ERROR CORRECTION AND FEEDBACK IN SPEAKING : A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF TEACHER (LECTURER) AND STUDENT PREFERENCES IN RESPONDING STUDENTS' ERRORS IN SPEAKING AT ENGLISH EDUCATION STUDY PROGRAM

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Abstract

While it is strongly believed that students' errors must be handled properly, it is crucial to note that teachers and students may have different perspectives upon the effective strategies to deal with the students' errors, particularly in oral production. Hence, this research is focused on comparing the teacher and student preferences for error correction and feedback in speaking activities.

This is a kind of survey research, where data were collected from all lecturers of Speaking subject – there were four – and all students taking the subjects of Speaking for General Purposes and Speaking for Academic Purposes presented in the first and third semester repectively. Data which were primarily collected through questionnaire were, then, analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively.

Based on the analysis, it was revealed that there is a discrepancy among teachers and students in terms of beliefs about the relative importance of speaking features and preferences for error correction techniques in speaking activities.

Keywords: error correction and feedback, error correction strategies, speaking activities, teacher and student preferences.

1. RATIONALE

"A man who has committed a mistake and doesn't correct it is committing another mistake" (Confucius in Harmer, 2004:108). It means that it is humane to make a mistake, but we must not make the same mistake for the second time, so we have to be aware of our mistake and make some necessary correction in order that we will not do the same mistake in the future.

In the context of English Language Teaching (ELT), students are encouraged to do *trial and error*. They are put in such a condition that they have to practice using the target language regardless of the deviations they may make as the primary goal of language learning is to enable the students to use the language as a means of communication. It means that they have to practice using the language to convey the message either in spoken or in written form to make them acquire the goal, that is communicative competence (Brown, 2001:69).

Furthermore, it is believed that making mistakes is a process to make progress. It is the step stone to have a better understanding of concept and language skills. Dulay et al. (1982:138) assert that making error is an inevitable part of learning. People cannot learn language without first systematically committing errors. In other words, without making mistakes, it is impossible for the students to reach success in language learning.

Therefore, English teacher must be able to convince his/her students that committing errors is a natural part of the learning process. Students commonly make mistakes when they are learning a new language item. Even though it has been explained in detail and regularly practiced, still, students can make mistakes. Unquestionably, errors and mistakes will always occur. Thus, error correction is important for students to make them aware of their misconception of a certain language rule and improve their language production. Errors and their correction can be used to help students consolidate their knowledge of a language point and to foster good learning habits (Pollard, 2008:60).

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Speaking is one the four language skills including listening, speaking, reading and writing. Together with writing, speaking falls under the category of productive skills, while listening and reading belong to receptive skills. According to Luoma (2004:1), speaking skills are an important part of the curriculum in language teaching, and this makes them an important object of assessment as well. Assessing speaking is challenging, however, because there are so many factors that influence our impression of how well someone can speak. It implies that to determine someone's proficiency in speaking is quite difficult. It involves a lot of aspects to take into consideration. In other words, it is not easy to acquire speaking skills.

Brown (2001:270), further, elaborates the characteristics of spoken language that makes speaking difficult including clustering; redundancy; reduced forms; performance variables; colloquial language; rate of delivery; stress, rhythm and intonation; and interaction. In addition, Pollard (2004:33) says that speaking is one of the most difficult aspects for students to master. This activity involves determining ideas what to say; language how to say regarding grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation; as well as listening to and reacting to the person communicating with.

That is why, it is not surprising at all if students make errors in the classroom speaking activities. Their errors may vary in terms of the language elements like pronunciation, vocabulary or grammar, or the communicative effects, that is, whether the error causes misunderstanding or not. The next problem is how to deal with the errors committed by students in speaking activities. There may be differences of ideas to cope with this phenomenon.

Theoretically, teachers are expected to help his/her students develop and improve their language proficiency. One of his/her responsibilities, then, is to give correction and provide positive feedback upon the students' errors. Based on the writer's experience, students usually expected correction for almost any error they made. The survey conducted by Ancker (2000:22) reveals similar findings. Most students expect teacher to correct every error they make, and their reason is the importance of learning to speak English correctly. On the other hand, most teachers have contrastive point of view. They do not think that it is necessary to correct every error students make because it may give negative impact on the students' confidence and motivation (affective filter).

