negative feedback is needed.

### **3.2.4. Comprehensible Output Theory**

Swain (1985: 247) questions previous theories especially those which are based on the assumptions that “the exchanges, themselves, in which meaning is negotiated [...] are facilitative to grammar acquisition as a result of comprehensible input”. As suggested by Long, she argues that learners cannot focus on meaning and form simultaneously but once a message is understood, the learner has free brain capacity in order to focus on form. The researcher also challenges the idea that it is input and not output which contributes primarily to acquisition like in Krashen’s Comprehensible Input Hypothesis. Swain (1985: 248f.) finally proposed The Comprehensible Output Hypothesis in which she claims that interlanguage development is achieved by pushing the learner to produce the target language in a precise, coherent and appropriate way. Production of language encourages learners to process language more deeply as they must pay more attention to how meaning is expressed through

language than they do for the comprehension of language (Swain 1985: 249). This means that focus on form is important for interlanguage development according to the researcher. Moreover, Swain (1985: 249) advocates the production of output as hypothesis testing takes place which contributes to language acquisition. She claims that based on the input, learners formulate hypotheses about the target language and then test them (Swain 1985: 249). Corrective feedback, called “negative input” by Swain, plays an important role in this context as the learner receives information about the correctness of his hypotheses. This encourages the learner to reanalyse his output and express the message with alternative linguistic resources (Swain 1985: 248). Chaudron (1988: 134) supports the idea of hypothesis testing and argues that

[t]he information available in the feedback allows learners to confirm, disconfirm and possibly modify the hypothetical, “transitional” rules of their developing grammars, but these effects depend on the learner’s readiness for and attention to the information available in feedback.

In other words, the learner has to compare his interlanguage system and the information provided by the feedback in order to be able to abandon wrong hypotheses and formulate new ones. This means that interlanguage development is encouraged by corrective feedback.

### **3.2.5. Vygotsky’s Sociocultural Theory**

Another learning theory is Sociocultural Theory which originates from the Russian psychologist L.S. Vygotsky’s writings. According to this model, human cognition develops from participation in the sociocultural context. Consequently, SLA can be explained as the acquisition of knowledge in social and cultural interaction with the environment in which language is a means of interaction (Lantolf & Thorne 2007: 201f). According to Sociocultural Theory instruction is facilitative as Lantolf and Thorne (2007: 207) argue that “intentionally designed learning environments (e.g., instructed L2 settings) can stimulate qualitative developmental stages.” Instruction should create a social and material environment in which two things occur. Firstly, learners should be encouraged to participate in meaningful activities and secondly certain assistance is necessary so that the novice can “successfully carry out the action at hand” which he can later do on his own. At the beginning the learner cannot notice an error or correct it even with help but finally he is able to detect and self-correct

errors (Lantolf & Thorne 2007: 215). This means that a gradual process from regulated to self-regulated error correction takes place through scaffolding. In sum, it can be said that feedback, being a form of assistance, is beneficial to language acquisition according to the Sociocultural Theory.

### **3.2.6. Summary of the learning theories relevant for CLIL**

Although within all the theories described above the opinions on how exactly language learning works differ, nearly all of them agree on the fact that focus on form and especially corrective feedback are beneficial to interlanguage development. According to behaviourism fossilization is the worst consequence of not correcting an error, thus explicit correction is of utmost importance. Within the theoretical frameworks of Long's Interaction Hypothesis and Swain's Output Hypothesis interlanguage development is stimulated by input and feedback, both implicit and explicit, which highlights problematic aspects of the current linguistic system and pushes the learner to restructure it, thus a learning process is provoked by corrective feedback. Even in the Sociocultural Theory corrective feedback is considered useful as it is a form of scaffolding and thus beneficial in the language acquisition process. According to the innate perspective of language acquisition, error correction simply does not have much influence on the learning progress. Only Krashen assumes that error correction should be limited and used only when the focus is on learning, otherwise it triggers the affective filter and impedes acquisition. To sum up, it can be said that nearly all learning theories advocate focus on form and error correction as being an important factor in language acquisition; therefore it is necessary to deal with this aspect in more detail.

### **3.3. Language learning theories relevant for traditional EFL classes**

Now I will turn to traditional EFL classrooms. The Austrian Curriculum in general is based on the principle of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). While the approach is well defined in terms of theory of language, (i.e. what it means to be communicatively competent) little has been said about theories of learning (Richards and Rogers 2001: 161). Richards and Rogers (2001: 161) see

Krashen's theory of language acquisition compatible with CLT. Johnson (1984) and Littlewood (1984) regard Skill Acquisition Theory as an alternative learning theory being the basis for CLT (Richards & Rogers 2001: 161f). In the following these theories will be discussed in order to find out if in CLT focus on form and error correction are similarly important as in CLIL.

Skill Acquisition Theory differs significantly from Krashen's and Terrell's theory of language acquisition. It explains how learners of a variety of skills, including language skills, proceed from initial learning to final proficiency. The logic underlying this theory is the following: when skills are learned usually a similar development in three stages takes place. These stages are distinguished by the nature of knowledge and its use. First declarative knowledge needs to be acquired. This means that the rules of a language have to be learned through explicit simplified grammar explanations in combination with numerous examples. Then the declarative knowledge can be turned into procedural knowledge through carefully planned practice. Learners can apply the rules, become gradually more fluent and make fewer errors. A lot of further practice leads to the final stage of development in which language is used automatically without producing hardly any errors. It can be seen that according to Skill Acquisition Theory instruction plays an important role, particularly at the beginning of the learning process. Given the fact that most types of corrective feedback either provide the correct form and thus examples of language or explain rules, against the background of Skills Acquisition Theory error correction can be seen as beneficial to language acquisition (DeKeyser 2007: 97ff).

According to the Natural Approach, developed by Krashen and Terrell, language acquisition should take place as naturally as possible, like the name suggests. The researchers argue that the elements of a language are acquired in a natural order which cannot be influenced by teaching and error correction, as already outlined in chapter 4.2.1. These techniques should only be applied for conscious learning which is restricted to situations in which monitoring is appropriate. In all other cases direct instruction and corrective feedback should be avoided. Krashen and Terrell point out that it may be counterproductive

when it discomfites the learner. This may have the consequence that the affective filter is up and fluent speaking in the foreign language is impeded (Krashen & Terrell 1983: 177f).

In general, the communicative approach emphasises the focus on meaning and use of language with the main objective of developing fluency. Corrective feedback is partly regarded as unnecessary and even counterproductive. However, Lightbown and Spada (1999:121) state that

[r]ecently, some researchers and educators have reacted to the trend toward communicative language teaching and have revived the concern that allowing learners too much 'freedom' without correction and explicit instruction will lead to early fossilization of errors.

Han (2002: 3-4) argues that the input features bad quality due to the fact that it mainly is provided by other L2 learners. Furthermore, when learners have the same L1 background, communication hardly breaks down which would cause a reanalysis of the learner's current interlanguage system. In sum, this learning environment leads to fossilization and more frequent exposure to the target language is demanded as well as form-focused instruction including feedback. Similar concerns are raised by Hughes who argues that "CLT [...] produces 'fluent' but 'inaccurate' learners; in the same way that natural language may lead to fossilization in pidgin" (Hughes 1981: 1).

#### **4. Review of research on the effectiveness of error correction<sup>3</sup>**

So far error correction has been discussed from a theoretical point of view. Considering the usefulness of corrective feedback from another, more practical, perspective, we turn to empirical research. When Hendrickson reviewed literature on error correction in 1977, he concluded that "much of what ha[d] been published on error correction [was] speculative, and need[ed] to be validated by a great deal of empirical experimentation" (Hendrickson 1977: 17). Researchers apparently followed his request as much research has been done since then.

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<sup>3</sup> For a detailed review of research see Norris and Ortega 2000 as well as Russel and Spada 2006.

Of course, error correction is not advocated by all researchers; probably the strongest dissenting voice against the benefits of corrective feedback is that of Truscott (1999: 437) who claims that

[R]esearch evidence points to the conclusion that oral correction does not improve learners' ability to speak grammatically. No good reasons have been advanced for maintaining the practice. For these reasons, language teachers should seriously consider the option of abandoning oral grammar correction altogether.

Lyster, Lightbown and Spada (1999) however, refute Truscott's arguments and question his selected data as well as his way to interpret it. Moreover, they point out that Truscott's article contains inconsistencies. Finally, Lyster et al. (1999: 457) conclude that "a growing body of classroom research provides evidence that corrective feedback is pragmatically feasible, potentially effective, and, in some cases, necessary". Norris and Ortega (2000: 417) confirmed the beneficial role of focus on form for SLA in an analysis of results from numerous studies. Regarding corrective feedback, however, it has to be mentioned that in these studies error correction was not investigated isolated from form-focused instruction in general. In a more recent meta-analysis of 56 studies, Russel and Spada (2006: 140) included only studies in which corrective feedback was clearly isolated from other forms of instruction. They showed that corrective feedback is useful in order to focus on formal aspects of the target language and thus it is beneficial to L2 grammar learning.

A great deal of studies on the role of corrective feedback in language learning classrooms is based on short-term, usually immediate, effects of oral feedback in the students' output, however these findings cannot be considered as evidence for acquisition. But Russel and Spada (2006: 152) also looked at studies that included delayed post-tests which suggest that the benefits of corrective feedback are durable (Tomasello & Herron 1989, Herron 1991, Carroll & Swain 1993, Muranoi 2000, Leeman 2003).

It has to be mentioned that in immersion settings the learners' skills comprehension and speaking are highly developed. However, in regard to grammatical accuracy, deficits could be observed. One reason for this might be the particular type of discourse which can be observed in this context. Teachers

attempt to ensure the comprehension of content conveyed through the L2. In this process of negotiation of meaning a variety of strategies are employed: use of bodylanguage, realia, contextual clues, examples, definitions, and input modifications are just some among others. Moreover, teachers help students to express themselves by using linguistic as well as non-linguistic means. Furthermore, teachers tend to interpret students' utterances "by responding with various reformulations and expansions that also serve as confirmations and confirmation checks". Although teachers attempt to improve students' productive skills, it has been observed that interlanguage development tends to diminish as soon as students have reached a certain level which allows them to communicate effectively. Therefore, Lyster demands increased focus on form, by using certain types of feedback, in content-based settings in order to guarantee continuation of development regarding accuracy (Lyster 2002: 237f.). What he claims is frequently employed in traditional EFL classrooms as Lochtmann's (2002: 121) study revealed.

To conclude, it can be said that focus on form is an important factor in regard to second language development in content-based as well as traditional EFL classrooms and should therefore be investigated. In the present study, focus is on oral error correction in classroom conversation, which is one type of focusing on form.

## **5. Students' and teachers' beliefs, expectations and preferences**

Having pointed out the theoretical view on the usefulness of error treatment in language learning theories as well as the research results concerning this issue, another perspective needs to be taken in mind: the attitude towards error correction of the language learners themselves and their teachers. Numerous researchers have stated that student beliefs are of considerable importance in terms of "motivation, selection of learning strategies, and learning in general" (Schulz 2001: 245). Schulz (2001: 245) argues that teachers have to consider these beliefs in order to create classroom activities which are beneficial to language development not only from the teacher's but also from the learner's

perspective. Therefore, students' expectations and preferences in regard to corrective feedback are discussed in the following section.

In 2001 Schulz conducted a study in which she compared students' and teachers' beliefs in the USA and in Colombia with focus on the role of grammar and error correction in SLA. In general it can be said, that for the perception of error correction, no considerable difference (i.e. no more than 6% difference in the discrepancy rates) was found between the US teachers and students as one group and those from Colombia as another (Schulz 2001: 254). Due to the fact that no significant difference between the two cultures was revealed, one might conclude that beliefs do not depend on the language learners' and teachers' cultural background, consequently similar beliefs towards error correction could be assumed to be held by Austrian teachers and students. However, in order to prove this claim, more research on this issue is necessary.

In Schulz' study students strongly agreed on questions about error correction. A substantial majority of them thought that teachers should correct students when they make errors in class. Learners felt a strong desire about correction of written work as well as on errors made in speaking (Schulz 2001: 254). Furthermore, it was revealed that learners from both cultural backgrounds preferred teacher correction over peer correction. This finding confirmed Brandl's (1995: 197) summary of several studies "that learners prefer the teacher's involvement in the error correction process". Schulz (2001: 251) also found that a considerable majority claimed to learn much from teacher corrections of their own errors and also from teacher correction of their peers' errors. In sum, the learners of the study felt a strong preference for corrective feedback.

Foreign language teachers' beliefs, on the contrary, did not only differ from those of the students but the responses even disagreed within the teacher group, to be more precise strong preference towards one or another belief was hardly found. Strong disagreement was observed regarding the question whether students like to be corrected in class in general and also whether students want teachers to correct their errors made in speaking, in particular.

Regarding written errors, teachers seemed to agree to a great extent. Most of them believed that students want to receive corrective feedback on written work (Schulz 2001: 251).

Comparing teachers' and students' beliefs, striking disagreement was observed in nearly all questions related to error correction. While students showed a strong preference for corrective feedback on oral and written errors, teachers thought like this only regarding written work (Schulz 2001: 255). The observation of Schulz' study mentioned so far are in line with the results of other studies like that of McCargar (1993) who investigated students' and teachers' expectations of the student and teacher roles across cultures and in how far they differ. In his study, ESL teachers did not agree with the statement, "language teachers should correct every student error", however, students clearly agreed except for Japanese students (McCargar 1993: 198). Another interesting finding in McCargar's (1993: 198) study is that students, apart from the Koreans, did not want the teacher to indicate an error without providing the correct form, whereas, the teachers involved in the study mildly agreed with the statement according to which "teachers should point out the student errors without correcting them" (McCargar 1993: 198). To sum up the differences in beliefs between learners and educators, it can be said that second language teachers show a reluctant attitude towards correcting errors in class while students definitely favour error correction, especially if it is initiated by the teacher and if the correct form is provided.

Schulz (2001: 255) mentioned several possible reasons for the learners' extremely positive attitude towards grammar and error correction. She points out that the beliefs may be related to the way in which foreign languages are taught and/or tested. Furthermore, the perceptions could be attributed to a myth concerning this issue which is "passed on from generation to generation of learners" (Schulz 2001: 255). The beliefs may also be a result of personal experiences in which corrective feedback (and grammar study) helps in language learning. Schulz (2001: 255) summarises the findings and argues that language learners independently of their cultural background, "see the teacher as an expert knower whose role is to explain and provide feedback". These

experts however, do not agree on what exactly is important in language learning. According to Schulz (2001: 255) teachers' beliefs are influenced by their formation to become a teacher, by their own professional experience with language learners as well as their own language learning experiences.

Researchers like Mantle-Bromley (1995: 383) argue that students may come to the language classroom with certain beliefs and expectations regarding the role of formal instruction and error correction. If these expectations are not met, language development could be impeded. Therefore it is rather important for the teachers to analyse their students' beliefs and either modify the learners' attitude or adapt the ways of instruction to them. By this conflicts can be avoided and positive conditions for language learning can be provided. Schulz (2001: 256) suggests that this is particularly important with students of another culture than the teacher's as they may have different "language learning experiences and classroom expectations".

## **6. Outline of the contexts: EFL and CLIL**

In the following EFL and CLIL, two different language learning environments will be depicted. It is necessary to be informed about the nature of each setting so that the diverging results of the data analysis can be put into context which makes them more comprehensible. Theories of second language acquisition which form the basis of EFL and CLIL are not discussed in this chapter as a detailed account is provided in chapter 4.

