

UNIVERSITY OF LATVIA  
FACULTY OF MODERN LANGUAGES  
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH STUDIES

**DEVELOPING SECONDARY SCHOOL LEARNERS'  
SPOKEN ACCURACY**

**VIDUSSKOLĒNU MUTVĀRDU PRECIZITĀTES  
VEICINĀŠANA**

DIPLOMA PAPER

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RIGA 2008

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The author of the present diploma paper is grateful to group C315 and C316 students at the private language school “Pygmalion” who have been very responsive in the course of the pilot study; the office staff of “Pygmalion”, especially Diana Kirillova, for their support; to Assoc. prof., Dr. Paed. Solveiga Ozoliņa who has been very helpful, supportive and caring during the process of writing this diploma paper.

## ANOTĀCIJA

Diplomdarbā apskatīta apzināšanās veicinošo vingrinājumu un kļūdu labošanas paņēmieni loma, veicinot vidusskolēnu mutvārdu precizitāti. Darbības pētījumā tika atklāts, ka neraugoties uz to, ka mutvārdu precizitāte nav uzlabojusies visos spontānās saskarsmes gadījumos, skolēni ir iemācījušies kontrolēt savu runu. Viņu runa ir kļuvusi precīzāka un pareizāka uzdevumu, kas ir virzīti uz mutvārdu precizitātes veicināšanu, pildīšanas rezultātā. Viens no svarīgākajiem pētījuma atklājumiem ir tas, ka, ja visi skaidrojumi un kļūdu labošana noved pie skolēna iekšējās valodas pārveidošanās, skolēns apgūst patstāvību mācīšanās procesā. Skolēnu individuālā atbildība par viņu mācīšanās iznākumu palielinās, kad viņi apzinās, ka gramatiskajai kompetencei ir izšķiroša loma efektīvā saziņā.

Atslēgvārdi:

1. mutvārdu precizitāte
2. apzināšanās veicinošie vingrinājumi
3. kļūdu labošanas paņēmieni
4. savas runas kontrole
5. patstāvība mācīšanās procesā
6. darbības pētījums

## **ABSTRACT**

The present diploma paper discusses the role of consciousness-raising activities and corrective techniques in developing the secondary school learners' spoken accuracy. The action research has revealed that although accuracy itself has not improved in all cases of spontaneous communication, the students have learnt to monitor their own output. Their speech has become more correct as a result of performing accuracy tasks. One of the important findings of the research is that if all explanation and correction initiates the restructuring of the learner's interlanguage, the learner becomes more independent. The learners' individual responsibility for their own learning increases when they are aware of the grammatical competence being crucial for effective communication.

### Keywords:

1. spoken accuracy
2. consciousness-raising activities
3. the techniques of error correction
4. self-monitoring
5. learner independence
6. action research

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## INTRODUCTION

The theme of the present diploma paper has been chosen due to practical reasons: the author of the diploma paper works at a private language school and often deals with learners whose language use is poor, in particular, the grammatical competence. Such learners often come to fee-paying language schools with a purpose of bringing their knowledge up to the level of being able to pass the secondary school exam. Therefore, the task of the teacher is within a limited time period (usually one school year) to find the most efficient ways of helping the learners to understand how to apply grammar rules in practice in order to express themselves correctly in any situation.

Thus, the **goal** of the present diploma paper is to find the most efficient techniques to improve learners' accuracy in spoken English.

In the course of the pilot study it has been discovered that alongside the wish and intention to study English, the target population do not realise that English lessons are aimed at practising and improving the language (in the sense of not only saying something, but saying it correctly without putting the strain on the listener). It means that the task of the teacher is to show why the school students need accurate English and to prove that accuracy, and not only fluency, is essential for successful communication without misunderstanding.

When learners are aware of how structures are formed in the language and when they analyse the reasons for using certain grammatical and vocabulary items, the correctness of their speech increases. If the results of the present research show that developing learners' analytical skills leads to increasing accuracy in speaking, then it will be possible to assert that the results might be interesting for other teachers of English as well, thus illustrating the significance of the findings.

The **hypothesis** of the diploma paper is as follows: learners' awareness of the importance of accuracy in speaking and the wish to become efficient speakers lead to increased individual responsibility for their own learning, as a result promoting the development of accuracy.

To prove the hypothesis, the following **research questions** have been put forward:

- whether the learners' responsibility is caused by their awareness of the importance of being grammatically correct;
- whether the application of consciousness-raising instruction improves the learners' spoken accuracy;
- whether the ways of correcting mistakes influence the learners' ability to recognize and avoid mistakes.

In order to successfully carry out the research, the **enabling objectives** include:

- studying relevant theoretical literature on speaking skills;
- investigating the role of accuracy in speaking;
- designing and/or adapting activities aimed at developing the learners' accuracy in speaking and piloting them in the classroom;
- drawing relevant conclusions.

The research has been carried out at “Pygmalion”, a private language school in Riga. The **participants of the study** are 15 learners of English, aged 13-18, at the pre-intermediate level divided into two groups (seven and eight people). The lessons, 90 minutes each, are conducted twice a week in the afternoons. The course book “Total English Pre-Intermediate”, additional teaching materials, audio and video recordings, the Internet resources are at the disposal of the teacher, therefore it can be assumed that teaching and learning take place in favourable conditions. A mixed age group in this case is regarded as an additional tool for learning rather than a problem, because older students can explain something to younger students, which brings some elements of cooperative and task-based learning into the course.

**Action research** has been chosen as the most appropriate **method of research**, because it is oriented towards solving the existing problems occurring in the language classroom. Firstly, the problem was stated – the students' lack of accuracy in fairly fluent speaking. Secondly, the analysis of the literature on speaking skills has led to the understanding of what is essential for developing accuracy and, as a result, a set of activities have been selected or adapted, the newly designed activities being constantly added to this set. These actions are being observed and documented, and, finally, the analysis of the obtained data will show whether the learners have made progress in this area.

The **research tools** for the present paper are classroom observation (focused on both the teacher and the learners), questionnaires, the analysis of the transcripts of the learners' speech and notes taken down during their speaking, samples of writing (because writing demonstrates the level of accuracy the student possesses), tests. The data collected will be both qualitative and quantitative, they will be presented in tables and diagrams. The findings of the present research are intended to be practically applied in further work.

**Chapter 1** contains the literature review on the role of the grammatical competence in accuracy; the application of consciousness-raising instruction; the role of corrective techniques for developing students' spoken accuracy. **Chapter 2** provides the description and analysis of the teaching-learning process at school “Pygmalion”; the findings and conclusions drawn in the course of the pilot study.

# CHAPTER 1

## THE WAYS AND MEANS OF FACILITATING SECONDARY SCHOOL LEARNERS' SPOKEN ACCURACY

In order to successfully conduct the present study it is important to understand the meaning of the notion 'accuracy' and the role of the grammatical competence in a speaker's communicative competence. Language awareness as part of being a competent speaker can be developed by means of consciousness-raising activities and appropriate corrective techniques. In the present chapter, it will be discussed which factors play an important role in developing spoken accuracy.

### 1.1. Definitions of Accuracy and Fluency

According to Brumfit,

The distinction between accuracy and fluency is essentially a methodological distinction, rather than one in psychology or linguistics. That is to say, it is a division which may have value to teachers in decision making about the content of lessons and the distribution of time between various types of activity [Brumfit 1994:52].

Brumfit's conclusion is that the learner is expected to focus on accuracy if his/her output is being evaluated, and to focus on fluency if the language is needed for real communication purposes [ibid.:51]. However, this neither means that accuracy is barely a measure for testing and fluency is a tool for communicating, nor that accuracy is inferior to fluency. "There is a definite role for accuracy work in language teaching, but [...] its function is quite different from that of fluency work, and its over-use will impede successful language development" [ibid.:52].

The author of the present diploma paper agrees with Brumfit that the notion of accuracy "embraces appropriacy as well" [ibid.:53]. The author of the diploma paper thinks that in some cases the acceptable level of accuracy may be higher or lower if it does not lead to failure in communication. However, the aim of this investigation is to find efficient techniques for developing accuracy, because the present level of accuracy of the target population is unsatisfactory for successful communication in the target language.

The definitions of accuracy and fluency by such authors as Harmer (2004), Gower, Phillips, Walters (2005), Thornbury (2006) are presented below.

The authors of the handbook for the learners of English, published by the BBC, state that "speaking **accurately** means that you speak without errors of grammar and vocabulary"

[Online 1]. In contrast with accuracy, “**fluency** means being able to communicate your ideas without having to stop and think too much about what you are saying” [ibid]. This view on the two notions is rather straightforward and easy to understand for learners. It promises the learners that unpleasant situations they are often afraid of, such as errors and extended pauses, will not happen if they master the two aspects.

The authors of the handbook for teachers in training offer their definitions: “**accuracy** – the ability to produce grammatically correct sentences” and “**fluency** – the features which give the speech the qualities of being natural, including effective pausing, rhythms and intonation. The ability to produce written or spoken language with ease, to communicate effectively and smoothly, though not necessarily perfect grammar or pronunciation” [Gower, Phillips, Walters 2005:209-210]. These definitions are ‘emotionally positive’ which can positively affect the teaching-learning process in case the teacher absorbs this positive attitude and brings it into his/her practice.

According to Thornbury’s definition, “**accuracy** is the extent to which a learner’s use of a second language conforms to the rules of the language. This is usually measured in terms of grammatical accuracy [...]. It is also possible to talk about accuracy of vocabulary use [...], and of pronunciation as well” [Thornbury 2006a:2]. It should be stressed here that the present research is aimed at developing *grammatical accuracy*, rather than lexical and phonological accuracy. There are two reasons for that: firstly, the pre-intermediate level itself does not suggest much difficulty in mastering lexis, secondly, the students’ pronunciation and the knowledge of vocabulary are satisfactory.

However, a learner’s level of accuracy may vary from situation to situation: accuracy can be higher in writing but lower in speaking, when it is essential to maintain high speed of talking. As the definition states, “**fluency** is primarily the ability to produce and maintain speech in real time” [Thornbury 2006a:82]. Thus, fluency can become an obstacle on the way to accuracy.

Fluency is sometimes contrasted with accuracy, as it is mentioned by Gower, Phillips and Walters; Thornbury also points out this contrast. Nevertheless, it is not possible to separate one from another, because both of them are always present in speech, but one may sometimes be paid more attention to than the other. The authors of the handbook for the learners of English mention that preoccupation with being highly accurate leads to feeling shy in case of errors and losing fluency, as a result, one “might not be able to have a conversation” [Online 1]. On the other hand, if one talks much and takes no notice of the errors he/she makes, it is possible to “find that it is difficult to make others understand your

ideas” [Online 1]. So, both accuracy and fluency are integral parts of communicative competence and the lack of any of them leads to inability to communicate.

The following observation by the author of the present research can illustrate accuracy and fluency being affected by each other. As a rule, the elementary students’ speech becomes more accurate by the end of the course. At the same time, some of the students become very cautious and sometimes refuse to speak at all, probably, as they admit, due to being afraid of errors. (This is more typical of adult learners, though.)

The “Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment” (further in the text – CEFR) defines the **grammatical accuracy** of a level C2 speaker by the following: “Maintains consistent grammatical control of complex language, even while attention is otherwise engaged (e.g. in forward planning, in monitoring others’ reactions)” [CEFR 2001:114]. In fact, this definition suggests that the highest level of mastery of a foreign language is reflected in accuracy, fluency and complexity being tightly bound.

**Fluency** does not mean purely the speed of talking, and, as Thornbury points out, it is “more to do with the length of the ‘run’ – the more words you can put together without pausing, the more fluent you are” [Thornbury 2000:3]. On the one hand, long pieces of talking can consist of simple language, but on the other hand, the longer one speaks the more complex his/her speech is, therefore the higher the risk of making mistakes. Therefore, it is correct to say that **complexity** is one of factors influencing accuracy. “A learner’s language is complex if it uses structures more typical of advanced learners than of lower level learners. A learner may be both accurate and fluent, but if their output consists of very simple sentences, they cannot really be said to be advanced” [Thornbury 2006a:40].

Hence, the level of competence reveals itself in complexity of speech as well as in being fluent and accurate. According to Harmer, **accuracy** is a feature of a certain level of competence: “advanced students are those who can read unsimplified fact and fiction [...]” and “[upper intermediate students] may not have achieved the accuracy or depth of knowledge which their advanced colleagues have acquired” [Harmer 2004:12]. Unlike the definitions above, in which a native speaker’s level of accuracy is the standard, the message here is that the level of accuracy should be measured within the level where the learner is currently placed. If an elementary student tries to use the language more typical of an advanced student, it will be full of errors, thus inaccurate, whereas if an elementary student speaks according to his/her level it may be accurate.

The present research is aimed at finding a solution for improving spoken accuracy of the students whose range of items (grammatical, lexical, functional) that have been covered in

the study process is wide enough to be referred to as ‘the pre-intermediate’, but whose level of accuracy is not adequate for the pre-intermediate level.

The main challenge for the author of the present paper is to change the students’ attitude to improving accuracy. The learners are often satisfied with being able to convey their thoughts approximately, rather than exactly. This is the reason why the author of the present research works on promoting her learners’ view of accuracy as one of the prerequisites for expressing their thoughts precisely. Therefore, in the course of the present research, activities deployed at lessons are aimed at increasing accuracy up to the level typical of the pre-intermediate level.

Hopefully, this will eventually increase the learners’ **language and communicative awareness**, as it is defined by the CEFR: “Sensitivity to language and language use, involving knowledge and understanding of the principles according to which languages are organised and used, enables new experience to be assimilated into an ordered framework and welcomed as an enrichment” [CEFR 2001:107].

## 1.2. Grammatical Competence as Basis for Accuracy

The CEFR states that “**communicative competence** in its narrower sense has the following components: linguistic competences, sociolinguistic competences, pragmatic competences” [CEFR 2001:108].

The linguistic competences include: “lexical competence; grammatical competence; semantic competence; phonological competence; orthographic competence; orthoepic competence” [ibid.:109].

In general, the lexical competence – “knowledge of, and ability to use, the vocabulary of a language” [ibid.:110] – of the participants of the present research is developed adequately, therefore, when it is possible to communicate on a lexical level or use standard phrases, no problem or misunderstanding arises. However, once it is required to express meaning in a more complicated form, it is often impossible due to inability to apply grammar (both rules and structures). At this point, the grammatical competence of a speaker is as essential as the lexical competence. As Nunan writes with reference to Wilkins, “inadequate knowledge of grammar would severely constrain linguistic creativity and limit the capacity for communication” [Nunan 1995a:152].

The present study is mainly focused on the development of the **grammatical competence** as a part of the linguistic competence.

Formally, the grammar of a language may be seen as the set of principles governing the assembly of elements into meaningful labelled and bracketed strings (sentences). Grammatical competence is the ability to understand and express meaning by producing and recognising well-formed phrases and sentences in accordance with these principles (as opposed to memorising and reproducing them as fixed formulae) [CEFR 2001:112-113].

At this point it is necessary to stress that developing the grammatical competence in terms of the present study does not mean an attempt to achieve the highest level of competence. The postgraduate agrees with Krashen's point of view that "our goal is to produce optimal Monitor-users, performers who can use grammar as a supplement to acquisition in situations where grammar use is appropriate" [Krashen, Terrell 1994:57].

A successful learner of a language possesses communicative competence. This means that a person's knowledge about the language is reflected in his/her performance while using the language. In other words, "the gap between what learners *know* and what they *can* do" [Thornbury 2006a:38] becomes as narrow as possible. Communicative competence is a broad notion which describes "what you know in order to communicate effectively" [ibid.:37]. It implies, in particular, that the speaker conforms to the requirements of *appropriacy* – knowing *how* to speak in *which* situations.

Unfortunately, some learners do not always pay due attention to appropriacy, and understand communicative competence barely as using all means (lexis, gestures, sound imitation, etc.) to convey meaning. It is obvious that such learners value the ability to say *something* higher than the ability to say it *correctly*. However, when the ability to communicate plainly on the lexical level makes a conversation inefficient, the need for grammar with its opportunities to create new meanings becomes urgent.

Accuracy work involves much grammar practice, which is not always welcomed by the students for it seems boring and distant from the needs of the students who mainly wish to enhance their vocabulary. However, the attitude to learning grammar changes when consciousness-raising techniques are applied. The following subchapter will explicate the idea of consciousness-raising instruction.

### **1.3. Consciousness-Raising and Language Awareness**

The author of this diploma paper thinks that in order to obtain a high level of grammatical competence, a person must have a well-developed ability to notice elements of structures, analyse and apply grammar rules correctly, to monitor his/her own speech and self-correct when needed. In other words, a skilled speaker of a foreign language possesses **language awareness** – "an ability to contemplate metacognitively a language over which one

already has a degree of skilled control and about which one will therefore have developed a coherent set of intuitions” [James 1998:86].

As the author of this investigation believes, language awareness is a product of learning, or, to be more precise, the product of controlled, conscious acquisition. The idea advocated in the present research is that a language is best learnt when deploying **consciousness-raising** techniques. The main distinction of consciousness-raising is that “there is much greater attention paid to form-function relationship. It also attempts to situate the grammatical structures and elements in question with a broader discursual context” [Nunan 1995a:149].

It has been discovered that learning does not occur in a linear sequence. According to Nunan, “learning is an organic process characterised by backsliding, leaps in competence, interaction between grammatical elements, etc.” [ibid.:148]. Learning is characterised by interaction of numerous items, which is sometimes damaging for the knowledge which has not been internalised yet. As a result, learners are incapable of using the items correctly and the period of correct use is followed by a period of erroneous use of these items. Of course, this period is followed by a period of correct use again, if further learning occurs.

Thornbury describes the process of learning using the term ‘**U-shaped learning curve**’ [Thornbury 2005b:46]. At the early stage of learning, attempts to say something are often *wrong*; later, when the learners operate with more information, they restructure their knowledge and start speaking *correctly*; again later, when the learners have access to even more information, they restructure their knowledge once again and may return to using *wrong* forms; finally, the learners restructure their knowledge and become *correct* in their utterances.

As it seems to the author of the present paper, the knowledge about the organic nature of learning lowers the stress level of the teacher’s work. The teacher should not worry if the learners do not acquire something immediately. Nevertheless, successful teaching should *cause restructuring* of the learner’s grammatical system and improving his/her **interlanguage** – “the version of the language which a learner has at any stage of development, and which is continually reshaped as he or she aims towards full mastery” [Harmer 2005:100].

As experts in the field of ELT (Nunan (1995), James (1998), Thornbury (2005) and others) believe, teaching something does not necessarily mean that it will be learnt. In general, “reduced expectations”, as Thornbury (2005) puts it, are typical of consciousness-raising. Instead of teaching learners to immediately produce accurate utterances, the task of **consciousness-raising** instruction is “to provide the kind of data that is likely to become intake, which, when the time is right, will have the effect of triggering the restructuring of the learner’s mental grammar” [Thornbury 2005b:38].

Traditionally, teaching grammar is thought to have an ‘input – output’ mechanism: the teacher explains the rules of use of new items, then the students practise to produce these items. Actually, consciousness-raising is based on a similar mechanism, but the ‘input’ stage is followed by the ‘noticing’ stage here. **Noticing** is the one of the key notions when referred to consciousness-raising. Learners are expected to “**notice** the gap between their own production and that of native speakers” [Schmidt and Frota cited in Nunan 1995a:150]. Similarly, Thornbury describes consciousness-raising activities as “designed to make students aware of features of the language – to **notice** them” [Thornbury 2005b:36].

Noticing the features of the target language is basic for learning, because when learners pay attention to the input, they are more cautious and motivated to be correct when producing output. To learn a language successfully the first step is to notice certain items, then recognise them, then use them. According to Nunan, one of the advocates of consciousness-raising Ur “argues in favour of explicit teaching in the belief that mastering the individual elements of a language, be they lexical, phonological or grammatical, is a valuable means toward eventual ability to communicate in the language” [Nunan 1995a:154].

As it has been said above (see p. 8), **consciousness-raising** should be distinguished from **language awareness**, since consciousness-raising is the process of developing language awareness. As James puts it, “language awareness is for knowers and consciousness-raising is for learners” [James 1998:260]. When a learner is able to analyse his/her own utterances, it shows that the learner possesses language awareness, that is, “implicit knowledge that has become explicit” [James and Garrett cited in James 1998:260]. At this point it becomes evident that application of the consciousness-raising methodology is far-sighted, and the above mentioned ‘reduced expectations’ develop a learner’s ability to study independently.