Likewise, to most language teachers, correcting students' speaking errors is one of the most frustrating tasks because it has more potential for subjectivity due to individual variables such as background knowledge, pronunciation, and spontaneity as influential parts (Cohen, 1990 and Hughes, 2002). Therefore, error correction should be done appropriately; lest, it will discourage them from practicing the language.

Consequently, it is urgent that a research be done to uncover the true condition of the error correction strategies practiced by the English teacher and the expectation of students for the correction and feedback from him/her to respond their errors. This research is focused on the speaking activities in the classroom. Thus, the aspects to examine are the teacher's practice of error correction and feedback and the student preferences of teacher's error correction and feedback upon their errors in classroom speaking activities.

Thus, this research is aimed at 1) Finding out the students' expectation of the error correction and feedback from their English teacher upon their errors in speaking activities; 2) Revealing English teacher practices of correcting the students' errors in classroom speaking activities and giving the feedback; 3) Comparing one teacher preferences of error correction and feedback on the students' errors in classroom speaking activities to that of other teachers; and 4) Comparing the teacher preferences of error correction and feedback on the students' errors in classroom speaking activities to that of other teachers; and 4) Comparing the teacher preferences of error correction and feedback on the students.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research belongs to a survey research. It is carried out to reveal the phenomenon being researched. Then, this research is a kind of census research because it involved all members of population as Kothari (2004: 55) states that a complete enumeration of all items in the population is known as a census inquiry. To be more specific, this research belongs to intangibles survey which reveals more challenging items such as attitudes, opinions, values, or other psychological and sociological constructs, instead of simple information like what proportion of children ride school buses, family members (Ary et.al., 2010: 373).

Considering both aspects, the scope and the focus of research, this research is then categorized as a census of intangibles. It involved all members of the population and it was dealing with attitudes, opinions and beliefs.

The sources of data are all lecturers of Speaking subjects teaching at the English Education study program who are called as "teachers" in this research. There were 4 lecturers teaching Speaking subject in

the odd semester of 2013/2014 Academic Year. In addition, data were also gathered from the students taught by both of them. There were 381 students as a whole distributed into 12 classes, 218 belonged to the first semester and 163 belonged to the third semester.

The data were gathered by employing questionnaire to find the information about the teacher and student preferences for error correction and feedback in speaking. There were two parts of the questionnaire used to collect the data. The first part of the questionnaire employed to collect the data used Likert scale with five options (*strongly disagree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, and strongly disagree*) to answer the structured questions provided. The second part of the questionnaire used semi-structured questions where the respondents might choose one of the options provided or more or write their own answer. (See Appendix 1)

After all data needed had been gathered, then they were analyzed by comparing the teacher preferences to the preferences of the students. In this case, the stages of the analysis were referring to the ones proposed by Ary et.al. (2010: 481). The stages are: 1) Collecting; 2) Sorting; 3) Tabulating; 4) Calculating; 5) Interpreting; and 6) Presenting. For that purpose, data gotten from questionnaire Part I and Part II were put into a table (see appendices 2 and 3 respectively).

3. RESEARCH FINDINGS

The comparison of teacher preferences with those of their students are presented and discussed according to the following three categories:

- 1. Degree of preference for accuracy in students' speaking activities (responses to Part I, items 1 and 2)
- 2. Beliefs about the relative importance of various speaking features (responses to Part I, items 3a-h)
- 3. Degree of preference for error correction techniques (responses to Part II, items 1-2)

3.1. Teacher and student preferences for accuracy in students' speech

According to the responses to items 1 and 2 in Part I (see appendix 4), all of the four Speaking lecturers 100%) agree that it is important that their students have as few errors as possible in their speech, and all of them feel that error-free speech is also important to their students. Three of four lecturers show their **agreement**, and one of them shows **strong agreement**.

Then, since 100% of the EFL students in student survey state that it is important to have as few errors as possible in their written work, and that fewer errors are important to their English teachers as well, the instructors and students seem to be in agreement regarding accuracy in student speech. 94% students show their **strong agreement** and 6% shows **agreement**.