### **6.1. Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)**

Content and language integrated learning, in short CLIL, refers to "the use of an L2 in the teaching of non-language subjects" as Dalton-Puffer (2007b: 139) defines it. In the last fifteen years English has become a medium of instruction in Austrian schools with increasing frequency. The implementation of CLIL was on the one hand fostered by individual teachers or schools and on the other hand it was also a concern of EU bodies to create a "multilingual population in Europe" (Dalton-Puffer 2007a: 46).

Several terms exist to describe similar phenomena. These labels are briefly defined and similarities as well as differences from CLIL are mentioned. In Canada, one can find French *immersion* which also refers to the teaching of non-language subjects in another language, however, the difference to CLIL is that French, the language used to teach these subjects, is another official language in the country and teachers are native-speakers of this language. In the United States *content-based instruction* is used to teach curricular content in the majority language. Such education programmes are usually employed to help a large group of immigrant speakers to learn the official language (Dalton-Puffer 2007b: 140). Locally the term 'Englisch als Arbeitsprache (EaA; English as working language) is very common which also means that other subjects than the language itself are taught in English (Dalton-Puffer 2002: 4). Throughout the rest of the paper the acronym *CLIL* will be used to refer to the Austrian setting in which English is used to teach majority language students.

## **6.2. English as a Foreign Language (EFL)**

In conventional English as a foreign language (EFL) classes, not subject content is taught in English like in CLIL but the focus is on the language itself. Nowadays EFL classrooms are dominated by Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) according to which the primary aim is to prepare learners for meaningful language use, this means they should develop communicative competence (Richards & Rogers 2001: 161). While in former times grammatical items and vocabulary, which needed to be mastered, were specified and taught in isolation, this is not common in CLT (Richards 2006: 11). During students' performances a need for certain items of grammar and vocabulary arise. Then students can reflect on some of the linguistic features of their performance. This implies that the focus is on meaning. Content or subject matter is the driving force in the language learning process (Richards 2006: 23). Although syllabuses are nowadays based on communicative language teaching, it has to be said that this approach is implemented to varying degrees. Personal observation has shown that numerous teachers still tend to employ a more traditional approach.

### **6.3. A comparison of language outcomes in both settings**

The results of various research studies come up to expectations and show that a higher foreign language level is achieved by CLIL students than by those who participate in traditional second language classes only. Especially students' communicative competence benefits from CLIL. This does not imply that all EFL students perform worse compared to those of CLIL classes, in fact particularly talented learners can reach rather good results as well, however it has been demonstrated that "CLIL significantly enhances the language skills of the broad band of students whose foreign language talents or interest are average" as Dalton-Puffer (2007b: 143) puts it. Due to the fact that learners in CLIL classes are in contact with various speakers and they are encouraged to read, their passive language skills are more enhanced than those of conventional EFL students. Considering the productive skills it has been found that CLIL students show "greater fluency, quantity and creativity" when it comes to speaking (Dalton-Puffer 2007b: 144). Furthermore these students tend to take risks more likely than conventional EFL learners. Another advantage could be observed, which can probably be attributed to increased time and quantity of language contact, namely certain features of morphology (e.g. third person –s) were found to be used more automatically. The aspect of language which benefits most from CLIL, compared to traditional EFL, is without doubt the lexicon. CLIL students possess a wide range of technical vocabulary because this is the only language aspect which is explicitly worked on in the lessons (Dalton-Puffer 2007b: 142ff).

As outlined above, certain aspects of language definitely benefit from extra exposure to the foreign language, however, others seem to remain unaffected like pronunciation. Dalton-Puffer (2007b: 144) points out that this area as well as pragmatic skills of CLIL learners have not yet been studied explicitly. It was also found that CLIL students indeed have a huge technical vocabulary at their disposal, general and informal lexicon, however, remains largely unaffected. Writing is probably the issue which profits least in the CLIL setting. Regarding this skill the appropriate use of grammar and style are two deficiencies among others (Dalton-Puffer 2007b: 144f.).

In short, students' passive language skills and speaking skills definitely benefit from CLIL and the same can be said about technical vocabulary. Accuracy of pronunciation on the other hand is not influenced positively in content-based classrooms.

## 7. Theoretical framework for the analysis

Having demonstrated the importance of corrective feedback in SLA in general, and in CLIL as well as in CLT in particular, now the theoretical framework will be provided according to which the material of the present study was analysed.

Figure 1 Error treatment sequence

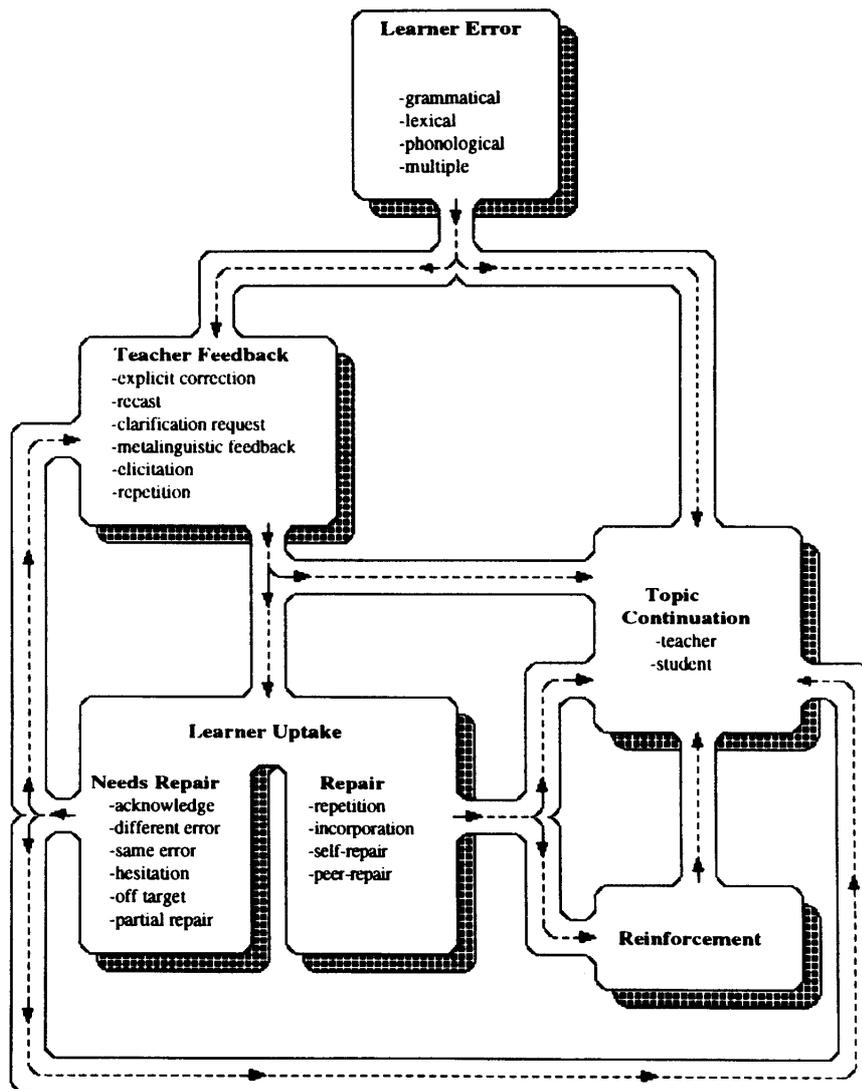


Figure 1 shows Lyster and Ranta's analytic model which was used for the analysis, however it was adjusted to fit the present data. As the researchers themselves describe it, "the model is to be read as a flowchart presenting a series of either/or options that together constitute an error treatment sequence" (Lyster & Ranta 1997: 45). For the present study the focus will be on these sequences.

The starting point of the error treatment sequence is a learner's utterance which contains at least one error. The teacher then either provides corrective feedback or he does not, in the latter case topic continuation follows. If the learner is supplied with corrective feedback this can result in uptake of the learner or no uptake which then means topic continuation. If there is uptake, the learner either repairs his utterance or produces another version still in need of repair. If then the utterance still needs repair, the teacher may provide further corrective feedback or topic continuation follows. If the learner indeed repairs his utterance, either topic continuation follows or some "repair-related reinforcement" on part of the teacher. Reinforcement is succeeded by topic continuation (Lyster & Ranta 1997: 45).

## **7.1. Errors**

In the following section I will consider error taxonomies of other researchers and explain my decision to include certain types of errors in the data analysis and to ignore others.

Van Lier (1988: 182f.) set up three categories of errors:

- errors of fact
- errors of logic
- errors of language

While an investigation of errors of logic and errors of fact indeed would be interesting in an analysis of CLIL classroom conversations only, it is not appropriate for the purpose of the present study which includes data from EFL lessons in which little argumentation and even less conveyance of facts take place. Therefore only errors of language remain which, are the most frequent category in classroom conversations of second language learners according to Dalton Puffer (2007a: 218).

In regard to linguistic errors, SLA researchers seem to agree on the taxonomy. The central categories, as for example used by Lyster and Ranta (1997: 45) are errors of phonology, lexicon and morphosyntax. For the present study these

categories were used together with the category “multiple”, also employed by Lyster and Ranta (1997: 45), when more than one error occurred in one turn.

Lyster (2001: 279) regards “unsolicited use of L1” as separate error category but Dalton-Puffer (2007a: 219) argues that this can be considered as code switching which is “a natural behaviour in bilingual contexts” and even Lyster (1997: 45) himself mentions that “such uses of the L1 are not errors per se” but he and Ranta were interested in an investigation of the teachers’ reactions to such instances. Therefore, I followed Dalton-Puffer and classed instances of L1 use under other categories, for instance they may appear under the rubric *vocabulary* in a case when the student does not know a particular word.

The category *grammatical gender* which formed part of Lyster and Ranta’s (1997) framework of errors in their research on French immersion classes, was disregarded as well. The present analysis dealt with data from English language lessons thus this error category had to be excluded for obvious reasons.

Dalton-Puffer (2007a: 218) as well as others include a further category, namely discourse errors, in their taxonomies. However, the definition of what is meant by such errors remains rather controversial (cf. Allwright and Bailey 1991, van Lier 1988), therefore they will not be investigated in the present analysis.

**Table 1** Categories of errors employed in the analysis.

<b>Category</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>Description</b>
Grammar	gra	morphosyntax: morphological and syntactic errors
Vocabulary	voc	lexical errors: wrong denotation, idioms, technical terms (the latter often difficult to distinguish from factual errors) wrong stylistic choice
Pronunciation	pron	phonological errors: wrong word stress and major phonemic substitutions; mispronunciations which could impede understanding

To sum up, in this research paper the focus will be on linguistic errors only. Table 1 shows which categories of errors were used for the study and a short description, adopted from Dalton-Puffer (2007a: 220), is added.

## **7.2. Which learner errors should be corrected?**

A survey of literature on error correction showed that regarding the error categories (i.e. grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation errors) established above, little has been said about whether they should be treated equally or if teachers should concentrate more on one type than on another. However, other ways of classifying errors were found which will be discussed in order to provide a complete overview on this issue.

Hendrickson (1978: 396) argues that it is recommendable to correct some errors with higher priority than others, particularly those which cause communication problems, those which stigmatise the interlocutor, and finally those errors which occur with considerable frequency.

Burt and Kiparsky (1980: 6f) came up with a distinction of errors: global errors and local errors. Global errors are those which lead to a misinterpretation of the message on part of a proficient speaker of the target language or the message is incomprehensible at all. Local errors, on the other hand, result in forms or phrases which seem awkward however, a proficient speaker can understand the meaning without or with little problems only. Burt (1975: 58) points out that especially with beginners, correction should be limited to global errors in order to avoid destroying their motivation and self-confidence. More advanced students, whose speech hardly contains global errors, benefit from corrective feedback on local errors as well, because they are pushed towards a more native-like status. Regarding the issue of message incomprehensibility, Lyster (2002: 246) argues that experienced teachers often learn to interpret their students' interlanguages. Thus they might have difficulties in distinguishing errors which impede intelligibility and those which do not.

## **7.3. Feedback types**

While former studies concentrated on the role of formal instruction and corrective feedback in terms of contributing to language acquisition in general, in more recent times the focus of interest is on different types of feedback and their impact on SLA. In this chapter various corrective feedback techniques will be presented and their characteristics discussed.

Lyster and Ranta (1997: 46ff.) observed in their investigation of immersion classrooms that teachers have different types of corrective feedback at their disposal. They distinguished six different feedback categories: recast, explicit correction, clarification request, repetition of error, elicitation, and metalinguistic clue. Lyster (1998b: 183f.) used these feedback types found in his previous study and categorised them as *recasts*, *explicit correction* and *negotiation of form* which contains the *elicitation*, *metalinguistic clue*, *clarification request* and *repetition*. With recasts as well as with explicit correction the teacher provides the correct form. In case of the former this is done implicitly and in case of the latter obviously explicitly. The term *negotiation of form* already suggests that the target language form is not given, the teacher merely indicates that the student's utterance contains an error and thus prompts the correct form. Therefore the category negotiation of form is also called *prompts* (Lyster 2004: 244). In the following, descriptions of all feedback types as well as discussions of their nature are provided.

### **7.3.1. Recasts**

#### **7.3.1.1. Definition**

Lyster and Ranta (1997: 46) define the feedback type *recast* as “the teacher's reformulation of all or part of a student's utterance, minus the error”. Many researchers use different terms with essentially the same meaning. Spada and Fröhlich (1995: 24), for instance speak of “paraphrase”, Chaudron (1977: 39) uses the expression “repetition with change”. Nevertheless, in numerous studies recasts do not just refer to a reformulation of the incorrect utterance but include elements like stress on the erroneous part (Nicholas, Lightbown and Spada 2001: 749). For the present study no distinction is made between simple recasts and those which include stress, both types are incorporated in the term *recast*.

(1) L: The first series libretto. [Error– pronunciation]

T: The first serious libretto. Okay, a little bit maybe... [FB – recast]

While in almost all studies, recasts are defined as the most implicit type of feedback, Ellis and Sheen (2006: 585) concluded according to their findings that

this type of feedback actually ranges along a continuum from implicit to explicit.

The researchers claim that

recasts cannot be viewed as a purely implicit form of negative feedback. In many cases, their illocutionary force as corrections is quite transparent and, therefore, they should be seen as a relatively explicit form of negative feedback (Ellis and Sheen 2006: 585).

In the present study, however, recasts are defined as the most implicit type of feedback due to their lack in salience which will be reasoned in an in-depth discussion following below.

### **7.3.1.2. The nature of recasts**

A considerable interest in the role of recasts in SLA can be observed<sup>4</sup> (Doughty & Varela 1998, Havranek 1999, Long, Iganaki & Ortega 1998, Lyster 1998a, 1998b, Lyster & Ranta 1997, Mackey, Gass & McDonough 2000, Mackey & Philp 1998, Ohta 2000, Oliver 1995). Nicholas, Lightbown and Spada (2001: 748) argue that this interest in recasts is due to several advantages. Recasts are a very unobtrusive form of corrective feedback and thus a perfect way to provide a correct model while maintaining the focus on meaning, this means that the flow of communication is not disturbed. Furthermore, recasts are provided immediately following the error and due to the common belief this immediacy is essential so that the learner can notice the difference between his own erroneous utterance and the target form (Nicholas, Lightbown and Spada 2001: 721). As Schmidt argues in his Noticing Hypothesis this is the first step in language acquisition. Considering these arguments the increasing interest in recasts is comprehensible.

