SLS 750: ERROR CORRECTION

TH 10:30-11:45, Moore Hall 226

Instructor: Lourdes Ortega
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(please use sign-up sheet on my office door or e-mail to schedule appointment first)

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Note: *The course syllabus provides a general plan for the course; modifications are likely to be necessary and will be implemented as a result of students' needs and classroom life.*

Course Description

Correcting language errors in students' speech and writing is thought to be a central part of every teacher's job, a professional duty that many language teachers excel in and that most language students expect. However, if one turns to the research for advice, the evidence is seemingly contradictory, at best, and dismaying at worst: For every study that shows positive effects for error correction, there is another study that reports no effects at all. In addition, error correction is extremely time consuming for most teachers and can be seriously demotivating for many students. Finally, it is unclear what the value and purpose of error correction might be in communication-oriented and content-based curricula, as well as in many contexts for L2 learning where nativeness is not a desired outcome.

In this seminar, we will attempt to elucidate some of these complex issues. We will examine a selection of the empirical, theoretical, and educational literature that addresses error correction in L2 classrooms, including in speaking and writing, and in traditional face-to-face formats and in technology-mediated formats.

The readings will be negotiated among members of the class, hopefully to represent a wide range of interests. They will speak to fundamental but difficult questions such as: Is accuracy a worthwhile pursuit in second language teaching? Is error correction worth the time investment and the affective risk? What, how, and when should we correct our students' language?

Seminar participants will design and pilot research on some aspect of error correction, including issues of effectiveness (the how and when), descriptive issues about the nature of errors (the what), and social, educational, or affective dimensions (the why's) of error correction in L2 classrooms.

Learning Objectives

- To develop an expert and personally relevant understanding of error correction as a field of study and as a professional practice;
- To become familiar with theories, methods, and findings in at least one area of error correction. For example: educational issues regarding motivation and affective variables; effectiveness in boosting accuracy; philosophical and ideological issues regarding the value of nativelike (or other) norms; error correction in speaking or in writing, in technology-mediated instruction, in teacher-fronted exchanges, and so on;
- To develop your ability to judge claims and evidence about error correction meaningfully;
- To develop your capacity to handle error correction in your own teaching successfully;
- To support you through the process of conducting and reporting on a research project that explores a problem in error correction of your choice (collaborative projects are welcome).

Methods of Instruction

The course will be conducted via informal lectures by the instructor and via student contributions:

- in whole-class and small group discussion,
- through our electronic forum, the class email list (sls750-l@hawaii.edu),
- through our class blog (http://sls750f07.blogspot.com/),
- and through our class wiki, http://sls750feedback.wikispaces.com/

I expect from students that they make every effort to contribute meaningfully to planned and spontaneous discussions and that they consciously create and exploit opportunities for personally relevant learning.

Instructional Materials

***Reading packet*:**
A set of readings will be made available to students for purchase from *Professional Image*, 2633 S. King St. (close to King/University intersection), but only after we have had a chance to negotiate what to read and in what order. Call to check availability first (phone: 973-6599).

The following two initial readings will be distributed electronically:

Ortega, L. (in preparation). Chapter 4: The linguistic environment. In *Understanding Second Language Acquisition*. London: Arnold.

Hyland, K., & Hyland, F. (2006). State-of-the-art article: Feedback on second language students' writing. *Language Teaching*, *39*, 83-101.

Course Requirements and Grading

Here is an overview of the requirements and how grading works:

Requirement	Specifics	Breakdown	Total grade
Attendance & prep.	Come to class prepared to discuss the readings		
Class blog	(a) Join the class blog and post your profile	2.5%	
	(b) Post an evaluation of TWO readings to help assemble the reading packet (8/30 & 9/4)	5%	
	(c) Post a comment in response to 4 messages (minimum) during the semester	2.5%	**10%**
Reflection & analysis	Post a reflection on a week's class meeting, or about *Research Programs in Error Correction* (once)		**10%**
Wiki collective writing	Contribute to creating a wiki on Error Correction. This is an experimental task for the seminar, but we will try to make it work and negotiate its shape and grading together		**15%**
Research paper	Post on Wiki by week 4, Thursday 9/13: Bibliography on some specific aspect of EC	10%	
	Due week 6, Tuesday 9/25: Proposal	10%	
	Due week 10, Tuesday 10/23&25: Oral report	10%	
	Due Week 14, Tuesday 11/20: 1st Draft	10%	
	Due Wednesday 12/12, 5:00pm: Final Paper	25%	**65%**
TOTAL			**100%**

I welcome email communication to deal promptly with any questions or queries that may rise as you work on the course. All assignments should be submitted both electronically and in hard copy.