3.2. Teachers' and students' beliefs about the relative importance of speaking features

The instructors' responses to items 3a-h in Part I (see appendix 4) reveal that they unanimously share similar belief concerning *pronunciation*. They all agree that *pronunciation* errors are very important to respond (100%). However, they are divided in their beliefs about the relative importance of *grammar*, *vocabulary choice, intonation, organization of ideas, communication strategies, use of gesture* and *fluency*.

In relation to *grammatical errors*, two of them (50%) show their **agreement** to point out the errors, whereas one of them (25%) shows **disagreement**, and the other one (25%) shows **neither agreement nor disagreement**. About errors in *vocabulary choice*, one of them (25%) shows his/her **agreement** to point out the errors, whereas one of them (25%) shows **disagreement**, and the other two (50%) show **neither agreement nor disagreement**.

Then, relating to errors in *intonation*, teachers' beliefs are equally split into two where two of them (50%) show their **agreement** to point out the errors, whereas the other two (50%) show **neither agreement nor disagreement**. Similarly, teachers' beliefs are also equally split into two in viewing errors in the *organization of ideas*. Two of them (50%) show their **disagreement** to point out the errors, whereas the other two (50%) show **neither agreement** nor **disagreement**.

Likewise, the same things also happen to the beliefs of making comments on *the use of gesture*, teachers' beliefs are divided into two. One of them (25%) shows his/her **agreement** to point out the errors, whereas the other three (75%) show **neither agreement nor disagreement**.

For the next beliefs – making comments on the communication strategies and on the fluency – teachers' beliefs are split into three. About the former, one of them (25%) shows their strong disagreement to point out the errors, whereas two of them (50%) show disagreement, and the other one (25%) shows neither agreement nor disagreement. Then, for the latter, one of them (25%) shows his/her disagreement to

point out the errors, whereas two of them (50%) show **neither agreement nor disagreement**, and the other one (25%) shows **agreement**.

In comparison to teachers' and students' beliefs about the relative importance of speaking features, seemingly, there is a sharp difference between the two. In general, while teachers' beliefs are varied, students' beliefs are showing that it is important for them to have responses from their teachers for every error they make. Their beliefs are only split into **agreement** and **strong agreement**. It indicates that students expect their teacher to provide response to any error they make in speaking activities.

For the first three points of item number three (3a-c), students' strong agreement is very dominating. It almost reaches 100%. To be exact, only four of 381 students (1%) show **agreement** with the item of *pointing out the errors in grammar*, while the rest, 377 of 381 (99%) show their **strong agreement**. Next, about *pointing out errors in pronunciation*, their expectation is even higher where only one of them who shows **agreement** (0.3%), and the other 380 (99.7%) shows their **strong agreement**. Students' **strong agreement** is also very high in the item of *pointing out errors in vocabulary choice* which is amounting 375 of 381 (98.4%), and 6 other students (1.6%) show **agreement**.

Then for the next points of item number three (3d-h), students' agreement is greater in number than the strong agreement one. To be specific, 228 of 381 students (59.8%) show their **agreement** with *pointing out errors in intonation*, and 153 of 381 students (40.2%) show their **strong agreement**. About *making comments on the organization of ideas*, 321 of 381 students (84.3%) show their **agreement** with *pointing out errors in intonation*, and 60 of 381 students (15.7%) show their **strong agreement**. For *making comments on the communication strategies*, 323 of 381 students (84.8%) show their **agreement** with *pointing out errors in intonation*, and 58 of 381 students (15.2%) show their **strong agreement**. Next, for *making comments on the use of gesture*, 340 of 381 students (89.2%) show their **agreement** with *pointing out errors in intonation*, and 41 of 381 students (10.8%) show their **strong agreement**. The last item, about *making comments on the fluency*, 301 of 381 students (79%) show their **agreement** with *pointing out errors in intonation*, and 80 of 381 students (21%) show their **strong agreement**.

The facts above reveal that how teachers' beliefs about the relative importance of speaking features are quite different from one to another like in *pointing out errors in grammar*, one of them disagrees, one is neutral, but two of them agrees. The same thing also happens to the rest items. They have different beliefs. There is only one item which is similarly shared by the teachers, that is *pointing out errors in pronunciation*. They all agree to do this.