Numerous studies show that it is one of the most frequent types of feedback which can be found in a wide range of second language classroom settings: from elementary to adult education and in immersion as well as EFL classrooms all over the world (cf. Doughty 1994, Lyster & Ranta 1997, Lyster & Mori 2006, Lochtmann 2000). However, many researchers have questioned whether learners perceive the modifications entailed in recasts (Allwright & Bailey 1991: 104, Chaudron 1988: 145, Netten 1991: 304). This means that opinions on the

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<sup>4</sup> For a detailed overview of studies concerning recasts, see Nicholas, Lightbown and Spada (2001)

salience, and consequently effectiveness, of recasts are split. Insights from first language acquisition show that children frequently repeat their parents' recasts, therefore Long (1996: 431) favours recasts, supposing this feedback type to be ideal in second language acquisition as it permits learners to notice the difference between their ill-formed utterance and the well-formed reformulation of the teacher. Long (1996: 434) brings forward the argument that recasts in general enable learners to notice the corrective function because cognitive resources which otherwise would be occupied by semantic processing are disengaged. Lyster (2007: 98) however, claims that Long's argument indeed may be true for form-focused but not for content-based classrooms. He explains that

[i]n meaning-oriented second language classrooms, [...] when students' attention is focused on meaning via recasting, they remain focused on meaning, not form, because they expect the teacher's immediate response to confirm or disconfirm the veracity of their utterances (Lyster 2007: 98).

It can be seen that researchers do not agree on the effectiveness of recasts. Like Lyster (1998a, 2007), other researchers as well have doubts about the "accessibility of the negative feedback" which is implied in recasts (Carpenter et al. 2006: 210). However, it cannot be said that learners never notice the negative feedback at all but rather that it depends on a wide range of variables whether learners recognise the corrective character of recasts or not. In the subsequent section a detailed discussion of these variables will be provided.

Lyster (2007:97) points out that recasts frequently cause "linguistic ambiguity" which may even lead to the continued use of non-target forms. One reason for this ambiguity is the fact that recasts and non-corrective repetitions, which occur even more frequently than recasts, fulfil the same discourse functions, namely to confirm or disconfirm the veracity of the student's message. Thus recasts can be perceived as non-corrective repetitions as it is difficult for the learner to notice whether the teacher recasts an ill-formed utterance or repeats a well-formed utterance. Consequently learners are often not aware of the difference between their own non-target form and the target-form produced by the teacher. Lyster found another reason for the ambiguity of recasts, namely the indiscriminate use of signs of approval (i.e. affirmations and praise markers)

with recasts, non-corrective repetition and also topic-continuation moves after errors (Lyster 1998a: 66).

Nicholas et al. (2001: 744), however, argue that paralinguistic cues and emphasis may disambiguate recasts and facilitate the noticing of their corrective nature. According to the researchers

[i]t may also be due to the availability of nonverbal cues or emphasis that help to distinguish recasts or repetitions that are intended as feedback on errors in form. For example, parents and teachers may use emphasis or raised eyebrows or other gestures to signal that they are providing negative evidence (Nicholas et al. 2001: 744).

The role of such paralinguistic clues in noticing the corrective character of recasts, was investigated by Carpenter et al. (2006). The researchers showed videotapes of task-based interactions in which teachers were providing recasts and repetitions. The participants were advanced students of English as a second language. One group saw video clips which had been manipulated by cutting out the learners' original erroneous utterance preceding the feedback and the other group saw the original video tape which included the learners' incorrect utterances. It was revealed that the group which did not hear the initial non-targetlike utterance were less successful at distinguishing recasts from repetitions as they did not look for non-linguistic or paralinguistic clues. Thus, it can be said that these cues do not contribute to the recognition of recasts' corrective quality or at least only to a rather restricted extent (Carpenter et al. 2006: 210).

As mentioned before, contextual setting might be an influencing factor in terms of salience and thus effectiveness of recasts in "promoting linguistic development" (Carpenter et al. 2006: 213). Several studies in content-based classrooms (Chaudron 1977, Lyster & Ranta 1997, Lyster 1998b, Lyster 2004, Panova & Lyster 2002) support Lyster's idea that recasts are not as effective as prompts particularly in these contexts as learners have difficulties in recognising recasts as corrective feedback. Ellis and Sheen (2006: 596f.) also claim that

[i]f learners treat language as an object to be studied, then they may detect the corrective force of recasts and thus derive negative evidence from them. But if they act as language users and treat

language as a tool, then they are less likely to see recasts as corrective.

However, the argument that recasts are not salient in content-based settings is not demonstrated by all studies. Some even give proof that recasts are “as salient as explicit correction” in content-based classrooms (Lyster & Mori 2006: 288).

In learning contexts in which focus is consistently on form, on the contrary, the corrective nature of recasts may be recognised more likely according to Ohta (2000: 67). The importance of discourse context of the foreign language classroom as a decisive factor in terms of recasts leading to learners’ uptake is also mentioned by Oliver and Mackey (2003: 519). The results of their study show that in explicit language-focused contexts 85% of the recasts are effective (Oliver & Mackey 2003: 527). Nevertheless, this seems not to be true in all form-focused language classrooms as revealed by Lochtmann (2002: 279) who conducted a study in form-focused German classes in secondary schools in Belgium which did not give much evidence for recasts leading to uptake. Summing up, it can be said that probably other factors than context are more influential in making recasts more or less salient.

The effectiveness of recasts in eliciting uptake may also vary depending on the type of error (i.e. grammatical, phonological, lexical errors). Lyster (1998b: 184) found that grammatical and phonological errors were mainly treated with recasts while teachers preferred negotiation of form for lexical errors. Mackey, Gass and McDonough’s (2000) results confirm these findings. Moreover, Lyster (2001: 290) revealed that recasts of grammatical errors were not very effective in leading to repair, however, they were successful in case of phonological errors and lexical errors (see also Carpenter et al. 2006; Han 2006; Mackey et al. 2000). Nicholas, Lightbown and Spada (2001: 742) conclude that “recasts do not appear to be equally effective as feedback mechanisms with all language features”.

Commenting on the increased effectiveness of particular feedback types for certain linguistic features, Lyster (1998b: 205) simultaneously points out another

factor which influences the salience of recasts, namely, the type of the task during which the error occurs. As already said above, recasts are rather effective for phonological errors, however, it has to be mentioned that in Lyster's (1998b) study these errors mainly occurred when learners were reading aloud. In this context meaning is supposed to be correct as stemming from a given text, consequently the corrective nature of recasts is more obvious. Thus, it can be said that the effectiveness of corrective feedback in general, and recasts in particular, depends on the task on which students work.

It is shown that salience of recasts is also influenced by the complexity of change between the initial erroneous utterance and the teacher's correct reformulation. Researchers revealed that recasts that are short and involve only minimal changes are more noticeable than complex changes (Philp 2003: 117f.).

Another influencing factor may be the frequency with which recasts occur. L1 research reveals that recasts are employed with different frequency for well-formed and ill-formed utterances. Lyster (1998a: 63) however, found that in immersion classrooms the frequency of teachers' repetitions of correct utterances was nearly the same like that of recasts in response to erroneous utterances. The researcher concludes that learners in L2 classrooms have greater difficulties with the recognition of recasts than in the L1 context. Nicholas et al. (2001: 728) assumes the same on the basis of intensive comparison of L2 research studies. It is argued that the salience of recasts "may depend in part on not being overused, that is, being seen in some sense as a marked feature of the interaction." Nicholas et al. (2001: 751) therefore conclude that this indifferent frequency may be a reason for the learners' difficulty to perceive recasts as negative evidence and their interpretation of recasts as being another possibility of saying the same thing or as the teacher's confirmation of what has been said by the learner.

A further factor which may influence the effectiveness of recasts is the "developmental level of proficiency" Nicholas et al. (2001: 752). It is argued that recasts may be effective when "the learner has already begun to use a particular linguistic feature and is in the position to choose between linguistic

alternatives” (Nicholas et al. 2001: 752). Mackey and Philp’s (1998: 338) study confirmed this supposition. The researchers revealed that recasts rarely lead to repair with less advanced learners, however, learners who were more advanced at the linguistic feature of interest, benefited to a greater extent from interaction with recasts than from interaction without this type of feedback (Mackey & Philp 1998: 351). It was concluded that a stage of developmental readiness needs to be reached in order to recognise the corrective nature of recasts (Mackey & Philp 1998: 354).

It has to be said that in most studies, effectiveness of feedback types is defined as leading to uptake. According to Oliver (2000: 131) absent uptake does not necessarily mean that the learner did not notice the difference between his erroneous utterance and the corrected reformulation. Sometimes, a repetition of the teacher’s recast may seem unnecessary or learners do not even have the opportunity as the recast is immediately followed by topic continuation. Ammar and Spada (2006: 565) argue that if recasts cause uptake, this indeed might be “a sign of noticing and learning”, however, they remark that it can also be a “mere repetition of the teacher’s reformulation” which means that no deeper processing or not even noticing takes place. Gass (2003: 236) called such repetitions after recasts which do not involve any analysis of interlanguage structures “mimicking”. Ohta (2000: 66) went beyond the investigation of uptake. For her study, individual students were recorded through microphones in order to find out if learners reacted to recasts in private speech. The researcher found that learners do notice recasts even if they do not produce any uptake. Given that uptake or its absence did not provide ample proof for the effectiveness of recasts, Havranek (1999: 32), investigated if learners remember corrective feedback. Her results showed that recasts were less likely to be remembered than more explicit types of feedback. Due to these divergent results from studies employing different methods of measurement, it has to be concluded that further studies with methods going beyond uptake have to be conducted in order to find out more about the effectiveness of recasts.

Finally, it is important to consider the fact that in most studies recasts are assumed to provide negative evidence, however, Nicholas et al. (2001: 733f) consider this assumption as “problematic”. It is argued that according to most

L1 literature recasts do not provide negative evidence, or do so only under certain conditions. The same issue is mentioned by L2 researchers as well. Leeman (2003) conducted a study in order to find out if recasts attributed to interlanguage development by providing positive evidence or negative evidence, this means by showing learners what is grammatical or what is not. According to the researcher effectiveness of recasts is more likely to be attributed to the enhanced salience of positive evidence, this means that the negative evidence is probably not the decisive factor in terms of interlanguage development (Leemann 2003: 37).

Overall, it can be said that research results definitely show that recast usually is the most frequent feedback type and there is common agreement that recasts contribute to interlanguage development although not to the same extent as other forms of feedback do. Disagreement can be observed about whether the benefit results from negative or from positive evidence and researchers also do not agree on which conditions exactly facilitate the learners' noticing of the corrective nature of recasts.

Thus, it can be said that recasts facilitate SLA but there is no evidence that recasts are more effective in contributing to language acquisition than other components involved in interaction such as models, prompts and more explicit types of correction. Ellis and Sheen (2006: 597) claim that the latter two aspects (i.e. prompts and explicit correction) indeed are more effective than recasts.

### **7.3.2. Explicit correction**

#### **7.3.2.1. Definition**

Like recasts, explicit corrections provide the learner with the target-reformulation of their non-target utterance. Moreover, they contain further information in order to indicate that the student's utterance was ill-formed (e.g. "Oh, you mean," "You should say"), therefore they are explicit in contrast to recasts which are implicit (Lyster & Ranta 1997: 46).

- (2) L: You can choose a voice who reads for you. [Error - grammar]  
T: A voice that, I would say, that reads the book to you. [FB – explicit correction]

### **7.3.2.2. The nature of explicit correction**

The focus of most studies is on recasts and prompts, whereas explicit correction seems to be slightly disregarded. Theoretically, it may be assumed that because of its explicitness, this feedback type would be very informative as it directly tells the learners about the incorrectness of their utterance. Carroll and Swain (1993: 362), however, point out that explicit forms of feedback may cause “serious problems of interpretation.” The teacher might provide an accurate description of the error and the grammatical rule. The interpretation often requires specialised vocabulary and knowledge which is often beyond the learners’ level of comprehension so that the corrective feedback might not be very effective. Carroll and Swain themselves, however conducted a laboratory study in 1991 in which they found the contrary. They compared the effects of explicit correction, recast, prompts and no corrective feedback at all. In case of one type of prompt, the learners were told that they were wrong (i.e. explicit utterance rejection) and in case of the other, learners were asked if they were sure about the correctness of their response (i.e. implicit metalinguistic feedback). The results showed that explicit correction was significantly more effective than prompts and recasts. The fact that in Lyster and Ranta’s (1997) study explicit correction was not very effective but in Carroll and Swain’s it was, may be attributed to the fact that the subjects in the latter study had been told in advance that they would receive corrective feedback, moreover the explicit feedback was often considerably longer than that of the other groups (Carroll & Swain 1991: 372).

### **7.3.3. Prompts**

In prompts, one interlocutor, usually the more competent person, attempts to “push” the other towards the production of a more correct utterance. This implies that both participants actively deal with a problem and that the learner is stimulated to self-repair (Van den Branden 1997: 592). Students modify their erroneous responses instead of being immediately provided with the correct form by the teacher (Lyster 2007: 108).

Clarification requests, repetition of the error, elicitation, and metalinguistic clues are classified under the category “prompts”. Below definitions of these feedback techniques are given along with examples and in a subsequent section the nature of prompts in general, with references to certain types of prompts in particular, is provided.

### **7.3.3.1. Clarification requests**

Following Spada and Fröhlich (1995), Lyster and Ranta (1997: 47), define clarification requests as an indication to learners either that the teacher has misunderstood the utterance or that it was ill-formed and consequently “a repetition or reformulation is required”. This feedback type contains phrases such as “Pardon me”, “I don’t understand”. Moreover, a repetition of the error may be included as in “What do you mean by X?” (Lyster and Ranta 1997: 47; Lyster 2007: 109). Lyster and Ranta (1997: 47) remark that this feedback type can either refer to problems of “comprehensibility or accuracy, or both.” I will fall into line with them and consider feedback as clarification request only when an error has preceded.

- (3) L: As little childs they got... [Error - grammar]  
T: I don’t understand that. [FB – clarification request]

### **7.3.3.2. Metalinguistic feedback or clues**

With metalinguistic feedback, the teacher does not provide the correct form but “comments, information, or questions related to the well-formedness of the student’s utterance” as Lyster and Ranta express it (1997: 47). Metalinguistic comments normally are explicit indications that an error has occurred. For instance phrases like “Can you find the error?,” “That’s wrong,” “No, not X,” or just “No” are used. Metalinguistic information contains either some grammar explanation that refers to the nature of the error (e.g. “It’s masculine”) or a lexical category (Lyster and Ranta 1997: 47). Metalinguistic questions refer to the nature of the error as well but attempt to elicit the metalinguistic information from the learner. Lochtman (2002: 277) includes in this category rhetorical questions like “Is that the answer which is in your book?” Thus employing these strategies, the learner’s awareness is raised and directed to the error.

- (4) L: (*reading*) [Error - grammar]  
T: No, no. Suggest always has ing-form. Ok. Last one. [FB – metalinguistic clue]

### **7.3.3.3. Elicitation**

Elicitation comprises three strategies that teachers employ to directly elicit the correct form from the learner. First, the teacher elicits completion of his own utterance by “pausing to allow students to fill the blank” (Lyster & Ranta 1997: 48). Lyster and Ranta (1997: 48) comment that such moves in which completion is elicited may appear together with a preceding metalinguistic comment like “No, not that. It’s a...” or with a repetition of the erroneous part. A second technique is that of using a question in order to elicit the correct form (e.g. How do we say X in French?). Yes/no questions (e.g. Do we say that in French?) are not included in the category of elicitation, they are classified as metalinguistic feedback. Another strategy of elicitation is to use questioning or intonation in order to indicate that the learner should reformulate his utterance.

- (5) S: They go. [Error - grammar]  
T: One evening... [FB - elicitation]  
S: One evening, they go. [Needs repair – same error]

### **7.3.3.4. Repetition**

Repetition refers to the technique of repeating the student’s ill-formed utterance in isolation. Usually teachers use a rising intonation to highlight the error.