Consciousness “refers to getting explicit insight into what one does not yet know implicitly” [James 1998:260]. In the opinion of the author of the present diploma paper, a learner should develop a habit of looking thoroughly at every structure of the target language and making an effort to understand why it is used.

In this connection, Thornbury’s view of grammar is worth quoting: “Grammar is less a *thing* than something that we *do*: it is a process” [Thornbury 2005b:43]. The author of the present research agrees to the idea that grammar is not a body of facts which have to be learnt and used. Learning grammar means understanding it, interpreting it and later producing it not because there are rules for using certain items, but because the situation requires using them.

When language awareness and consciousness-raising are referred to, the problem of distinguishing between acquisition and learning arises. According to Krashen and Terrell, “**acquiring** a language is ‘picking it up’, i.e., developing ability in a language by using it in

natural, communicative situations [...]. Language **learning** is different from acquisition. Language learning is ‘knowing the rules’, having a conscious knowledge about grammar” [Krashen, Terrell 2000:18].

In other words, as Krashen and Terrell explain, “while acquisition is subconscious, learning is conscious. Learning refers to ‘explicit’ knowledge of rules, being aware of them and being able to talk about them. This kind of knowledge is quite different from language acquisition, which could be termed ‘implicit’” [ibid.:26].

The author of the present research thinks that her students urgently need to develop their conscious knowledge. In fact, learning does not mean only grammar exercises and drilling. A learner also learns to analyse, to use conscious processes in order to understand what is right or wrong, and then starts using his/her knowledge intuitively. Such intuition is not based on ignorance, but on the existence of numerous options to be chosen from in the learner’s head. From this point of view, learning cannot be less important than acquisition. Nor can it be separated from acquisition, because having learnt (consciously) something in the classroom, the learner starts noticing (subconsciously) this item in various contexts.

The benefits of conscious learning are obvious. The author of the present study agrees with Bolitho and Tomlinson that throughout the learning process, students are facing “the challenge of thinking about language and progressing to be increasingly self-reliant” [Bolitho, Tomlinson 2004:iv]. Thinking is a conscious process, its result is self-reliance. The postgraduate supposes that self-reliance is the main aim of learning a foreign language, and as it can be seen, it is learning, rather than acquisition, which leads to self-reliance.

Since language awareness is a product of learning, it cannot be achieved without formal studies (independent or in a classroom). Definitely, there are cases of mastering a language only through communicating with the speakers of the target language. Nevertheless, in the majority of cases learners’ knowledge fossilises at a stage which is sufficient for their needs and does not develop unless formal learning takes place. **Fossilisation** is “the premature closing down of the learner’s developing language system” [Thornbury 2005a:30]. According to Mason, the reasons of fossilisation may be the lack of obvious need for people to improve their knowledge of the target language [Online 2].

Ideally, formal learning should be combined with real-life practice, then the need for improving one’s knowledge will develop. Communication combined with explanation, grammar practice, analysing the objects of learning, etc. are the components of consciousness-raising. Thus, it is impossible to separate learning from acquisition, since they are tightly bound and mutually interact. According to Nunan, “consciousness-raising rejects the split between conscious learning and subconscious acquisition” [Nunan 1995a:149].

Sharwood-Smith (1988) suggests that consciousness-raising can be both **explicit** (“conscious, analytical awareness of formal features of the language”) and **implicit** (“intuitive feeling for what is correct”) [Sharwood-Smith cited in Nunan 1995a:150]. As the author of the present paper supposes, it is advisable for a teacher to take this double nature of learning into account when choosing teaching material and corrective techniques.

Another question in the focus of attention of researchers is whether **explicit formal instruction** (EFI), i.e. teaching (including correcting mistakes), is effective. James points out that researchers: Pica (1984), Pavesi (1986), Carroll, Roberge and Swain (1992), Harley (1993), have revealed that EFI is effective, as it finally leads to acquisition of correct forms and accuracy. As James concludes, EFI can be beneficial in the process of self-monitoring, which means that while speaking slowly and carefully the learner’s accuracy improves [James 1998:244-245].

On the other hand, it is common knowledge that ‘traditional learning’ implies drilling grammar rules in a classroom-type context with the main focus on form and accuracy and a lot of correction, whereas ‘acquisition’ implies meaning- and fluency-focused activities which are practiced in a natural-type context with a lot of comprehensible input rather than correction [Thornbury 2005b:32]. According to Thornbury, if a teacher’s approach is purely meaning-based, it will be discovered at some point that a learner is not able to express his/her thoughts due to the lack of the grammatical competence. The author of this study tends to stand in the middle and apply explicit formal instruction in a natural-like context. One of the examples of such combination is using authentic texts (such as advertisements, internet chatting) for analysing grammar rules.

The consciousness-raising instruction is based on several principles. They are introduced in the following subchapter.

#### **1.4. Principles of Consciousness-Raising Instruction**

Ur distinguishes four stages of explicit grammar teaching: *presentation – isolation and explanation – practice – test* [Ur cited in Nunan 1995a:155]. Having analysed the views of different researchers: Nunan (1995), Thornbury (2005), Ur (2006), the postgraduate may describe the processes involved in teaching grammar according to the consciousness-raising theory:

**Presentation stage (input).** New language items are presented in a text. It is crucial for new items to appear in a meaningful context to awake interest and trigger noticing.

**Isolation and explanation stage (noticing).** New items are viewed from different angles in order to ensure that students understand everything about the target items. It is essential that focus is on form-function relationship, because grammar is not a body of facts but an assortment of possibilities to express numerous meanings. At this stage, ‘learning’ initiated by the teacher (conscious noticing) takes place, and later is followed by ‘acquisition’ stage, when noticing occurs subconsciously.

**Practice (output, interaction).** The students practise to use new items in a broader context; they think and reflect and while interacting new items appear. Language is absorbed, and production transforms from conscious (the learner makes an effort to produce output) into subconscious (the learner produces output effortlessly).

**Test (feedback).** The learners demonstrate their mastery. The teacher’s feedback should be aimed at promoting further learning.

It is obvious that at all the four stages learners form and test their hypotheses and restructure their interlanguage, this process never stops. This is what Thornbury calls “a process grammar” [Thornbury 2005b:48]. The teacher in such environment is not a transmitter of knowledge, but a facilitator. It is meant here, that since the learner collects structures and items in his/her interlanguage, it is the teacher who is to help to let certain items out when needed, in other words, to provide the conditions for the emergence of grammar.

The idea of **grammar emergence**, described by Thornbury (2005), suggests that “exposure to stretches of language, e.g. sequences of sounds or of words, triggers simple inferencing operations in the brain, and may even spontaneously generate forms that are not only absent in the input, but are more complex than anything in the input” [Thornbury 2005b:52]. When the students have acquired a sufficient number of items, they start using these items and putting them in patterns. Unlike the traditional approach when grammar is taught in pieces in a ‘presentation – practice’ way, the emergent approach allows the learner to collect numerous items – components of their own systems – and then use them when the learner is ready. “The grammar is not implanted from outside; rather it emerges out of the encounter between a pattern-hungry brain and a language-rich environment” [ibid.].

A similar principle was described by Brumfit (1971): “a course ‘which expands the student’s existing knowledge of the language not by necessarily adding any items at all, but simply by aiming to produce complete accuracy in the areas with which he is already familiar’” [Brumfit cited in Brumfit1994:51]. Thus, the teacher may reduce the input in order to “respond rather than initiate” [Brumfit 1994:51], letting the learner use the existing knowledge and complement it with new generalisations.

Some of the findings of the research conducted on second language acquisition are applicable to foreign language acquisition, too. One of such findings is that **comprehensible input** maximises the opportunities for language acquisition. According to Krashen and Terrell, learners acquire a language “by understanding input that is a little beyond [their] current level of (acquired) competence” [Krashen, Terrell 2000:32]. In these terms, the present research is being carried out in favourable conditions, because the materials in the course book and additional materials conform to the definition of comprehensible input.

On the other hand, comprehensible output is equally important, because acquisition does not occur only on the basis of the input received. So, **comprehensible output hypothesis**, advocated by Swain (1985), claims that “output, particularly when it occurs in conversations where the learner is having to negotiate meaning, provides learners with the opportunity to push to the limit their emerging competence” [Swain cited in Nunan 1995a:50]. Besides, output provides a learner with an opportunity to test their hypotheses about the structures of the target language, which enhances acquisition. This means that the tasks where students have to negotiate meaning, especially the “two-way information gap” tasks, motivate learners to speak correctly in order to complete the task.

In a *two-way information gap task* “all participants have a piece of information known only to them which must be contributed to the small group discussion for the task to be completed successfully” [Nunan 1995a:50]. For example, a motivating task piloted within the present study is the following: each student receives a description of a person’s daily life, then the class have to work out the relationships among those people based on the descriptions. The discussion is interesting. Afterwards, conversations between those people may be invented, which is also useful, because such task involves the pragmatic competence – a conversation between close friends is different from a conversation between the owner of a café and a customer.

When working on speaking tasks, especially if it is pair work, the abilities of conversation partners should be taken into account, in order to avoid the so-called **interlocutor effect** [ibid.:47]. If one interlocutor’s speaking ability is low, the other interlocutor, whose speaking ability is much higher, will try to adjust to the level and may spoil his/her own performance. Needless to say that in the case when one student is trying to negotiate meaning to another one who is not so capable of understanding and responding, the level of both performance and motivation to speak decreases.

According to Nunan (1995), when planning the **order of teaching** the most problematic grammatical items, it is important to take into account the organic nature of learning. If learners have not mastered some structure yet, learning other structures will

interfere and, finally, none of the structures will be mastered. Therefore, it is advised that structures, which are in some way alike, are “integrated into the semantic and grammatical system in such a way that each marks off its own meaning domain” [ibid.:149]. The best illustration for this statement is verb tenses. Apart from complicated structures, meanings are also unclear for learners whose first language does not have such grammatical features.

The saying “repetition is the mother of learning” is absolutely true for developing accuracy. Again, knowing that learning follows the U-shaped curve, it is important that learners have opportunities **to revise the material** from time to time, especially when the curve decreases. The purpose of this is not only to increase the frequency of practising previously learnt items, but also to help the elements of the learners’ interlanguage to interact with newly acquired elements. “It may well be that even though learners are incapable of reproducing a particular item at the time it is taught, systematic exposure over a period of time will speed up acquisition in the long run” [ibid.:148]. Therefore, the author of the present diploma paper suggests that it is crucial to carefully choose the order of introducing new items to learners and then periodically revise them.

Ur advocates the necessity of repetition: “Effective learning of a foreign language depends crucially on repetition. But repetition is *boring*. So one of the most important goals of foreign language teaching is to make repetition *interesting*” [Online 3]. The author of this research thinks that the variety of task types deployed according to the four-stage teaching sequence (see p. 11-12) makes repetition various, because the same items are viewed from different angles.

The principles described in this chapter form a general approach to teaching. In the classroom, motivating learners to use correct grammatical forms requires the following conditions, as Thornbury lists them:

- a balance of positive and negative feedback;
- communicative success;
- relevance and investment;
- being listened to...

Motivation comes from a sense of being valued” [Thornbury 2005b:76].

The teacher expresses his/her attitude to learners directly, by praising or criticizing, or indirectly, by respecting the students and reacting to their preferences. One of the learners’ preferences is to be corrected by the teacher every time when the student makes a mistake. The instances of mistakes, types of correction, the principles of correction and other aspects of this sensitive matter are discussed in the following subchapters. To begin with, it is necessary to understand what mistakes and errors are.

## 1.5. Defining Errors and Mistakes

Experts have been debating about the definitions of cases the learner's language being incorrect – deviances, according to James. The terms used to name deviances are below:

**a slip** – a result of tiredness, lack of attention, speaking too fast; made by native speakers too;

**a mistake** – a failure to apply the knowledge;

**an error** – a result of not knowing something;

**an attempt** – trying to say something but being wrong due to not knowing how to say it correctly;

**a distortion** – incorrect use of previously learnt items;

**a fault** – incorrect use of items that have not been learnt before;

**a goof** – errors in process of learning;

**a solecism** – not conforming to the rules of 'pure' grammar presented in course books [James 1998:78-84].

On the one hand, some of the terms presented above are to be found in the literature on Error Analysis and not in the literature targeted at practising teachers of English. On the other hand, even for practitioners it is interesting to know how useful the question of defining deviances is for choosing appropriate techniques of correction. For example, the following discussion demonstrates how different attitudes to deviances are expressed in naming them:

Following Edge's classification, **attempts** are wrong forms that are a result of trying to say something without having learnt about forming a certain form correctly [ibid.:80-81].

As James puts it, Edge "applauds the learners" since they are trying to communicate using their own strategies. In contrast with Edge's positive attitude, Hammerly's views are noticeable due to his inclination to blame either a student or a teacher for the student's being incorrect: **distortions** – incorrect use of known structures of a target language, and **faults** – incorrect use of structures that have not been learnt yet [ibid.:82]. A term, which sounds neutral in comparison with emotional views advocated by Edge and Hammerly, is a **goof**. This term is used by Burt and Kiparsky and it means "an error students tend to make in learning English as a second language, for which no blame is implied" [ibid.].

Such discussion is fruitful in terms of choosing techniques for correcting errors. Having analysed several authors' definitions, the postgraduate considers the following definitions being the most appropriate.

"By **mistake** is meant the learners' momentary failure to apply what they already know, due mainly to the demands of online processing" [Thornbury 2005a:92]. Moreover, as

James stresses, “**mistakes** can only be corrected by their agent if their deviance is pointed out to him or her” [James 1998:83]. In general, practice cures mistakes. Since the learner is familiar with the item he/she produced wrongly, it is often enough to send a signal to initiate self-correction. In more difficult cases, an explanation of a rule is necessary for self-correction. If a learner cannot self-correct, then it is not a mistake but an error.

“**Error** is an instance of the learner’s language that does not conform to accepted norms of usage, and which is attributed to incomplete or faulty learning” [Thornbury 2006:75]. The gap in learning leads to inability to self-correct: “**Error** is an instance of language that is unintentionally deviant and is not self-correctible by its author” [James 1998:78]. Therefore, teaching should be repeated. It seems to the author of the present research, that in such situations the stage of isolation and explanation should be stressed. Noticing, which takes place at this stage, initiates the interaction among the items which have been subconsciously acquired and consequently leads to the restructuring of the knowledge.

As the author of the present study thinks, application of grammar rules often causes errors, because situations vary, they are usually new, and learners need much analytical skill to decide which rule to apply. Forming grammatical structures, on the contrary, is a usual cause of mistakes, because learners are usually aware of the components of the structures, but they fail to put the right components together.

If the main distinction between a mistake and an error is self-correctibility, then how should it be called when a learner feels that something is incorrect, but at the same time he/she does not know what exactly and how to correct? James saw a possible answer to the issue in Snow’s description of three stages – **two stages of error** and **one stage of mistake**. In the first stage of error the learner does not know that he/she is wrong; in the second stage of error the learner knows that he/she is wrong but does not know how to be right; in the stage of mistake the learner does something wrong but knows how to correct it [James 1998:80].

The teacher should be able to distinguish between the stages and the causes of errors to correct appropriately. The following subchapter contains an overview of the errors of the target population of the research and a discussion of possible causes of their errors/mistakes.

## **1.6. Typical Errors of the Target Population**

According to Harmer, “there are two distinct causes for the errors which most if not all students make at various stages” [Harmer 2005:99]. As he explains, errors are caused by a learner’s first language which interferes with the language being acquired (the first language

interference) and by the incompleteness of the development of knowledge (developmental errors).

Harmer's definition of the **first language interference** follows: "where L1 and English come into contact with each other there are often confusions which provoke errors in a learner's use of English" [ibid.:99]. In connection with the first language interference it is important to refer to such terms as **positive transfer** and **negative transfer**. As Thornbury explains, "instances of L1 influence on L2 production are examples of transfer. They do not necessarily result in errors – there is such a thing as positive transfer" [Thornbury 2005a:114]. On the contrary, if a learner produces wrong forms of target language, these are examples of negative transfer. According to Thornbury, negative transfer is "what was once called the first language interference" [ibid.].

**“Developmental errors:** [...] a child starts to 'over-generalise' a new rule that has been (subconsciously) learnt, and as a result even makes mistakes with things that he or she knew before. Later, however, it all gets sorted out, as the child begins to have a more sophisticated understanding [...]. Foreign language students make the same kind of 'developmental' errors as well" [Harmer 2005:100]. It is typical of learners that when they learn a new rule of using an item, they tend to use it despite the context, which results in errors.

The following example of **over-generalisation** is typical: since the Present Perfect is translated into Russian or Latvian as the past tense, the learners start using it to speak about the past events. The present perfect structures sound sophisticated, but they are wrongly used instead of the past simple structures. Moreover, the brightest example of over-generalising rules for native speakers of Latvian and Russian is a wrong use of articles. Since articles are not in the learners' first language, the learners need more time to acquire this item.

Developmental errors are a sign of incomplete understanding and acquisition of a certain item, hence, apart from over-generalisation, it is possible to speak of **under-generalisation**, as James calls it [James 1998:185]. In the case of auxiliary verbs, over-generalisation – excessive use of auxiliary verbs – stands by under-generalisation – lack of understanding of correct application of auxiliary verbs.

Bolitho and Tomlinson have categorised the causes of errors / mistakes as below:

- a) L1 interference.
- b) False analogy.
- c) Overgeneralization.
- d) Overlearning.
- e) Ignorance.

f) Incomplete learning.

g) Interference from other items in English” [Bolitho, Tomlinson 2004:114].

The author of the present research thinks that in this grouping, the same causes as the named above are obvious – the interference from the first language (points ‘a’ – ‘b’), and developmental errors (points ‘c’ – ‘g’). All the causes are tightly bound in the process of learning, which is illustrated by the following example.

As the author of this study has noticed, it is typical of native speakers of Russian and Latvian to transfer the word order of their mother tongue into English (the first language interference). When later they learn about the existence of auxiliary verbs, they tend to use them even when unnecessary (developmental error – over-generalisation). Later they discover that auxiliary verbs should be used with caution, therefore sometimes, if a sentence structure resembles a sentence structure in the learner’s mother tongue, it convinces some learners that auxiliary verbs are not needed (developmental error mixed with the first language interference).

Distinguishing between the causes of errors contributes a lot to selecting efficient techniques of error eradication. Thus, in order to conduct the present research, it is necessary to identify common errors of the target population. As the teacher has observed, the most problematic areas of English for her students at the pre-intermediate level can be grouped as the following (see Table 1.1):

**Table 1.1. Possible Causes of Typical Errors in the Speech of the Target Population**

Typical errors	Cause	Examples of the speech of the target population
Meanings of words (including phrasal verbs, countable / uncountable nouns). Vocabulary errors lead to errors in the verb – subject agreement; misuse of parts of speech	Incomplete learning	There *is many *peoples, and *another *peoples. It’s a person who *bring your *eat in a restaurant. What are your *educations? There *are different music and I like *listen music. I don’t have *these equipment.
	Over-generalisation	*Cooker is a man who *cook. A thing with *what you can eat *soap or ice cream. The crime rate *grows up. Are your *luggages packed?
	Negative transfer	*On computer you can *sit *in Internet, in evening. When I *had 10 years old... I *looked after it and found it in my bag. We can use all our *knowledges. They have *many special equipment, *car and even axes. Are firefighters *mans or *womans?
Sentence structure: word order; coordination; agreement; completeness	Incomplete learning	People *are one cake, but he *want two cakes: one for *he and one for *her sister. The cat *was going out, *catch mice and *bring them home.
	Negative transfer	I often *in shops buy fruits. Children go there very *many. I have written about music *who listen today’s teenagers and my friends. At the ambulance *need to be very clean.