On the contrary, students seem to have similar beliefs about the relative importance of speaking features. There is only a slight difference that is between 'agree' and 'strongly agree'.

Consequently, the facts show the discrepancy of the teachers' and students' beliefs about the relative importance of speaking features. The similar belief only occurs in the item of *pointing out errors in pronunciation*.

3.3. Teacher and student preferences for error correction techniques

The responses given by teachers to item 1a-o in questionnaire Part II (see appendix 5) show that teachers have different preferences for error correction techniques. It reveals that none of them prefers using such techniques as using facial expression, pointing at the correct language, telling students how many mistakes, and giving a number of points. It also discovers that only one of them prefers using such techniques as using grammatical terminology to identify the mistake, giving the rule, just telling students that they are wrong (but nicely), and reminding students when they studied the point. Then, three of them prefer employing collecting the errors for later and asking students to try again techniques. In fact, none of the techniques provided shared by all of the four teachers.

When compared to student preferences for error correction strategies, it can be noted that both teachers and students share similar preferences for not using facial expression, giving the rule and giving a number of point techniques. Some teachers and students are in agreement for the employment of collecting the errors for later, repeating what student said, telling students what part should be changed, and asking partners to spot errors.

However, discrepancy happens to the items of pointing at the correct language and just saying the right version techniques. All the 381 students expect their teacher to do those techniques. Conversely, none of the 4 teachers prefers using those techniques. It is obvious that both sides have different perspective about error correction strategies.

In addition, minor discrepancy occurs in the use of body language and reminding students when they learned the point techniques. Some teachers prefer using them, while all students do not.

Then, considerable discrepancy appears again when comparing teachers' and students' preferences for feedback on the speech with many errors, none of the teachers feels that all errors should be corrected while all students prefer to be corrected, both major and minor errors. All of the four teachers agree that they will only correct the major errors, but not the minor ones. If there are too many major errors, three of them will not correct all. However, if there are repeated errors whether major or minor, three of them will correct the errors. It just reveals how discrepancy also happens among the teachers themselves.

4. CONCLUSION

From the aforementioned findings above, it can be concluded that:

- 1. Students expect their teacher to correct and give feedback on their errors in speaking activities whether major or minor errors.
- 2. Teachers, on the other hand, do not think that it is necessary to correct all of the errors. They think that it is important to give correction and feedback on the major errors only because it may interfere communication.
- 3. Discrepancy occurs among teachers in terms of beliefs about the relative importance of speaking features and preferences for error correction techniques in speaking activities.
- 4. Discrepancy also happens between teacher and student preferences for error correction techniques in speaking activities.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Instrument to collect the data

Part I.

Directions to Part I: Below are some beliefs that some teachers have about feedback to student writing. Read each statement and then decide if you: (1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Neither Agree nor Disagree, (4) Agree, or (5) Strongly Agree. Please write the number of your response in the space provided. There are no right or wrong answers. We are simply interested in your opinions.

a. For Teacher

No	Item	Response
1.	In general, it is important to <i>me</i> that my students have as few errors as possible	
	in their speech.	
2.	In general, it is important to my students that they have as few errors as	
	possible in their speech.	
3.	When responding to students' errors, the lecturer should always:	
	a. point out errors in grammar (verb tenses, subject/verb agreement, article use,	
	etc.)	
	b. point out errors in <i>pronunciation</i>	
	c. point out errors in vocabulary choice	
	d. point out errors in <i>intonation</i>	
	e. make comments on the organization of ideas	
	f. make comments on the <i>communication strategies</i>	
	g. make comments on the use of gesture	
	h. make comments on the <i>fluency</i>	

b. For Students

No	Item	Response
1.	In general, it is important to me that I have as few errors as possible in my	
	speech.	
2.	In general, it is important to my lecturer that I have as few errors as possible in	
	my speech.	
3.	When responding to students' errors, the lecturer should always:	
	a. point out errors in grammar (verb tenses, subject/verb agreement, article use,	
	etc.)	
	b. point out errors in <i>pronunciation</i>	
	c. point out errors in vocabulary choice	
	d. point out errors in <i>intonation</i>	
	e. make comments on the organization of ideas	
	f. make comments on the <i>communication strategies</i>	
	g. make comments on the use of gesture	
	h. make comments on the <i>fluency</i>	