- (6) L1: Royals. [Error - lexicon]  
T: Royals? [FB - repetition]

### **7.3.3.5. The nature of prompts**

Hardly any research material has been found on differential effects of prompts therefore they will be treated in general as a group and only sometimes single types of prompts will be mentioned in particular. In the following, prompts will be discussed in comparison with recasts. One could argue that this might be like “comparing apples and oranges”, as Ammar and Spada (2006: 565) put it, because the two types of corrective feedback are completely different,

especially regarding uptake. Whereas recasts do not necessarily produce or even do not provide opportunity for uptake, prompts result in uptake in most of the cases. Nevertheless, the feedback techniques will be compared in order to highlight differences as well as advantages and disadvantages of each.

The effectiveness of prompts can be explained from different perspectives. Lyster and Izquierdo (2009: 462), for instance, attribute the effectiveness of prompts on the one hand to the negative evidence which is provided and on the other hand to skill acquisition theory. According to the latter, learning is considered as a transformation from declarative to procedural knowledge, this means a change from controlled processing, which involves attention and the short-term memory, to more automatised processes, in which the long-term memory is used. Automatisation is a result of repeated practice (DeKeyser 2007: 98f). However, activities which have a communicative purpose and are controlled (i.e. requiring a specific target structure) are difficult to design and therefore prompts have an important role (Lyster 2007: 118). Lyster (2007: 118) claims that “given their aim to elicit modified output”, prompts provide perfect opportunities for controlled practice within communicative interaction. The control over already internalised target language structures can thus be improved by prompts as they allow for output which turns declarative into procedural knowledge (DeKeyser 2007: 89f). At this point it is also important to refer to Swain’s output hypothesis according to which “pushed output” contributes to interlanguage development (Swain 1985: 249f). This means that language learners are invited to experiment with new structures and thus test out new hypotheses. As Swain argues, this may be especially important in case of the acquisition of syntax as learners are forced to focus on syntax when they produce utterances, particularly when these cause comprehension problems. De Bot (1996: 529) also argues that being pushed to retrieve and subsequently produce target language forms brings about more benefits for learners benefit than exposure to structures only, because connections in the memory are developed in the first case. Long (1996: 102), nevertheless, rejects this psycholinguistic substantiation for the importance of prompts. The researcher argues that the main objective is that the learner acquires new knowledge and not automatises “the retrieval of existing knowledge”. Language acquisition,

however, cannot take place if learners do not get sufficient opportunity for “assimilation and consolidation of that knowledge” as Lyster (2007: 119) claims. When languages are learned at school, the students have to be provided with numerous opportunities to retrieve and, if necessary, restructure their interlanguage knowledge in a cyclical way. To sum up, it can be said that prompts are highly useful from a theoretical point of view.

In contrast to recasts, prompts are found less frequently in classroom conversations (Lyster & Ranta 1997: 53; Musumeci 1996: 286). Van den Branden (1997: 599) points out that when a learner cannot provide a correct answer, in most of the cases, the teacher turns to another learner or gives the correct answer himself instead of prompting the student to provide a more targetlike version. Musumeci (1996: 319f) mentions several reasons for the fact that teachers hardly encourage the students to self-repair. Firstly, prompts are more time-consuming than feedback types in which the correct version is provided and teachers usually want to move on with the lesson. Moreover, it is argued that educators do not want to embarrass the learners and therefore prefer more face-saving forms of feedback. However, it is important to consider negotiation of form as an essential element within the process of learning.

Van den Branden (1997: 627) found that frequency of negotiation plays a decisive role in terms of leading to better results in the posttests. This can be explained by Gass and Varonis' (1994: 299) argumentation that the learner's attention needs to be drawn to the erroneous utterance, otherwise it is unlikely that he will notice the gap between the incorrect and the targetlike version.

In most laboratory studies recasts were compared with a control group which did not receive any feedback. Only a few laboratory studies compared recasts to other types of feedback, like those of Carroll and Swain (1993), McDonough (2007) and Lyster and Izquierdo (2009). All of them revealed no significant difference between recasts and prompts, however both types of feedback were more effective than no feedback. Moreover, McDonough (2007: 337) conducted a subsequent analysis which led to the tentative conclusion that “clarification request may impact several forms across developmental stages simultaneously,

whereas recasts may have a more concentrated impact on a single developmental feature". Although no considerable difference between recasts and prompts was shown in most laboratory studies, this is not true for all of them. Ellis, Loewen, and Erlam (2006: 339), for example, investigated the differential effects of recasts and prompts on the use of the simple past tense in an experimental study and their outcome was different. They defined prompts as a repetition of the erroneous utterance together with a metalinguistic clue to indicate an error. The results showed prompts to be more effective than recasts. In this study effectiveness was measured with delayed posttest.

Although, experimental studies have numerous advantages they also have disadvantages. For example, the learner focuses only on a certain number of language features. This means that the results from such studies are not absolutely valid for more natural learning situations in classroom which are characterised by greater complexity. Moreover, experiments cannot inform about long-lasting effects of error correction as they are usually conducted during a short term (Havranek 2002: 256). Due to these reasons it is necessary to look at observational studies as well.

Classroom studies, in contrast to these laboratory studies, confirmed the theoretical suppositions and showed prompts to be more effective than recasts. The study conducted by Havranek and Cesnik (2001 referred to in Lyster & Mori 2006: 273) revealed that prompts which successfully resulted in repair were the most powerful combination of corrective feedback, for the learners who received the feedback as well as their peers. Lyster (2004) also found prompts to be more effective than recasts in an elementary school setting. The researcher investigated the effects of recasts and prompts on the acquisition of grammatical gender in French. One group received recasts, another prompts and in the third group errors were not treated at all. The results of eight proficiency tests which were carried out immediately after the lesson as well as two months later, revealed that the group receiving prompts outperformed the comparison group on all eight measurements and thus stuck out significantly. In another research, Loewen and Philp (2006: 546) revealed that corrective feedback resulted in an accuracy rate of 75% in case of prompts whereas

recasts led to an accuracy rate of only 53% in immediate posttests and also delayed posttests proved prompts to be more effective than recasts.

In another investigation, Ellis (2007: 354) also compared prompts and recasts in terms of their effectiveness on the acquisition of the past tense marker *-ed* and the comparative *-er* in English. Prompts again were operationalised as a repetition and a metalinguistic clue. The results confirmed the findings of the studies mentioned before, this means that prompts were more effective in comparison to recasts, interestingly they were more beneficial for the comparative than for the past tense forms. Consequently one can conclude that prompts are more effective for the treatment of particular aspects of language, like the comparative, than others.

So far, prompts were treated as a group, however it needs to be said that two types of prompts were found to be particularly effective in terms of eliciting repairs that consist of more than a repetition of the teacher's corrected version by the student. Lyster and Ranta (1997: 56) revealed that elicitations and metalinguistic feedback led to student-generated repair with higher frequency than the other prompts. Similar results were found by Carroll and Swain (1993: 379) who observed that the group which received error treatment through metalinguistic feedback performed better in the second recall session than any other group.

Moreover, it was found that, like recasts, prompts are more likely to appear in combination with certain types of errors than others. According to Lyster (1998b: 184) negotiation of form is mainly used to treat lexical errors. He also found that lexical and grammatical errors followed by negotiation of form led to most repair, which means that these error-treatment combinations are most successful according to the researcher.

An important factor that influences the effectiveness of prompts is the learners' proficiency level, which has already been mentioned in connection with recasts. Like previous studies (Pica 1988; Nobuyoshi & Ellis 1993; Lyster 2004), Amar and Spada (2006: 562) found that low-proficiency learners who were pushed to

selfcorrect benefited definitely more from this type of feedback than from recasts, whereas high-proficiency students benefited equally from both recasts and prompts. This outcome was again confirmed by Lyster and Izquierdo (2009: 455) who also revealed that prompts were particularly effective for students with pretest scores below 50% while for those who scored more no significant difference between recasts and prompts was found regarding effectiveness. In sum, low-proficiency learners benefit more from prompts than from recasts, nevertheless it is important to bear in mind that the learners' level of proficiency needs to be adequate so that they can engage successfully in negotiation of form as teachers cannot elicit forms that learners do not yet know (Lyster 1997: 58).

The general superior effectiveness of prompts can be attributed to two characteristics of this feedback type as Ammar and Spada (2006: 562) claim: firstly, prompts are explicit and secondly, they provide "multiple opportunities to produce the target form in reaction to teacher's corrective moves (i.e. uptake)." The first refers to the unambiguous indication of an error and this is why prompts are particularly helpful for learners with a low proficiency level. Less advanced students seem to need teachers' help to notice the corrective intent, the part which contains an error as well as options for the correction of the error (Ammar and Spada 2006: 563). Regarding the second characteristic, Ammar and Spada add that it is not only the frequency of uptake which contributes to the effectiveness of prompts but also the quality, this means that in case of prompts the uptake is not a mere repetition of the correct form which has been provided by the teacher but it is generated by students. This means that the learner takes part in the process of repair and consequently it is more likely that hypotheses are revised (Ammar & Spada 2006: 564).

To summarise the characteristics of negotiation of form, mentioned above, it can be said that prompts and recasts have been shown to be equally effective in most laboratory studies. In classroom studies, nevertheless, this was not the case in a wide range of settings, there prompts were proven to move interlanguage development forward to a greater extent than recasts. This leads to the conclusion that in experimental settings certain factors are beneficial for

the effectiveness of recasts which are absent in observation settings, thus it seems that one cannot draw on the results of experiments in order to make generalisations for the classroom. Apart from the general higher effectiveness of prompts, elicitations and metalinguistic feedback were most successful in leading to student-generated repair and the latter was found to be most effective according to delayed posttests as well. It was also revealed, that prompts are mainly used to treat lexical errors and it is the combination of prompts and this error category as well as grammatical errors which seem to be most successful. However, the students' proficiency level influences the effectiveness of prompts too. For less advanced learners, prompts are very helpful due to their explicitness which helps the novice to notice the problematic form. Another probable reason why prompts are effective is the fact that the learner is actively engaged in the repair process and therefore the interlanguage grammar is restructured.

To conclude, in Table 2 a summary of all feedback types is provided, together with short definitions given by Lyster and Ranta (1997: 46-48).

**Table 2** Feedback types used in the analysis.

<b>Feedback type</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Recast</b>	The teacher's reformulation of all or part of a student's utterance, minus the error.
<b>Explicit correction</b>	An explicit correction contains the correct form as well as a clear indication that what the student said was inaccurate.
<b>Clarification request</b>	An indication to the learner either that the teacher has misunderstood the utterance or that it was ill-formed and consequently a repetition or reformulation is required.
<b>Metalinguistic clue</b>	Includes comments, information, or questions related to the well-formedness of the student's utterance.
<b>Elicitation</b>	The teacher directly elicits a reformulation.
<b>Repetition</b>	The teacher repeats the erroneous utterance using intonation to highlight the error.

Finally, it is necessary to note that no definite statement about the effectiveness of any feedback type can be given. Although a tendency for prompts to be more successful was observed, one has to be aware of the matter of fact that

numerous factors influence the feedback and learning process and therefore it is impossible to say that one feedback technique contributes more to interlanguage development than another in all cases.

#### **7.4. Uptake**

Lyster and Ranta (1997: 49) aimed at investigating the illocutionary force of corrective feedback and therefore borrowed the term *uptake* from speech act theory and made it part of the “error treatment sequence”. In earlier work, learner uptake was defined differently, for instance as “what learners claim to have learned from a particular lesson” (Slimani 1992: 197). Lyster and Ranta (1997: 49) however, use uptake to refer to

a student’s utterance that immediately follows the teacher’s feedback and that constitutes a reaction in some way to the teacher’s intention to draw attention to some aspect of the student’s initial utterance.

This particular definition of the term has since then been used in studies of classroom interaction that include a wide range of instructional settings. An analysis of uptake demonstrates what the learner intends to do with the teacher’s feedback. In case of uptake absence, the teacher might employ corrective feedback again or a topic continuation move follows, either initiated by the same student, another one, or the teacher. If a student continues, the teacher’s intention to draw attention to the erroneous part of the student’s first utterance, has passed unheeded, and if the teacher goes on, he has not provided an opportunity for uptake (Lyster and Ranta 1997: 49).

Lyster and Ranta (1997: 49) distinguished two types of learner uptake: (a) *repair* which refers to correct or successful uptake, this means utterances with repair of the error to which the feedback referred, and (b) *needs-repair* which refers to incorrect or unsuccessful repair, in other words, utterances that still need repair. Lyster (2007: 118) remarks that in an analysis of “potential effects of different types of feedback”, students’ utterances with repair are of greater interest than utterances which are still in need of repair. In the present study, repair includes only correct reformulations of an initially erroneous utterance which occur in a single student turn. A correct reformulation which is

the result of a series of turns is not identified as repair for this study. The same is applied to self-initiated repair. For the present study unprompted self-corrections are ignored, in other words, only repairs which are the result of prompting are analysed. Schegloff, Jefferson, and Sacks (1977: 364) refer to this as “other-initiated repair”.

### 7.4.1. Repair

Lyster and Ranta (1997: 49) observed four types of repair in investigations of uptake:

1. *Repetition* refers to a learner’s repetition of corrective feedback in cases when the teacher supplies the correct form.

- (7) S: The nest protect the eggs. [Error - grammar]  
T: What does the nest do? It protects. [FB – explicit correction]  
S: Protects. [Repair - repetition]

2. *Incorporation* refers to a learners’ repetition of the correct form supplied by the teacher, which the learner then incorporates into a longer utterance produced by himself.

- (8) S: there are over three thousand spe [Error - pronunciation]  
T1: species [FB - recast]  
T2: species [FB - recast]  
S: species of lizards worldwide. [Repair - incorporation]

3. *Self-repair* refers to a self-correction by the student who uttered the initially erroneous utterance in response to corrective feedback by the teacher which does not already contain the correct form.

- (9) S: Cause of Schwerkraft. [Error - vocabulary]  
T: Oh come on you know the word! [FB - metalinguistic feedback]  
S: Gravity. [Repair - self-repair]

4. *Peer-repair* refers to a correction by a student, who did not make the initially erroneous utterance, in response to feedback provided by the teacher.

- (10) S1: Exchange [Error - vocabulary]  
T: What do we call that when he wants to get new ones from the seller?  
[FB - elicitation]  
S2: Exchange of goods [Repair – peer-repair]

### 7.4.2. Needs-repair

Lyster and Ranta (1997: 50f.) found six types of needs-repairs:

1. *Acknowledgement* usually consists of a simple “yes” uttered by the learner in response to the teacher’s corrective feedback. Lyster and Ranta (1997: 50) state that by this the student wants to express “Yes, that is indeed what I meant to say (but you’ve just said it much better!)” “Yes” or “no” of the student following metalinguistic feedback supplied by the teacher is also referred to as acknowledgement.
2. *Same error* means that the learner repeats the same error, made initially, in the uptake.
3. *Different error* refers to a learner’s response to the teacher’s feedback in which a different error is included, this means that the initial error is neither repeated nor corrected.
4. *Off target* refers to uptake that does not include any error, however, it completely circumvents the teacher’s focus on form although the learner’s utterance is clearly a response to the feedback provided by the teacher.
5. *Hesitation* means that in response to the feedback supplied by the teacher, the learner utters a hesitation.
6. *Partial repair* means that the learner’s initial error is only partly corrected in the uptake.

In response to needs-repair, teachers may provide further feedback. Such sequences, however, are not analysed in the present study.

Due to its importance, it has to be mentioned again that neither uptake in general nor repair in particular must be equated with immediate acquisition nor is it a guarantee of following acquisition. However, Lyster and Ranta (1997: 57) point out that uptake contributes to the automatization process of retrieving target language items. The researchers refer on the one hand to DeKeyser’s (2007: 99) claim that “a lot of practice leads to gradual automatization” and on the other hand to Swain (1985: 252) and her hypothesis that pushed output contributes to acquisition as learners are encouraged to revise wrong hypotheses about the L2. The view that uptake may facilitate acquisition is confirmed in other studies as well (cf. Ellis, Basturkmen and Loewen 2001).

