Error Treatment Preferences of Adult Intensive English Program Students: Does Proficiency Matter?

This survey-based study examined the preferences of adult English as a second language (ESL) learners regarding two types of corrective feedback in an Intensive English Program (IEP) setting. The first type of corrective feedback was implicit and included recasts and clarification requests, whereas the second type was more explicit and was represented by overt error correction and metalinguistic explanation. Additionally, a possible connection between the proficiency level of the students and their self-reported preferences was explored. The total number of participants was 87, representing 11 first-language backgrounds. The findings revealed that the ESL students in this IEP context generally preferred explicit feedback, but they did favor one particular type of implicit feedback—recasts. Furthermore, the more proficient students preferred feedback that focused on accuracy rather than fluency. The study has implications for the adult ESL grammar classroom in an IEP context, encouraging instructors to identify and consider students’ self-perceived needs with respect to error correction.

Corrective Feedback: Definition, Typology, Discussion

For English as a second language (ESL) learners, beliefs about error treatment as an effective instructional tool may differ substantially from the beliefs and practices of their ESL teachers. Teachers may address errors only when communication is affected, whereas learners may prefer to have all their errors addressed. Given the current emphasis on learner-centered instruction, it is important to identify learners’ preferences toward specific corrective feedback approaches. Furthermore, such investigation of learners’ preferences should be conducted in specific language-learning contexts, for example, the adult ESL classroom, in order to inform the practice of teachers in different instructional environments. To this end, the present study centered upon the error-treatment preferences of adult ESL learners in an Intensive English Program (IEP) in the US.

Corrective feedback refers to any indication furnished by a teacher or
peer that a form produced by a learner is incongruent with target-language norms (Gass, 2003). Error treatment is considered an important variable in language learning. Some researchers assume that it is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for second language (L2) learning, especially for adults who require corrective feedback to construct a grammar of their second language successfully (van Lier, 1988).

Research in this area has viewed error treatment in terms of two broad categories. The first category of corrective feedback is implicit in nature, indirectly indicating to learners that an utterance is nontargetlike. Two of the most frequently observed means of implicit error treatment are recasts and clarification requests (Lyster, 2001; Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Nicholas, Lightbown, & Spada, 2001). To recast a learner’s erroneous utterance, a teacher or peer restates the utterance (or part of the utterance) while correcting the problematic segment. An example follows:

Student: He didn’t write all the words in his notebook.
Teacher: Oh, so he didn’t write all the words in his notebook.

This type of treatment may involve a change in intonation, that is, added emphasis, on the corrected item to direct the learner’s attention to form.

In addition to recasts, clarification requests have been found to occur frequently in classroom talk. One example follows:

Student: He didn’t write all the words in his notebook.
Teacher: What was that? [rising tone]

In comparison with recasts, clarification requests may be viewed as more implicit and possibly more open to misinterpretation by the learner, who may assume that the teacher is asking a meaning-based question rather than a form-focused one.

The second category of corrective feedback, referred to as explicit corrective feedback, provides learners with either overt error treatment or metalinguistic explanation. Lyster and Ranta (1997) qualify overt error treatment as incorporating direct provision of a targetlike form by a teacher or peer, along with a clear indication that the learner’s production is inaccurate, as can be seen in the following:

Student: He didn’t write all the words in my notebook.
Teacher: You don’t say, “He didn’t wrote.” You say, “He didn’t write.”

Different from recasting, in which corrected utterances are simply repeated back to learners, explicit corrective feedback openly identifies errors and provides acceptable renditions of learner utterances.

In addition to overt error treatment, explicit corrective feedback may be provided in the form of metalinguistic commentary. An example of such feedback follows:

Student: He didn’t wrote all the words in his notebook.
Teacher: Now, think about the verb here. What tense are you trying to use? What’s the rule for forming the simple past in negative statements?

Here, the teacher’s response to the student’s error focuses on the error itself, but it does not provide a solution. Instead, it is left to the student to consider the comment and arrive at a solution to the teacher-identified problem. It is important to note that the metalinguistic commentary provided by the teacher assumes learner familiarity with grammar-related terminology and rules.