Questions: word order; the auxiliary verb – main verb agreement	Incomplete learning	*Someone of you *will go to concert? Did you *lived in Tallinn 10 years ago? *Do it live on trees?
	Over-generalisation	*Do I can eat it? Why do you *don't want to be a pilot?
	Negative transfer	*In which time *is open government office? In the day teachers *have interesting stories [situations]? What time she *goes to work?
Use of tenses: application of rules; form	Incomplete learning	They *are speak, eat. When he *going to bed, he saw a thief.
	Over-generalisation	I *have been in Europe last year. Firefighters *are rescuing people every day.
	Negative transfer	He *was in Italy three times. They *have lunch now. I won't be able to come to your party, because my boss *must visit me (instead of is visiting me).
Active / passive voice	Over-generalisation	How many complaints of security *are your inspectors investigated? Population *are grown fast.
Articles	Over-generalisation	It was *a people or animal? Was it *a big or *a small? It's *a food which is on some happy birthdays. *The London is *capital of England. Did *the Nina go with you to primary school?

It is not easy to identify the cause of an error because language acquisition is an organic process which develops cyclically, with various aspects developing at their own pace and influencing each other. Knowing this, it is logical to assume that the best way of eradicating errors is to apply diverse techniques at different stages of acquisition.

The following is a typical conversation between the author of the present research (T) and her students (S):

S: *He \*have lunch.*

T: *The past.* (A gesture follows: the palm waved backwards over the shoulder)

S: *Ah, he \*has lunch.*

T: *The past. Yesterday.*

S: *He \*was have lunch?*

This conversation shows that the form of the Past Simple has not been internalised yet, it is under-generalised. At the same time, the use of 'was' as an indicator of the past tense is over-generalised. The techniques which should be deployed here in order to help the learner to acquire the use of the Past Simple may be: a) identifying a past simple form of a verb 'have'; b) analysing the use of the Past Simple; c) practising the structure in grammar tasks; d) additional explaining and revision; e) practising the structure in comparison / contrast with other structures; f) further periodical revision and practice. If necessary, the comparison with the learner's mother tongue may be beneficial.

This procedure conforms to the principle of accuracy-oriented teaching described by Ur: “we should provide opportunities for students to learn rules: talk *about* the language (language awareness), including contrast with L1, and practise accurate production, as well as lots of communicative work: exposure to (correct) spoken and written language, communicative speaking and writing tasks” [Online 4].

The necessity for such amount of work dedicated to a single item can be explained by the following statement:

In all research into second language acquisition there is no evidence that frequent correction is at all valuable to the learner. But there is considerable evidence that teacher patience and encouragement plus meaningful exposure to the language in use can help the learner to eventually get it right [Bolitho, Tomlinson 2004:113].

According to Bolitho and Tomlinson, “many errors are developmental and do not benefit very much from correction” [ibid.]. The conversation above is an example of a developmental error. The error here is grammatical and “very few grammatical errors are caused by interference from the first language” [ibid.]. In contrast with the errors caused by interference from the first language, which “can eventually be remedied by constructive feedback from the teacher” [ibid.], developmental errors are likely to be gradually substituted by correct items as a learner’s interlanguage becomes more advanced [ibid.].

Thus, it is obvious to the author of the present research that any teaching should promote the development of a learner’s interlanguage. And if teaching does not give desired results, then corrective techniques should be applied properly.

## 1.7. Corrective Techniques

Correction is always a sensitive matter. Having studied experts’ (James (1998), Bartram and Walton (1999), Harmer (2005)) views of correction, the author of the present paper has defined several **principles**, which, if followed by the teacher, make correction a helpful tool for learning.

1. Errors should be judged from the point of view of intelligibility, since it reflects real-life use of a language.
2. A type of correction should be chosen in each case individually.
3. The more sensitive the learner, the more gentle should be correction (oral or written, individual or involving the whole class).
4. Two-stage correction is useful. It suggests that learners correct their own output after some time. Then, this output is corrected by the teacher.
5. Correct as late as possible so that the learners try to repair the gap in communication.

Principles 4 and 5 represent the ideas of consciousness-raising since they are aimed at self-monitoring. They are not always welcomed by learners, but they prove to be effective in the long term.

In general, types of correction have been categorised by James. The author of the present study will use the term ‘deviance’ here to designate both mistakes and errors.

**Feedback** – informing the learners of a deviance and leaving them to discover and repair it themselves.

**Correction proper** – providing information that leads to revising and correcting a certain deviance, that is, telling learners what their deviances are and suggesting ideas of how to correct the deviances.

**Remediation** – providing learners with information that leads to revision of the rule which is applied wrongly, thus preventing from further recurrence of the same type of deviance. Thus, the purpose of remediation is “primarily to improve the processes for all future productions rather than merely ‘cosmetically’ to improve the present product” [James 1998:237].

Since errors represent a gap in knowledge and mistakes indicate lack of practice, the question arises: which is more effective **curing mistakes** or **preventing errors**? According to James, if it is assumed that prevention is more effective than cure, the focus should be on teaching rather than correcting. However, as he supposes, preventing errors requires too much effort on developing suitable teaching strategies and this effort is not really necessary because “error commission is not irreversible” [ibid.:242]. Moreover, based on the results of experiments, he concludes that neither prevention, nor cure is better [ibid.].

In the present research, it is clearly seen that James is right. On the one hand, working with students who have already received some teaching at their schools, the author of the pilot study is curing mistakes. On the other hand, in most cases the students have not formed any hypotheses about how these items work, so it is not reteaching but teaching, and there is a chance for the teacher to try to prevent errors. However, if the U-shaped curve of learning is taken into account, it becomes clear that there will be mistakes and the need to eradicate them. Thus, the focus of teaching should be on choosing right teaching and correcting techniques at the right moment.

There have been different opinions expressed regarding the best techniques of error correction, from heavy correcting to not correcting at all. James refers to George’s ‘paradoxical’ assumption that ignoring errors prevents them, which means that in this case learners “will be less inclined to focus on errors” [ibid.:241]. In fact, on one hand, it regularly happens in the teaching practice of the postgraduate that after the teacher requests a student to repeat a certain sentence (sometimes erroneous, sometimes simply not heard properly), the

student refuses to speak at all because he/she is frightened of being wrong. In this case it seems reasonable to follow George's suggestion to neglect errors and hope that further practice will put everything in order and errors will not occur. But on the other hand, correction is a part of learning, so it is necessary.

In general, the amount and the type of correction are determined by the type of activity, mainly categorised into the exercises for developing fluency and the exercises for developing accuracy. Such distinction is caused by frequently noticed inability of learners to maintain production of both accurate and fluent output. One of the proponents of distinguishing accuracy work from fluency work is Krashen. According to him, "grammar use should be restricted to situations where it will not interfere with communication" [Krashen, Terrell 1994:57].

Therefore, as it usually happens in the classroom, the activities for developing fluency do not require or expect the students to be highly accurate: "**fluency** is defined as that part of the lesson where students work on their capacity to communicate within the language, generally a period free of correction" [Bartram, Walton 1999:32].

In contrast with fluency work, while performing accuracy tasks, the learners are expected to use such grammatical structures which convey their ideas exactly. "**Accuracy** work is defined as that part of the lesson where students are encouraged to make their utterances as near to a native-speaker's as possible – which is usually taken as necessitating more intense correction" [ibid.]. Since the participants of the present research are fluent enough but inaccurate, it is right to say that a considerable part of their learning routine is dedicated to correction. Within the frameworks of consciousness-raising, correction usually takes the form of self-correction under the teacher's guidance.

In the literature on error correction, authors tend to distinguish between **random** and **systematic** deviances (both errors and mistakes). As Thornbury notices, "systematic errors best respond to correction" [Thornbury 2006b:115]. However, it is often difficult to understand whether it is a systematic error, which is due to a gap in knowledge, or a random mistake, which is a temporary failure to apply a known rule. What Thornbury offers, and the author of the present paper agrees, it is useful to give a learner a chance to self-correct. The ability to self-correct determines further actions in each case.

The learner's language is constantly in the process of restructuring (reorganization of a learner's internal grammar) and the teacher's role is to encourage and facilitate this restructuring. This can be realized by providing feedback in a most suitable way. It may be **overt correction**, when a student is clearly informed of a mistake (as in case of interrupting the student and giving negative feedback), or **covert correction**, when the teacher provides a

correct variant without interrupting the speaker in hope that the student will take the notice of the correct form (as in reformulation or echoing).

The following are not really corrective techniques, but they do provide the learners information about the status of their knowledge and their errors/mistakes.

One way of obtaining feedback is **retranslating** – a text in the target language is translated into the learners' mother tongue, then translated back into the target language and then the two versions are to be compared. Such comparison is *feedback* [Thornbury 2005b:71].

Interestingly, when the learners tried to do this task for the first time, they mainly paid attention to lexical aspects and worried about the words they used to coincide with the words in the original texts. Mistakes in spelling, articles, the subject-verb agreement were not noticed when the students compared their retranslations with the original texts. As they said, they did not check “these small things” at all. For the author of the present study this ‘confession’ proves that the students are focused on meaning, not on form. In this case the teacher can try to change the students’ attitude to accuracy and improve their self-monitoring skills.

Another technique deployed in the pilot study is a **dictation**, which is a simplified version of **dictogloss**. The three stages are incorporated – input (the text itself) – output (the learners’ reconstruction) – *feedback* (comparison with the original text) [Thornbury 2005b:73]. In order to write correctly, the learners need to listen actively for each item. While listening, perception is significantly based on prediction skills of a listener, therefore, inability to hear something demonstrates the gap in the learner’s knowledge.

In these activities the teacher is not a grammar transmitter, but a facilitator of learning – the teacher leaves the learner the opportunity to analyse and come to conclusions. It is the main benefit of performing a task like the retranslation or dictogloss: “What it does not mean is **diagnosis**: it is not a question of making clear to the learners **why** they have produced a wrong form, but in what way their interlanguage version is different (or deviant) from the target form” [James 1998:263].

Although facilitating learning is one of the basic principles of the consciousness-raising instruction, students do not realise the benefit of such role of the teacher. They expect the teacher to explain, to demonstrate patterns. In fact, experts see **explanation** as an integrate part of teaching-learning process, since it “improves the learner’s chances of pattern recognition (noticing) rather than pattern production” [ibid.]. Recognition automatically leads to learning, but, as James notices, it is receptive learning, which has to be developed into productive learning.

The author of the present investigation supposes that the teacher may involve his/her students into explanation, and it can be done at all four stages of learning. For instance, at the **presentation stage**, the learners can be asked to find certain structures in the input text. Explanation manifests itself in the teacher's explanation of the components of the target structures and the learners' explanation of whether they have found the structures and why they think the structures they have found are the target ones. At the **isolation and explanation stage**, the learners can be invited to explain the reasons of the target structures being in the input text. At the **practice stage**, the learners may explain their reasons for choosing certain structures in their output. Even at the **test stage**, the task can be to describe possible cases of using a certain structure.

The teacher is to decide in every case individually whether to explain or not. It seems that the principle to follow is expressed by James: "mistakes call for practice, but errors call for explanations, which will induce the learners to adjust their mental representation of the language item in contention" [ibid.:263].

The grammatical competence as a basis for accuracy is best developed when the learners are clearly aware of the necessity of being grammatically accurate. The consciousness-raising approach with its focus on form-function relationship leads to developing language awareness in general and grammatical accuracy in particular. The question whether consciousness-raising activities in combination with appropriate corrective techniques are efficient with secondary school learners can be answered by research.

The report on the activities within the pilot study and the outcomes of the application of the consciousness-raising methodology is presented in the following subchapters.

## CHAPTER 2

### DISCUSSION OF THE PILOT STUDY

The present chapter contains the description of the stages of the pilot study and the analysis of the data obtained in the course of the research. It also contains a collection of consciousness-raising tasks for developing the learners' language awareness piloted during the research. The discussion of the findings at the end of the chapter shows whether the pilot study has been conducted successfully.

#### 2.1. Characteristics of the Target Population and the Method of Research

Since learning at a fee-paying language school is optional, the number of students varies – four participants of the research left after two months of instruction, but during the school year other four students joined the course. In total, the target population of the present research consists of 15 students, aged 13-18. Thus, eleven out of fifteen students have been participating in the study from its beginning.

The English language proficiency of the participants can be evaluated as pre-intermediate. Each of them has a minimum one-year long experience of learning English. It is typical of each of the participants to possess a relatively wide scope of vocabulary and grammatical themes, but the knowledge of grammatical structures and their correct application is insufficient for the pre-intermediate level.

To use a *metaphor*, the learning process can be compared with a vapour trail of an airplane: the themes being studied are like a white stripe of the vapour trail. Sometimes, this trail remains in the sky for a long time as an endless white line, but sometimes, it looks like a short line and follows an airplane without leaving a mark in the sky. Likewise, some learners study an item and retain it in their memories. Other learners tend to forget what they studied during the previous lessons, their ability to use newly learnt information is short-term. The results of their learning seem chaotically scattered on the surface of their memory and cannot be properly operated with. When doing a task, such learners guess instead of supporting their answers by a certain rule.

As it was discussed in Subchapter 1.3, in the process of acquiring a foreign language all learners form their own interlanguage. The **interlanguage** of each participant of the present study forms two layers. Due to the age difference of the target population, the range of

levels they are studying at in their schools is between the pre-intermediate and the upper-intermediate. The grammar phenomena they know vary accordingly. In contrast, at “Pygmalion” they study at the pre-intermediate level. As a result, two separate systems exist in their interlanguage.

To illustrate the gap between the two systems, the essays of some participants of the research have been analysed (see Appendix 1). On the one hand, the essays contain advanced features, such as the sequence of tenses and the past perfect in the first essay, and complicated syntax in the second essay. On the other hand, the use of articles, simple tenses and spelling is inadequate for the pre-intermediate level.

The mistakes in the essays have been pointed out to the students, but only a few of them were corrected. Hence, it is possible to speak of the **fossilisation** of some aspects of the learners’ interlanguage. It means that non-target forms stay fixed in a learner’s interlanguage “no matter what the age of the learner or amount of explanation and instruction he receives in the target language” [Selinker cited in Online 2]. A learner who is able to use certain items typical of the advanced level may misuse other items which are typical of lower levels.

Possible reasons for fossilisation, as it was discussed in Subchapter 1.3, are the lack of need for improving a person’s knowledge of a foreign language. Hopefully, the attempts of the author of the present study to create such need have led to overcoming fossilization of such grammar items as using auxiliary ‘was’ in all cases of speaking about the past events; using wrong plural forms of the words ‘man’, ‘woman’ and ‘child’; misuse of ‘peoples’ and ‘people’; wrong use of auxiliary verbs ‘do’ and ‘does’.

At the beginning of the present research it was discovered by means of observation that the students did not understand how to apply the acquired grammar rules, that is, how to form tense structures and when to use certain forms, degrees of comparison, etc. therefore, it was problematic for them to recognise and avoid mistakes. Besides, correcting mistakes was problematic too, because the students used to guess linguistic items rather than to use them consciously. Consequently, the very first objective of the research was to teach the students to **recognize** certain structures in the sentences they encountered and then analyse these structures.

In order to teach a heterogeneous mixed-ability group and obtain data for the study, **action research** has been chosen as the most suitable method of research, i.e. “a form of self-reflective inquiry carried out by practitioners, aimed at solving problems, improving practice, or enhancing understanding” [Nunan 1995b:229]. The professional growth of the teacher and the opportunity to self-reflect offered by the action research have been the main determining factors of selecting this research method.

The obtained data lead to selecting and revising research tools and, consequently, requires obtaining more data in order to understand the processes in the classroom. The research has been conducted since October, 2007, and the process is constantly monitored and adjusted, therefore, there is a strong reason to consider that the present study has an **internal validity**. Also, the findings of this study might be generalised and used with other learners, which means that the investigation possesses an **external validity** too.

With the help of the research tools mentioned in the Introduction the following data have been collected: transcripts of student-to-student interviews, transcripts of utterances produced by the learners; grammar exercises, essays and tests; the teacher's notes taken during the lessons. Since the object of the present research is *developing spoken accuracy through the use of consciousness-raising techniques*, it is important to understand the attitude of the target population towards the learning process. Such data have been collected by means of the students' questionnaires about the importance of accuracy, the appropriateness of the techniques of mistake correction and the students' self-evaluation of their progress.

Observing the performance of the target population and administering their questionnaires have revealed interesting facts. The most prominent of these facts, such as the reasons for studying and the results of self-evaluation, as well as the stages of the pilot study, are described in the following subchapter.

## **2.2. The Stages of the Pilot Study**

### **2.2.1. Pre-Testing**

**Pre-testing** was conducted in order to identify the level of spoken accuracy of the target population at the beginning of the research. The students were given guidelines for an interview (see Appendix 2), which they had to use for interviewing each other in pairs. Their speech was recorded and transcribed, and some of the transcripts are presented in Appendix 3.

*Conversations 1 and 2* both contain a few mistakes, but the difference between the two conversations is the level of formality. *Conversation 1* possesses features of spontaneous spoken language, such as short answers, linking phrases, whereas *Conversation 2* with its full answers and unemotional style resembles a written dialogue from a grammar book. The answers in *Conversation 2* seem to be learnt some time ago, probably in some kind of topic, and they were inserted in appropriate slots in the conversation.

*Conversations 3 and 4* contain many mistakes caused by the attempts to formulate spontaneous utterances. *Conversation 4* contains questions which were not requested by the

guidelines for the interview but which arose during the dialogue, thus increasing the level of spontaneity.

The important feature of *Conversations 1, 2 and 4* is that the questions which request more advanced grammatical structures or vocabulary have been avoided. It seems that the real cause of this deliberate escapism is in the teaching methodology which does not require learners to notice what the target language consists of. Here it is appropriate to remember about the basic goal of consciousness-raising: “to force the learners to notice important grammar distinctions” [Thornbury 2005b:100].

As it is well-known, we notice something when we are aware of its existence, and we pay attention to something which we are interested in it. Having noticed and paid attention to a phenomenon we remember it longer. The importance of noticing and analysing is the main assumption that the author of the present diploma paper follows in her teaching practice.

The pilot study has been designed in the following way:

**Input:** Presenting a new item in a text and identifying the components of its structure.

**Noticing:** First analysing the context in which the item is used and the reasons for using this item, then linking the grammar rules of the new item with the learners’ own experiences, and finally performing a number of tasks (matching, multiple choice, inventing contexts, etc.) and substantiating the choice of certain structures.

**Output:** The use of the new items in speaking, writing, retranslating, dictation.

**Feedback:** Various types of feedback are used, they are mainly targeted at self-correction.

At all the stages discussed above the learners are actively involved. They are invited to form and express their hypotheses, to explain difficult items to other students if needed. The teacher helps only when it is absolutely necessary. For example, if a hypothesis developed by a learner is wrong, then the teacher should offer extra practice in order to help the learner to reformulate his/her hypothesis.

It is important to periodically revise the new items in order to enhance their acquisition and change from conscious production into natural and subconscious production. As Ur suggests, “probably we need to do an immense amount of deliberate re-cycling of new language [...]. This recycling, or repetition, needs to be scattered (‘distributed’), not all in one go. So we should be leading constant ‘cumulative’ review exercises” [Online 3].

According to the CEFR, the overall level of accuracy of the target population at the beginning of the present research may be evaluated as A2: “Uses some simple structures correctly, but still systematically makes basic mistakes – for example tends to mix up tenses and forget to mark agreement; nevertheless, it is usually clear what he/she is trying to say”

[CEFR 2001:114]. Unfortunately, the learners feel that it is ‘usually clear’ what they want to say, and it often distracts them from trying to develop their own grammatical competence.

In order to understand whether the learners want to be accurate, the author of the research has developed a questionnaire for the target population to respond. The following part contains the analysis of the responses.

### 2.2.2. Reasons for Developing Accuracy in Speaking

At the starting point of the present research, in October 2007, it was discovered by means of a questionnaire that the participants of the pilot study were generally motivated to study English, but they did not realise that the lessons of English gave them ample opportunities to practise English. 17 learners have responded to the questionnaire and expressed their opinions about the importance of learning English and the importance of spoken accuracy. Table 2.1 demonstrates their responses to Part 1 of the questionnaire (the numbers in the cells represent the number of the respondents).

