

Students believe that preliminary preparation to entering higher educational establishments can contribute greatly to successful performance of school graduates as university students.

As for teaching foreign languages in universities, starting from scratch is a waste of time which we cannot afford. First year students do have some experience learning a language, so a university teacher's task is to have a clear understanding of how students are going to develop their linguistic skills in order to organize the process of teaching in the most efficient way.

For the program of continuous teaching foreign languages to be an effective tools for both the teacher and the student it would be most advisable to:

- determine the final goal to be achieved at each stage of teaching process;
- introduce the basic components of each goal to be achieved;
- provide a set of tests for checking the level of knowledge on the subject.

For universities majoring in linguistics training their students to be specialists in languages, the level of knowledge to be achieved can be described by the term "bilingual personality" which corresponds to the degree of knowledge possessed by a native speaker of a relevant language. The components implied by this level are, in the first place, basic linguistic qualities of an educated native speaker; next, a number of various speaking skills required for effective communication, and, finally, some professional skills associated with the use of a foreign language. Also, prior importance is attached to the correspondence of the level of command of foreign languages to generally accepted global standards.

The above-mentioned suggestions contribute to implementing the idea of continuous teaching foreign languages, the possibility of combining traditional methods of teaching with the latest techniques aiming at developing communication skills that find their application in the many areas of human activities.

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Spoken and written mistakes

If you are trying to use a language which you are learning, you will make mistakes. It is inevitable. Some of these mistakes are "slips of the tongue or pen" which you can correct yourself without prompting; others are what one might call "real" mistakes, where you do not know what the problem is and need someone to tell you. Mistakes can be spoken, or written.

As for the role of the teacher, when it comes to correction, this is by no means as straightforward as you might think, or as the student who says "I want all my mistakes corrected" might think. Correction is a complex part of the teacher's role. Should all mistakes be corrected? The first question is easy to answer – "No", all mistakes should not be corrected. What's more, even if you thought they should be (as some students do), it would be impossible. Imagine a group of twenty students, all talking at different points, all making mistakes, and you trying to correct every single mistake. It's impossible. Should any mistake be corrected? Again, it's an easy question – "Yes", of course. How can any skill without having important mistakes corrected? How can a person learn to be a professional without knowing or being told when something has gone wrong?

Having established that some, but not all, mistakes should be corrected, we are faced with the question of which mistake should be corrected. Ultimately, of course, this is for the individual teacher to decide, based on the context of the lesson and the nature of the class. We can make some general points about what mistakes should be corrected. If students are doing a practice activity, using specific language previously presented, as well as other language, then mistakes involving the "target language" should be focused on for correction. In this type of activity, the focus is more on accuracy, and therefore, at least some of the inaccuracies with the target language need to be corrected. Common mistakes are also suitable

for correction. If you are teaching a monolingual class, then you are more likely to get similar mistakes being repeated, and everyone will benefit from the correction. What a teacher might determine to be a significant mistake, for whatever reason, can be corrected. For instance, a mistake which results in the wrong meaning. If a student says “Can I lend your dictionary?”, then this is a significant mistake.

If some mistakes should be corrected, then others should not – or do not have to be. For example, if your students have done a reading comprehension, and, in answering a question about the text, a student gives the right answer, but uses incorrect grammar, then the teacher can ignore the mistake because the aim of the task was comprehension, not accuracy. If you are chatting with students before or after the lesson, and they make mistakes when talking, ignore the mistakes as long as meaning is clear. If the students have done a practice activity and made mistakes with the target language, focus on those mistakes and worry less about any others, unless they are significant in some other way, or are very common. To correct or not, then, depends on the aim of the class or activity. A mistake that occurs in a controlled-practice activity might not be corrected if it occurs in a fluency activity, or a comprehension exercise.

In other words, be selective in deciding which mistakes need to be corrected, and which don't. Some teachers might argue that from time to time higher-level students should be allowed to do a speaking activity where the sole focus is fluency and the teacher should ignore all mistakes.

Sometimes, you might feel that a mistake should be corrected immediately. For example, pronunciation mistakes would normally be corrected straight away/ If a student was answering a question concerning target language and a mistake with the target language was made in the answer, again the mistake would be corrected immediately. Sometimes, in the normal flow of a class, if a student is talking and a mistake or mistakes in his speech impede your understanding, you might feel that you need to correct.

If the aim is comprehension (the correct answer to a question), focus on the correct answer, not the correct grammar. Don't interrupt fluency work – make a note of mistakes. In conclusion, some mistakes will be corrected straight away, some later, and some not at all.