**Frequency of Observed Corrective Feedback Contrasted With Student Preferences**

Previous research in the area of corrective feedback in the classroom has revealed a strong tendency on the part of teachers to employ implicit means of treating learner errors, rather than explicit ones. Panova and Lyster (2002) conducted an observational study of an adult ESL classroom with the purpose of identifying the types of corrective feedback moves carried out by the teacher. They found that the large majority of the corrective moves were implicit in nature, with recast and translation figuring prominently in the corrective discourse between the teacher and the students. Explicit correction accounted for only 2% of the teacher’s corrective moves. Similarly, Sheen (2004) found that in both ESL and EFL contexts, teachers most frequently made use of recasts when offering form-related feedback. In the ESL contexts, teachers used recasts 68% of the time, while in the EFL classroom, recasts represented 83% of corrective feedback moves. This preference for implicit provision of feedback is consistent regardless of the type of second-language learning environment, whether FL, SL, or immersion. For example, Lyster (2001) identified a clear preference for recasts in a French immersion class for the treatment of grammatical errors. In that context, only 1% of grammatical errors were explicitly corrected; 72% of the time, they were treated using recasts.

Teachers’ classroom practices may reveal their pedagogical preferences for the provision of form-focused corrective feedback. Schulz (2001) conducted a study of Colombian EFL and North American FL teacher preferences. Of the 120 Colombian EFL teachers surveyed, only 39% believed it necessary to correct student errors in a direct and explicit manner. Likewise, 30% of the U.S. foreign language instructors surveyed viewed explicit error treatment favorably.

In the same study, Schulz (2001) also explored student attitudes toward error treatment. The discrepancy between learners’ preferences and those of their teachers was notable. Of the 607 Colombian EFL students, 97% wanted to have grammatical errors corrected explicitly, and 90% of the 824 U.S. foreign language students also favored the direct correction of errors. This divergence in the perspective of the learners and their teachers—58% in the Colombian EFL context and 60% in the U.S. FL context—is problematic from a pedagogical perspective. Such a gap between student beliefs and teacher preferences on corrective feedback may negatively influence the learning process by suppressing learner motivation (Alalou, 2001).
It is important to note that learner preferences are not monolithic. In fact, research suggests that learner preferences may vary according to context and the type of error being treated. Lasagabaster and Sierra (2005) found that learners, instead of being corrected constantly, preferred a more context-sensitive approach to error treatment. Because context is a potentially powerful influence on learners’ preferences for the type of error treatment to be provided by the instructor, it must be taken into consideration when conducting research related to what second language learners prefer in the way of corrective feedback. From a pedagogical perspective, sensitivity to context is likely to benefit L2 instructors in helping them to recognize that error-treatment strategies should be in some way tailored to the individual learner characteristics in order to influence L2 learning (DeKeyser, 1993). If instructors know what their students prefer in terms of error treatment, L2 teachers might incorporate the student preferences at first and then gradually move toward what the instructor thinks are level-appropriate correction moves. Therefore, the focus of the present research effort is to identify adult ESL learners’ preferences regarding types of corrective feedback in relation to their language proficiency in the context of an Intensive English Program in the US.

The Present Study

Research Questions

In response to conflicting evidence regarding learners’ preferences vis-à-vis corrective feedback in the classroom (Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2005; Schulz, 2001), the present study addressed two related questions regarding learner preferences. The primary research question that motivated this study was: With reference to previous findings in the field, do students in the adult ESL context prefer explicit or implicit corrective feedback? The secondary question was: Does the proficiency level of the students play a role in determining their preferences on the type of error treatment they favor in grammar classes?

Setting and Participants

The study took place at an Intensive English Program affiliated with a major research university in the Southeastern US. An important distinction needs to be drawn here between IEPs and other academically oriented adult ESL programs, such as English for Academic Purposes (EAP) programs. Whereas IEP students are often highly literate in their first language (L1) and highly motivated, EAP students may reflect a greater range of L1 literacy and motivation. In addition, whereas IEP students are most often recent arrivals to an English-speaking environment, EAP students may be longtime residents of an English-speaking country and may have been educated as adolescents alongside native-speaking peers.