It has been argued that not all types of uptake are equal. Ammar and Spada (2006: 546) note that uptake after recasts “can be a sign of noticing” but it can also be “a sign of mimicking” this means a mere repetition of the reformulation provided by the teacher, which does not involve any revision of the current interlanguage system. However, it is argued that uptake following prompts “always reflects a certain level of analysis and hypothesis reevaluation” (Ammar & Spada 2006: 565). For these reasons, Lyster and Ranta (1997: 54) split repair up into two categories: one named “repetition” which includes repetition and incorporation and another termed “student-generated repair” which comprises self- and peer-repair. Lyster (2007: 118) claims that self-repair involves a deeper level of processing than repetition of a correct form provided by a teacher. Therefore, the probability to contribute to the learners’ interlanguage development is particularly higher in case of self-repair but also with peer-repair as the learner is prompted to reanalyse and restructure his interlanguage. In regard to repetition of a recast, however, processing might not be as intensive and it does not lead to any reanalysis.

Finally it needs to be said that although uptake seems to be beneficial to acquisition for theoretical reasons and this was proven to be true in several empirical studies, uptake is not necessary as Mackey and Philp (1998: 338) have shown in their study which revealed that learners can benefit from corrective feedback even if it is not followed by uptake.

To conclude, repair in general and student-generated repair in particular, may be facilitative of language acquisition nevertheless, it is no prerequisite. Thus, in order to measure the effectiveness of individual feedback types one must not equate uptake with acquisition but long-term studies are necessary to clarify this issue. However, uptake may indicate if the learner has noticed the corrective character of feedback, therefore it was analysed for the present study.

## **7.5. Reinforcement**

After repair, teachers frequently reinforce the correct form for example by signs of approval like “Yes!,” “That’s it,” and “Very good” or by a repetition of the

students's corrected version. Lyster and Ranta (1997: 51) refer to these statements as "reinforcement." It is also mentioned that reinforcement is often accompanied by metalinguistic information. This part of feedback sequences, is mentioned for reasons of completeness, however, it was not analysed for the present paper.

## **8. Empirical study**

### **8.1. Research questions**

The study reported below was designed to conduct a comparison of CLIL and EFL classrooms in Austria in regard to oral error correction. Thus, the following research question was central to the present study:

- What is the nature of oral error correction in Austrian CLIL and EFL classrooms?

This main question comprises a number of further subquestions:

- What is the distribution of errors in general and different types of errors in particular?
- Who initiates the error treatment?
- How much error treatment is there?
- Are some errors treated more frequently than others?
- What is the distribution of oral corrective feedback types?
- What is the distribution of uptake following different types of corrective feedback?
- Does the error type affect the choice of the feedback type?

Thus, in the analysis of the data, it was investigated if there was a difference between the settings in regard to the frequency with which errors occur in general and if particular error types occurred more frequently in one instructional setting than in the other. Moreover, it was analysed if only teachers initiated error treatment or if students did this as well. Then, after a general examination of error treatment in terms of frequency, it was explored if certain types of errors were treated with preference, which consequently led to a survey about reasons for teachers' decisions. After this, it was investigated by whom the correction was initiated, this means if only teachers provided feedback to errors or if students did it as well. Then the distribution of corrective feedback types was analysed and the effectiveness of the feedback moves was examined afterwards by exploring the uptake which followed. Finally the issue of the relationship between error types and the choice of feedback moves was considered.

In the present study self-initiated repairs were disregarded, thus only repairs following prompts were investigated in order to examine the effectiveness of feedback types.

## 8.2. Data description

In this comparative study differences in error correction in Austrian CLIL and traditional EFL classrooms were analysed. The data, presented in Table 3, includes transcriptions of six recorded CLIL lessons held by six different teachers and one native speaker who cooperated with the teacher in CLIL4. The school subjects are biology (CLIL1) in a 5<sup>th</sup> grade and physics (CLIL2) in a 6<sup>th</sup> grade of an AHS (grammar school), business and economics in a 10<sup>th</sup> grade (CLIL3, CLIL4) and history in a 11<sup>th</sup> grade (CLIL5, CLIL6) of a BHS (vocational school). The six lessons amount to 4 hours 35 minutes and 36 seconds. The EFL lessons (EFL1-6), for comparison, were recorded in an AHS only. Lessons EFL1 and EFL2 were held respectively in a 5<sup>th</sup> grade and a 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Both lessons of teacher 2 (EFL3, EFL4) were recorded in a 10<sup>th</sup> grade and the lessons EFL5 and EFL6 by teacher 3 were held in a 11<sup>th</sup> grade. As the length of the EFL lessons was not given, the average of 10 lessons (46 min 5 sec) was taken for calculations which results in 4 hours 36 minutes 30 seconds for all EFL lessons. The teachers were not informed about the study's focus of interest, this means they were not influenced and did not change their correction habits.

**Table 3** Data

Teacher	Lesson	Grade	Type of School	Subject	Length
Teacher 1	CLIL1	5 <sup>th</sup>	AHS	biology	46:20
	CLIL2	6 <sup>th</sup>	AHS	physics	53:12
Teacher 2	CLIL3	10 <sup>th</sup>	BHS	business and economics	43:50
	CLIL4	10 <sup>th</sup>	BHS	business and economics	42:50
Teacher 3	CLIL5	11 <sup>th</sup>	BHS	history	43:12
	CLIL6	11 <sup>th</sup>	BHS	history	46:12
					<b>4:35:36</b>
Teacher 4	EFL1	5 <sup>th</sup>	AHS	English	46:05
	EFL2	8 <sup>th</sup>	AHS	English	46:05
Teacher 5	EFL3	10 <sup>th</sup>	AHS	English	46:05
	EFL4	10 <sup>th</sup>	AHS	English	46:05
Teacher 6	EFL5	11 <sup>th</sup>	AHS	English	46:05
	EFL6	11 <sup>th</sup>	AHS	English	46:05
					<b>4:36:30</b>

## 9. Results

The description of the results is split into two parts: first, teacher- and student-initiated feedback is presented collectively and afterwards only teacher-initiated feedback is depicted.

### 9.1. Teacher and student-initiated feedback

#### 9.1.1. Distribution of errors and error types

Table 4 and 5 reveal the distribution of errors in both settings in general as well as error types in particular in the individual lessons. In this section all errors are included, those treated by teachers as well as those detected and corrected by peers. Immediately self-corrected errors, however, are not part of this analysis and thus do not appear in the table.

**Table 4** CLIL: Distribution of errors including those corrected by peers

Teacher	Lesson	Gram	Voc	Pron	Multiple	Errors
Teacher 1	CLIL1	15	7	2	0	24 (14%)
	CLIL2	6	4	2	0	12 ( 7%)
Teacher 2	CLIL3	14	11	3	0	28 (16%)
	CLIL4	22	2	23	0	47 (27,5%)
Teacher 3	CLIL5	5	4	7	0	16 ( 8,5%)
	CLIL6	11	10	23	1	45 (26%)
		<b>73 (42%)</b>	<b>38 (22%)</b>	<b>60 (34%)</b>	<b>1 (1%)</b>	<b><u>172</u> (100%)</b>

**Table 5** EFL: Distribution of errors including those corrected by peers

Teacher	Lesson	Gram	Voc	Pron	Multiple	Errors
Teacher 4	EFL1	9	1	3	0	13 (23%)
	EFL2	13	6	3	0	22 (39%)
Teacher 5	EFL3	2	3	1	0	6 (11%)
	EFL4	4	2	0	0	6 (11%)
Teacher 6	EFL5	5	2	0	0	7 (12,5%)
	EFL6	2	0	0	0	2 ( 3,5%)
		<b>35 (62,5%)</b>	<b>14 (25%)</b>	<b>7 (12,5%)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b><u>56</u> (100%)</b>

It can be seen that 56 errors occurred in all analysed EFL lessons whereas, in the CLIL classrooms three times as many, to be more precise 172 errors, were made. Furthermore, it can be observed that the distribution of error types diverges between the instructional settings and it is highly uneven within them. Unequalities do not depend on the teachers only but also differ from lesson to lesson.

In the CLIL classrooms fewest errors were observed in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade (CLIL 2) of Teacher 1 (12 errors) while in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade (CLIL1) of the same teacher double the amount of errors occurred (24 errors). Slightly more errors were made in lesson CLIL3 by Teacher 2 (28 errors) and most mistakes were counted in the second lesson (CLIL4) of this teacher (47 errors). In both classrooms the same 10<sup>th</sup> grade was observed. The greatest discrepancy between the individual lessons of the same class (11<sup>th</sup> grade) and the same teacher (Teacher 3), however, was found in the lessons CLIL5 and CLIL6. In the former only 16 errors were detected which stands in sharp contrast to the latter in which almost three times as many mistakes were identified (47 errors). In general, it can be said that in the lessons in which the youngest learners participated fewer errors occurred than in those in which the 10<sup>th</sup> grade took part. The largest number of errors was made in one lesson by the 11<sup>th</sup> grade.

In the traditional setting errors were distributed more equally across the lessons, however, differences were found as well. Only 2 errors were discovered in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade (EFL6) instructed by Teacher 4 and in the other lesson (EFL5) of the same class taught by the same educator 7 errors were identified. The maximum amount of errors within the EFL lessons was made by 8<sup>th</sup>-graders (EFL2) taught by Teacher 4 (22 errors) and nearly half the amount was committed in the second lesson EFL1 (13 errors) in which 5<sup>th</sup>-graders participated. Interestingly, exactly the same number of errors was found in the lessons EFL3 and EFL4 in which 11<sup>th</sup>-graders were instructed by Teacher 5 (6 errors).

The analysis of different error types, without looking at individual lessons, has revealed that in both settings hardly any multiple errors occurred, in fact it was only one in the lesson CLIL6. The differences between the numbers of grammar, vocabulary and phonology errors are relatively small in the content-based setting (respectively 42%, 22%, 34% of all errors within CLIL). In the EFL classrooms a different outcome has to be presented. The largest number of errors was of a grammatical nature (62,5%), vocabulary errors were made to a lesser extent (25%) and only 12,5% pronunciation errors were identified. Comparing the two settings, it can be said that in both grammatical errors prevail and the numbers of vocabulary errors were almost the same. Errors

regarding pronunciation were relatively common in CLIL classrooms whereas in the other setting they could be observed less frequently.

### 9.1.2. Frequency of error treatment

Table 6 shows that the analysis yielded a total of 172 errors in 4 hours 35 minutes and 36 seconds of CLIL classroom recordings in which 77 corrections were followed by corrective feedback. Thus 45% of the student turns which contained one or more errors, were treated. Considering the initiation of the treatment, it can be seen that 69 incorrect utterances (40%) were followed by teachers' corrective feedback and 8 errors (5%) were treated by students. In the EFL context, 87,5% (49) of 56 errors which occurred during 4 hours 36 minutes 30 seconds, were followed by error treatment. Regarding the initiation of treatment, it can be seen that in this setting only the teachers provided feedback. A comparison shows immediately that much more error treatment took place in the form-focused EFL classroom than in the CLIL setting. Whereas, in the CLIL context, teachers and students provide feedback, this is only done by teachers in the other setting.

**Table 6** Frequency of error treatment in general

	CLIL		EFL	
<b>Feedback</b>	<b>45%</b> (77)		<b>87,5%</b> (49)	
<b>Teacher</b>		<b>40%</b> (69)		<b>87,5%</b> (49)
<b>Student</b>		<b>5%</b> (8)		<b>0%</b> (0)
<b>No Feedback</b>	<b>55%</b> (95)		<b>12,5%</b> (7)	

### 9.1.3. Initiation of error treatment

**Table 7** CLIL: Frequency of error treatment in individual lessons

	Teacher 1 CLIL1		Teacher 2 CLIL3		Teacher 3 CLIL5	
	CLIL2	CLIL4	CLIL6			
<b>Teacher</b>	62,5% (15)	58% (7)	61% (17)	0% (0)	38% (6)	53% (24)
<b>Student</b>	-- --	-- --	18% (5)	-- --	6% (1)	5% (2)
<b>No Feedback</b>	37,5% (9)	42% (5)	21% (6)	100% (47)	56% (9)	42% (19)

Table 7 presents the distribution of student-initiated feedback across the individual CLIL lessons. In the lessons CLIL1 and CLIL2 of Teacher 1 no student-initiated error treatment could be observed whereas in both lessons of Teacher 3 students provided corrective feedback. To be more precise, this happened once in lesson CLIL5 and twice in lesson CLIL6. Interestingly, no student-initiated feedback occurred in lesson CLIL4 by Teacher 2 however, in lesson CLIL3 by the same teacher. In this lesson five incorrect utterances were treated by a student (18% of all errors).

**Table 8** CLIL: Student-initiated feedback in regard to error types

	<b>Gram</b>	<b>Voc</b>	<b>Pron</b>	<b>Multiple</b>
<b>Student-initiated FB</b>	1	5	2	0

As shown in Table 8 some types of errors were more frequently followed by student-initiated feedback than others. Of all feedback moves provided by students (8) in response to errors of their peers, 5 referred to vocabulary errors, 2 of the student-initiated feedback moves followed pronunciation errors and error treatment by students for grammatical errors is even less common and occurred only once.

The analysis has shown that student-initiated feedback did not involve a great variety of feedback moves but only one, namely recasts for all types of errors.

## **9.2. Teacher-initiated error treatment**

The subsequent analysis will focus on teacher-initiated feedback only. Therefore, the numbers described in the previous section are presented again excluding student-initiated feedback.

### **9.2.1. Distribution of errors and error types**

Table 9 and Table 10 present the distribution of errors in general and error types in particular in the individual lessons. While Table 9 shows the findings of the CLIL classrooms, in Table 10 the results of the EFL setting can be seen. As there is no significant difference between Table 4 which includes student-

initiated feedback and Table 9 in which this type of feedback is excluded and no difference at all exists between Table 10 and Table 5 as no student-initiated feedback occurred in the EFL setting, no detailed description of Table 9 and Table 10 is provided here.

**Table 9** CLIL: Distribution of errors

Teacher	Lesson	Gram	Voc	Pron	Multiple	Errors
Teacher 1	CLIL1	15	7	2	0	24 (15%)
	CLIL2	6	4	2	0	12 ( 7%)
Teacher 2	CLIL3	13	7	3	0	23 (14%)
	CLIL4	22	2	23	0	47 (29%)
Teacher 3	CLIL5	5	3	7	0	15 ( 9%)
	CLIL6	11	10	21	1	43 (26%)
		<b>72 (44%)</b>	<b>33 (20%)</b>	<b>58 (35%)</b>	<b>1 (1%)</b>	<b><u>164</u> (100%)</b>

**Table 10** EFL: Distribution of errors

Teacher	Lesson	Gram	Voc	Pron	Multiple	Errors
Teacher 4	EFL1	9	1	3	0	13 (23%)
	EFL2	13	6	3	0	22 (39%)
Teacher 5	EFL3	2	3	1	0	6 (11%)
	EFL4	4	2	0	0	6 (11%)
Teacher 6	EFL5	5	2	0	0	7 (12,5%)
	EFL6	2	0	0	0	2 ( 3,5%)
		<b>35 (62,5%)</b>	<b>14 (25%)</b>	<b>7 (12,5%)</b>	<b>0 (0%)</b>	<b><u>56</u> (100%)</b>

## 9.2.2. Frequency of error treatment

**Table 11** Frequency of error treatment in both settings

	CLIL	EFL
<b>Feedback</b>	42% (69)	87,5% (49)
<b>No Feedback</b>	58% (95)	12,5% (7)

The findings represented in Table 11 refer to the frequency of error treatment in both settings. In the CLIL context a higher percentage of errors was ignored (58%) than provided with feedback (42%). In the form-focused setting, however, the majority of the mistakes was corrected (87,5%). Thus, comparing the two settings it can be said that in terms of percentage a notably higher correction rate was identified in the EFL setting than in the other one. Looking at the actual number of errors which were corrected, this statement is relativised. Due to the

larger amount of errors in the CLIL setting, in fact more errors were corrected in this context (69 errors) than in the EFL context (49 errors).