*Table 2.1. The Importance of Learning English for Secondary School Students*

<b>1. REASONS FOR LEARNING ENGLISH<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Very important</b>	<b>Important</b>	<b>Not very important</b>	<b>Not important</b>
1. Because I have to	12	5		
2. Because I want to	7	10		
3. Because my parents want me to	3	5	6	3
4. Because English is a world language	9	7	1	
5. So I can get a better job	14	3		
6. So I can feel professional at my future workplace	5	11	1	
7. So I can travel and communicate with foreigners freely	8	7	2	
8. So I can pass an examination	9	4	4	
9. So I can emigrate to an English-speaking country	3	10	4	
10. Because it is something to do – I meet people at classes		6	8	3
11. So I can understand books, magazines, technical manuals, TV, films, songs etc. in English	5	9	3	

<sup>1</sup> Part 1 of the questionnaire is adapted from Viney P., Viney K. (1996) *Handshake, a Course in Communication. Workbook*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 20

12. Because I want to practise the English I already know	4	10	3	
13. So I can understand the English in computer messages	3	5	6	3
14. Another reason (written by the respondents):	a. Just for myself. Everything we learn may be used in our lives some day. b. To become a specialist in talking in English.			

As it is seen from Part 1 of the questionnaire, it is important for the respondents to be able to speak English, because it offers good prospects in terms of business career and communication with foreigners. But Questions 10 and 12 of Part 1 show that the learners do not realise the importance of practising English at lessons, as a result, they do not use the lesson time as efficiently as they could.

This attitude to the lessons of English as contributing too little to the learners' progress in English is probably based on the lack of consciousness while learning. Classroom observation shows that the following learning strategies are typically used by adolescents: groundless guessing, in particular, when doing multiple choice tasks; requesting answers from the teacher instead of using a dictionary or a grammar reference part of the course book; not taking down any notes during the lessons. As a result, after the lessons there are no sources for the students to refer to, as well as there are no strategies available for independent learning. All this affects the learning process and it becomes very vague, with the majority of information left unnoticed.

Table 2.2 represents Part 2 of the questionnaire. It demonstrates the learners' attitude to spoken accuracy.

**Table 2.2. The Importance of Accuracy in Spoken English for Secondary School Students**

<b>2. IS ACCURACY IMPORTANT?<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Very important</b>	<b>Important</b>	<b>Not very important</b>	<b>Not important</b>
1. I have to speak English correctly	8	7	2	
2. I want to speak English correctly	13	4		
3. I want to speak correctly as educated foreigners do	4	10	3	
4. Accurate use of English grammar forms helps others to understand me completely	5	11	1	
5. At work, I want to be a professional and speaking accurately is a part of professionalism	10	7		
6. At examinations, accuracy is an important part of a mark, I will do my best to get a higher mark	9	7	1	
7. My classes give me a chance to practise speaking and I have to take advantage of it	3	12	2	
8. My speaking lacks accuracy	3	10	4	

<sup>2</sup> Part 2 of the questionnaire has been developed by the author of the present study.

9. I worry when I make mistakes in speaking	4	10	2	1
10. Speaking correctly makes me feel proud of myself	9	7	1	

Table 2.2 reveals a similar tendency. The respondents possess a strong wish to speak correctly. The wish is intensified by feeling proud in case of being accurate and overcoming difficulties in speaking, as well as by feeling fear of making mistakes. However, again, question 7 of Part 2 shows the lack of a conscious approach to learning during the lessons. As the author of the present research supposes, the respondents are interested in the *product* – the ability to speak, but not interested in the *process* – learning and practising at lessons. Thus, the pilot study started with the following questions:

- 1) How to help the learners to realise that the knowledge they acquire at lessons is practically applicable?
- 2) Will the learners become more responsible for their learning process if they understand why they need accuracy?

The author of the pilot study has been trying to convince her students of the necessity of learning grammar by offering them various types of exercises – from traditional grammar practice exercises to communicative tasks focused on certain grammar items. However, learning process is not complete without testing, because testing provides useful information on what has/has not been acquired yet. The learners’ test results are presented in the following subchapter.

### 2.2.3. Test Results in the Process of Research

In the course of the present study, from October 2007, till April 2008, the target population have taken four progress tests. The final achievement test will be administered at the end of May 2008.

Before starting a course at “Pygmalion” students usually take a placement test to identify their level of competence. The information about five students’ placement test results is not available, but ten students’ results are listed in Table 2.3. At the final stage of the present course, a test which replicates the text of the placement test was taken in order to measure the increase of the students’ knowledge. The results of the replicated test show that the learners’ grammatical competence has generally improved (see Table 2.3).

**Table 2.3. The Comparison of the Results of the Replicated Test**

Testee	Beginning of the research %	Final stage of the research %	Increment %
A	67	80	13

B	57	60	3
C	47	63	16
D	57	73	16
E	57	73	20
F	57	57	0
G	57	77	20
J	63	63	0
M	53	43	-10
P	40	57	17

Table 2.3 demonstrates that on average the target population's knowledge has improved by 10 per cent. However, it can be seen from the table that there is a significant difference in each student's increment, so it is not really applicable to calculate the average here. Taking into account the personal characteristics of the participants of the research, the results of the replicated test did not surprise the teacher. A significant improvement can be observed in those learners who have been studying both in the classroom and at home and who prefer a conscious approach to guesswork.

The results of the six tests are shown in a chart in Appendix 4. Some of the participants joined the course in the second term, that is why the placement test is repeated twice in the chart. It can be seen that alongside the common tendency of knowledge to improve, some students' results for progress tests fluctuate significantly. It depends on the themes covered: some of them are easier to acquire, some are more difficult. For example, the first progress test was about the use of the Present Perfect and Past Simple, a complicated theme for those whose mother tongues are Latvian and Russian. As a result, the average mark for this test is 46 per cent. Also, the placement test was designed as multiple choice tasks, while the progress tests required the test-takers to write their own answers, which is not as easy as choosing one of the offered options.

James has determined four stages of knowing: **-acquired -learnt**: no knowledge at all; **+acquired -learnt**: implicit knowledge; **-acquired +learnt**: explicit knowledge; **+acquired +learnt**: a learner's language is mostly correct [James 1998:86]. The author of the present research holds that the chart in Appendix 4 shows the state of acquisition and learning of the target population.

Progress tests are taken soon after covering certain items, and these items are not always acquired, whereas they may be learnt. As a result, tests may be written well due to the conscious approach to the tasks, but application of these items in speaking may not be

successful. On the other hand, if learners do not attend lessons or do not study hard enough, they cannot learn these items and cannot perform well in tests.

For example, students B, F, J and K have lower results in the progress tests than in the test which replicates a part of the placement test. The author of the present research explains this by the following: the students have not attended many lessons and have not studied some of the target items, therefore, their progress test results do not exceed 45 per cent of the mark. However, being repetitively exposed to these items, the students have acquired some of them and can recognize them in tasks of the multiple choice type. Therefore, the results of testing their grammatical competence in general are higher (approximately 60 per cent) than the results of testing their knowledge of specific items.

Those students who have both acquired and learnt the items they have been taught show steady results in both types of tests. This proves the efficiency of consciousness-raising activities (aimed at learning) combined with recurring revision (aimed at acquisition).

The author of the present research maintains that her learners have made considerable progress. It will be discussed in the following subchapter whether the target population have a similar opinion concerning their progress.

#### **2.2.4. Self-Evaluation of the Target Population**

In order to make the findings of the present research more reliable, the author of the diploma paper has asked her students to self-evaluate their progress by means of a questionnaire. The responses to the questionnaire are presented in Part 1 of Appendix 5.

There are 10 respondents whose accuracy in speaking has improved and 10 respondents whose knowledge of grammar rules has improved. To compare, 13 respondents think that their speaking skills have improved, 12 respondents think that their writing skills have improved, and 10 respondents think that their vocabulary has developed. Basically, it can be concluded that the majority of the target population have improved their language use significantly.

It follows from the data collected that the majority of the target population (10 respondents) associate spoken accuracy with the knowledge of grammar. This conclusion has been made on the basis of the analysis of the responses: those who have responded that the correctness of speaking has improved also have responded that the knowledge of grammar rules and structures has improved. There are 9 respondents, whose accuracy in speaking, i.e. the knowledge how to apply grammar rules and structures, has improved.

According to 1 respondent, she wanted to improve accuracy, but did not understand that she needed to improve the knowledge of grammar. On the other hand, there are 4 respondents who wanted to improve their knowledge of grammar but did not want to improve spoken accuracy. According to the data about what has really improved, there are 9 respondents who have improved both accuracy and the knowledge of grammar, 1 respondent who has improved the knowledge of grammar, but has not improved accuracy, 1 respondent has improved accuracy, but has not improved the knowledge of grammar rules and structures.

Speaking skills are not equal to the accuracy of speech, and it is demonstrated by the responses. 8 respondents have admitted that both speaking skills and the correctness of speaking have improved. 5 respondents think that their speaking skills have improved, but the correctness of their speech has not improved. 2 respondents think that their correctness of speaking has improved whilst speaking skills in general have not improved.

In general, 4 respondents have improved more skills than they had wanted to improve. 9 respondents' plans were too ambitious, as a result, they have not improved everything they had intended to. Interestingly, 2 respondents have improved totally different skills from which they initially had planned to improve. Part 2 of the Appendix 5 contains the comparison between which skills the respondents wanted to improve at the beginning of the research and which skills they have improved. The data reveals that those skills which the target population expected but failed to develop are the speed of talking, the skill to communicate in real-life situations, vocabulary, as well as the skill to think of synonyms and opposites easily, listening skills. It is possible to conclude, that at the beginning of the research the respondents mainly wished to develop spoken fluency. On the contrary, the skills which have developed unexpectedly for the learners are the skill of answering questions fast and the skill to analyse the use of grammar rules. As the author of the present study supposes, this is an evidence of elements of language awareness.

The target population have responded that they know (8 respondents) and probably know (7 respondents) what they have to improve in their knowledge of the target language. 13 respondents have responded that they are probably able to deal with possible difficulties now that they have strategies to find solutions to possible problems. These strategies are word-for-word translation into the mother tongue, analysis of a grammatical structure or a vocabulary item, analysis of the context in which a problematic sentence has appeared, etc.

Generally speaking, all the respondents believe that they have improved their knowledge of the target language. Among those 5 respondents who see their knowledge as chaotic there are 2 respondents who study at the Upper-Intermediate level at their conventional schools, and the chaos may be explained by the simultaneous studies at two

different levels. 2 other respondents have not attended 30 per cent of the lessons, which may be the reason for a chaotic knowledge. 1 respondent joined the course 5 months after its beginning, and since she has not covered the majority of basic items it is difficult for her to understand many items being studied.

Due to many reasons the learners' self-evaluation does not always coincide with external evaluation. Post-testing allows to ascertain whether the level of accuracy of the target population has increased by the final stage of the research. The following subchapter contains the analysis of the results of the post-testing.

### **2.2.5. Results of the Post-Test**

At the final stage of the present research, in April 2008, the target population was requested to do a post-test in order to obtain the data confirming their progress in developing spoken accuracy. The students had to interview each other using the prompts given (see Appendix 6). The interviews were recorded and transcribed; the transcripts of some of the interviews can be found in Appendix 7. In comparison with the interview at the beginning of the study, which included questions about personal details and which was aimed at the elementary level learners, the present interview involves questions on different themes and checks the skill of talking about the past, present and future.

*Conversation 1* demonstrates an almost correct application of grammar rules by Speaker A, which is a sign of considerable progress. The use of the Past Simple, Present Simple and Past Perfect is mostly correct, with the exception of the question ‘\*Have you been in cinema last week?’. There are some mistakes (for example, use of ‘some’ in questions, use of articles), but they are self-correctible in case they are indicated.

*Conversation 2* shows that the speakers have a limited vocabulary. For example, they mix ‘celebrity’ and ‘celebrate’, ‘last’ and ‘next’, say ‘play \*in a musical instrument’ instead of ‘play a musical instrument’. However, despite numerous mistakes in sentence structures and grammatical structures the application of tenses by Speaker K is generally correct. Speaker J uses short answers mostly incorrectly. On the whole, the two speakers usually cannot self-correct, even when their errors have been pointed out to them. It means that they need remedial work and additional learning in order to eradicate their errors. In fact, the two speakers were not present at more than 20 per cent of the lessons, moreover, they are very shy and reluctant to speak in the target language, that is why their progress is not significant enough.

*Conversation 3* shows that the speakers are not accurate enough, though Speaker G tends to self-correct, even without the indication of his mistakes. The way of asking questions

by Speaker F makes the author of the present research think that Speaker F associates the structure 'Do you do...' with questions, rather than with the Present Simple, and uses it almost everywhere. Having observed the speakers in the course of the research, the author of this study knows that these students can self-correct. According to their responses in the questionnaire, their knowledge has probably improved, but it is chaotic at the moment. The teacher believes that revision of the covered material, which is planned to take place in the last month of the course, will be useful for them and will bring some order in their knowledge.

*Conversations 4 and 5* demonstrate an adequate use of the language for the pre-intermediate level. Taking into account a high fluency of the speakers and their ability to repair a conversation, as in Conversation 4 – negotiating of the meaning of the word 'celebrity', it is possible to conclude that some revision of the material covered throughout the course will lead to developing both fluent and accurate speaking.

On the whole, the target population of the present research have improved their accuracy in speaking. At least, they try to monitor their speech and self-correct. Consciousness-raising activities in general are aimed at developing the skill to notice both input and output, and the pilot study has demonstrated that these activities are useful for building a steady basis for further acquisition of a foreign language.

According to the criteria of the CEFR, the target population of the present study are now at level B1: "Communicates with reasonable accuracy in familiar contexts; generally good control though with noticeable mother tongue influence. Errors occur, but it is clear what he/she is trying to express. Uses reasonably accurately a repertoire of frequently used 'routines' and patterns associated with more predictable situations" [CEFR 2001:114]. The author of this diploma paper thinks that the majority of the target population may start studying at the intermediate level after the present course has been completed.

The post-testing results have proved the efficiency of explicit learning. In the majority of cases the learners know practically which grammar rule to apply. However, some students often form grammatical structures incorrectly. The teacher thinks that the only 'remedy' to this problem is a certain amount of drilling so that the students remember the structures. Nevertheless, it is more important that the students are aware of the functions of grammar rules, than that they use correct forms in wrong cases.

The following subchapter will demonstrate the types of exercises favourable for raising consciousness in language learning.

## 2.4. Consciousness-Raising Tasks Deployed in the Pilot Study

Having identified the target population's expectations towards learning English, the main direction of the teaching-learning process was set: to initiate the development of the language awareness of the participants of the research by means of consciousness-raising activities. In the course of the pilot study, the learners have been guided on how to apply explicit learning techniques.

The course book "Total English Pre-Intermediate" is used in the course of the present research. The following types of tasks are offered by the course book and usually performed at lessons. 15 representatives of the target population have graded the tasks in terms of developing spoken accuracy. The results are presented in Table 2.4.

*Table 2.4. The Types of Exercises and Their Usefulness for Developing Spoken Accuracy*

Types of tasks	4 very helpful	3 helpful	2 not useless	1 useless
1. Choosing one of the alternatives ( <i>I live / lives</i> in London.)	4	9	1	1
2. Writing the correct forms of the words given in brackets	5	9	1	
3. Filling in the gaps with the words given	3	7	3	2
4. Filling in the gaps; no words are given to choose from	8	3	4	
5. Correcting mistakes (the types of mistakes are indicated)	6	7	1	1
6. Correcting mistakes (the types of mistakes are not indicated)	9	5	1	
7. Changing the grammatical structure but leaving the meaning of the sentence	4	9	2	
8. Thinking of stories for the sentences given	7	6	2	
9. Reading a text and explaining why grammar structures are used in the way they are used	5	8	2	
10. Translating a text into English	11	4		
11. Retranslating (English – mother tongue – English)	7	4	4	
12. While listening to a recording writing down certain grammatical structures	5	6	3	1
13. Dictation	7	6	2	
14. Retelling texts	7	5	2	1

According to the respondents, the most useful tasks are No. 4, 6, 10, i.e. those in which output is based on the learner's knowledge, not on the use of the provided items. Translation into the target language is the most useful. Also, the responses reveal that the students like working with grammatical structures (Tasks 7, 8, 9). Dictation seems useful to them, because it trains both listening skills and the ability to recognise and predict certain structures.

A proper feedback given on the tasks listed above leads to the restructuring of the learners' interlanguage, that is why the respondents have graded these tasks as 'helpful' and 'very helpful'. These tasks are designed to trigger the process of *grammar emergence* described in the Subchapter 1.4. When the conditions are suitable (explanation, analysis and revision are available) grammatical structures and vocabulary emerge from the number of items stored in a learner's memory.

This statement can be proved by comparing the responses to the questionnaire in Table 2.4 given in April 2008, with the responses given in November, 2007. The tendency is that more participants of the present research have started to believe in the usefulness of the tasks. On average, 70 per cent of the responses stated the tasks being 'useful' and 'very useful' in November 2007, (see Appendix 8), whereas in April 2008, the number of responses 'useful' and 'very useful' increased up to 85 per cent.

The target population have been asked which types of tasks they think are the most challenging for them. For more clearness, 'challenging' here means that the tasks may be difficult for the students, but having them done gives the students the feeling of achievement and learning something new. The responses are presented in Table 2.5.

**Table 2.5. Types of Tasks Being Challenging for the Target Population of the Study**

<b>Types of tasks</b>	<b>Responses</b>
1. Choosing one of the alternatives ( <i>I live / lives</i> in London.)	5
2. Writing the correct forms of the words given in brackets	6
3. Filling in the gaps with the words given	2
4. Filling in the gaps; no words are given to choose from	6
5. Correcting mistakes (the types of mistakes are indicated)	5
6. Correcting mistakes (the types of mistakes are not indicated)	9
7. Changing the grammatical structure but leaving the meaning of the sentence	5
8. Thinking of stories for the sentences given	5
9. Reading a text and explaining why grammar structures are used in the way they are used	5
10. Translating a text into English	8
11. Retranslating (English – mother tongue – English)	5
12. While listening to a recording writing down certain grammatical structures	3
13. Dictation	7
14. Retelling texts	7

The same questionnaire was given to the students in November 2007. The responses can be seen in Appendix 8. Having compared the responses to the two questionnaires, the author of the present research has concluded that the students' attitude to the tasks has

generally become more accuracy-focused. Also, at the beginning of the research the respondents mainly focused on the tasks which gave a chance to practice vocabulary, but at the final stage of the research, the tasks aimed at developing grammatical competence have become more challenging for the students.

In November 2007, the tasks based on work with grammar were not regarded as challenging, and the most challenging tasks were translating into the target language (5 respondents) and correcting mistakes with no indication of the types of mistakes provided (4 respondents). These tasks let the respondents use their knowledge in practice. By April 2008, the situation has changed significantly. Although the most challenging tasks are correcting mistakes (9 respondents) and translating into the target language (8 respondents), other tasks, such as dictation and retelling (7 respondents each) and work with grammatical structures, have become more challenging for the students. As the students have commented, the tasks are difficult and they require much knowledge, but performing the tasks enables them to apply their knowledge, check its correctness and learn new items.

Initially it was not planned to duplicate the questionnaire. However, in the course of the research new issues constantly emerge, and the necessity to collect the opinions of the target population arises. As a result, such longitudinal triangulation has demonstrated the validity of the questionnaire.

Although the numbers of responses for each option vary slightly between the two questionnaires, the tendency is generally the same: the most useful tasks are those which allow the target population to use the knowledge stored in their memory rather than to choose among the offered options. So, according to the respondents of the questionnaires, the most useful tasks are writing the correct forms of the words given in brackets, filling in gaps when no words are provided to be chosen from, correcting mistakes, explaining the rules and changing the structure of sentences, translating into the target language. The most challenging tasks are correcting mistakes with the types of mistakes not indicated, translating into the target language, dictation and retelling.

The tasks listed above have the features of explicit learning. They require conscious approach and knowledge about the language. The feedback the learner receives while completing these tasks leads to grammar emergence and the restructuring of the learner's interlanguage.

In the course of the present investigation it has been important to help the target population develop the understanding of the necessity of accuracy, to improve their level of accuracy in speaking and to develop their habit to pay attention to the form both in reception and in production of language.

In the above mentioned questionnaire, the respondents have admitted that accuracy is very important for them (see Table 2.2.), however, the lesson time is not perceived as contributing very much to the development of spoken accuracy. In fact, such attitude to the lessons of English can be explained by the lack of experience of real-life situations and the lack of necessity to be accurate (in comparison with the adult learners who have experienced misunderstanding and its consequences, and who come to the lessons with definite aims).