Part II

Directions to Part II: Answer the following questions by circling the number of the appropriate response. (Please circle ALL that apply.)

a. For Teacher

No	Item				
1.	When 1	When responding to students' errors in speaking, how do you usually indicate the errors?			
	a.	Collect the errors for later			
	b.	Use Facial expression			
	с.	Use body language			
	d.	Point at the correct language			
	e.	Repeat what they said			

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	f.	Just say the right version
	g.	Tell them how many mistakes
	h.	Use grammatical terminology to identify the mistake
	i.	Give the rule
	j.	Give a number of points
	k.	Just tell them they are wrong (but nicely)
	1.	Tell them what part they should change
	m.	Ask partners to spot errors
	n.	Ask them to try again
	0.	Remind them when you studied that point
2.	If there	are many errors in students' speech, what do you usually do?
	a.	Correct all errors, major and minor
	b.	Correct all errors I consider major, but not the minor ones
	с.	Correct most but not necessarily all of the major errors if there are many of them
	d.	Correct only a few of the major errors no matter how many there are
	e.	Correct all repeated errors whether major or minor
	f.	Correct only errors that might interfere with communicating ideas
	g.	Correct no errors and respond only to the ideas expressed
	h.	Other (please specify):

b. For Students

No	Item
1.	When committing errors in speaking, what kind of response do you expect from your
	lecturer to indicate the errors?
	a. Collect the errors for later
	b. Use Facial expression
	c. Use body language
	d. Point at the correct language
	e. Repeat what you said
	f. Just say the right version
	g. Tell me how many mistakes
	h. Use grammatical terminology to identify the mistake
	i. Give the rule
	j. Give a number of points
	k. Just tell me I am wrong (but nicely)
	1. Tell me what part I should change
	m. Ask partners to spot errors
	n. Ask me to try again
	o. Remind me when I studied that point
2.	If there are many errors in your speech, what do you expect your lecturer to do?
	a. Correct all errors, major and minor
	b. Correct all errors I consider major, but not the minor ones
	c. Correct most but not necessarily all of the major errors if there are many of them
	d. Correct only a few of the major errors no matter how many there are
	e. Correct all <i>repeated</i> errors whether major or minor
	f. Correct only errors that might interfere with communicating ideas
	g. Correct no errors and respond only to the ideas expressed
	h. Other (please specify):

Appendix 2. Table to keep data from questionnaire Part I

Table I

Data Received from Questionnaire Part I

Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Number 1					
Number 2					
Number 3					
a.					
b.					
с.					
d.					
е.					
f.					
g.					
h.					

Appendix 3. Table to keep data from questionnaire Part II

Table II

Data Received from Questionnaire Part II

No	Item		Response
1.	a.	Collect the errors for later	
	b.	Use Facial expression	
	с.	Use body language	
	d.	Point at the correct language	
	e.	Repeat what they said	
	f.	Just say the right version	
	g.	Tell them how many mistakes	
	h.	Use grammatical terminology to identify the mistake	
	i.	Give the rule	
	j.	Give a number of points	
	k.	Just tell them they are wrong (but nicely)	
	1.	Tell them what part they should change	
	m.	Ask partners to spot errors	
		Ask them to try again	
	0.	Remind them when you studied that point	
2.	a.	Correct all errors, major and minor	
	b.	Correct all errors I consider major, but not the minor ones	
	с.	Correct most but not necessarily all of the major errors if there are many of them	
	d.	Correct only a few of the major errors no matter how many there are	
	e.	Correct all <i>repeated</i> errors whether major or minor	
	f.	Correct only errors that might interfere with communicating ideas	
	g.	Correct no errors and respond only to the ideas expressed	
	h.	Other (please specify):	<u></u>