**Table 12** CLIL: Frequency of error treatment. in individual lessons

	<b>Teacher 1</b> <b>CLIL1</b>	<b>CLIL2</b>	<b>Teacher 2</b> <b>CLIL3</b>	<b>CLIL4</b>	<b>Teacher 3</b> <b>CLIL5</b>	<b>CLIL6</b>
<b>Feedback</b>	62,5% (15)	58% (7)	74% (17)	0% (0)	40% (6)	56% (24)
<b>No Feedback</b>	37,5% (9)	42% (5)	26% (6)	100% (47)	60% (9)	44% (19)
<b>Errors</b>	<b><u>24</u></b>	<b><u>12</u></b>	<b><u>23</u></b>	<b><u>47</u></b>	<b><u>15</u></b>	<b><u>43</u></b>

**Table 13** EFL: Frequency of error treatment in individual lessons

	<b>Teacher 4</b> <b>EFL1</b>	<b>EFL 2</b>	<b>Teacher 5</b> <b>EFL 3</b>	<b>EFL 4</b>	<b>Teacher 6</b> <b>EFL 5</b>	<b>EFL 6</b>
<b>Feedback</b>	100% (13)	100% (22)	100% (6)	83% (5)	43% (3)	0% (0)
<b>No Feedback</b>	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	17% (1)	57% (4)	100% (2)
<b>Errors</b>	<b><u>13</u></b>	<b><u>22</u></b>	<b><u>6</u></b>	<b><u>6</u></b>	<b><u>7</u></b>	<b><u>2</u></b>

Looking at the balance between those errors which received feedback and those which did not in the individual lessons it was revealed that two thirds of the CLIL lessons do not represent the general proportion presented in Table 11. In reality in most lessons (CLIL1,2,3,6) more errors were corrected (respectively 62,5%, 58%, 74%, 56) than ignored as can be seen in Table 12. Only for the lessons CLIL4 and CLIL5 the previous numbers are true. Interestingly, in CLIL4 not a single error received treatment although it is the lesson in which most errors occurred within the CLIL setting (47 errors).

Table 13 indicates a similar picture for the EFL lessons. In four out of six lessons the majority of the errors was followed by corrective feedback. 100% of the errors received treatment in the lessons EFL1, 2 and 3. In the lesson EFL5 of Teacher 6, however, more errors were ignored than corrected. No error treatment took place in lesson EFL6 of this teacher but one has to bear in mind that only two errors occurred.

### 9.2.3. Error treatment in regard to error types

Table 14 indicates the amount of error treatment in regard to error categories. All vocabulary (14) and pronunciation (7) errors were corrected in the EFL setting and a slightly lower correction rate was observed for grammatical errors (80%). However, the figures have to be relativised as in fact more errors were corrected in this category (28 grammar errors) than in those mentioned before. Shifting attention to the CLIL setting, in general a lower correction rate, in terms of percentage was identified. The majority of vocabulary errors was followed by treatment (79%, 26 errors), whereas a relatively small percentage of corrective feedback concerning pronunciation errors (34%, 20 errors) and an even smaller one of grammatical errors (31%, 22 errors) was found. Lastly, multiple errors did not occur in the traditional lessons and the only one which was identified in the content-based setting, received corrective feedback. Summarising and comparing both contexts, it can be said that, in case of all error categories a considerably higher correction rate, in terms of percentage, was identified in the EFL context than in the other. In terms of actual corrected errors, however, figures are similar for both settings or even higher in the CLIL context.

**Table 14** Error treatment in regard to error types

	CLIL	EFL
<b>Grammar</b>	31% (22)	80% (28)
<b>Vocabulary</b>	79% (26)	100% (14)
<b>Pronunciation</b>	34% (20)	100% (7)
<b>Multiple</b>	100% (1)	--- ---

### 9.2.4. Distribution of oral corrective feedback types

The distribution of feedback types for CLIL and EFL classrooms is displayed in Table 15. Corrective feedback types that supply learners with the correct form occurred with considerable frequency in both instructional contexts. In EFL lessons the correct form was provided in 73,5% of all correction moves, whereas in the CLIL classrooms the rate amounts to 90%. Consequently hardly any prompts, which require self-correction by the students, were employed.

Among the feedback moves which provide the correct form, the largest category is recast which accounts for 83% of all correction moves in CLIL classes and a lower rate (61%) was found in EFL classes. This means that in both settings more than 50% of all error were treated with recasts. In regard to prompts, metalinguistic feedback seems to be preferred by EFL teachers (16,5%) whereas only a small number of this feedback type was found in CLIL (3%). If at all, clarification requests, elicitations and repetitions were hardly identified. The first was used in EFL for 6% of all errors and in CLIL for 3%. Elicitations followed 4% of the errors in CLIL and 2% in EFL. The last and least used feedback type is repetition which was identified in the form-focused (2%) but not in the other setting.

**Table 15** Distribution of oral corrective feedback types

<b>Feedback type</b>	<b>CLIL</b>	<b>EFL</b>
<b>Recast</b>	83% (57)	61% (30)
<b>Explicit correction</b>	7% (5)	12,5% (6)
<b><i>Teacher-repair</i></b>	<b><u>90%</u></b>	<b><u>73,5%</u></b>
<b>Metalinguistic feedback</b>	3% (2)	16,5% (8)
<b>Clarification request</b>	3% (2)	6% (3)
<b>Elicitation</b>	4% (3)	2% (1)
<b>Repetition</b>	--- ---	2% (1)
<b><i>Self-repair</i></b>	<b><u>10%</u></b>	<b><u>26,5%</u></b>

### **9.2.5. Effectiveness of corrective feedback**

Table 16 informs about the effectiveness of corrective feedback types in leading to learner uptake. Uptake was identified in one third of all correction moves in CLIL lessons. The level of uptake was higher in EFL classrooms (47%). Of the uptake following feedback in CLIL, 78% resulted in repair and only 22% in needs-repair. In the EFL context success is higher as repair occurred in 91% of all uptake moves and needs-repair was observed in only 9%. Overall, then, it

seems that corrective feedback is more effective in EFL as the uptake level is higher and also the rate of repair.

**Table 16** Frequency and success of uptake following corrective feedback

	CLIL		EFL	
<b>Uptake</b>	33,3% (23)		47% (23)	
<b>Repair</b>		78% (18)		91% (21)
<b>Needs Repair</b>		22% (5)		9% (2)
<b>No Uptake</b>	66,6% (46)		53% (26)	

It may be asked whether all types of corrective feedback are equally effective in leading to learner uptake. Table 17 presents the amount of uptake of different types of feedback and also indicates the distribution of repair and needs-repair.

**Table 17** Frequency and success of uptake following feedback types

	CLIL			EFL		
	Uptake	Repair	Student-generated Repair	Uptake	Repair	Student-generated Repair
<b>Recast</b>	28% (16)	69% (11)	0% (0)	33,3% (10)	100% (10)	0% (0)
<b>Explicit Correction</b>	40% (2)	100% (2)	0% 0	17% (1)	100% (1)	0% (1)
<b>Metalinguistic Feedback</b>	50% (1)	100% (1)	100% 1	100% (8)	100% (8)	100% (8)
<b>Repetition</b>	--	--	--	100% (1)	100% (1)	100% (1)
<b>Clarification Request</b>	100% (2)	100% (2)	100% (2)	100% (3)	33,3% (1)	100% (1)
<b>Elicitation</b>	66,6% (2)	100% (2)	100% (2)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)

It has been found that recasts, the most popular feedback technique in both instructional contexts, led to little uptake. Regarding this feedback type an almost equal uptake level in CLIL lessons (28%) and EFL lessons (33,3%) was observed. A relatively low uptake rate was also identified for explicit correction. In the CLIL context 40% resulted in uptake and in the form-focused setting even less uptake was found (17%). With prompts the situation is different. In EFL lessons all prompts were 100% effective in eliciting uptake except elicitation,

which was not followed by uptake at all. In CLIL classrooms only clarification requests led to uptake in all instances. Moreover, it was found that two thirds of the elicitations and half of the metalinguistic feedback moves were followed by learner utterances involving uptake. Summarising, it can be said that in both contexts prompts were more effective in leading to uptake than recasts and explicit correction.

Looking at the quality of uptake, every uptake was identified as repair with two exceptions: recasts in CLIL lessons and clarification requests in EFL lessons. The former led to repair in slightly more than two thirds of the uptake and regarding clarification requests only one third of the uptake consists of repair.

In the preceding analysis the effectiveness of feedback types was described in terms of leading to uptake in general and repair in particular. However, not all types of repair are equally effective in indicating whether a student has noticed the corrective nature of the teacher's feedback. Therefore it is necessary to look at the type of repair in more detail. Following Lyster and Ranta's strategy, a further breakdown of the data was done in which peer- and self-repair was separated from repetition and incorporation. In the following peer- and self-repair will be referred to as *student-generated repair* and the other two categories are joined to *repetition*.

Table 17 also presents the student-generated repair as percentage of the repair for each feedback type. As with recast and explicit correction the correct form is provided by the teacher, no student-generated repair is possible and therefore the percentages of these two categories are reduced to zero in both settings. All repairs following prompts, however, consist of either self- or peer-repair.

The preceding analysis has revealed that feedback types in which the teacher provides the correct form, were not very effective in leading to uptake. Apart from the fact that the student is not prompted to reformulate his erroneous utterance and therefore uptake is less likely, another influencing aspect was observed which was also mentioned by Lyster (2007). Recasts and explicit correction were frequently used in combination with signs of approval which

might lead to confusion with non-corrective repetitions in case of recasts. Table 18 displays the percentage of all recasts and explicit corrections which were used with signs of approval and then it is shown how many of these feedback moves led to uptake. In general, more signs of approval were employed in the CLIL classrooms (27) than in the other context (12).

**Table 18** Corrective Feedback used with signs of approval

	CLIL		EFL	
	Approval	Uptake	Approval	Uptake
<b>Recast</b>	46% (26)	19% (5)	45% (10)	0% (0)
<b>Explicit correction</b>	20% (1)	0% (0)	66% (1)	0% (0)
<b>Repetition</b>	0% (0)	0% (0)	100% (1)	100% (1)
<b>Signs of approval</b>	<b>27</b>		<b>12</b>	

It can be seen that in both settings the combination of corrective feedback with words of approval, occurred quite frequently particularly with recasts (CLIL: 46%, EFL: 45%). In regard to explicit correction, this phenomenon was identified as well although with a higher rate, namely 66% of all recasts in EFL classrooms were accompanied by signs of approval and only 20% in the CLIL setting. None of these corrective feedbacks led to uptake except the recasts in the CLIL lessons, which resulted in uptake in 19% of those cases in which approval was involved. As the only repetition in the form-focused context occurred together with a sign of approval, this type of corrective feedback is included as well. Interestingly, it resulted in uptake.

### 9.2.6. Relation between error types and feedback moves

Table 19 indicates the distribution of feedback types in regard to individual error types in order to reveal if the type of error affected the choice of feedback. It can be seen that all kinds of errors were treated primarily with the dominant recast in both settings and the rate varies between 53,5% and 100%. The lowest recast rate was found in the EFL setting for errors of grammar. This implies that more explicit feedback types like metalinguistic feedback (21%), explicit correction (11%), clarification requests (11%) as well as elicitations (3,5%) were

used in this context in order to treat errors of grammatical nature. In the CLIL context, however, the analysis revealed a very different picture regarding errors of grammar. All of them were treated by providing the correct form (91% recasts, 9% explicit corrections). In the category of vocabulary, error treatment was similar in both settings in the sense that a rather great variety of feedback moves was used. Apart from the majority of recasts (CLIL: 68%, EFL: 64%) a minor part of the errors received explicit correction (CLIL: 8%, EFL: 22%) and metalinguistic feedback (CLIL: 8%, EFL: 7%). In the content-based setting elicitations (12%) and clarification requests (4%) were observed as well whereas these feedback types did not occur in EFL lessons. The only repetition, was used in the EFL setting for a vocabulary error. Incorrectly pronounced words were mostly followed by recasts (CLIL: 90%, EFL: 86%) and by explicit correction (5%) as well as clarification requests (5%) in CLIL lessons. In the other setting only one metalinguistic feedback was identified. The only multiple error in the CLIL setting was recasted.

**Table 19** Relation between error types and feedback moves

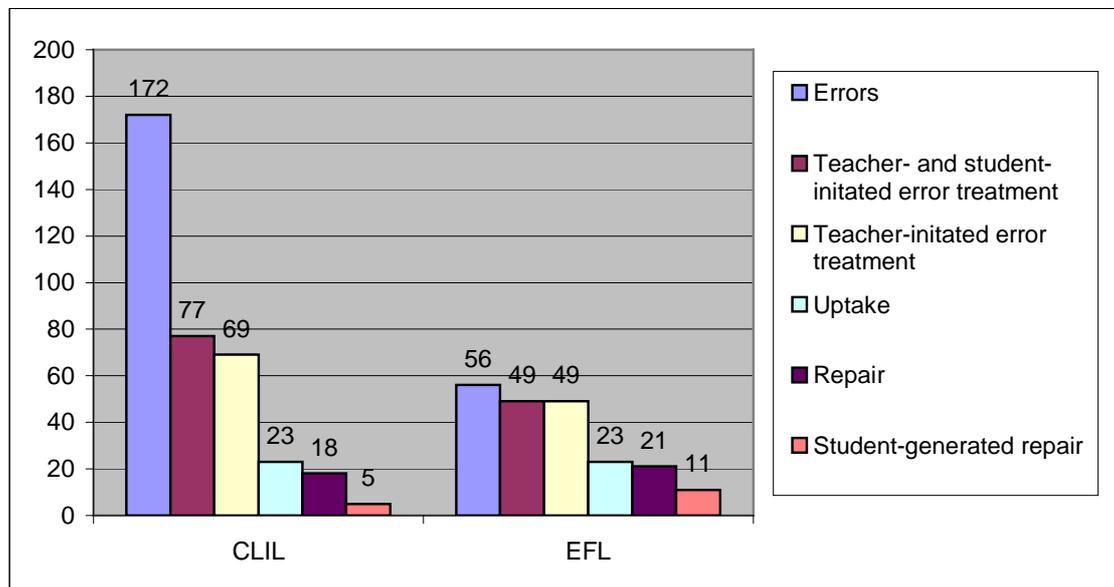
	Gram		Voc		Pron		Multiple	
	CLIL	EFL	CLIL	EFL	CLIL	EFL	CLIL	EFL
<b>Recast</b>	91% (20)	53,5% (15)	68% (18)	64% (9)	90% (18)	86% (6)	100% (1)	---
<b>Explicit Correction</b>	9% (2)	11% (3)	8% (2)	22% (3)	5% (1)	---	---	---
<b>Metalinguistic Feedback</b>	---	21% (6)	8% (2)	7% (1)	---	14% (1)	---	---
<b>Clarification Request</b>	---	11% (3)	4% (1)	---	5% (1)	---	---	---
<b>Elicitation</b>	---	3,5% (1)	12% (3)	---	---	---	---	---
<b>Repetition</b>	---	---	---	7% (1)	---	---	---	---

### 9.3. Summary

The graph in Figure 2 presents the totals for the entire database. It has been revealed that in the CLIL context 172 errors occurred whereas in the EFL setting only 56 were identified. Of these, only 40% received some kind of feedback from the CLIL teachers and 87,5% were treated in the other context.