Therefore, the author of the present research decided to assign the target population such tasks which would show them the importance of being accurate and the consequences of being inaccurate. The examples of consciousness-raising tasks can be seen in Appendix 9.

Tasks 1 and 2 are aimed at **demonstrating how low accuracy hampers understanding** of the text.

*Task 1* contains a lot of mistakes in spelling, vocabulary, tenses. In order to understand the meaning, the letter should be read as a whole piece following the logic of the writer throughout the letter. As a result of correction different versions of the letter appeared in the classroom: there was no common decision about whether the girl lived in Singapore or she had emigrated from there; about the time of the concert – whether yesterday or tomorrow; as well as about the food – whether it was going to be brought or it had already been brought and eaten up.

*Task 2* demonstrates how forms, which are basically correct, can destroy the meaning if being applied wrongly. Both endings can be used to complete the story, but then there will be two different stories.

This task appeared to be difficult for the target population, they could not choose any ending to complete the story, probably because there was too much concentration on grammar, which distracted the students from following the storyline and understanding the idea of the text. On the contrary, it was not a problem for them to think of contexts for the separate structures they had corrected, which can be explained by having less restrictions but more freedom in inventing contexts. This proves the assumption that a higher accuracy is more likely to be achieved at a lower complexity (the contexts invented by the students are usually simplistic, but precisely illustrating the use of grammatical structures). It also correlates with Krashen's theory of comprehensible input.

Tasks 3 and 4 (see Appendix 9) demonstrate **the connection of meaning with grammar**.

*Task 3* was slightly modified by the author of the research. In order to practise oral perception, the teacher read the sentences aloud instead of distributing copies. The students only saw the pictures and did not have a chance to compare the sentences in the list and thus

eliminate some generalisations in terms of using articles with countable/uncountable nouns. The participants of the research could only rely on their own knowledge and listening skills to write the names of the persons in the picture.

*Task 4* is an example of how the use of tenses changes the meaning. At first, it lets the learner notice the structures, then the learner describes the charts him/herself. The second part of the task is very important because it trains the skill of being accurate and precise in speaking.

A successful learning of grammatical structures starts at the stage of **input**. It is usually a written text with certain grammatical items in it. The author of the pilot study then asks the target population questions about the functions of certain grammar items in the text, whether they are used to express the past or the present, real or imaginary situation, etc. Then the target population are asked to **practise** by performing the tasks in the course book. Usually, the tasks are offered in the following order: 1) complete the sentences choosing one of the two options given; 2) correct the mistakes in the sentences; 3) form questions from the prompts and answer them. Usually, the lesson time finishes at the moment of completing these tasks, so homework is assigned, which consists of exercises of similar types.

At the next lesson, the students practise the target structures in games and oral exercises, such as completing sentences, answering questions, describing pictures. The teacher is convinced of the usefulness of eliciting structures from contexts or exercises and using them immediately in speaking activities. This type of exercise may be categorised as a ‘**grammaring**’ task, if using Thornbury’s terminology [Thornbury 2005b:1].

*Task 5* (see Appendix 9) is aimed at practising the Past Simple and Past Continuous. At first, the students complete the grammar task by writing correct forms of the verbs in brackets. Then they mark the tenses schematically (a line for the Past Continuous, a cross for the Past Simple) on a separate worksheet. Then, based on this ‘skeleton’ they retell the text.

Generally, retelling texts is a useful technique. When the texts are short, the students do not worry about forgetting any details and try to speak as close to the original as possible. But there is a danger that some students do not see the necessity of following the original and being accurate, because they know that everyone has read the same text and understands them. From this point of view, the two-way-information-gap tasks where the students have to negotiate meanings are more beneficial.

*Task 6* (see Appendix 9) is based on the use of authentic material from the internet, such as comments to songs on the website [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com). Since the comments are written by the people from all over the world, it is interesting for the participants of the research to compare their knowledge with the comment-writers’ knowledge.

The first part of the task is to make the comments more formal, in other words to paraphrase them using more grammar resources. The author of the present research supposes that paraphrasing and explaining are useful for developing accuracy in speaking, because they make the speaker be as precise as possible in order to be understood by listeners.

The second part of this task is to write a description of musical life using the information from the comments. The author of this study believes that writing develops speaking, because it gives the opportunity to use all the knowledge the learner has. Also, this kind of exercise teaches the students read carefully, link separate pieces of information and use the language in a logical and convincing way both in writing and speaking. This task is of **one-way information gap** type: the same information is available to all the students, but they present it in different ways in their texts. Hence, this task is aimed at the development of the ability to **negotiate the meaning**.

The author of the present diploma paper thinks that paper conversations are useful for the development of spoken accuracy. **Paper conversations** are aimed at both fluency and accuracy, because the learners have to manage to discuss certain items within a limited period of time, at the same time they have an opportunity to reflect on what they are writing and form sentences more correctly. The learners are allowed to help each other, and the author of the present research thinks that such cooperation between the learners leads to the restructuring of their interlanguage. If some problem cannot be solved by the learners, especially if there is a confrontation in their opinions about a certain structure, they are motivated to know the correct answer and their chances to remember it increase.

Such paper conversations can also be used as material for mistake correction by the whole class. Since mistakes are of various types, the task provides a good opportunity for revision.

The author of the pilot study has tried to use 'Myths and facts about homeopathy' (see Appendix 9) as an example of a **two-way-information-gap task**. Ten myths and facts about homeopathy are written on separate slips of paper, which are given then to the students. A student reads silently a fact that is written on the slip of paper and then retells it in his/her own words. The other students listen and try to understand which myth this fact relates to. If no variants are given, the fact is put aside and then analysed.

The difficulty of this activity is the text being authentic, taken from the Internet, and it contains vocabulary that is unknown to the target population of the present research. The task may seem too complicated and stressful, since it requires the skill to read, comprehend, summarise and explain clearly, but it shows the learners what language they are surrounded by and teaches them to orient in an unfamiliar situation. In fact, seven out of ten facts were

related with the correct myths, thus, it is possible to say that the task was performed successfully. Although this task is not for everyday use in the classroom, it can be deployed sometimes to increase the level of challenge.

‘Chiromancy’ (see Appendix 9) is another two-way-information-gap task which has been done successfully. All classmates except one are given slips of paper with descriptions of personal features according to the shape of hands. Then they have to describe the personality of the student who did not have a text. Since the material is printed out from the Internet, the participants of the research are allowed to use dictionaries.

The target population have been asked whether **writing drafts** (or listing down difficult items, such as grammar and vocabulary) before speaking is useful. Fifteen respondents have answered the question. Six of them have admitted that writing drafts is ‘very helpful’, five respondents have responded that writing drafts is ‘helpful’, and four respondents think that writing drafts is ‘useless’. The reasons for responding in a certain way are listed in Appendix 10 Part 1. As it can be concluded from the responses, having a draft mainly increases *fluency* (learners usually think that fluency is the most important aspect in speaking), whereas not having a draft eventually develops *self-monitoring skills*. The reason for the latter conclusion is that the necessity to analyse the speech while speaking provokes the speaker’s attention to grammatical and lexical items, thus, leads to the development of self-monitoring skills and, consequently, accuracy.

Although the majority of the respondents see the advantage of writing drafts, they do not usually write them or do it reluctantly. As the postgraduate has noticed, if the students write drafts, they are motivated to read their texts aloud or at least hand them in for correction. As a result, they try to write more correctly, and also, their speaking becomes richer in content and accurate when they have a draft to base on. In other words, when writing, the learners tend to analyse the language they produce both orally and in writing.

Doing **homework** is an essential part of learning. The majority of the target population (12 respondents) think that it gives an opportunity to think independently and understand new material (see Appendix 10 Part 2). However, this opportunity for practising and learning is often neglected. As the majority of the students have responded, there is not always enough time for doing homework, and also they do not always understand how to do it.

As it has been stressed before, correcting erroneous language should lead to further learning. It was interesting for the author of the present study to find out the opinion of the target population in terms of correction. As a result, a relevant questionnaire was developed and administered. The analysis of the data is presented in the following subchapter.

## 2.5. The Target Population's Attitude to Error Correction

Fifteen participants of the present research have been asked five questions about correction techniques in terms of developing spoken accuracy. The purpose of asking these questions was to understand the respondents' attitude to *the teacher's correction, peer correction, explanation and whole-class discussion*. The questionnaire and the summary of the responses can be seen in Appendices 11 and 12 accordingly. The questionnaire was originally in English and discussed before administering, but the respondents were allowed to write the responses in their mother tongue. The responses have been translated by the author of the diploma paper. The copies of two students' questionnaires are in Appendix 13.

*Question 1* of the questionnaire is aimed at understanding whether immediate correction is more preferable to waiting until the end of the speech. According to the respondents, both techniques are equally acceptable. For some of the students interrupting is dangerous, because they tend to forget what they intended to say. However, immediate correction is useful because the learners remember what they have said and understand what is being corrected. When fluency or the complexity of the content of speech is important, then, it is advisable to wait until the end of the speech and correct then. When working on accuracy, the discourse should not be complicated and the speed of talking may not be fast, thus, interrupting is not harmful and all erroneous language should be analysed and corrected tactfully.

*Question 2* has been asked with the aim of discovering the most appropriate way of indicating the wrong language items by: a) echoing the correct form, b) saying 'Sorry?' to imitate lack of understanding or c) repeating the mistake and asking the speaker to correct him/herself.

The majority of the respondents have described option 'c' as 'very useful' (8 students) and 'useful' (6 students), explaining their preference by the fact that in this case the student knows clearly what should be corrected.

When the teacher shows that he/she does not understand what the student is saying by asking 'Sorry?', for some students it is a reason to analyse their speech and try to self-correct. Thus, option 'b' has been graded as 'very helpful' by 5 respondents and 'helpful' by 3 respondents.

Although 8 students have graded echoing as 'very helpful' and 'helpful', among them there are only 2 students who think that this technique is 'very helpful'. A possible reason for such attitude, as observed by the author of the present study, is that the target population do

not often notice the teacher repeating their words unless it takes a form of protesting or correcting.

*Question 3* has been asked in order to discover the learners' attitude to peer correction versus the teacher's correction. While peer correction (option 'a' in the questionnaire) seems 'very useful' and 'useful' to the respondents (2 and 9 students accordingly), they think that it is better if the teacher explains the rule and the students then try to correct themselves (option 'b' in the questionnaire). 13 respondents think that this type of correction is 'very useful', since it refreshes their knowledge and gives a chance to form and test their hypotheses.

In general, it is not important whether the teacher or the classmates correct the mistakes. The most important aspect is that a student is given an opportunity to think and self-correct, which results in better learning. What the teacher should not do is to immediately correct the mistake him/herself: 10 respondents have graded this technique as 'useless'.

The purpose of *Question 4* is to understand whether the students prefer to do grammar tasks independently, and then compare their answers or to do the exercises together discussing sentence by sentence. The former option implies the challenge to complete the task and only then check whether it has been done correctly, while the latter decreases one's opportunity to test his/her ability, but provides more scaffolding and the feeling of security.

In fact, connecting *Question 4* with correction of mistakes is not essential, but the students' own speech as the material for learning is more motivating, since it is unexpected, diverse and the students have to find the wrong items themselves. The questionnaire reveals the evidence that, although the respondents think that doing the task together (option 'b' in the questionnaire) helps everyone to hear the correct language and to remember what mistakes should not be made, the students still prefer working independently and then compare the answers (option 'a' in the questionnaire). Thus, 11 respondents think that it is 'useful' to do tasks together: 6 respondents think it is 'very helpful', 5 respondents think it is 'helpful'. 13 respondents prefer independent work, with the distribution of responses as 4 for 'very helpful' and 9 for 'helpful'.

In the teaching-learning process it is often impossible to distinguish clearly between the advantages of different techniques and it depends on an activity whether to do it in turns or independently. But in the case of correcting the language of the learners who cannot correct themselves, it is preferable to discuss while correcting the mistakes, since this is the kind of feedback the learners can immediately apply while doing the next sentence in the task.

*Question 5* – students write down the mistakes they hear in their classmate's speech. 4 respondents think the activity is 'very useful'. 9 respondents think that it is 'useful', but they still rely on the teacher in terms of taking notes of mistakes (students do not hear all the

mistakes). 2 respondents have admitted that the exercise is useless. There is a comment that this type of exercise is humiliating for the speaker. It is possible to partially agree with such an opinion, but if the teacher conducts the lesson in a way that every student feels safe and valued, then everyone can benefit from doing the task. Generally, the respondents like to listen to their classmates' speech and they are willing to improve their output, therefore correcting mistakes and discussing them as a type of activity is mainly appreciated. It also develops listening skills.

To summarise, the respondents prefer being corrected by the teacher to peer-correction, because the teacher usually explains the rules, thus increasing the opportunity for the students to self-correct. Also, the teacher notices more mistakes than peers do, so more mistakes will be corrected, which theoretically enhances the knowledge. In fact, not the number of mistakes being corrected, but the ability of the teacher to organise whole-class correction and discussion when the learners have a chance to share their hypotheses, enhances the knowledge.

The responses to the questionnaire bring into focus the distinction between errors and mistakes, discussed in Subchapter 1.5. As it has been noticed by the author of the present research, forming a correct structure often causes problems to the target population. They mix endings, for example, '-s' of the third person singular and '-ed' of the past simple, or the forms of the comparison degrees. Usually the reason for being wrong in these cases is lack of attention, carelessness, and when there is an indication that the form is wrong, the students can self-correct. Therefore, these are the examples of mistakes, which usually do not need any special form of feedback. Probably, what can help here is making up sentences with the target structures in them. The students make sentences containing certain structures and they remember them better when they say their sentences aloud.

As to the wrong application of grammar rules or vocabulary, it is usually an example of error. According to Bolitho and Tomlinson, in contrast with mistakes, which are caused by external factors (tiredness, lack of time), errors result from "faulty internalization" [Bolitho, Tomlinson 2004:113] and curing them requires "remediation", as James calls it [James 1998:237]. Actually, remediation is what the learners expect from the teacher and this is reflected in the responses analysed above. Remediation implies additional explanation, practice and feedback in the way favourable for improving the knowledge. That is why it is important to follow Ur's (2006) advice and not give a concentrated practice on some theme, but rather practise it with intervals in order to have an opportunity to discover gaps in the learners' knowledge and cure the erroneous forms before they fossilize.

In general, the most important data obtained in the course of the research have been analysed. The following subchapter contains the summary of the results and the discussion of the findings of the pilot study.

## **2.6. The Discussion of the Findings**

One of the main obstacles on the way to learning a foreign language successfully is appropriate application of grammar rules in practice. It has been noticed that some learners are good at doing grammar exercises while being inaccurate in speaking, and some learners do not see the importance of doing grammar exercises at all, which leads to being inaccurate in speaking, too. (Of course, there are also learners who do not, as they say, know grammar rules, and choose correct options intuitively, but this fact is not in the focus of the present research.)

At the beginning of the present study, the grammatical competence of the target population was not developed properly, as a result, their speech lacked accuracy. Also, the target population did not possess enough strategies which could help them in understanding or negotiating meanings. For example, the skills to paraphrase and describe, to use synonyms or antonyms, to use structural patterns provided by input or the grammar reference part of the course book, etc. were underdeveloped. The learners were satisfied with being able to express themselves approximately rather than exactly and, since they had not experienced situations where accuracy and precision were crucial, they did not feel the necessity of being accurate.

The author of the present diploma paper supposes that one of the possible causes of poor grammatical competence is insufficient use of explicit learning techniques.

The present research has constantly focused on developing a conscious attitude to the items being learnt. The target population have been shown the effect of the grammatical competence on accuracy and communication. In the course of the studies, the learners have come to a conclusion that working with grammar tasks is beneficial for developing accuracy in speaking, and they have also admitted that their accuracy has improved.

The author of the present research has monitored the performance of each of her students to facilitate acquisition. Translation into the mother tongue and explanation using the mother tongue of the learners are allowed and sometimes even necessary. Corrective techniques have been carefully selected and applied in each case individually to promote better acquisition. Fortunately, the target population consists of such students who appreciate all types of correction, as a result, there are no restrictions in this aspect. In general, correction

is targeted at promoting self-correction and developing the skill to use the clues encoded in the input.

The results of the post-test have demonstrated the increase of accuracy in speaking. Although there are mistakes in the learners' speech, they are mostly aware of them and can self-correct. It is possible to say at the final stage of the research that the level of language awareness of the target population has increased. Also, they have started to develop the skill to analyse input. The author of the diploma paper hopes that her students will eventually turn into independent learners.

Having conducted the present study, it is now possible to answer the questions posed in Subchapter 2.2.2.:

- 1) How to help the learners to realise that the knowledge they acquire at lessons is practically applicable?
  - Consciousness-raising activities are designed to demonstrate the learners how strongly the meaning is dependent on the form, such tasks are likely to promote the learners' motivation to speak correctly. Consciousness-raising tasks show the learners that the knowledge of grammar is essential for real-life communication, as a result, motivation for practising grammar at the lessons increases.
- 2) Will the learners become more responsible for their learning process if they understand why they need accuracy?
  - When the learners get accustomed to the idea that guessing is not the best technique for developing spoken accuracy, they start to use other strategies, such as analysing the use of certain grammatical structures. When they see that analysing leads to forming correct sentences, they gradually develop a more positive attitude to explicit learning, start to evaluate their speech and adjust it appropriately, which is a sign of a responsible attitude to learning.

In general, the present research has been conducted successfully. According to the questionnaires, the target population started to attend the course voluntarily, and some of them also invited their friends to join the course. With the exception of several students, the attendance during the research has been close to 100 per cent. The results of the tests show the development of the students' fluency and accuracy. These facts convince the author of the present study that the learners are satisfied with their progress and are motivated to continue learning further.

The author of the present research is able to give a positive answer to the research questions:

- 1) Is the learners' responsibility caused by their awareness of the importance of being grammatically correct?
  - Yes, when the learners are aware of the effect of accuracy on communication, their responsibility increases.
- 2) Does the application of consciousness-raising instruction improve the learners' spoken accuracy?
  - Yes, the application of consciousness-raising instruction causes the improvement of the learners' spoken accuracy, but it requires long-term studies. The consciousness-raising activities are aimed at developing conscious attitude to language acquisition, rather than at immediate acquisition. However, consciousness-raising teaches the learners to notice and analyse the target language, which is one of basic strategies in learning a foreign language.
- 3) Do the ways of correcting mistakes influence the learners' ability to recognize and avoid mistakes?
  - Yes, correction is important and should be done appropriately. The main principle of correction is to give learners the opportunity to think, attempt and learn.

In the course of this study, the target population have not achieved perfect accuracy. However, which is more important, they have learnt to pay attention to grammar. Although the learners' interlanguage has not completely restructured yet, and, as some of them have admitted, is in the state of chaos, if they continue to use a conscious approach to learning combined with more fluency work, their output will become both accurate and fluent.

## CONCLUSIONS

The **goal** of the present diploma paper is to find the most efficient techniques to improve the learners' accuracy in spoken English. The author of the present research has analysed the theoretical literature on developing speaking skills and the grammatical competence, which has helped in determining the main direction of the study. The review of the literature on error correction has helped to distinguish between types of errors and types of corrective techniques. The recommendations of the experts in the field of foreign language teaching have been taken into account, and the postgraduate believes that the most efficient techniques for developing grammatical competence have been found.

The author of the present research is convinced that consciousness-raising approach is the best solution for developing secondary school learners' spoken accuracy. Therefore, the **hypothesis** of the diploma paper has been proved, although not fully: the learners' awareness of the importance of accuracy in speaking and the wish to become efficient speakers have resulted in increased individual responsibility for their own learning, as a result promoting the development of accuracy.

On the basis of the classroom observation, the test results and the learners' speech evaluation, it is possible to state that by the final stage of this investigation the learners have learnt to notice separate items, discover links among them, identify form-function relationships. The students have learnt to pay attention to the items at the input stage, to monitor their own output, in many cases they are able to explain the choice of a certain item. The author of the present study thinks that these are the signs of growing individual responsibility for learning. Although the target population have not achieved a very high accuracy, they have learnt to monitor their output, therefore, they will eventually start to speak accurately.

The author of the present research thinks that the target population could have learnt more if all the learners had joined the course at the same time and had fully covered the course programme. Also, if the learners had known each other before the course, the level of participation in the lessons would have been higher, and more challenging tasks could have been piloted.