Data collection in the present study took place on two separate occasions. At both times, the IEP had a student population of more than 40, with 6 ESL instructors. The total number of participants was 87, with 45 females and 42 males. Because of the relatively small size of the IEP surveyed, the researchers did not use any sampling procedures but rather decided to include the entire student body in their data collection. All students present on the days the sur-
The survey was administered in the study, yielding a 100% response rate. For survey-based studies, Borg and Gall (1989) recommend a minimum of 20 observations per subgroup, a number that was attained by the researchers.

The participants represented 11 different first-language backgrounds: Korean \((n = 24)\), Arabic \((n = 13)\), Portuguese \((n = 13)\), Spanish \((n = 13)\), Mandarin \((n = 12)\), Vietnamese \((n = 5)\), German \((n = 2)\), Turkish \((n = 2)\), French \((n = 1)\), Italian \((n = 1)\), and Japanese \((n = 1)\). Additionally, the IEP divided students into four proficiency-level subgroups: Group 1 \((n = 20)\), beginning level, consists of learners whose paper-based TOEFL scores range from 300 to 380; Group 2 \((n = 22)\), low-intermediate level, has learners whose scores range from 400 to 450; Group 3 (high-intermediate, \(n = 25\)) scores range from 450 to 500, and Group 4 (advanced, \(n = 20\)), from 500 upward.

**The Instrument**

The instrument employed for data collection was a 10-item survey, designed to distinguish between learners’ preferences for implicit and explicit feedback (see Appendix). The approach taken in developing the instrument was a simple descriptive one, in that the focus was on describing the population’s views at a single point in time (Mertens, 2005). Sampling considerations were not critical because the entire student population of the IEP participated.

The survey comprised two parts: In the first part, the participants were given four possible scenarios representing four types of error treatment and were instructed to rate each type of feedback with regard to helpfulness, with 1 being *not helpful* and 4 *very helpful*. Implicit feedback, operationalized as recasts and clarification requests, was reflected in the first two items. Explicit feedback, operationalized as overt error treatment and metalinguistic explanation, represented the other two items in the survey. The second section, adapted from Schulz (2001), contained six items designed to look at both general learner attitudes toward error treatment and specific preferences for when and how such treatment should occur. For this section, participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement with statements about error treatment in the classroom, where 1 indicated *strong disagreement* and 4 *strong agreement*. A neutral category was not included out of concern that some learners, whose cultural backgrounds give preferentiality to indirect responses, might use such a category as a default response.

**Data-Collection Procedure**

The survey was distributed to the participants near the beginning of the session in the grammar classes. After the distribution of the instrument, the data collected were organized by feedback type and according to various characteristics of the participants (e.g., first language, placement level, and gender). The analysis of the data was conducted using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to generate descriptive statistics and correlation among survey items and learner characteristics with the purpose of identifying and interpreting the participants’ preferences for the provision of error treatment.
Findings

The responses to each individual survey item are discussed below, grouped according to the two major sections of the survey. The individual item responses are presented in aggregate and also in terms of the placement level groups of the participants.

Error Treatment Scenarios

As previously mentioned, the survey was divided into two parts. The first section required a response to four possible scenarios involving different types of error treatment.