Appendix 4. Table to compile data from Questionnaire Part I

Table III

Compilation of Data Received from Questionnaire Part I

a. From Teacher Item	Strongly	Disagree	Neither Agree	Agree	Strongly
Item	Disagree	Disagree	Nor Disagree	Agree	Agree
1. In general, it is important					
to me that my students				3	1
have as few errors as				3	1
possible in their speech.					
2. In general, it is important					
to my students that they				2	1
have as few errors as				3	1
possible in their speech.					
3. When responding to					
students' errors, the					
lecturer should always:					
a. point out errors in grammar					
(verb tenses, subject/verb		1	1	2	
agreement, article use, etc.)					
b. point out errors in				4	
pronunciation				4	
c. point out errors in		1	2	1	
vocabulary choice		1	2	1	
d. point out errors in			2	2	
intonation			2	2	
e. make comments on the		2	2		
organization of ideas		2	2		
f. make comments on the	1	2	1		
communication strategies	1	2	1		
g. make comments on the use			3	1	
of gesture			3	1	
h. make comments on the		1	2	1	
fluency		1	2	1	

b. From Students

Item	Strongly	Disagree	Neither Agree	Agree	Strongly
	Disagree		Nor Disagree		Agree
1. In general, it is important					
to me that I have as few				23	259
errors as possible in my				23	358
speech.					
2. In general, it is important					
to my lecturer that I have				23	358
as few errors as possible in				23	330
my speech.					
3. When responding to					
students' errors, the					
lecturer should always:					
a. point out errors in grammar					
(verb tenses, subject/verb				4	377
agreement, article use, etc.)					
b. point out errors in				1	380
pronunciation				1	380

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c. point out errors in <i>vocabulary choice</i>		6	375
d. point out errors in <i>intonation</i>		228	153
e. make comments on the <i>organization of ideas</i>		321	60
f. make comments on the <i>communication strategies</i>		323	58
g. make comments on the use of <i>gesture</i>		340	41
h. make comments on the <i>fluency</i>		301	80

Appendix 5. Table to compile data from Questionnaire Part II

Table IV

Compilation of Data Received from Questionnaire Part II

No	Item	Responses
1.	When responding to students' errors in speaking, how do you usually indicate the errors?	F
	a. Collect the errors for later	3
	b. Use Facial expression	0
	c. Use body language	2
	d. Point at the correct language	0
	e. Repeat what they said	2
	f. Just say the right version	0
	g. Tell them how many mistakes	0
	h. Use grammatical terminology to identify the mistake	1
	i. Give the rule	1
	j. Give a number of points	0
	k. Just tell them they are wrong (but nicely)	1
	1. Tell them what part they should change	2
	m. Ask partners to spot errors	2
	n. Ask them to try again	3
	o. Remind them when you studied that point	1
2.	If there are many errors in students' speech, what do you usually do?	
	a. Correct all errors, major and minor	0
	b. Correct all errors I consider major, but not the minor ones	4
	c. Correct most but not necessarily all of the major errors if there are many of them	3
	d. Correct only a few of the major errors no matter how many there are	0
	e. Correct all <i>repeated</i> errors whether major or minor	3
	f. Correct only errors that might interfere with communicating ideas	4
	g. Correct no errors and respond only to the ideas expressed	0
	h. Other (please specify):	

b. From	Students
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No	Item	Responses
1.	When committing errors in speaking, what kind of response do you expect	
	from your lecturer to indicate the errors?	
	a. Collect the errors for later	55
	b. Use Facial expression	0
	c. Use body language	0
	d. Point at the correct language	381
	e. Repeat what you said	158
	f. Just say the right version	381
	g. Tell me how many mistakes	0
	h. Use grammatical terminology to identify the mistake	44
	i. Give the rule	78
	j. Give a number of points	0
	k. Just tell me I am wrong (but nicely)	230
	1. Tell me what part I should change	38
	m. Ask partners to spot errors	21
	n. Ask me to try again	101
	o. Remind me when I studied that point	0
2.	If there are many errors in your speech, what do you expect your lecturer to do	?
	a. Correct all errors, major and minor	381
	b. Correct all errors I consider major, but not the minor ones	0
	c. Correct most but not necessarily all of the major errors if there are many of them	e 0
	d. Correct only a few of the major errors no matter how many there are	0
	e. Correct all <i>repeated</i> errors whether major or minor	0
	f. Correct only errors that might interfere with communicating ideas	0
	g. Correct no errors and respond only to the ideas expressed	0
	h. Other (please specify):	0