1. ATTENDANCE AND PREPARATION (no grade, excellent performance expected)

Come to class prepared to discuss the readings and contribute to the topics. Perfect attendance is expected. Please discuss with me openly and in advance any problems with class preparation or attendance that you may encounter during the semester and we'll try to find a solution. But note that I reserve the right to lower grade if you incur more than two absences during the semester.

2. CLASS BLOG: Interact on our topic through the class blog (10%)

a. **Join the class blog and post your profile:** Go to the class blog http://sls750f07.blogspot.com/ and join as an author, then post your profile.
b. **Post an evaluation of TWO of the readings we are considering to do over the semester:** Guidelines to be discussed in class. Please post one evaluation on Thursday 8/30 of week 2 and the other on Tuesday 9/4 of week 3. The purpose is to help assemble the reading packet through broad reading and negotiation of interests.
c. **Post a comment** in response to 4 messages (minimum) during the semester.

3. REFLECTION AND ANALYSIS: Posting once a semester only (10%)

There are two options here (involving one single posting in the semester), to choose one: → Class meeting reflection: You will post a message to both summarize and reflect on insights and conundrums derived from our class meetings for ONE WEEK during the semester. The purpose is to keep a public record of what transpires in class each week and to help place class discussions within the context of the entire course. → ***Research Programs in Error Correction*;** Students who choose this option will post a message about a research program which seems to be coherent enough to be considered central to the topic of error correction. The purpose is to help everyone in our class become familiar with the intellectual map of error correction as an area of study.

4. CREATING A WIKI ON ERROR CORRECTION: Share responsibility for creating a wiki as a class on the topic of this seminar (15%)

Because wikis are platforms for collective writing, we will have to plan and negotiate how we will handle this assignment. However, I feel there is great potential in letting the seminar create a site that examines the topic of error correction in as many directions as we find fit as a class. I am willing to weigh this assignment or shape it differently, depending on how things evolve and what students want to do. We may even have to give up and eliminate it from the course, if it is not working for us. The space we can use is: http://sls750feedback.wikispaces.com/

5. RESEARCH PAPER IN FOUR INSTALLMENTS: Develop a research bibliography and write a research proposal, to be reworked and expanded into an interim draft, which will be further developed into a final research paper. GROUP PROJECTS ARE GREATLY ENCOURAGED (65%)

Feedback-plus-grade option: Each of the four submissions will be evaluated with a letter grade (10%+10%+15%+30%).
Grade-at-the-end-only option: You have the option to ask to be graded only at the end of the semester on the final paper. In that case, I will give you feedback without a grade on each installment, and a *grade* on your *final paper* which will weigh 65% towards your course grade.

All research carried out in HELP or ELI needs to be compliant with their research conduct policies:

- ELI: first read http://www.hawaii.edu/eli/research/index.html
  and only then contact the director, Kenton Harsch < kenton@hawaii.edu >
- HELP: first read: http://www.hawaii.edu/sls/HELPresearchguidelines.html
  and only then contact the director, Steve Jacques < jacques@hawaii.edu >

In addition, remember that if your research involves human subjects (e.g., students –including your own!— or teachers –including your friends and colleagues!) and you think you may eventually wish to *either publish or even just present* the research outside the course context in which it began, you will need to undergo a review with the UH Human Subjects Committee and Institutional Research Board's (IRB) in order to attain the status "Exempt."