Table 1
Feedback Scenarios

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number/Item</th>
<th>G1M</th>
<th>G2M</th>
<th>G3M</th>
<th>G4M</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Student: He didn’t write all the words in his notebook. Teacher: Oh, so he didn’t write all the words in his notebook.</td>
<td>2.167</td>
<td>2.455</td>
<td>3.000</td>
<td>2.917</td>
<td>2.634</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Student: He didn’t write all the words in his notebook. Teacher: What was that? [rising tone]</td>
<td>2.333</td>
<td>1.364</td>
<td>1.727</td>
<td>1.750</td>
<td>1.725</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Student: He didn’t write all the words in his notebook. Teacher: You don’t say, “He didn’t wrote.” You say, “He didn’t write.”</td>
<td>2.667</td>
<td>2.364</td>
<td>2.727</td>
<td>2.167</td>
<td>2.450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Student: He didn’t write all the words in his notebook. Teacher: Now, think about the verb here. What tense are you trying to use? What’s the rule for forming the simple past in negative statements?</td>
<td>3.833</td>
<td>3.000</td>
<td>3.545</td>
<td>3.417</td>
<td>3.400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Learners’ Attitudes and Preferences Toward Error Treatment

The second section of the survey, containing six items adapted from Schulz (2001), investigated learners’ attitudes toward error treatment in general and specific preferences for when and how they wanted to be corrected by their teachers or peers.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number/Item</th>
<th>G1M</th>
<th>G2M</th>
<th>G3M</th>
<th>G4M</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5. I learn a lot when my teacher corrects the errors I make in class.</td>
<td>3.667</td>
<td>3.363</td>
<td>3.181</td>
<td>3.333</td>
<td>3.350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Most students dislike it when they are corrected in class.</td>
<td>2.500</td>
<td>2.000</td>
<td>1.636</td>
<td>1.917</td>
<td>1.950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I like it when my fellow students correct the errors I make in class.</td>
<td>2.833</td>
<td>2.818</td>
<td>3.090</td>
<td>2.916</td>
<td>2.925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Teachers should not correct students’ pronunciation or grammatical errors in class unless these errors interfere with comprehension.</td>
<td>3.000</td>
<td>2.090</td>
<td>1.272</td>
<td>1.750</td>
<td>1.900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Most students like it when their teacher corrects their speaking.</td>
<td>3.500</td>
<td>3.090</td>
<td>3.454</td>
<td>3.166</td>
<td>3.200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I learn a lot when my teacher corrects the errors made by my fellow students in class.</td>
<td>3.166</td>
<td>3.363</td>
<td>3.272</td>
<td>3.166</td>
<td>3.250</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Analysis and Discussion**

**Error Treatment Scenarios**

In comparing the means for the learners’ responses to the four possible feedback scenarios, the following trends emerged. For recasts, it appears that the proficiency level of the students influenced their preferences. For example, learners in the lowest-proficiency group indicated that they found this procedure only a *little helpful*, whereas the two highest-proficiency groups both indicated that recasts were *helpful*. The fact that learners with higher proficiency held a more positive view of recasts does not exclude the usefulness of this treatment strategy for lower-level students. Rather, it is suggested that grammar teachers explain the strategy to the learners, indicating to them more explicitly how and why recasts are used and teaching them to listen for specific cues that indicate a recast is forthcoming.

For the second scenario, the overall response indicated that the learners found the use of rising intonation to be between *not helpful* and a *little helpful*. However, a surprising finding emerged in the responses to this scenario, as the low-level students found the use of rising intonation to be between a *little helpful* and *helpful*. This preference may indicate that the lower-level students considered the rising intonation to be a cue that a correction move was being made. This claim, however, needs to be investigated further using an instrument designed specifically to assess its validity. For the grammar teacher, it
appears that some students look for an external indicator from their peers or teacher informing them of the correctness of their speech.

Perhaps the most surprising finding is the learner responses to the use of direct correction. Anecdotal evidence suggests that adult second language learners desire direct, overt treatment of their errors. How many times have ESL teachers been asked by their students to correct errors whenever they occur? Indeed, adult learners may want to be corrected, but the findings of the present survey indicate that these learners do not want to be simply corrected but to understand why they are being corrected. In fact, even recasts were preferred to the use of overt error treatment without explanation.