In general, it is possible to say that the target population possess 'learnt' knowledge, which results in the accuracy of planned speech. They need to develop 'acquired' knowledge, which will result in the accuracy of spontaneous speech. This can be achieved by using a combination of consciousness-raising activities and fluency tasks. If it is possible, the author of the diploma paper will continue the research with the same group of students. If not, the

present research may be replicated with another group of students in order to prove the reliability of the findings.

## THESES

1. The pilot study was conducted from October 2007 till May 2008 with the goal of finding the most efficient ways of developing secondary school learners' spoken accuracy. The study is based on the hypothesis that the learners' awareness of the importance of accuracy in speaking and the wish to become efficient speakers lead to increased individual responsibility for their own learning, as a result promoting the development of accuracy.
2. The theme was chosen due to the reason that the learners' language was fairly fluent but inaccurate. Spoken accuracy is mainly defined as the grammatical correctness of speech and is contrasted with fluency defined as the ability to maintain high speed in lengthy pieces of speaking.
3. Developing the secondary school learners' grammatical competence as one of the most essential aspects of accuracy consequently leads to language awareness. Language awareness is the ability to analyse the language, self-monitor and learn independently. Consciousness-raising activities help the learners to develop these abilities.
4. Consciousness-raising methodology presumes that a foreign language is best acquired if due attention is paid to the isolation-explanation stage of the teaching-learning process, because at this stage noticing occurs, and it is crucial for developing language awareness. Explicit, conscious learning should be combined with implicit, subconscious acquisition. Interaction of various items while performing consciousness-raising activities initiates the restructuring of the learner's interlanguage.
5. Monitoring the learners' output allows the teacher to distinguish between errors and mistakes the learners make. Analysing the causes of errors/mistakes of the target population helped the author of the study to select corrective techniques and plan the order of teaching. Such types of correction as feedback, correction proper and remediation were practised in the classroom.
6. As it has been discovered, an efficient way of giving feedback to the learners is letting them compare their output with a correct output. The difference between the two outputs demonstrates the gaps in the learners' knowledge. This type of feedback invites the students to think about the language and, as the responses to the questionnaires reveal, it is generally welcomed by them. The teaching practice has shown that correction becomes more productive if the learners are familiar with the metalanguage.
7. A range of data has been obtained during the pilot study by means of questionnaires, analysing the target population's essays, transcripts of their speech, test results. The

comparison of the results of the pre-test and post-test shows that the level of spoken accuracy has increased from A2 at the beginning of the course to B1 at the final stage of the study.

8. Application of consciousness-raising activities has improved the learners' ability to perform well in grammar tasks (i.e. explicit learning). When written tasks were followed by speaking activities, the learners started to notice the contexts around particular grammar rules (explicit-implicit learning). The fluency activities practised were necessary for developing automatic application of the rules (implicit acquisition).
9. Although the level of accuracy of the target population has not developed fully, their language awareness (self-monitoring, positive attitude to correction and input, conscious approach to learning the target language) has started to develop. This is the most important factor for developing independent and self-reliant learners. As the target group have admitted, they prefer doing tasks independently, because it allows them to form hypotheses and then test them when comparing their answers.
10. The present study has revealed that besides developing the learners' awareness of the application of grammar rules, much attention must also be paid to acquiring grammatical structures. Excessive focusing on showing the links among the linguistic phenomena in contexts sometimes distracted the author of this investigation from insisting on learning the structures. It resulted in the learners' knowing which grammar rules to apply but not always knowing how to form the structures.
11. The accent on the form-function relationship, which is typical of the consciousness-raising activities, has helped the learners to understand the practical application of grammar. As a result, they have become more responsible for their own learning and their accuracy is gradually improving. This enables the author to conclude that the hypothesis that has been put forward has been partially validated.

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## Examples of writing by the participants of the research (Extracts from essays)

### Student 1 (Form 8, Pre-Intermediate)

\*Before two years I heard about opportunity for pupils to work \*in a summer. I wanted to try how it \*is to work and also I thought that it would be \*grate if I \*earn money \*by myself. My friend wanted to work too. She had some \*kind friend in \*department store "Maxima". She \*had fixed \*interview with her. So I went there with her. I was a little bit nervous, but everything was \*grate probably for the reason that \*woman was my \*friends friend. Our conversation \*pass very \*good and there wasn't \*big necessity to be nervous because that woman was very kind. She sad that \*we're too young for working but because she \*known my friend she could \*to place us in job....

### Student 2 (Form 11, Upper-Intermediate)

Today \*a people \*has different aims in their \*life and a lot of ways of life.

To achieve \*that aims you should make an impression on the people who are around you. The first, \*on what people \*are watching is \*the appearance. It is very important to have a good physique, to be well-groomed. If you have it, \*the people will think you are tidy, you have good manners and you can work hard, because to be \*in a good shape you must work hard and take care \*about your way of life, \*what is not easy.

Because of \*motionless way of life \*the people are becoming fat. Most of \*the people go to \*a fitness clubs and do a lot of different types of sport. Also, they try to maintain diets, to \*throw down weight....

### Pre-Testing: Interview Guidelines

Please ask your partner questions using the ideas below. Add other questions you are interested in.

- |  |                          |
|--|--------------------------|
| 1. Name  | What ...?                |
| 2. Age   | How old ...?             |
| 3. Date of birth   | When ...?                |
| 4. Home town (country)   | Where ...?               |
| 5. Native language   | What ...?                |
| 6. Reasons for studying English  | Why ...?                 |
| 7. Length of time studying English                                     | How long ...?            |
| 8. Studies of other foreign languages                                  | Which ...?               |
| 9. Education (major, occupation, plans)                                | What ...?                |
| 10. Family   | Are you ...? Do you ...? |
| 11. Interests  | What ...?                |
| 12. Any special information to share (travels, accomplishments, goals) |                          |

## Pre-Testing: Transcripts

### CONVERSATION 1

A: What's your name?

L: My name is Elīna.

A: How old are you?

L: I am fourteen.

A: When is your birthday?

L: Mm... seventh February.

A: Where do you live?

L: In Latvia.

A: What is your native language?

L: My native language is Latvian.

A: Why are you studying English?

L: Because I want to learn English better. I think I need it for my job.

A: Which other languages are you studying?

L: Russian and German.

A: What are your plans for the future?

L: Actually I don't know.

A: Have you any brothers and sisters?

L: No, I don't have brothers and sisters.

A: What are your interests?

L: Learning English.

A: What are your achievements?

L: I don't know.

A: What are your goals?

L: I don't know.

### CONVERSATION 2

K: What is your name?

J: My name is Nastya.

K: How old are you?

J: I am sixteen years old.

K: When is your birthday?

J: My birthday is in April 26.

K: What is your native language?

J: My native language is Russian.

K: Why do you study English?

J: I study English because I like it.

K: How long you studying English?

J: I studying English 3 years.

K: Which language do you learn?

J: I learn Latvian.

K: What is your education?

J: I am a student.

K: Do you love your family?

J: Yes, I love.

### CONVERSATION 3

F: What is your name?

G: My name is Artyom.

F: How old are you?

G: Er... Seventeen age old.

F: When is your birthday?

G: My birthday is on December ten.

F: Where do you live?

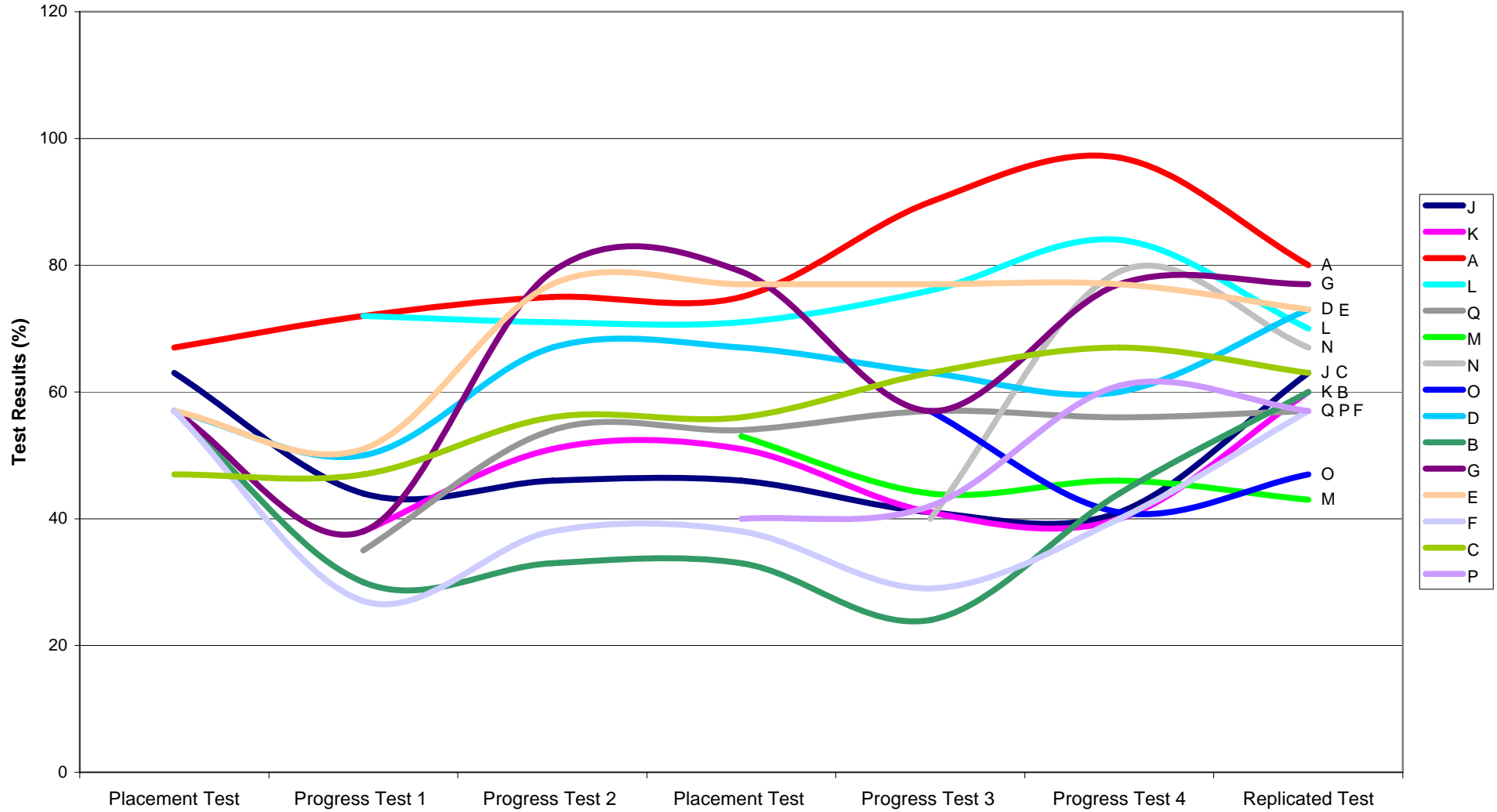
G: I live in Riga.

F: What is your native language?  
G: My native language is Russian.  
F: Why do you stay... studying [steidin] English?  
G: I started to study English because I need to learn... er... English because in twelfth grade I will have an exam.  
F: How long are you studying English?  
G: I'm studying English about 11 years I think... or 10 years.  
F: Which other studies of the [fogen] languages?  
G: Mm... I think I study a Lettish language.  
F: Well. What is your educations?  
G: My education is a main education is nine grade.  
F: Do you have a brother?  
G: No, I don't have a brother.  
F: What is your interests?  
G: My interests... I think it's computers and airsoft.  
F: What is your goal?  
G: My goal is to complete twelfth grade.

#### **CONVERSATION 4**

C: Hello. What is your name?  
D: My name is Kārlis.  
C: How old are you?  
D: Fourteen.  
C: What is your date of birth?  
D: The twenty-first September.  
C: Where are you from?  
D: From Riga!  
C: What is your native language?  
D: Latvian.  
C: Why do you study English?  
D: Because I want to.  
C: And which language you study else?  
D: Russian.  
C: In what form do you learn?  
D: What?  
C: In what form do you learn?  
D: In eight.  
C: Ok. And do you have any brother or sister?  
D: Yes, I have sister.  
C: How old is she?  
D: Eight years old.  
C: In what are you interested?  
D: BMX, [...] and skate.  
C: Do you like travel?  
D: Yes.  
C: And where you were?  
D: Er... In Poland, er... Germany, er... Russia  
C: And where do you want to travel?  
D: Where I want?  
C: Yes.  
D: I don't know. Mmm ... USA!  
C: Thank you for the interview.

Test Results Throughout the School Year



## The Self-Evaluation of the Target Population

### Part 1

#### The Responses to the Questionnaire

<b>1. I started to attend this course because</b>	<b>Respondents</b>
I wanted to.	12
my parents offered me to attend the course.	3
my parents forced me to attend the course.	

<b>2. At school, the level of the course books my class uses is</b>	<b>Respondents</b>
Elementary	
Pre-Intermediate	8
Intermediate	2
Upper-Intermediate	5
Advanced	

<b>3. In general, by the end of this school year my knowledge of English</b>	<b>Respondents</b>
has improved.	10
has probably improved, but there is chaos in my head.	5
has not improved.	

<b>4. I know what I do not know in English.</b>	<b>Respondents</b>
Yes, sure	6
Probably	8
No	1

<b>5. I know what I need to improve in my English.</b>	<b>Respondents</b>
Yes, sure	8
Probably	7
No	

<b>6. I am ready to deal with any situation in English.</b>	<b>Respondents</b>
Yes, sure	3
Probably	11
No	1

<b>7. I am not afraid of possible difficulties in English, I have strategies for dealing with them.</b>	<b>Respondents</b>
Yes, sure	1
Probably	13
No	1

<b>8. When I come across a difficulty I</b>	<b>Respondents</b>
wait until someone helps me so that I do not make mistakes.	2
try to think and work out a solution.	13

<b>9. I feel I have improved</b>	<b>Responses</b>
speaking skills	13
the speed of talking	6
the correctness of talking	10
the skill to explain	7
vocabulary	10
the skill to think of synonyms and opposites easily	3
pronunciation	10
listening skills	8
reading skills	9
the skill to use a dictionary	3
the skill to understand unknown words without a dictionary	6
the knowledge of grammatical structures	8
the knowledge of grammar rules	10
the skill to analyse the use of grammar rules	7
writing skills	12
spelling	11
the skill of composing a logical text	7
the skill of answering questions fast	10
creative thinking	5
the skill to communicate in real-life situations	9

<b>10. At the beginning of the course I wanted to improve</b>	<b>Responses</b>
speaking skills	13
the speed of talking	11
the correctness of talking	10
the skill to explain	7
vocabulary	14
the skill to think of synonyms and opposites easily	8
pronunciation	12
listening skills	10
reading skills	8
the skill to use a dictionary	5
the skill to understand unknown words without a dictionary	9
the knowledge of grammatical structures	10
the knowledge of grammar rules	14
the skill to analyse the use of grammar rules	7

writing skills	11
spelling	10
the skill of composing a logical text	8
the skill of answering questions fast	7
creative thinking	10
the skill to communicate in real-life situations	12

## Part 2

### The Result of the Analysis of the Questionnaire

Having administered the questionnaires, the following comparison between what the respondents wanted to improve and what they have really improved has been made:

Skills	Wanted, but have not improved	Did not want, but have improved	Deviation from expectations
Speaking skills	2	2	
The speed of talking	7	1	- 7
The correctness of talking	2	2	
The skill to explain	2	2	
Vocabulary	5	1	- 5
The skill to think of synonyms and opposites easily	6	1	- 6
Pronunciation	4	2	- 4
Listening skills	4	2	- 4
Reading skills	2	3	
The skill to use a dictionary	3	1	
The skill to understand unknown words without a dictionary	4	2	- 4
The knowledge of grammatical structures	3	1	
The knowledge of grammar rules	4	0	- 4
The skill to analyse the use of grammar rules	3	4	+ 4
Writing skills	2	3	
Spelling	3	4	+ 4
The skill of composing a logical text	3	2	
The skill of answering questions fast	3	6	+ 6
Creative thinking	4	0	- 4
The skill to communicate in real-life situations	5	2	- 5

**Post-Testing: Interview Guidelines<sup>1</sup>**

Interview your partner by asking him/her Yes-No-questions and Wh-questions using the prompts below.

1. brothers / sisters / How many?
2. cinema / last week / What?
3. be / England / When?
4. would like / famous / Why?
5. play / a musical instrument / Which instrument?
6. enjoy / schoolwork
7. go away / last weekend / Where?
8. come here / by bus
9. go out / tonight / Where?
10. be good / cooking
11. fail / a test / Which subject?
12. be / sensitive
13. eat / a lot of junk food / Favourite?
14. try / acupuncture
15. meet / a celebrity / Who?

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<sup>1</sup> Adopted from Naughton D., "Total English. Teacher's Resource Book", Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2006, p. 135

## Post-Testing: Transcripts

### CONVERSATION 1

- A: How many brothers and sisters do you have?  
 L: I don't have brothers or sisters.  
 A: Have you been in cinema last week?  
 L: No.  
 A: Have you been in England?  
 L: No.  
 A: Would you like to meet some famous person?  
 L: Yes, I would like.  
 A: Why... would you like to meet some famous person?  
 L: Because they are famous.  
 A: Do you play a musical instrument?  
 L: No.  
 A: Do you enjoy schoolwork?  
 L: Sometimes.  
 A: Did you go away somewhere last weekend?  
 L: Yes.  
 A: Where... did you go?  
 L: I went to my countryside.  
 A: Do you come here... came here by bus?  
 L: Yes, I came here by bus.  
 A: Are you good at cooking?  
 L: I hope.  
 A: Have you ever failed in a test?  
 L: Yes, I have.  
 A: In which subject?  
 L: In housekeeping.  
 A: Are you sensitive?  
 L: Mm... sometimes.  
 A: Do you eat a lot of junk food?  
 L: Yes, I eat.  
 A: What's your favourite junk food?  
 L: Er... I don't know. Coca-cola.  
 A: Have you ever tried an acupuncture?  
 L: No.  
 A: Have you ever met a celebrity?  
 L: No.  
 A: Ok, thanks.

### CONVERSATION 2

- K: How many brothers or sisters have you?... Have you got?  
 J: I have one brother.  
 K: Have you been in the cinema last week?  
 J: Er... Yes, I have been in the cinema last week.  
 K: What did you saw there?  
 J: I saw... 'Honey'.  
 K: Have you been in England?  
 J: No, I haven't.  
 K: Would you like be famous?  
 J: No, I don't.  
 K: What musical instrument... can you play?  
 J: I can't play in a musical instruments.  
 K: Do you enjoy schoolwork?  
 J: Yes, I do.  
 K: Where will you go away last weekend?

**J:** I celebrity my birthday party.  
**K:** Did you come here by bus?  
**J:** I come... I came here... on foot.  
**K:** Where... will you go out tonight?  
**J:** I will not go out tonight.  
**K:** Are you good at cooking?  
**J:** Er... no, I'm not.  
**K:** Which subject fail... Which subject did you fail a test?  
**J:** I failed... in my last test .... in Mathematics.  
**K:** Are you sensitive?  
**J:** Yes, I am.  
**K:** Do you like eat a lot of junk food?  
**J:** Yes, I like.  
**K:** Have you ever... have you ever did ... acupuncture?  
**J:** No, I haven't.  
**K:** Who will meet a celebrity with you?  
**J:** I didn't meet any celebrity.

