Error Analysis

1. Types of Error

Look at the following groups of errors. What type of error are the learners making?

Group A
- I live in Milan for three years
- I am the responsible of the European market
- Before to pass to the last point ...

Group B
- It isn’t /ne’sesəri/
- We need better /e’kɪpmənt/
- Please sit over there

Group C
- In our division we introduced this year a very important system
- This year were introduced two new systems
- I go often to London

Group D
- I want to remember you that ...
- I forgot my umbrella at home
- We think that sales will surely rise.
- Do you want black or white tea?

Group E
- I am responsible for developping software
- During my work, I often speak english
- I have lost a little, brown, dog

Group F
- Good morning, dear colleagues ...
- Go straight on and then turn left please
- (Manager to client) Please sit over there

Group G
- (From an essay on the industrial revolution) Anyway, working in a factory was really uncomfortable
- The advantages and disadvantages of flying
  It has several disadvantages. Firstly, ....
2. Reasons for Error

And why might a learner make the errors in these groups?

Group A

- I am agree with you. (Italian learner)
- He is the man who I saw him yesterday (Arabic learner)
- I have seen a good film last Friday. (French learner)
- I watched television when they arrived (Finnish learner)
- He took off glasses and brushed hair. (Japanese learner)
- She good teacher (Russian)

Group B

- Yesterday I goed to the shops and I buyed some apples
- He had no words to express his gratefulness
- Do you can play tennis?
- She works very hardly

Group C

- My sister is elder than I am
- He has much money
- Aberdeen is far from London

Group D

(Intermediate students during a warm-up discussion in pairs)

- I saw a nice sweater and I buy it
- My brother live in Turin

Group E

- T : Ask Gianni where Paola lives.
  S : Where Paola lives?

- T : What's he reading?
  S : He reading a newspaper.

- T : Do you read much?
  S : Yes, I read much.
2. Error and Feedback

a. Why use the term Feedback and not Correction? What’s the difference?

b. Imagine a totally inexperienced teacher asked you to talk to her about “feedback” – what feedback she should give, when and how, in oral work. (NB: We will not be looking at feedback on written work here, but will be considering it in depth in the sections on Teaching Writing.)

Draw up a checklist of points you would include. Consider:

- How much feedback would you give in practice activities. When and how would you do it?
- And in fluency activities?

It might help to consider these specific situations:

1. The T is doing a repetition drill on the Be + Ving for future arrangements in full-class mode. A student says: He’s go to Paris next week.
2. The students are in pairs doing a controlled practice information gap activity. The T. is monitoring and overhears a S. say: He’s go to Paris next week.
3. The students are in pairs doing a controlled practice information gap activity. The T. is monitoring and overhears several Ss. say: He’s go to Paris next week.
4. In a freer activity later in the class the T. hears a S. say: He’s go to Paris next week.
5. In the same activity the teacher overhears: He’s going to Paris for see a friend.
6. In the same activity the teacher overhears: His friend lives in Paris for many years.
7. In the next lesson one of the students says, in front of the class: I’m not here next lesson. I go to Paris.