The most favored error treatment method indicated by the learners’ responses was the use of metalinguistic commentary. Learners across the proficiency groups found this procedure to be either helpful or very helpful. It is perhaps surprising that the lowest-proficiency-level learners had the strongest preference for metalinguistic commentary. The implications of this finding may include the benefit of working from an actual example (e.g., a learner’s error) to a rule or principle, rather than working from the rule to the application, as is favored in traditional grammar instruction. Also, the importance of understanding why an error is being targeted for treatment emerges in this finding. The fact that the metalinguistic commentary procedure actively engages students in correcting their own errors may also be a contributing factor to the widespread preference for this method among the respondents.

To summarize, the comparison of the overall mean responses to the first four survey items revealed a general preference among the learners for explicit feedback, but, interestingly, also showed that they viewed recasts at least as positively as overt error correction, if not more positively. Such a positive view of recasts is in contrast with the results of Schulz’s (2001) study, but it is consistent with Lyster’s (2001) findings with respect to learners’ preferences in a French immersion context. The data also indicated that the clarification request was the least preferred method for error treatment.

Learners’ Attitudes and Preferences Toward Error Treatment

The second part of the survey targeted learners’ views on error treatment in general and specific preferences for the time and method of error treatment by their teachers or peers. Items 5 and 10 both addressed the extent to which students think they are learning when they or their peers are corrected by the teacher. The average responses for both items indicated that the respondents felt agreement to strong agreement, indicating that they found error treatment to be beneficial to their learning. There were no major discrepancies among the proficiency groups for these two items.

Items 6, 7, and 9 asked the students to reflect on whether they enjoy being corrected in class by their peers or by the teacher. Generally the respondents indicated that they like being corrected, and they believe students generally enjoy being corrected in class. However, a trend in the data suggests that the respondents preferred that teachers do the correcting rather than their peers, though they still accept peer correction as being acceptable (still indicating mild agreement).
For Item 8, the respondents were to select between fluency and accuracy in grammar classes. Differences among the groups were particularly tied to proficiency level for these responses. It appears that the more proficient the students were, the more they favored error treatment. Although the average response for this item was 1.90, which indicates disagreement, it is important to note that learners from Group 1 responded with stronger agreement than the learners in Group 3 or Group 4. This finding appears to suggest that the lower-level learners in this particular IEP context may have been more interested in the quantity of their output than in the quality of their speech. In other words, the findings may indicate that these learners perceived improving their fluency to be more beneficial than improving accuracy. It should be noted that this suggestion is tentative because it is in response to the learners’ selections on just one survey item. Because of the importance of the relationship between fluency and accuracy, this possible preference is worthy of further investigation to confirm whether or not proficiency level in fact plays a role in learners’ selection of error treatment strategies.

**Limitations of the Study**

Several limitations must be noted with respect to the present study. First, the context within which the survey was conducted was an Intensive English Program at a large university. As a result, the findings must be interpreted as applying specifically to the IEP context. Implications of the findings for other ESL contexts should be formed cautiously and supplemented by further research.

The number of participants is an additional limitation of the study. The reality of the IEP context is that in many cases, such programs are small, and class sizes may often be small in size as well (actually a pedagogical benefit of the IEP). The validity of the findings in the present study may be reconfirmed by administering the survey to additional IEP students in other programs. It is also important to reiterate and elaborate upon the distinction between the IEP and EAP contexts. Whereas IEPs are typically populated by students who are highly literate in their first language and who are exceptionally motivated, students in a typical EAP program represent a range of L1 literacy levels and may not exhibit the same high levels of motivation that are common among IEP students. In many cases, EAP students may be Generation 1.5 learners of English (Harklau, Losey, & Siegal, 1999), who have essentially grown up in an English-speaking environment and been educated alongside native-speaking peers. IEP students, by contrast, are generally more recent arrivals to an English-speaking environment. In order to strengthen the implications of the findings for contexts outside of the IEP, it is suggested that the survey used in the present study be administered in those different contexts.

A final limitation that warrants further discussion concerns the nature of the IEP grammar class. Within many IEP contexts, the grammar classroom holds a unique place in that students are strongly focused on language structure. In the present study, the survey was administered to students in an IEP grammar class, which limits the applicability of the findings. For future research, it may be beneficial to investigate whether or not the preferences of
IEP students for error treatment vary according to the type of class. It may be that, for example, oral communication or composition classes include activities that engender different student attitudes toward error treatment.