This is true regardless of where the research is conducted: at UH, somewhere else in the U.S., or anywhere abroad. If it is UH-affiliated research, it needs to be approved by UH officials. You can read more at: http://www.hawaii.edu/irb/html/cat_exem.htm

The fulfillment of the requirement of each submission can range in grade, as follows:

A+ (100-96)	Outstanding quality. The content coverage, research skills, and academic writing capabilities demonstrated in the paper are through, mature, and sophisticated.
A (95-94)	Excellent quality. The paper shows excellence in at least two or three areas: content, research skills, academic writing ability.
A- (93-90)	Fair-only quality. The paper shows competent research skills, good development of ideas, and at least good writing skills. It is, however, towards the low side of quality given what is expected of graduate-level work.
B+ (89-85)	The paper is below what is expected of graduate work. It shows only incipient research skills and/or minimally appropriate writing skills.

Course Expectations

-Your grade in the course will be a combination of criterion-referenced and individual-referenced assessment. I will be looking at your semester-long progress regarding research skills, adept academic writing, and development of discipline-specific knowledge (the individual-referenced part of the assessment), and I will evaluate the extent to which you have reached the learning objectives stated in this syllabus (the criterion-referenced part of the assessment). I will not compare the quality of your performance to that of other students in the class (i.e., I do not give grades by spreading student performances on a curve).

- What I am looking for in your performance is clear evidence of intellectual commitment (i.e., engaged curiosity) and academic effort (i.e., hard work) during the semester, and evidence of professional growth. If you are an MA student, this may mean a changed perspective on L2 teaching, based on what research and educational writings tell us our students can and cannot do when we correct their L2; if you are an Advanced Graduate Certificate or doctoral student, that may mean growth in your capacity to contribute original and useful research on the learning and teaching of second languages.

-I encourage you to talk to me regularly (either email or face-to-face) to get feedback on your progress in the course and to gain a sense for how what you are doing in 750 relates to other courses and to your long-term goals as a teacher and/or a researcher.

-The deadlines in our course exist to help you stay focused and improve your learning processes. If you have reasonable reasons for asking for an extension on a deadline, please immediately discuss it with me so we can negotiate a satisfactory solution.

SLS 650: Second Language Acquisition (Tentative Course Schedule)

	Topics	Readings and assignments
Week 1 August 21 August 23	Introduction to the course & field	Ortega (in prep) Chapter 4 (environment & error correction)
Week 2 August 28 August 30		Hyland & Hyland (2006-LT) error correction in L2 writing **Blog posting 1: Evaluation of reading 1 on 8/30** (to help assemble reading packet)
Week 3 September 4 September 6		**Blog posting 1: Evaluation of reading 2 on 9/4** (to help assemble reading packet)
Week 4 September 11 [September 13]	Lourdes in Japan for SSLW	**Research Bibliography on wiki** due Tuesday 13
Week 5 September 18 [September 20] TBLT Conference begins (Plenaries by Van den Branden, Robinson & Skehan, and Samuda)		
Week 6 September 25 September 27		
Week 7 October 2 October 4	Recasts	Nicholas et al. (2001), R. Ellis & Sheen (2006)
Week 8 October 9 October 11	No readings	**Oral reports updating on projects both days** **Research Proposal** due Sunday 14th
Week 9 October 16 October 18	No readings	**Oral reports updating on projects both days**
Week 10 October 23 October 25	CA & Repair	Houser (2005), Koshik (2002) Hall (in press)
Week 11 October 30 November 1	Sociocultural theory & feedback	T: Aljaafreh & Lantolf (1994), Nassaji & Swain (2000), Nabei & Swain (2002) [ENFRS] Th: de Guerrero & Villamil (1994) & (2000)
Week 12 November 6 November 8	L2 writing & error correction	T: Hyland (1998), Hyland (2003), Hyland & Hyland (2006) Th: Bitchener et al. (2005), Ferris (2004)
Week ☺ November 13 November 15	Educational concerns in error correction	T: Guénette (2007), Lasagabaster & Sierra (2005) Th: Seidlhofer (2001), Elizabeth Ellis (2006)
Week 14 November 20	No readings	**Oral reports & Interim draft** due Tuesday 20th
November 22-25 Thanksgiving		
Week 15 November 27 November 29	EC in meta-analyses	Russell & Spada (2006), Truscott (in press) Keck et al. (2006), Mackey & Goo (2007), Hattie (2007) Kim et al. (submitted)
Week 16		

December 4 December 6	Presentation of students' projects	**Final paper** due December 12th by 5:00pm, email submission (plus hard copy to be delivered in my box)

Initial bibliography on Error Correction

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