### 3.3 Categorising learner mistakes – Trainer Notes

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<th>LEARNING OUTCOMES</th>
<th>By the end of this session participants will be able to:</th>
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<td></td>
<td>• explain the differences between errors and slips</td>
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<td>• categorise different types of mistakes</td>
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<td>• demonstrate understanding of the reasons underlying different mistakes</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KEY CONCEPTS</th>
<th>errors</th>
<th>inappropriacy</th>
<th>over-application</th>
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<td></td>
<td>slips</td>
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<td>mistakes</td>
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<td>motivation</td>
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<tr>
<th>MATERIALS</th>
<th>Errors and slips + Suggested answers</th>
<th>Our typical mistakes</th>
<th>Mistake categories + Suggested answers</th>
<th>Why do we make mistakes? + Suggested answers</th>
<th>Correction codes + Answer sheet</th>
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1. **Learning Outcomes**
   Explain learning outcomes for session to participants

2. **Errors and slips**
   - Ask participants to think back to 1.11 The role of error. Can they remember the difference between an error and a slip?
   - Divide participants into groups and give out Errors and slips. Ask participants to discuss the lead-in questions.
   - Feedback – see Errors and slips - suggested answers

   The distinction is sometimes between errors and mistakes, but TKT uses errors and slips, therefore these worksheets reflect this.

3. **Our typical mistakes**
   - Give out Our typical mistakes. Participants initially work individually to think about the mistakes typically made by their learners or, alternatively, the types of mistake they made when learning English. If participants do not teach, have limited teaching experience, or prefer not to talk about their own classes, they can think instead about when they were learning English – what kinds of mistakes did they typically make?
   - Continue with the procedure on Our typical mistakes with participants working in groups.
   - Feedback - elicit whether mistakes tend to be the same or different amongst
the groups they teach and why this might be, e.g. age groups, levels, background, learning styles.

4 Mistake categories

For this activity, it may be safest to categorise learner mistakes in general. However, if participants have come up with a sufficiently wide range of mistakes identified in the previous activity, they could use these to complete the grid.

- Divide participants into groups. Follow instructions on participant worksheet Mistake categories.
- Feedback – see Mistake categories – Suggested answers. Whole class discussion of how the categories can be sub-divided. As many of the categories overlap, be prepared to acknowledge this if participants feel that it is difficult to be completely certain about the cause of an error.

You may wish to highlight that making mistakes is a natural part of language learning. Mistakes play an important role both in indicating to teachers the stage learners are at and what needs further teaching or study. They help teachers to advise learners on what to do to improve.

5 Why do we make mistakes?

This activity is based on the completed grid from the previous activity.

- Divide participants into groups. Elicit ideas from them as to why language learners make mistakes.
- Give out Why do we make mistakes? Participants match the definition with the causes of mistakes.
- Check - Why do we make mistakes? - Suggested answers.
- Using the examples of mistakes from the grid, participants select causes.
- Feedback – see Why do we make mistakes? - Suggested answers. Discuss with group if knowing the causes is helpful.

6 Correction codes

- Elicit from participants how they normally correct written work. Ask if anyone uses correction codes and, if so, to give examples.
- Give out Correction codes. Participants look at the correction codes and say what they mean.
- Feedback – see Correction codes - Answer sheet.
- Discuss whether they think these codes are useful and if they would be appropriate for their learners.

7 Reflection

- Ask participants to think about the following question.

  How important is accuracy? Is it always necessary to correct learners’ mistakes? What effect can correction have on motivation?
• Participants share their thoughts with a partner.
• You may wish to elicit some of their ideas in a plenary discussion.