**Conclusion**

The primary research question that motivated the study was whether students in the context of an adult IEP program prefer explicit or implicit error treatment. The findings revealed that ESL learners in this context generally preferred explicit feedback. The least favored approach to error treatment was the clarification request, while the most favored type was the metalinguistic commentary on error. The responses suggest that the learners may have viewed explicit grammar rules as useful for understanding their errors in L2 production. The finding that direct correction was, surprisingly, less favored than the more implicit recasting approach may also indicate that learners may not appreciate taking on a passive role in the corrective discourse, regardless of the level of explicitness of the feedback. Perhaps learners in the IEP context do not simply want to be given the correct form but also want to understand the reasoning behind the correction. Moreover, the trend toward higher-profi-
ciency groups’ favoring the use of recasts may be attributed to those learners’ more sophisticated understanding of English structures, which enabled them to recognize the function of the recast. At the same time, recasts may not have been viewed as face-threatening by the adult IEP learners, in contrast with direct correction moves.

For the secondary research question, the study sought to determine whether the proficiency level of the students influenced their preferences on the type of error treatment they favored in grammar classes. The lower-profi-
ciency group appeared to have a preference for a focus on fluency, or quan-
tity of language production, versus a focus on accuracy, or quality of language production. This possible preference, indicated by the lower-profi-
ciency learners’ responses to Item 8, may have stemmed from an awareness of their need to produce as much language as possible in order to develop their lan-
guage proficiency. On the other hand, it is conceivable that the more advanced learners were simply more aware of the value of accuracy in their developing L2 system. For such learners, it may not be the quantity they are concerned with as much as the quality of their production. This group differ-
ence may not indicate a direct influence of proficiency level on whether or not learners want to be corrected. Rather, this finding may point to the extent to which learners at different proficiency levels favor more explicit grammar-
correction techniques.

The proficiency level of adult ESL learners seems to play a distinctive role in determining their preferences regarding the type of feedback provided by their teachers. The overall responses to the survey items indicated that all the students wanted to be corrected, but in different ways, according to their pro-
fi ciency levels. The lower-proficiency groups appeared to favor a focus on flu-
ency, or quantity of language production, whereas the higher-proficiency groups seemed to prefer a focus on accuracy, or quality of language produc-
tion. In this second-language learning context, ESL instructors should consid-
er their students’ proficiency levels when planning how to provide corrective feedback. This is not to suggest that instruction be driven completely by student preferences, as students may not always recognize how best to reach their full potential. However, it is important to understand and incorporate student expectations, particularly in the initial stages of learning, to increase learner motivation and interest in the class. To help them meet students’ expectations, one suggestion might be to encourage instructors of adult IEP students to foster fluency at the lower levels and increase demand for accuracy at the higher-proficiency levels. Doing so may help reduce the gap between learners’ expectations and teachers’ practices that has been observed in the past. The increased demand for accurate production among higher-proficiency-level students may also have a positive effect on preventing fossilization, as learners are pressed to reflect on their own developing system.

Because learner preferences for error treatment may vary from group to group across time, it is recommended that ESL teachers in IEP programs use survey-based investigation or other similar means to ascertain the preferences of their particular students regarding various error treatment strategies. Again, the data collected should not be the sole source of information used for planning classroom instruction, but they should be used as a tool to help reduce the gap between what learners expect and what teachers employ in the area of error treatment. The reduction of this discrepancy may be beneficial for the learning process and could enhance the efforts of both teachers and students in adult IEP contexts.