### CONVERSATION 3

**F:** Do you have brothers or sisters?  
**G:** No, I doesn't. No, I don't... have... brothers or sisters.  
**F:** Do you go to the cinema last week?  
**G:** No, I didn't go to the cinema last week.  
**F:** Have you... been to the England?  
**G:** No, I haven't been to the England.  
**F:** Do you like to be famous?  
**G:** No, I don't like to be famous.  
**F:** Why?  
**G:** Because... I'm... Maybe I'm shy.  
**F:** Do you play any musical instrument?  
**G:** No, I don't play any musical instruments.  
**F:** Do you enjoy schoolwork?  
**G:** Mm... No, I don't enjoy schoolwork.  
**F:** Do you go away last weekend?  
**G:** Last weekend? Yes...  
**F:** And where?  
**G:** To the countryside.  
**F:** Mm...Do you come here by bus?  
**G:** Yes, I do.  
**F:** Mm... Do you go out tonight?  
**G:** Yes...  
**F:** And where?  
**G:** Mm... For walk... For a walk, maybe...  
**F:** Do you good cooking?  
**G:** I don't know, but I think no.  
**F:** Do you fail a test?  
**G:** Fail? I don't know... No.  
**F:** Do you... Do you are sensitive?  
**G:** Er... Yes.  
**F:** Do you eat a lot of junk food?  
**G:** No, I doesn't. No, I don't.  
**F:** But what are your favourite food?  
**G:** Favourite food? I don't know. Spagetti maybe.  
**F:** Do you try acu... acupuncture?  
**G:** No, I didn't.  
**F:** Did you met celebrity? And who?  
**G:** Yeah... Yes, I did. But I don't remember what name it was... A singer from...  
**F:** Russia.

**G:** No, a singer from 'A-Europa'. And different other singers from Russia, but I don't know their names.

#### CONVERSATION 4

**C:** Do you have brother or sister?  
**D:** Yes  
**C:** How many?  
**D:** I have one sister.  
**C:** Did you went to the cinema last week?  
**D:** No.  
**C:** Er... Have you ever been in England?  
**D:** No.  
**C:** Would you like to be famous?  
**D:** No.  
**C:** Er... Can you play a musical instrument?  
**D:** No.  
**C:** Do you enjoy schoolwork?  
**D:** No!  
**C:** Did you... go... away last weekend?  
**D:** No. No.  
**C:** Do you come here by bus?  
**D:** No.  
**C:** Will you go out tonight?  
**D:** Maybe.  
**C:** And where?  
**D:** To the... party.  
**C:** Are you good at cooking?  
**D:** No.  
**C:** Did you fail test?  
**D:** No.  
**C:** Are you sensitive?  
**D:** No.  
**C:** Do you eat a lot of junk food?  
**D:** Yes.  
**C:** Your favourite?  
**D:** McDonald's food.  
**C:** Have you ever tried acupuncture?  
**D:** No.  
**C:** Do you want to meet a celebrity?  
**D:** What's celebrity?  
**C:** Famous people.  
**D:** What?  
**C:** Famous people.  
**D:** Ah... No.

#### CONVERSATION 5

**D:** Do you have any brother or sister?  
**C:** Yes, I have sister.  
**D:** One only, yes?  
**C:** Yes.  
**D:** Do you... last week... on cinema?  
**C:** No.  
**D:** Have you been at England?  
**C:** No... I haven't.  
**D:** Would you like to be famous?  
**C:** Yes...  
**D:** Why?  
**C:** I don't know. I want to try something new.  
**D:** Do you play a musical instrument?  
**C:** No, I don't.  
**D:** Do you enjoy schoolwork?  
**C:** Yes.  
**D:** Did you go away last weekend?  
**C:** Mm... Yes.  
**D:** Where?  
**C:** Er... To the Plakanciems.  
**D:** Did you come here by bus?  
**C:** No, I didn't.  
**D:** Do you... No. Will you go out tonight?  
**C:** Maybe.  
**D:** And where?  
**C:** Er... I don't know. Somewhere with my friends.  
**D:** Are you good on cooking?  
**C:** Yes, I am.  
**D:** Do you failed a test?  
**C:** No.  
**D:** Are you sensitive?  
**C:** Yes.  
**D:** Do you eat a lot of junk food?  
**C:** Sometimes.  
**D:** And what's your favourite?  
**C:** Mm... Ice cream.  
**D:** Have you ever tried a...cu... punc...ture?  
**C:** No.  
**D:** Have you ever ... No. Do you want to meet a celebrity?  
**C:** Yes.

## The Responses to the Questionnaire in November, 2007

### 1. Grade these exercises for developing correctness in speaking

	4 very helpful	3 helpful	2 not useless	1 useless
1. Choosing one of the alternatives ( <i>I live / lives</i> in London.)	2	3	2	4
2. Writing correct forms of the words given in brackets	5	6		
3. Filling in gaps with the words given	3	5	3	
4. Filling in gaps with the words which are not given	5	2	3	1
5. Correcting mistakes (the types of mistakes are indicated)	3	3	4	1
6. Correcting mistakes (the types of mistakes are not indicated)	5	3	3	
7. Changing the grammatical structure but leaving the meaning of the sentence	3	5	3	
8. Thinking of contexts for the sentences given	2	4	5	
9. Reading a text and explaining why grammar structures are used in the way they are used	5	5	1	
10. Translating a text into English	7	3	1	
11. While listening to a recording writing down certain grammatical structures	3	3	3	2

### 2. Which of the exercises in question 1 are more challenging for you?

1. Choosing one of the alternatives ( <i>I live / lives</i> in London.)	
2. Writing correct forms of the words given in brackets	2
3. Filling in gaps with the words given	2
4. Filling in gaps with the words which are not given	3
5. Correcting mistakes (the types of mistakes are indicated)	1
6. Correcting mistakes (the types of mistakes are not indicated)	4
7. Changing the grammatical structure but leaving the meaning of the sentence	1
8. Thinking of stories for the sentences given	
9. Reading a text and explaining why grammar structures are used in the way they are used	
10. Translating a text into English	5
11. While listening to a recording writing down certain grammatical structures	1

Nr 10, because I like translating into English. (B)

Nr 2 and 7, because they help you understand better what is necessary. (C)

Nr 11, I do not know why. (D)

Nr 4 and 10, because my vocabulary is not very rich yet. Nr 6, because there are certain themes in which it is difficult for me to identify mistakes. (E)

Nr 6, I think it helps us a lot to concentrate on the correct form. (F)

Nr 10, it helps you use all knowledge of English. (G)

Nr 4, it gives you more chance to practice vocabulary. (H)

Nr 3 and 10 because it is easier to memorise words in contexts, and Nr 10, because it develops speaking skills. (J)

Nr 5, 6 and 10, because they improve the knowledge of English and the vocabulary. (K)

Nr 2, 3 and 4, because they are more difficult than the other exercises. (L)

### 3. If you wish, please mention other exercises which help you learn to speak correctly:

1. Playing games which develop one's knowledge. Reading/creating interesting stories. (C)
2. Making notes in a notebook and revising the notes at home or in the classroom. (D)
3. Watching films in English every weekend. (B)
4. Just speaking, practice speaking not writing. (E)

## Consciousness-Raising Tasks

### Task 1<sup>1</sup>

*Please rewrite the text correctly. Is everything clear in the text? Do you need more information?*

Hello.

My name is Zhou Wenwei, but always calls me Wendy. I lived in Singapore, a big city in Asia. I spoke China. I can song in China. My favourite musician is cantopop and English pop. I went to a concert of 'Savage Garden' tomorrow, so I must lose my ticket. 'Savage Garden' will have too lead singers. She is handsome men.

I write this email now and think about food. I am eating all my cookies in the morning, so I have no cookies. My mom brought me some food soon. Happy!

When did you visit me? Sent me an email before you come. Last year I am going to go to Singapore. Remember them.

Keep in touch.

You Wendy

### Task 2

1. *Read the text. Is everything clear in it?*
2. *Correct the mistakes. In what case which ending is possible?*
3. *In what contexts can the corrected sentences be used?*

That morning I was having breakfast at six. I'm usually eaten at nine, but that time everything was different as usually. While I was tidied up after the breakfast, Tony was called: "Honey, where are you?" And I thought:

- A) "He's back!"      B) "She's back! That woman!"

---

<sup>1</sup> Task 1 and 2 have been designed by the author of the present research.

## Task 3<sup>1</sup>

- 1 Look at the pictures, read the sentences and work out the name (first name and family name) of each person.



The person who ordered chicken is called Chris.  
The person who has long hair is called Kim.  
The person who bought a coffee is called Robin.  
The person who is standing on a glass is called Jo.  
The person who is eating ice cream is called Pat.  
The family name of the person who has a long hair is Smith.  
The family name of the person who is eating an ice cream is Brown.  
The family name of the person who ordered a chicken is MacDonald.  
The family name of the person who bought coffee is O'Connor.  
The family name of the person who is standing on glass is Patel.

2 Now, check that you know the difference between:

chicken	a chicken
hair	a hair
coffee	a coffee
glass	a glass
ice cream	an ice cream

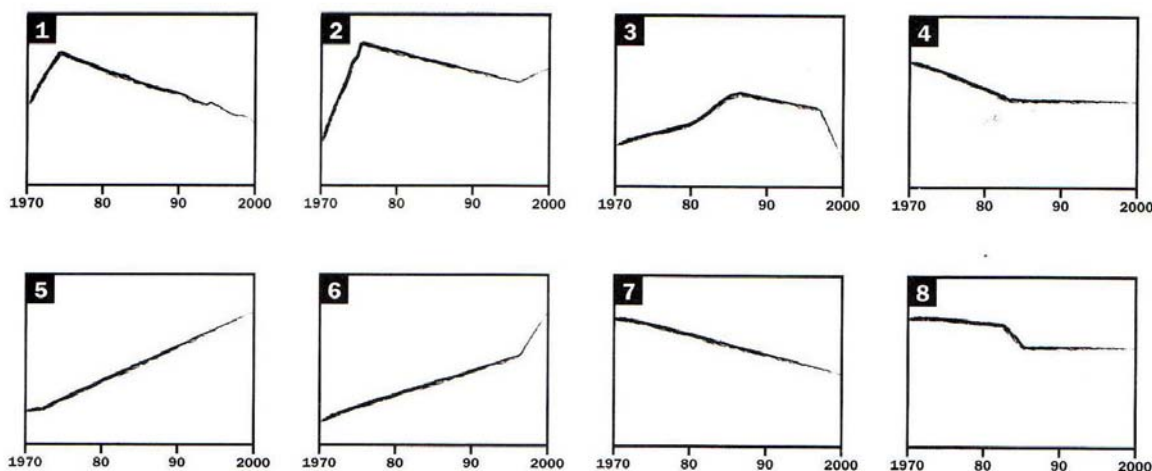
Can you add any more words to these lists? For example:

paper	a paper
-------	---------

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Thornbury, S. (2005b) *Uncovering Grammar*. Oxford: Macmillan Education, p. 103

## Task 4<sup>1</sup>

- 1 Read this information about an imaginary city and look at the graphs. Decide which graph represents which topic (Population, Crime, etc).



**a** **Population**  
The population of Grammarton has been falling steadily since the late 60s.

**b** **Crime**  
The crime rate increased sharply in the early 70s but has gradually fallen since then.

**c** **Home ownership**  
The number of people owning their own homes has been increasing steadily since the early 70s.

**d** **Tourism**  
The number of tourists visiting Grammarton rose steadily from the 70s on, but has increased dramatically recently.

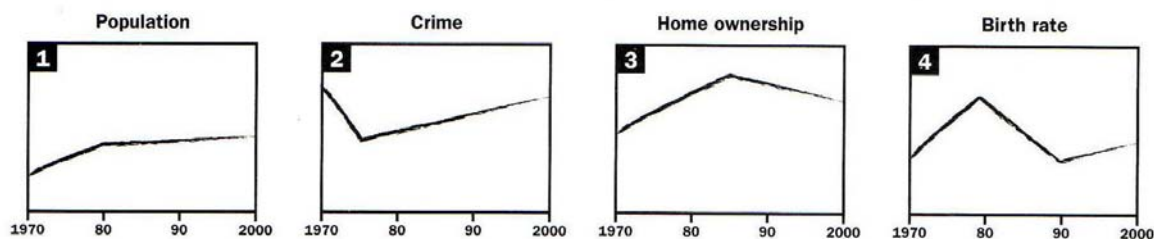
**e** **Unemployment**  
The number of people out of work increased dramatically in the early seventies, but then fell gradually. There has been a slight increase in the last few years.

**f** **Birth rate**  
The birth rate fell steadily until the mid 80s, and has remained the same since then.

**g** **Infant mortality**  
The rate of infant mortality has remained the same since a slight fall in the mid 80s.

**h** **Heart disease**  
Rates of heart disease rose steadily until the mid 80s, then fell slowly. Recently there has been a sharp fall.

- 2 Now, write sentences about another city, using the information in these graphs:



- 3
- Draw some graphs yourself about, for example, changes in fashion, in health, in leisure habits, in business or economy, in beliefs, in habits, etc in your local area or in some imaginary country.
  - Write sentences to describe them, but in a different order.
  - Exchange your graphs and sentences with other students. Can they match the sentence with the graph?

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Thornbury, S. (2005b) *Uncovering Grammar*. Oxford: Macmillan Education, p. 106

## Task 5<sup>1</sup>

### 1. Write the simple past or the past continuous form of the verbs in brackets.

1. At 6:00 p.m., Bob sat down at the table and began to eat. At 6:05, Bob (*eat*) \_\_\_\_\_ dinner. While Bob (*eat*) \_\_\_\_\_ dinner, Ann (*come*) \_\_\_\_\_ through the door. In other words, when Ann (*come*) \_\_\_\_\_ through the door, Bob (*eat*) \_\_\_\_\_ dinner. Bob went to bed at 10:30. At 11:00 Bob (*sleep*) \_\_\_\_\_. While Bob (*sleep*) \_\_\_\_\_, the phone (*ring*) \_\_\_\_\_. In other words, when the phone (*ring*) \_\_\_\_\_, Bob (*sleep*) \_\_\_\_\_. Bob left his house at 8:00 a.m. and (*begin*) \_\_\_\_\_ to walk to class. While he (*walk*) \_\_\_\_\_ to class, he (*see*) \_\_\_\_\_ Mrs Smith. When Bob (*see*) \_\_\_\_\_ Mrs Smith, she (*stand*) \_\_\_\_\_ on her front porch. She (*hold*) \_\_\_\_\_ a broom. Mrs Smith (*wave*) \_\_\_\_\_ at Bob when she (*see*) \_\_\_\_\_ him.

2. Yesterday afternoon I (*go*) \_\_\_\_\_ to visit the Parker family. When I (*get*) \_\_\_\_\_ there around two o'clock, Mrs Parker (*be*) \_\_\_\_\_ in the yard. She (*plant*) \_\_\_\_\_ flowers in her garden. Mr Parker (*be*) \_\_\_\_\_ in the garage. He (*work*) \_\_\_\_\_ on their car. He (*change*) \_\_\_\_\_ the oil. The children (*play*) \_\_\_\_\_ in the front yard. In other words, while Mr Parker (*fix*) \_\_\_\_\_ the oil in the car, the children (*play*) with a ball in the yard.

3. Yesterday Tom and Janice (*go*) \_\_\_\_\_ to the zoo around one o'clock. They (*see*) \_\_\_\_\_ many kinds of animals and (*have*) \_\_\_\_\_ a few adventures. While they (*walk*) \_\_\_\_\_ by the elephant, it (*begin*) \_\_\_\_\_ to squirt water at them, so they (*run*) \_\_\_\_\_ behind a rock and (*dry*) \_\_\_\_\_ themselves. Later, while they (*pass*) \_\_\_\_\_ the giraffe area, one of the tall, purple-tongued animals (*lower*) \_\_\_\_\_ its head toward Tom and (*start*) \_\_\_\_\_ to nibble on his green hat. Janice said, "Shoo!" At that point, the giraffe (*stretch*) \_\_\_\_\_ its head toward Janice and (*try*) \_\_\_\_\_ to eat her ice cream cone. Janice (*let, not*) \_\_\_\_\_ the giraffe have the ice cream because she (*stand*) \_\_\_\_\_ right in front of a sign that said, "DO NOT FEED THE ANIMALS." She (*point*) \_\_\_\_\_ at the sign and (*say*) \_\_\_\_\_ to the giraffe, "Can't you read?"

4. – There was a power outage in our part of town last night. (*Your lights, go out*) \_\_\_\_\_ too?  
– Yes, they did. It (*be*) \_\_\_\_\_ terrible! I (*take*) \_\_\_\_\_ a shower when the lights went out. My wife (*find*) \_\_\_\_\_ a flashlight and rescued me from the bathroom! We couldn't cook dinner, so we (*eat*) \_\_\_\_\_ sandwiches instead. I (*try*) \_\_\_\_\_ to study by candlelight, but I couldn't see well enough, so I (*go*) \_\_\_\_\_ to bed and (*sleep*) \_\_\_\_\_. How about you? – I (*read*) \_\_\_\_\_ when the lights (*go out*) \_\_\_\_\_. I (*study*) \_\_\_\_\_ for a history exam. Of course, I couldn't study in the dark so I (*get up*) \_\_\_\_\_ very early this morning and finished studying for my test.

### 2. Mark the past simple with X and the past continuous with \_\_\_\_\_. Retell the stories.

<b>1.</b>	<b>2.</b>	<b>3.</b>	<b>4.</b>
Bob ( <i>eat</i> )	I ( <i>go</i> )	Tom and Janice ( <i>go</i> )	( <i>Your lights, go out</i> )?
Bob ( <i>eat</i> )	I ( <i>get</i> )	They ( <i>see</i> ) and ( <i>have</i> )	it ( <i>be</i> ) terrible
Ann ( <i>come</i> )	Mrs Parker ( <i>be</i> )	they ( <i>walk</i> )	I ( <i>take</i> ) a shower
Ann ( <i>come</i> )	She ( <i>plant</i> )	the elephant ( <i>begin</i> )	my wife ( <i>find</i> )
Bob ( <i>eat</i> )	Mr Parker ( <i>be</i> )	they ( <i>run</i> ) and ( <i>dry</i> )	we ( <i>eat</i> )
Bob ( <i>sleep</i> )	he ( <i>work</i> )	they ( <i>pass</i> )	I ( <i>try</i> ) to study
Bob ( <i>sleep</i> )	he ( <i>change</i> )	one animal ( <i>lower</i> )	I ( <i>go</i> ) to bed and
the phone ( <i>ring</i> )	the children ( <i>play</i> )	the giraffe ( <i>start</i> ) to	( <i>sleep</i> )
the phone ( <i>ring</i> )	Mr Parker ( <i>fix</i> )	nibble	I ( <i>read</i> )
Bob ( <i>sleep</i> )	the children ( <i>play</i> )	the giraffe ( <i>stretch</i> ) and	the lights ( <i>go out</i> )
Bob ( <i>begin</i> )		( <i>try</i> )	I ( <i>study</i> )
he ( <i>walk</i> )		Janice ( <i>let, not</i> )	I ( <i>get up</i> )
he ( <i>see</i> )		she ( <i>stand</i> )	
Bob ( <i>see</i> )		she ( <i>point</i> ) and ( <i>say</i> )	
she ( <i>stand</i> )			
she ( <i>hold</i> )			
Mrs Smith ( <i>wave</i> )			
she ( <i>see</i> )			

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Azar, B. S. (1992) *Fundamentals of English Grammar*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall Inc., p. 33-37

## Task 6<sup>1</sup>

- a) Make the comments below more formal. Correct mistakes.  
b) Imagine you are writing an article for a music magazine where you have to describe the situation in music based on the comments. Be as polite as possible! Don't forget about the introduction, body and conclusion 😊

1. by this song she became an legend....her new one is also amazing.
2. you never get tired of this one!
3. beautifully sung! Can't get enough of it!
4. this songs help me so much to get over my ex-bf who left me 3 months ago...i'd like to sing this to his face,to show that he hurted me but did not stop me
5. X-tina is so hot
6. She has a wondrefull voice and for me she is a winer always,she is so different from birney Spears
7. Christina and Avril are my favorite singers evaa! I like Avril cuz she has a cute voice and her songs are cool.  
I love Christina because she has beautiful voice and sings deep songs that touch my soul xDD
8. Whats up with the middle-aged/old woman? She is thinking of plastic chirurgie! Like a face-lift ;)
9. LOL... I've never seen him either. I was fooled too.
10. Hahahaha LoL!! Im laughing now(ok maybe not RIGHT now. nice fro's though!
11. love it
12. Lenny is the coolest dude on the planet. If my girlfriend cheated on me and she told me it was Lenny...I wouldn't even say anything...I would just be pissed off that she didn't let me meet him lol!
13. Love this song. Been trying to learn how to play it. Anyone out there know it. Maybe share the tuning and notes!
14. Too pretty this song..
15. =]]]] lov ths music
16. Underrated? Definitely! Shit... a couple of days ago I didn't even knew it, but now I just can't get it out of my head.
17. gahh i cant find this one song, i thought it was played by lenny kravitz, but i dont kno anymore, i forgot the lyrics something about monday tuesday, he goes through the week talking bout his girl, damnnnn i forgot wht that song was called
18. no offence but the vid is really blur and i cant really hear the singing!!