Those errors which were not treated, were followed by teacher or student topic continuation. Of all feedback moves provided by teachers in the CLIL setting, one third (23) led to uptake. In the traditional context uptake was also observed in 23 cases, this, however, amounts to almost a half of those errors which were treated and 41% of those which occurred at all. The difference between the instances of uptake and the general number of errors which were identified in the EFL setting, was significantly higher. Only 13% of the errors were corrected and followed by uptake. Slightly fewer examples of repair were found in the CLIL lessons (18) than in the EFL classrooms (21). Going into more detail and looking at student-generated repair, which should be elicited with preference, it has been discovered that it only occurred five times and thus it followed 7% of all correction moves and only 3% of all errors in the CLIL setting. Analysing student-generated repair in the other setting, it was observed 11 times. Consequently 22% of all corrected errors led to student-generated repair and it followed 20% of all errors in this context.

**Figure 2** Total turns with error, feedback, uptake, repair, and student-generated repair.



## 10. Discussion

The first research question addressed the **distribution of errors in general and error types in particular**. This study has shown that in general the number of errors in CLIL lessons is significantly higher than in the other setting. However, it was observed that the amount of errors varies highly depending on the teachers and individual lessons. A profound analysis of the data revealed several possible reasons for this outcome. All of them are related to the general nature of both settings.

It was found that in CLIL classrooms much more students' talk took place and consequently more opportunities to produce errors existed than in traditional EFL lessons. The fact that students talked a lot can be ascribed to various reasons.

Firstly, students show greater readiness to talk in CLIL lessons as the focus is on content and not on language. This means that CLIL-learners are not afraid of talking because they do not feel inhibited by possible errors as they know that the conveyed information is more important. In the traditional setting, however, the aim is to produce linguistically correct utterances and therefore students are afraid of producing incorrect ones. As a consequence many learners do not dare to talk.

Another reason why a different amount of students' talk and thus more or less errors occurred in the settings might be the way how learning was organised and which methods were used in both contexts. In CLIL information about certain topics had to be conveyed and therefore real conversation was necessary. This was for example observed in CLIL6 in which 45 errors were counted. The teacher and the students worked out a topic collaboratively in this lesson. This means that constant turn taking took place. In CLIL4 another method was employed which resulted in much student talk, namely presentations. In the traditional setting, however, methods seemed to be rather teacher-centred and students were mostly required to do tasks in which they had to fill in particular linguistic aspects or they were asked to do matching

tasks. This implies that learners often said or read single words and phrases only. By doing so, it was almost impossible to produce errors. Although teachers used so called “speaking tasks” in EFL classrooms not the same amount of students’ talk was produced as in CLIL teaching and consequently fewer errors occurred.

Another possible reason why little interaction and therefore few errors occurred in the EFL context is the fact that linguistic matters were sometimes very abstract and learners had not got the necessary means to talk about them. Moreover, students knew that the aim was not to talk about the rules, which they were learning, but to use them. As a consequence they spoke in German or did not speak at all. In CLIL classrooms, however, topics were often complex, nevertheless learners had to be able to communicate about them and thus there was no alternative to using the foreign language.

Another issue which is a possible reason for the great amount of errors in CLIL might be seen in the fact that obviously focus was on content and not on linguistic aspects. Consequently, students neglected accuracy because they had to concentrate on often difficult subject matters. It was found that numerous errors occurred even in prepared presentations because the content was so difficult to understand and explain. A concrete example for this phenomenon was identified in CLIL 4. Students had to present a rather complex issue and despite being a prepared talk numerous errors were made since the speakers’ entire concentration was on content. In the EFL classrooms, on the contrary, students concentrated intently on form, as a result fewer errors occurred.

So far reasons for the general tendency that more errors were produced in the content-based setting were stated. However, it is also necessary to point out that different amounts of errors were identified with different teachers and even between individual lessons of the same teacher figures diverge. It was found that in all cases it highly depended on the extent to which the teachers encouraged their learners to talk in English. In EFL6 for example, the teacher asked questions which required very short answers only, often one-word-answers, and thus just two errors were made. This means it often depended on

the teacher if errors could be produced as he could regulate the amount of students' output by choosing specific teaching methods.

Adding one last point, it was found that in CLIL 2 and CLIL 5, which showed the lowest error rates of this setting, actually errors occurred with similar frequency like in the other lessons. But in the first case half of each lesson was used for organisational matters which was done in German and in the second lesson to watch a film. This implies that no errors could be produced during these periods and thus the number would have been even higher for CLIL if these parts of the lessons had been conducted as the rest. As a consequence the difference regarding error frequency, which was big between CLIL and EFL anyway, would have been tremendous.

Summarising, it can be said that the frequency with which errors occurred depended on the one hand on the teacher and the extent to which the students were encouraged to produce sentences in the foreign language and on the other hand there was a general tendency for much more errors to occur in CLIL than in EFL due to the different nature of the two settings and the teaching methods which were more common in one context than in the other.

Next, the distribution of error types was analysed. The results indicate that in the traditional language lessons grammatical errors occurred predominantly whereas half the amount of repairables concerning vocabulary was found and the number of phonological mistakes again turned out to be half of the preceding category. In the CLIL setting apart from multiple errors, the distribution of error types was more even. Grammatical errors prevailed like in the other context, followed by pronunciation and vocabulary mistakes. It is important to mention that, on the whole, the figures in the individual lessons represented the general outcome in the traditional setting. However, this was not true for CLIL lessons. In fact half of them showed the same distribution of error types like EFL lessons and in CLIL 5 and 6 more pronunciation errors were found than grammatical errors. Only CLIL 4 represented the general distribution of error types. As almost one third of all CLIL errors occurred in this lesson, it influenced the final figures most.

The outcome in the traditional setting was probably a reflection of the focus on grammar aspects in these lessons. Students dealt with new and difficult issues of form which obviously caused a large number of grammar errors. Unlike in the other context, the students were not confronted with a great number of new topics and topic vocabulary which would have led to numerous vocabulary or pronunciation errors. On the contrary a detailed analysis revealed that rather simple vocabulary was used when new structures were introduced or practised, probably this was done in order to allow the learners to concentrate on grammar only without causing confusion. This is a likely explanation for the small number of vocabulary and pronunciation repairables.

Surprisingly, error types were distributed similarly in CLIL 1, 2 and 3. In advance, a huge number of vocabulary and pronunciation errors had been expected as students had to deal with new topics which obviously required new topic vocabulary to be treated in class. The contrary was observed in the classes being currently discussed. Accordingly low numbers of vocabulary and pronunciation mistakes were made. This can be explained by the fact that CLIL students have more vocabulary at their disposal than those following the conventional curriculum as claimed by Matiassek (2005: 51). It can also be assumed that CLIL students are more capable of paraphrasing an idea, when they do not know the specific word, than EFL learners. Furthermore it had been expected that in CLIL lessons a small number of grammar errors would occur as the students would not be forced to use complex structures but they would use simple ones. Based on the preceding argumentation one might infer that if learners do not use particularly difficult constructions as it indeed happened in the CLIL classrooms, this would lead to hardly any grammar errors but in fact the focus of attention was on meaning and brain capacity is limited, consequently grammar errors happened as well.

The lesson CLIL 4 was analysed in more detail as it influenced the overall figures most which is due to the huge number of errors in this lesson. As mentioned before, in this lesson presentations were held by students. One might think that prepared talk would lead to few errors, however, the contrary

was observed. The least common error type was vocabulary as the learners had looked up and learned the words in advance, however they were not able to pronounce these new words correctly and therefore numerous phonological errors were made. The most frequent repairable was of a grammatical nature. This outcome might be attributed to the fact that the issues which had to be explained, were extremely complex, thus students' concentration was entirely on the subject matter. This means they disregarded grammar in favour of content. Moreover, one has to bear in mind that when students have to give presentations, an enormous amount of nervousness is involved as a consequence they make numerous errors even if it is prepared talk.

Regarding the distribution of error types, the lessons CLIL5 and 6 also deviated from the general CLIL results as well as those of EFL. It was found that in one lesson (CLIL5) a video was shown, students took notes and then the content was discussed. Obviously the learners had written down new words which they used afterwards with limited success. This means they used adequate terms but did not know how to pronounce them. A similar observation was made in CLIL6. The students had to read a text and talk about it subsequently. As in CLIL 5 they used the words from the text but mispronounced them. As a result, in both lessons few vocabulary errors were made but numerous errors of a phonological nature.

The next research question was **"Who initiates the error treatment?"** A finding of this study was that there was not a single student-initiated error treatment in the traditional setting, whereas several instances could be observed in CLIL classrooms, to be more precise, in three lessons. One possible explanation for the difference between the settings may lie in the fact that CLIL students show a higher risk taking inclination according to Naimann (1995 referred to in Dalton-Puffer 2007b: 144). This is seemingly not confined to speaking only but also to interrupting peers and correcting their mistakes. Investigating why in some CLIL lessons student-initiated error treatment occurred and in others not, it was found that proficiency might play an important role. Students in CLIL 1 and 2 did not correct their peers. This can probably be attributed to the fact that the learners had a lower proficiency level than those in the remaining CLIL lessons.

Summing up, students who showed the tendency to take risks, particularly observed with CLIL students, tended to correct their peers and another factor was the learners' level of language proficiency. The higher it was, the more likely students corrected their peers.

Going into detail and looking at the type of errors which was preferably corrected by students, it has been found that vocabulary errors dominated. The fact that CLIL students have a huge lexicon at their disposal, as already mentioned above, is one likely reason for this outcome. Moreover, it is probable that students did not consider wrong grammatical constructions as disturbing when the focus was on content whereas words often needed to be used correctly otherwise the meaning could have changed.

The next research question deals with **frequency of error treatment**. The following discussion takes account of error treatment initiated by teachers only and student-initiated feedback will be disregarded from now on. As suspected, errors were in general much more frequently corrected in EFL than in CLIL classrooms. This is comprehensible as in the first setting focus was on form, therefore students' attention needed to be drawn to their mistakes. In CLIL, on the contrary, the correction of errors could be more easily neglected because content was important. Moreover, in consideration of the high number of errors in this context, frequent correction would have been disturbing particularly because fluency is another main concern of CLIL.

Regarding the traditional teaching context an exception has to be mentioned, namely EFL5 and EFL6 held by Teacher 6. In the first lesson more errors were ignored than corrected and in the second not a single incorrect utterance was treated. Like in CLIL, in both lessons the focus was not on form but on content. It seems that the teacher wanted to encourage fluent conversations about the topic and therefore reduced corrective feedback.

The results regarding frequency of error treatment in the traditional setting reflect those of previous studies like Lochtmann's in 2005. She detected that 90% of all repairables received treatment and in the present study just slightly

less, namely 87,5% of the errors, were followed by feedback. The outcome of the CLIL setting, however, was surprising as teachers reacted to only 42% of all mistakes whereas Lyster and Ranta's study (1997) the figure was considerably higher, at 62%. A close look revealed that in CLIL4, the lesson with most deviant forms, not a single one received treatment, consequently the overall correction rate was relatively low although in the other lessons it was similar to that found by Lyster and Ranta. Several explanations could be valid for the omission of corrective feedback in CLIL4.

Firstly, it was the lesson in which presentations were held, and one can assume that the teacher did not want to interrupt the students who needed to concentrate entirely on the content. Furthermore, it was student-monologue and this type of discourse is not meant to be interrupted at any time. Moreover, a native speaker assisted in this lesson who did not provide corrective feedback either because the students communicated effectively according to him. This means that they were able to convey the meaning despite numerous mistakes. The fact that the native speaker felt no necessity to provide corrective feedback may have influenced the teacher in the way that he did not consider it necessary to correct the mistakes or that he did not feel to be in the right to correct as the native-speaker did not do it either. The finding leads to the assumption that intensive error treatment is not natural but considering the fact that students in a language classroom are not exposed to a huge amount of input, they will not notice the gaps in knowledge themselves but their attention needs to be drawn to it. This explains why language teachers usually provided frequent corrective feedback. A detailed analysis of different correction habits of native-speakers and non-native-speakers would be interesting as well but this would take us too far afield and should better be investigated in a separate thesis.

Summarising the preceding findings, it seems that the frequency of error treatment highly depended on two factors. Firstly, the specific focus of an activity such as content which led to little feedback on form. Consequently the correction rate was lower in the CLIL setting, in which focus is on content, than in

the form-focused EFL context. Secondly, the role which the teachers took up either consciously or unconsciously influenced his correction behaviour.

Addressing the issue which **types of errors CLIL-teachers tended to correct**, the analysis of the content-based lessons has shown that a rather high percentage of vocabulary errors received treatment whereas grammar and pronunciation errors remained mainly disregarded. One possible explanation may lie in the fact that teachers wanted to assure the conveyance of correct content and in order to achieve this it was inevitable to use appropriate vocabulary. On the other hand, fluency is an important factor in CLIL as well therefore teachers disregarded a huge number of mistakes regarding grammar and pronunciation in order to avoid disruption of fluency. In short, teachers preferred correction of vocabulary errors over pronunciation and grammar errors to guarantee comprehensibility of content as well as fluency. It might be thought that such a high incidence of vocabulary correction would impede fluency, however this was not the case as all participants seemed to be able to notice the corrective feedback if necessary without losing the overall orientation to meaning. This observation may be related to the use of certain feedback types which will be discussed subsequently.

In the **form-focused context**, the analysis of error treatment in regard to error types led to a surprising outcome. Considering the correction of grammatical errors, one would have expected an extremely high feedback rate in EFL classes. Nevertheless, this study revealed the opposite. The correction rate of repairables regarding this error type is surprising as it was low in comparison to the remaining error categories, however it has to be mentioned that it was still considerably higher than in the CLIL setting, which meets the expectations. A detailed investigation was conducted to find out the reasons for this neglect of grammar mistakes and the correction of all vocabulary and pronunciation deviants. It revealed that teachers tended to treat only those errors regarding grammar which were related to the current major focus. This means that students' attention was drawn to a specific form and they were not distracted or confused by corrective feedback provided for other forms. A possible reason for the surprisingly high correction rate of vocabulary and pronunciation errors may

be found on the one hand in the nature of EFL itself, which concentrates on accuracy, and on the other hand in the small number of mistakes which occurred in this setting compared to CLIL. This means that correcting all of them still was not considered disturbing by the teachers. In sum it can be said that in both settings errors of those areas which were of importance received treatment. This means that incorrect vocabulary was provided with feedback in CLIL classrooms and errors regarding the grammatical structure of current interest were treated in EFL lessons.

The next research question is concerned with the **distribution of corrective feedback types**. As in previous studies, in both settings forms of treatment prevailed which did not require students' self-correction as the teacher provided the correct form. Among these, recasts were the most frequent type of corrective feedback. In case of content-based lessons it was probably a reflection of the nature of this particular kind of language instruction. When the correct form was provided by the teachers, this allowed to maintain the flow of communication, to keep students' attention focused on content, and to provide helpful scaffolding when target forms were beyond the learners' current abilities. It is one explanation why the communicative flow did not seem to be threatened in the CLIL lessons despite the high percentage of corrective feedback. What is surprising, however, is that these feedback moves prevailed in the form-focused lessons as well. Regarding recasts even double the amount was found in this study compared to Lochtman's (2002). Consequently only a minority of the feedback provided involved self-repair. This means that learners were hardly prompted to correct the ill-formed utterance on their own which would have involved a deeper level of processing than the repetition of a correct form provided by a teacher. One reason for the frequent use of feedback moves which benefit the communicative flow might be that the curriculum for foreign language teaching in Austria nowadays is based on the communicative approach. This is often misinterpreted as focus on speaking fluently only instead of developing communicative competence as recommended by Hymes (1979: 281) which includes "the possible", this means accuracy as well.

Another interesting finding concerning the distribution of corrective feedback types in EFL is that metalinguistic feedback was the second most frequent way to treat errors. A close look revealed that all incidences of this type of feedback were employed by Teacher 1 in the lessons EFL1 and EFL2 which were the 5<sup>th</sup> and the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, this means the learners were less proficient than those in the remaining classes. The teacher preferred metalinguistic feedback, which usually implies grammatical metalanguage to refer to the nature of the error, for his less experienced students in order to help them reformulate the ill-formed utterance. It is likely that less advanced students think more in terms of rules than do students who are experienced and use the foreign language automatically without thinking consciously of the body of rules behind it. Indeed this type of corrective feedback was successful in leading to uptake in all cases as will be seen in the subsequent sections. This finding is in line with that of Amar and Spada (2006) and Lyster (1997) who found that particularly low-proficiency learners benefit from prompts.

Summarising the results, it can be said that the distribution of error treatment techniques is not balanced. Teachers should consider the whole range of feedback types, which they have at their disposal, rather than overusing recasts which comprise over 60% of all feedback moves in both settings. Moreover, it is important to draw attention to the importance that teachers need to take into account their students' degree of proficiency in the L2 when choosing adequate feedback.

Another research question was “What is the **distribution of uptake following different types of corrective feedback?**” thus, how effective are the individual feedback moves. Again it has to be mentioned that uptake must not be equated with acquisition. It only indicates that a learner has noticed the gap between his utterance and the well-formed one of the teacher. First it should be considered how much uptake occurred in general. In CLIL lessons only one third of the feedback moves led to uptake which was much less compared to the results of Lyster and Ranta's (1997) study (55%). It is not surprising that only 78% of the uptake consisted of repair because of the high percentage of recasts. In the EFL context, the uptake rate was very low as well but still higher than in CLIL.

Not even half of the EFL-feedback moves were followed by uptake (47%), however, almost all of them (91%) were successful in leading to repair. The fact that in most cases corrective feedback was immediately followed by topic continuation is definitely one reason for the general low level of uptake. This means that it depends on the teacher to give the students opportunities for uptake. Other factors which influenced the level of students' uptake became obvious when the choice of feedback type was considered. The analysis of the present data has demonstrated that in both contexts uptake was less likely when the correct form was provided by the teacher which confirms the results of previous studies. Unfortunately, these feedback types were preferably employed by teachers. Lyster (2007, 99) points out that the corrective value of recasts is often not recognized by learners because they misinterpret them as non-corrective repetitions. Furthermore, in many cases corrective feedback is used along with signs of approval which increases their lack of salience. In the data of the EFL lessons Lyster's argument has been confirmed. Furthermore, it has been revealed that the same applies to explicit correction. Although the teacher explicitly indicated that an error had occurred, learners were confused by the accompanying sign of approval. This is probably the reason for the fact that in the EFL context only 17% of this feedback move used in combination with approval led to uptake. In the content-based setting, this technique was not very successful either, however, the percentage was considerably higher (40%). One possible explanation for the difference may be found in the perception of the signs of approval on the side of the learners. It could be supposed that in EFL classrooms, in which students focused especially on form, approval was considered as a sign to confirm that an utterance was grammatically correct and therefore learners did not recognise the corrective character of the teacher's feedback. In CLIL classrooms, on the other hand, content was more important than form and students were aware of this, therefore it was more likely that they assigned the approval to content and thus noticed that the teacher probably repeated their utterance because of an error. This argumentation is the very antithesis of Lyster's (2007: 98) who argues that when students concentrate on form, their attention remains focused on form and therefore they do not notice the corrective character of recasts. However, the interpretation given here is

supported by the fact that the results of the present analysis are similar to those of other studies (cf. Lochtmann 2002, Lyster & Mori 2006).

Finally, another important finding has to be mentioned. The analysis has revealed that in almost all cases, in which prompts led to uptake, it was repair, namely student-generated repair this means the correct version was either provided by the student who had made the error or by a peer. Unfortunately, the learners were hardly given any opportunity for student-generated repair due to the small number of prompts. On the contrary, most errors were treated with recasts and explicit corrections which do not allow the students to correct their utterances. This is another reason why teachers should make use of the whole range of error treatment techniques, which they have at their disposal.

The last point of interest was the **question if the error type influences the choice of feedback**. In general, recasts were dominant with all types of errors while the other feedback techniques were used less frequently, however, differences could be observed. In regard to grammatical errors, it was observed that in the EFL context, fewer recasts and consequently more other feedback was employed. This is perhaps a reflection of the teachers' concern to direct the students' attention to aspects of accuracy which is an important area in this setting. In the CLIL classrooms, on the contrary not a single prompt was used in combination with errors of grammatical nature. This can be easily explained as the focus in CLIL lessons was not on grammar but on content and fluency, therefore the less obtrusive feedback technique, recast, was used with preference. A similar correction behaviour was observed regarding vocabulary deficiencies, but the other way round. While EFL teachers opted for recasts only, CLIL teachers made use of prompts as well. This might be due to the importance of adequate vocabulary in this context. As mentioned earlier, when subjects are taught in English it is necessary to assure that the correct content is conveyed and therefore appropriate words have to be used. This is probably the reason why teachers focused on lexical issues with prompts. To sum up, it can be said that a certain tendency could be observed that the teachers' choice of corrective feedback is influenced by the error type. However, no general conclusion can be drawn in terms of which error type is preferably corrected in a

particular setting because it depends on the general focus of the setting and on the particular lesson or task which error type is considered important.

According to all evidence so far, certain tendencies of correction behaviour in the two settings could be revealed but in general it seems that provision of feedback is not a matter which is done consciously but more intuitively without having professional knowledge about this topic.

## 11. Conclusion

The aim of the present paper was to provide an overview on errors and error correction in EFL and CLIL classrooms. By looking at learning theories behind CLIL and EFL as well as research studies conducted so far, it has been found that focus on form and error correction are beneficial and sometimes even necessary to language acquisition because untreated errors may lead to fossilization. Moreover teachers as well as students in general regard it as an important element in the language classroom and their expectations should be met otherwise interlanguage development could be impeded. It has been argued that teachers should either adapt their instruction techniques to the students' expectations or that students' attitudes should be modified. As most students look for error correction and the majority of researchers argue for it, it is recommendable to modify students' attitudes if they are against corrective feedback. This means that a positive attitude towards errors and their treatment needs to be created in the language classroom. Thus it is advisable to inform students about the fact that errors are a natural accompanying element in every learning process. Although the aim is to gradually reduce them they should not be regarded as a negative feature or an evil but as a starting point for further improvement. What one learner does not know, another probably does not know either. Therefore it is useful to draw the learners' attention to this part and provide or elicit the correct form. If students expect error correction and if errors and their treatment are not negatively charged, negative affective factors, as mentioned by Krashen, can be avoided. Consequently the only dissident voice regarding the beneficial effects of error treatment could be disregarded. Unfortunately it is questionable if such a positive attitude can be developed as long as marks depend on the number of errors in exams.

Having outlined the importance of corrective feedback, the theoretical framework was provided for the subsequent empirical data analysis. In this section it was shown that all types of corrective feedback have advantages as well as disadvantages and that their effectiveness depends on a huge variety of factors.

In the following the general findings of the final empirical study will be summarised and implications for teachers will be outlined. In CLIL lessons a considerably higher amount of errors occurred than in the EFL setting which can be explained by the large amount of students' talk in the first setting. Only a small percentage of the errors was treated with corrective feedback by the teachers in the CLIL classrooms probably in order to avoid conversation disruptions or because the message was comprehensible despite the errors and consequently treatment was not considered necessary. However, still more error treatment took place in this context than in the traditional setting. In spite of the smaller number of feedback moves in the EFL context, a higher percentage resulted in student-generated repair. It has been claimed that learners in the CLIL setting are better in terms of fluency whereas students of the traditional setting outperform the other group with respect to accuracy (Lyster 2003: 237). Assuming that better outcomes regarding accuracy are related to student-generated repair, it is advisable for teachers to increase it in the content-based setting. As already mentioned before, uptake in general and repair in particular must not be equated with acquisition, it only indicates that a learner has noticed the feedback. Interlanguage development may move forward without uptake however, it has been argued that uptake contributes to the automatization process of retrieving target language items and it is also beneficial to acquisition as learners are encouraged to revise wrong hypotheses about the second language. So far it is considered at least as additional practice and possibly facilitative to interlanguage development.

In previous studies both advantages as well as weak spots of CLIL and EFL students have been revealed. It was found that CLIL learners are the winners concerning fluency and lexicon but in regard to grammatical accuracy, deficits could be observed in CLIL classrooms which on the other hand is the strong point of EFL students (Lyster 2003: 237). Interestingly, the present study revealed that errors which were treated with priority in CLIL, were those related to vocabulary and in the traditional setting, errors regarding those grammatical structures on which the focus was at that moment. The fact that exactly these areas which received feedback are the strong points of the students, confirms the results of previous studies that corrective feedback is beneficial to

interlanguage development. This targeted correction behaviour seems to be recommendable. It might be a good idea to treat particular types of errors with priority while neglecting others which are less important at a certain moment.

Another conclusion which can be drawn from the present study is that frequent provision of corrective feedback does not impede fluency. Despite more frequent error treatment in the CLIL classrooms, much more students' talk took place compared to the other context. One may think that the type of feedback is the reason for this result as recasts were used primarily in this instructional setting whereas prompts dominated in the traditional setting which could have impeded conversational fluency. However, a close investigation of the data has shown that it is the type of task and the questions asked on which the amount of students' talk depends and not the feedback techniques. Another aspect with regard to frequency of error treatment is that teachers should adapt it to the circumstances. For example error correction should be reduced or even avoided if possible in case of presentations or conversations in which meaning is important while errors should be treated frequently if the focus is on a certain aspect of language.

Moreover, it is highly recommendable to employ a great variety of feedback techniques in order to meet the different needs of different learners. It is also important to make future teachers aware of the confusing nature of signs of approval in combination with corrective feedback. Finally teachers should not only provide feedback to errors but analyse the errors themselves and consider them as feedback on their own teaching and on their students' gaps in knowledge and consequently reflect on their instruction procedures.

As already pointed out, making errors should be considered as something normal at least during phases of exercise. In this context it is crucial to clearly indicate if a phase is dedicated to exercise or examination, the latter implies that no errors should be made. If learners clearly perceive that they are allowed to make errors in an exercise phase, they will be less worried and they will dare to talk which contributes to increased fluency in the foreign language.

It is necessary to bear in mind that all conclusions have to be considered as deductions made on the basis of the relatively small data base which was analysed for this case study and should not be regarded final. This means that the findings may suggest a tendency concerning the occurrence and correction of errors in the two language teaching settings. However, one must not generalise as the amount of the analysed data was very small. In order to obtain more reliable results, it is inevitable to carry out more extensive studies. It is even more important is to conduct studies over a long period of time in order to investigate the real effectiveness of various feedback types. Taking uptake as indicator which shows if students have noticed the feedback or as measurement of effectiveness in terms of interlanguage development is not very reliable but it was chosen for the present study for practical reasons. It would also be interesting to investigate the issue which came up in the course of the analysis, namely if the correction behaviour of native speakers differs from that of non-native speakers. Moreover, a comparison of CLIL teachers which are also trained EFL teachers with those who are not EFL teachers regarding their correction behaviour would be interesting. Finally it would be worth while to find out if the assumption that the amount of students' talk is not influenced by corrective feedback in general and certain feedback types in particular can be confirmed. In order to analyse this, the same tasks have to be set and the same type of questions need to be asked.

Throughout the paper it became clear that error treatment plays an important role in language teaching. Nevertheless, the findings of the present study create the impression that corrective feedback is often not provided purposefully but rather randomly. Therefore future teachers should be made familiar with this issue during their training. Obviously, it is impossible to train them in the sense that they will provide the most adequate feedback for every single error because so many factors are involved in the correction process. Nevertheless, they should be aware of the possibilities and benefits as well as dangers of corrective feedback. Moreover they should be equipped with knowledge about the variety of feedback techniques which can be applied and the students need to be informed about advantages and disadvantages of individual types of feedback depending on the context in which they occur.

Summarising the findings, it has been revealed that error correction in Austrian CLIL and EFL classrooms is partly influenced by the setting and partly by teachers' personal preferences and other circumstances. As error correction is an important contribution to interlanguage development, arbitrary behaviour should be reduced which implies intensive teacher training with regard to error correction.

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## **Zusammenfassung**

Diese Diplomarbeit befasst sich mit Fehlern und deren Korrektur in Konversationen im traditionellen Fremdsprachenunterricht und in jenem Unterricht in dem Englisch als Arbeitssprache dient. Im ersten Teil werden die Unterrichtsformen beschrieben und die Sinnhaftigkeit von Fehlerkorrektur vor dem Hintergrund verschiedener Spracherwerbstheorien hinterfragt bevor ein Überblick über Forschungsergebnisse zu diesem Thema gegeben wird. Anschließend werden Haltungen und Erwartungen von Lehrern und Schülern gegenüber Fehlern und Fehlerkorrektur dargelegt. Dann wird das theoretische Rahmenwerk für den abschließenden praktischen Teil erläutert welches Definitionen von Fehlern und Korrekturformen beinhaltet sowie eine ausgiebige Beschreibung von deren Besonderheiten und schließlich werden Schülerreaktionen auf Fehlerkorrektur und Verstärkung behandelt.

Im zweiten Teil der Diplomarbeit wird die empirische Studie beschrieben, welche in jeweils sechs Unterrichtseinheiten mit traditionellem Englischunterricht und in solchen in denen Englisch als Arbeitssprache dient, durchgeführt wurde. Es werden Unterschiede und Ähnlichkeiten zwischen den Unterrichtsformen hinsichtlich der Verteilung der Fehlerarten, Korrekturformen, Reaktionen auf Fehlerkorrektur beschrieben und der Zusammenhang zwischen Fehlerarten und Korrekturformen untersucht.

## **Curriculum Vitae**

### **PERSÖNLICHE DATEN**

Vorname: Magdalena  
Zuname: Hampl  
Geburtsdatum: 23. Februar 1985  
Geburtsort: Kirchdorf a. d. Krems  
Staatsangehörigkeit: Österreich  
Eltern: Walter und Maria Hampl  
Familienstand: ledig

### **SCHULBILDUNG**

1991 – 1995 Volksschule Plenklberg in Steyr  
1995 – 2003 Bundesgymnasium Werndlpark in Steyr mit  
abschließender Reifeprüfung  
2004 – 2011 Lehramtsstudium Englisch und Spanisch an der  
Universität Wien  
02/2009 – 07/2009 Erasmus Auslandsaufenthalt an der Universidad de  
Murcia in Spanien

### **RELEVANTE PRAKTIKA UND ARBEITSVERHÄLTNISSE**

03/2007 – 06/2007 Pädagogisches Praktikum im Unterrichtsfach Englisch  
an der Handelsschule Friesgasse in Wien (bei Mag.  
Friedrich)  
09/2007 – 02/2008 Fachbezogenes Praktikum im Unterrichtsfach Englisch  
am GRG 15 in Wien (bei Mag. Pokorny)  
09/2009 – 02/2010 Fachbezogenes Praktikum im Unterrichtsfach Spanisch  
am BG Untere Bachgasse in Mödling (bei Mag.  
Scheiber)  
seit 09/2010 Unterrichtstätigkeit am BG Untere Bachgasse in  
Mödling