**Future Directions for Research**

The limitations of the present study discussed earlier point to several additional implications for further research. First, the survey can be administered to a larger sampling of IEP students to reconfirm the validity of the findings and to determine whether or not learners in similar IEP programs at different institutions express the same preferences for error treatment. Another possible and important direction should be the administration of the survey to diverse adult ESL populations (e.g., adult EAP students, learners in community-based ESL programs, etc.). Finally, to determine whether learners’ preferences for error treatment change based on the types of activities in which they are involved, the survey may be adapted to reflect different types of activities (e.g., a formal presentation versus an open class discussion). Further, the survey may be administered to students in different types of classrooms (e.g., composition, reading, oral communication classes) to determine whether the nature of the class affects student preferences regarding error treatment.

The population of adult ESL learners is not homogenous, so it is not beneficial to attempt to prescribe a “one size fits all” approach to error treatment. Consequently, ESL teachers in general, and those who work in Intensive English Programs in particular, are encouraged to adopt the survey used in the present study as a starting point for their own research. Teachers with small class sizes may be especially able to shift focus from describing what students prefer to explaining why students hold certain preferences. Suggestions for such research
include self-reflection, think-aloud protocols, focus groups, interviews, and so forth, which explore students’ preferences for error treatment from different angles, moving from description to explanation. Such qualitative efforts should supplement the findings suggested in the present study, as well as in other quantitative, survey-based research, thus providing a more comprehensive understanding of learner preferences vis-à-vis error treatment.

**Authors**

*An assistant professor of ESL at Georgia Gwinnett College in Lawrenceville, GA, Justin Jernigan holds a PhD in Multilingual/Multicultural Education from Florida State University (FSU). He has taught ESL and EFL for more than a decade, and he has also taught Applied Linguistics and TESOL methods courses.*

*An assistant professor in TESOL at the University of Central Florida (UCF), Florin Mihai holds a PhD in Multicultural/Multilingual Education from Florida State University (FSU). He has taught TESOL courses at FSU and UCF as well as English language classes in the US and abroad.*

**References**


**Appendix**
Survey of Perceptions Concerning Grammar Instruction and Corrective Feedback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First language</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Years of English study</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Section I. Read the following dialogues between a teacher and student in an English grammar class. In each dialogue, the student makes a grammar error and the teacher responds to the mistake. Which response from the teacher do you think is the most helpful for the student? Please rate each response.

1. Student: He didn’t wrote all the words in his notebook.
   Teacher: Oh, so he didn’t write all the words in his notebook.
   (1) Not Helpful (2) A Little Helpful (3) Helpful (4) Very Helpful

2. Student: He didn’t wrote all the words in his notebook.
   Teacher: What was that? [rising tone]
   (1) Not Helpful (2) A Little Helpful (3) Helpful (4) Very Helpful

3. Student: He didn’t wrote all the words in my notebook.
   Teacher: You don’t say, “He didn’t wrote.” You say, “He didn’t write.”
   (1) Not Helpful (2) A Little Helpful (3) Helpful (4) Very Helpful

4. Student: He didn’t wrote all the words in his notebook.
   Teacher: Now, think about the verb here. What tense are you trying to use? What’s the rule for forming the simple past in negative statements?
   (1) Not Helpful (2) A Little Helpful (3) Helpful (4) Very Helpful

Section II. For each item, please select one answer.

5. **I learn a lot when my teacher corrects the errors I make in class.**
   (1) Strongly Disagree (2) Disagree (3) Agree (4) Strongly Agree

6. **Most students dislike it when they are corrected in class.**
   (1) Strongly Disagree (2) Disagree (3) Agree (4) Strongly Agree
7. I like it when my fellow students correct the errors I make in class.
   (1) Strongly Disagree  (2) Disagree  (3) Agree  (4) Strongly Agree

8. Teachers should not correct students’ pronunciation or grammatical errors in class unless these errors interfere with comprehension.
   (1) Strongly Disagree  (2) Disagree  (3) Agree  (4) Strongly Agree

9. Most students like it when their teacher corrects their speaking.
   (1) Strongly Disagree  (2) Disagree  (3) Agree  (4) Strongly Agree

10. I learn a lot when my teacher corrects the errors made by my fellow students in class.
    (1) Strongly Disagree  (2) Disagree  (3) Agree  (4) Strongly Agree