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<sup>1</sup> Task 6 contains comments from the website [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)

## **Myths About Homeopathy<sup>1</sup>**

**Myth 1.** Homeopathy is an unproved science.

**Myth 2.** Homeopathic medicines are only sugar pills which act more as placebos and have no medicinal value as such.

**Myth 3.** Homeopathy is slow acting and cannot be used in acute cases of diarrhoea, fever, cough, cold, etc.

**Myth 4.** Homeopathy is a 'magic remedy' that can treat any disorder.

**Myth 5.** Homeopathic doctors are quacks who do not have formal training in the field of Medicine. etc.

## **Facts About Homeopathy**

**Fact:** Homeopathy is based on experimental pharmacological and clinical data. Over the years, homeopathic medicines have been extensively studied for their efficacy in a variety of indications. Clinical studies have been conducted in India as well as other countries. The physical basis of the homeopathic medicines is still not clear but there is enough clinical data to prove its efficacy. All the principles of homeopathy are based on sound logic and experimental data.

**Fact:** Yes, the white sugar pills, as such do not have any medicinal value. But these act as vehicles or carriers for the medicines, which are alcohol based. Otherwise the medicine can be taken directly or dissolved in water. Homeopathic medicines have been scientifically studied the world over and found to be effective in a wide range of diseases. Thus they are not placebos.

**Fact:** Homeopathy is fast acting in acute cases and can be effectively used in treating infections, fever, cold etc. Unfortunately, people tend to go to a homeopath only when the acute problem becomes chronic. Naturally, these cases take longer to treat. Also, most people take recourse in homeopathy in cases of arthritis, allergic asthma or skin conditions etc., which take a longer time to treat with any other medicines.

**Fact:** Homeopathy like any other field of medicine, has its limitations. For example, it cannot treat cases where surgery is unavoidable, many dental cases, etc.

**Fact:** Qualified doctors practice Homeopathy, in most parts of the world. In India, there are over 200 homeopathy medical colleges and world over the number is close to 500, which offer degree and post-graduate studies in Homeopathy. At present, there are over 2,00,000 trained homeopaths in India and at least half-million across the globe. etc.

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from <http://www.hpathy.com/basics/homeopathic-myths.asp>

# Chiromancy<sup>1</sup>

## Hand Size

Before determining the size of the hand, it is important to judge the size in relation to the rest of the body. Generally small hands represent the inclination towards large ideas, and large hands show a desire to do things and get them done one your own. Those with small and smooth hands tend to be the best executives because they have the ability to think big and delegate work. Those with large, knotty hands tend to have a strong desire carry out their own wishes and ideas on their own.

## Hand Strength

This is best determined by shaking someone's hand. If the handshake is firm, then the person would most likely be aggressive and outgoing. However, if they present a weak handshake, then the obvious qualities would tend to be a little reserved, they may also be the type of person who likes to be taken care of.

## Hand Colour

The colour of the palm is a good indicator of the vitality and strength of a person. A pale palm often shows a lack of strength and vitality. A yellow palm might indicate a hostile or even cynical nature. A pink palm show good vitality and strength. A red palm shows an extremely aggressive nature as well as hyperactive tendencies.

## Flexibility

A relaxed and flexible hand represents an easygoing nature, and a person who readily accepts new ideas. However if the hand is too flexible and the fingers bend all the way back to a ninety degree angle, then the person can tend to be a pushover. A stiff hand shows a rigid personality and a stiff thumb represents a strong will. The spread of the fingers measures a person's versatility and generosity.

## Warmth

The warmth of a hand is fairly straightforward. If the hand is generally warm then the person is good-natured, and if it is generally cool or cold, then the person may tend to be somewhat withdrawn.

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from <http://www.gadry.com/palm.htm>

## Benefits of Writing Drafts of Speech and Doing Homework

### Part 1

Before speaking students write drafts (or list down difficult items, such as vocabulary and grammar).

a) Very helpful	6
b) Helpful	5
c) Useless	4

#### Very helpful<sup>1</sup>

1. Because then we speak more confidently and faster.
2. Having a draft helps the speaker not to lose his/her thought.
3. It is easier to speak when you have a draft.
4. It is a good idea to write down the most difficult grammar and vocabulary items because then you will be able to revise them before tests. Also, writing something helps you remember it.
5. It helps both to write and speak correctly, because you will speak as you have written.

#### Helpful

1. Because sometimes you start speaking about something else and then your notes are useless. But sometimes making notes helps a lot.
2. Because it also teaches us to write correctly.
3. It helps you to remember, and then speak and write without mistakes.
4. It helps you to learn when you do several tasks at the same time.

#### Useless

1. Because when you are not prepared you make mistakes and then you learn from your mistakes.
2. You need to learn to analyse faster what you are saying, it will help in communication.
3. At the exam, you will not have a chance to write a draft.
4. It is better to do one task at a time.

### Part 2

#### 1. Doing homework is *(more than 1 response can be chosen)*

useful – it gives an opportunity to think independently and understand something.	12
not a big deal – I just write something quickly. Anyway, we will check it at the lesson.	4
necessary for survival – our teacher is very strict.	
useless – I do not understand anything and I cannot study alone at home.	
useless – I know everything and doing homework does not improve my knowledge.	

#### 2. When I do not do my homework, it is because *(more than 1 response can be chosen)*

I do not have enough time.	14
I do not understand how to do it.	6
I do not want to spend time on the things I am good at.	
I am not disciplined enough.	

<sup>1</sup> The comments have been written by the respondents in their mother tongue and translated by the author of the present research.

## Error Correction: Questionnaire

*Dear students,*

*in order to do research on developing accuracy in speaking I would like you to answer the following questions. Ask me for help if needed. Thank you in advance.*

1. Which way of correcting mistakes is more helpful? (*Circle the appropriate answer*)

- a) Stopping the speaker and correcting the mistake at once.
- b) Waiting until the speech is finished and correcting afterwards.
- c) Both, but "a" is more helpful.
- d) Both, but "b" is more helpful.

*Explain your choice:* .....

2. While a student is speaking, the teacher corrects the mistakes by (*grade the answers from 1(useless) to 3 (very helpful)*):

- a) repeating in the correct way (echoing).
- b) indicating difficulty in understanding by saying 'Sorry?'
- c) saying what the mistake is and asking to repeat correctly.

*Explain why:* .....

3. If a student does not know how to correct him/herself, the teacher (*grade the answers from 1(useless) to 3 (very helpful)*):

- a) asks the other students to correct the mistake.
- b) explains the rule and then asks to correct the mistake.
- c) corrects the mistake him/herself.

*Explain why:* .....

4. When a student is talking, the teacher writes down the mistakes, at the end of the speaking activity everyone receives papers with mistakes written on them and (*grade the answers from 1(useless) to 3 (very helpful)*):

- a) correct the mistakes on their own and then read aloud to compare.
- b) read aloud and correct the mistakes in turns.
- c) depends on the activity.

*Explain why:* .....

5. When a student is talking, the others write down the mistakes they notice in the speech, then the whole group discusses the mistakes.

- a) Much more helpful than when a teacher takes notes
- b) Helpful
- c) Useless

*Explain your choice:* .....

## Error Correction: Summary of Responses<sup>1</sup>

### 1. Which way of correcting mistakes is more helpful?

a) Stopping the speaker and correcting the mistake at once	7
b) Waiting until the speech is finished and correcting afterwards	6
c) Both, but "a" is more helpful	
d) Both, but "b" is more helpful	2

#### Response 'A'

1. Because if you correct mistakes after the speech, the speaker forgets what he/she has said. (A)
2. It is better because it does not let us speak incorrectly and helps remember the correct form. (F)
3. To make the speaker think about correct usage of vocabulary and grammar in further speaking and not to let him/her forget what he/she has said, because the majority does not notice what they are saying. (G)
4. It is better to stop the speaker and make him/her correct his/her mistake because then the speaker remembers the correct variant. (L)
5. When you are stopped at once, you can remember the correction. (M)
6. Because then a person understands what his/her mistake is, he/she will remember it and speak correctly. (N)
7. I will be corrected at once, and my answer will be more or less correct. (P)

#### Response 'B'

1. I prefer this one. (B)
2. Because when you are interrupted, you forget your thought and cannot resume speaking properly. (C)
3. Because then you have time to think about your mistakes and write them down. (D)
4. Being interrupted you lose your thought and cannot resume speaking. (H)
5. Being interrupted you lose your thought. When a teacher corrects your mistakes after the speech, you remember better. (K)
6. It is better to wait till the speaker finishes and then explain what his/her mistakes are. (O)

#### Response 'D'

1. It is possible that the speaker was speaking correctly, but listeners did not catch it. Then if you interrupt the speaker, he/she can lose his/her thought and mix everything up. (E)
2. It is better not to interrupt the person while speaking. (J)

### 2. While a student is speaking, the teacher corrects the mistakes by

	3 very helpful	2 helpful	1 useless
a) repeating in the correct way (echoing).	2	6	7
b) indicating difficulty in understanding by saying 'Sorry?'	5	3	7
c) saying what the mistake is and asking to repeat correctly.	8	6	1

#### Technique 'A' is the most useful

1. While repeating the correct variant the student learns it better. (L)
2. The teacher must train the learner to use a correct form instead of asking the student to invent anything him/herself. (P)

#### Technique 'B' is the most useful

1. 'B' is the most helpful because then we have to try to remember. 'A' is the most useless because I just repeat, but do not remember anything. (A)
2. Because I understand at once that there is a mistake and that I have to correct it. (B)
3. Because it lets us think what the correct form is and learn more. (F)

<sup>1</sup> The comments have been written by the respondents in their mother tongue and translated by the author of the present research.

4. The learner uses his/her knowledge and thinks how to correct his/her own mistake. (G)
5. The student starts to think what the mistake is and corrects it with the help of the teacher. (N)

Technique 'C' is the most useful

1. The speaker understands what his/her mistake is and will not make the same mistake again. (C)
2. Because while repeating you memorise it better. (D)
3. It is good to let the learner understand what his mistake is. (E)
4. Then you understand what your mistake is instead of trying to correct each word in the sentence. (H)
5. Because the student knows what is wrong, but he has a chance to try and correct it him/herself. (J)
6. It is better if the student knows what his mistake is and then he/she will not do the same mistake again. (K)
7. The learner will remember how to speak correctly. (M)
8. Every mistake should be corrected, otherwise the student will continue making them in the future. (O)

### 3. If a student does not know how to correct him/herself, the teacher

	3 very helpful	2 helpful	1 useless
a) asks the other students to correct the mistake.	2	9	4
b) explains the rule and then asks to correct the mistake.	13	1	1
c) corrects the mistake him/herself.		5	10

Technique 'A' is the most useful

1. Because if the student cannot remember the correct form, the other students can tell him something useful. (F)

Technique 'B' is the most useful

1. It is very useful when the teacher explains the rule, more useful than if he/she just corrects the mistake. But if the teacher asks the other students, it helps everybody to remember the rule. (A)
2. I prefer to correct my mistakes myself. (B)
3. Because this way you know what the mistake is and it is easier to correct it. (C)
4. If someone says what my mistake is and corrects it, then it is easier to remember it. (D)
5. At first, the teacher should give the student a chance, and then ask the others if they know the correct variant. (E)
6. The learner refreshes his/her knowledge and thinks how to use it in further speaking. (G)
7. When the student knows the rule, he/she understands why and what he/she has to correct. (J)
8. If the teacher explains the rule, the student learns how to deal with such tasks. (K)
9. When you know the rule you can correct your mistake yourself. It is more useful than when someone tells you the correct variant. (L)
10. If the teacher does not explain, the student might have a lot of problems. (M)
11. The student understands the reason for making the mistake and starts to think how to correct it. (N)
12. The teacher should not correct the mistake at once, but give a chance to the student to correct the mistake. If needed, to explain the rule once again so that the student understands his/her mistake. (O)
13. 'B' is very useful. I do not like 'A' because I do not trust other students who may be wrong too. (P)

### 4. When a student is talking, the teacher writes down the mistakes, at the end of the speaking activity everyone receives papers with mistakes written on them and

	3 very helpful	2 helpful	1 useless
a) correct the mistakes on their own and then read aloud to compare.	4	9	2
b) read aloud and correct the mistakes in turns.	6	5	4
c) depends on the activity.	5	1	9

Technique 'A' is the most useful

1. If we correct the mistakes on our own, it helps us think more. (A)
2. Because the student starts thinking and understands what the mistake is. (C)
3. It is better to check your own knowledge first and then only to compare the answers. (E)
4. Everyone is able to understand their own mistakes and apply their knowledge. (G)

Technique 'B' is the most useful

1. Because in this way the students hear their classmates' mistakes and remember not to make them. (J)
2. While reading aloud and correcting mistakes on the spot, there is a chance to discuss the mistakes and it becomes easier to remember the correct variant. (L)
3. It develops speaking and accurate writing. (M)
4. It helps the student understand what the mistake is and it helps other students in the class too. Everyone remembers how not to make mistakes. (O)
5. I learn better when I listen to what is written. I remember what is right or wrong. (P)

Depends on the activity

1. Depends on the activity. It is better to do the task on your own, but when the group does the task together, the students think about their classmates' mistakes as well as their own ones. (K)
2. While doing different tasks, different mistakes occur. (N)

**5. When a student is talking, the others write down the mistakes they notice in the speech, then the whole group discusses the mistakes.**

a) Much more helpful than when a teacher takes notes	4
b) Helpful	9
c) Useless	2

The activity is very helpful

1. Because all mistakes have to be discussed. (D)
2. It is more useful for learners to listen, than just to sit passively. (M)
3. I think that the teacher should write down the mistakes too, but the students should try to correct the mistakes first. If their correction is wrong, the teacher will help. It is useful for all the students. (O)

The activity is helpful

1. It helps us hear the mistakes and we repeat the rules, but students do not hear all the mistakes. (A)
2. Because students can sometimes explain the rules better than a teacher, and then both the one who has made a mistake and the others improve their knowledge. But students sometimes react aggressively. (C)
3. This way lets the teacher understand the level of all the students in the group. Also, all the students will be able to understand their mistakes, not only the speaker. (E)
4. It makes students listen more carefully to what the others say, come to conclusions and not to make such mistakes in their speaking. (G)
5. It is more helpful when the teacher corrects mistakes, but the students explain why he/she does so, because when the students correct mistakes, they can be wrong in their correction and this will lead to a complete mess in the speaker's head. (J)
6. Everyone listens and tries to understand if there are mistakes, then a whole-class discussion is useful, it helps to remember. (N)
7. Does not matter who corrects. The discussion is useful, because the teacher guides the students' thoughts. (P)

The activity is useless

1. It is humiliating for the speaker. (H)
2. This activity is useful and helps to understand mistakes, but sometimes it is more useful when the teacher collects the notes and corrects the mistakes in them. (L)

## The Samples of Questionnaires Filled by the Learners

Dear students, \_\_\_\_\_  
in order to do research on developing accuracy in speaking I would like you to answer the following questions. Ask me for help if needed. Thank you in advance.

1. Which way of correcting mistakes is more helpful? (Circle the appropriate answer)

- a) Stopping the speaker and correcting the mistake at once.
- b) Waiting until the speech is finished and correcting afterwards.
- c) Both, but "a" is more helpful.
- d) Both, but "b" is more helpful.

Explain your choice: a because ~~then~~ if you correct the mistakes after the speech, i have already forgotten what had i say.

2. While a student is speaking the teacher stops him/her and corrects the mistakes by (grade the answers from 1 (useless) to 3 (helpful)):

- a) repeating in the correct way (echoing). 1
- b) indicating difficulty in understanding by saying 'Hm, sorry?'. 3
- c) saying what the mistake is and asking to repeat correctly 2

Explain your choice: B is the most helpful because than we have to try to remember. The A is the most useless because i just repeat, but don't remember anything.

3. If a student does not know how to correct him/herself, the teacher (grade the answers from 1 (useless) to 3 (helpful)):

- 2 a) asks the other students to correct the mistake.
- 3 b) explains the rule and then asks to correct the mistake.
- 1 c) corrects the mistake him/herself.

Explain your choice: If he explains the rule then its very useful, more useful than if he just corrects the mistake. But if he asks the other students it helps everybody to remember the rule.

4. When a student is talking, the teacher writes down the mistakes, at the end of the speaking activity everyone receives papers with mistakes written on them and (grade the answers from 1 (useless) to 3 (helpful)):

- 3 a) correct the mistakes on their own and then read aloud to compare.
- 2 b) read aloud and correct the mistakes in turns.
- 1 c) depends on the activity.

Explain your choice: If we correct them on our own it helps us to think more.

5. When a student is talking, the others write down the mistakes they notice in the speech, then the whole group discusses the mistakes.

a) Much more helpful than when a teacher takes notes

b) Helpful

c) Useless

Explain your choice: It helps us to hear the mistakes <sup>and we repeat the rules</sup> ~~and~~ but ~~if~~ students don't hear all the mistakes.

6. Before speaking students write drafts (or difficult items (vocabulary and grammar)).

a) Very helpful

b) Helpful

c) Useless

Explain your choice: because then we speak more confident and faster.

Dear students,  
in order to do research on developing accuracy in speaking I would like you to answer the following questions. Ask me for help if needed. Thank you in advance.

1. Which way of correcting mistakes is more helpful? (Circle the appropriate answer)

- a) Stopping the speaker and correcting the mistake at once.
- b) Waiting until the speech is finished and correcting afterwards.
- c) Both, but "a" is more helpful.
- d) Both, but "b" is more helpful.

Explain your choice: ..... Когда перебивают - сбиваемся с мысли, когда исправляет учитель наше творчество, запоминание свои ошибки лучше.

2. While a student is speaking the teacher stops him/her and corrects the mistakes by (grade the answers from 1 (useless) to 3 (helpful)):

- a) repeating in the correct way (echoing). 1
- b) indicating difficulty in understanding by saying 'Hm, sorry?'. 2
- c) saying what the mistake is and asking to repeat correctly. 3

Explain your choice: ..... Лучше, когда ученик сам поймёт свою ошибку и тогда не будет больше ошибаться.

3. If a student does not know how to correct him/herself, the teacher (grade the answers from 1 (useless) to 3 (helpful)):

- a) asks the other students to correct the mistake. 2
- b) explains the rule and then asks to correct the mistake. 3
- c) corrects the mistake him/herself. 1

Explain your choice: ..... Если учитель объяснит правило, то ученик научится выполнять такого рода задания.

4. When a student is talking, the teacher writes down the mistakes, at the end of the speaking activity everyone receives papers with mistakes written on them and (grade the answers from 1 (useless) to 3 (helpful)):

- a) correct the mistakes on their own and then read aloud to compare. 2
- b) read aloud and correct the mistakes in turns. 1
- c) depends on the activity. 3

Explain your choice: ..... Детишки будут думать об ошибках не только своих, но и других.

5. When a student is talking, the others write down the mistakes they notice in the speech, then the whole group discusses the mistakes.

- a) Much more helpful than when a teacher takes notes
- b) Helpful
- c) Useless

Explain your choice: .....

6. Before speaking students write drafts (or difficult items (vocabulary and grammar)).

- a) Very helpful
- b) Helpful
- c) Useless

Explain your choice: *Когда будет экзамен, не будет времени писать на черновике.*

**ATTESTATION PAGE**  
(Dokumentārā lapa)

Diplomdarbs „Vidusskolēnu mutvārdu precizitātes veicināšana” izstrādāts LU Moderno valodu fakultātē.

Ar savu parakstu apliecinu, ka pētījums veikts patstāvīgi, izmantoti tikai tajā norādītie informācijas avoti un iesniegtā darba elektroniskā kopija atbilst izdrukai.

Autors: Marija Nikolajeva

Rekomendēju darbu aizstāvēšanai

Vadītāja: Assoc. prof., Dr. Paed. Solveiga Ozoliņa

Recenzents:

Darbs iesniegts Anglistikas nodaļā

Metodiķe:

Darbs aizstāvēts maģistra gala pārbaudījuma komisijas sēdē

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Komisijas sekretāre: