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Learners' Attitudes towards Oral Error Correction The Case of Second Year LMD English Students at Mostaganem University

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Dedication

To my beloved father, Tayeb

To my dear son Ahmed-Yacine.

In the memory of our teacher, Dr.Benali-Mohamed Rachid

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Most importantly, I would like to thank Allah for his amazing grace and direction as I pray Him daily.

List of Abbreviations

- 1. FLA** Foreign language acquisition
- 2. SLA** Second language acquisition
- 3. L1** First language
- 4. L2** Second language
- 5. CLT** Communicative language teaching
- 6. EFL** English as a Foreign Language
- 7. FL** Foreign language
- 8. CF** Corrective feedback
- 9. EA** Error Analysis
- 10. CA** Contrastive Analysis
- 11. IDs.** Individual differences
- 12. UG** Universal Grammar
- 13. LMD** Liscence, Master, Doctorat

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Résumé

Cette thèse traite d'une enquête effectuée pour des étudiants universitaires de l'anglais en ce qui concerne leur préférence sur la correction de l'erreur orale. Elle met également la lumière sur l'attitude des étudiants universitaires dans la correction de leurs erreurs dans les parlés. Elle traite également les différents types et sources d'erreurs en général en mettant l'accent sur les attitudes concernant la correction d'erreurs relatives en cas des étudiants de 2ème année LMD à l'université de Mostaganem. L'étude porte aussi sur la nature de la rétroaction corrective, ses différents types et le rôle qu'elle joue dans l'apprentissage des langues.

L'enquête menée dans ce travail tente, alors, d'apporter quelques réponses à certaines questions fondamentales sur la correction de l'erreur conformément aux questions cadres proposées par Hendrickson (1978). Ces questions sont : les erreurs des étudiants devraient-elles être corrigées ? Si oui, quand et lesquelles devraient-elles être corrigées ? Comment devraient-elles être corrigées ? Et enfin, qui devrait corriger les erreurs des étudiants ? Les connaissances théoriques dans le 1^{er} chapitre sont renforcées par un travail empirique se focalisant sur des cours d'expression orales. Deux questionnaires sont élaborés afin de déterminer les attitudes des étudiants à l'égard de la correction des erreurs et les réflexions des professeurs sur les erreurs orales des étudiants et leur stratégie de correction préférées. Le but principal de cette étude est d'essayer et d'apporter une explication à la question de la correction de l'erreur à la fois aux étudiants et aux professeurs qui s'inquiètent du module de l'expression orale.

ملخص

تعالج هذه الأطروحة بحث حول مواقف طلبة اللغة الإنجليزية الجامعيين اتجاه تصحيح أخطاءهم اللفظية ويشمل الفصل الأول من الأطروحة تعريف للأخطاء بصفة عامة وتصنيفها المعتمد مع الإشارة إلى مصادرها. كما تحاول هذه الأطروحة الإجابة على الأسئلة الخمسة التي طرحها الباحث جيمس هاند ريكسون 1978 و المتعلقة بتصحيح أخطاء المتعلمين و هي على الترتيب : 1- هل ينبغي تصحيح أخطاء المتعلمين و في حالة الإيجاب 2متى 3وكيف يتم التصحيح و 4 - ماذا عن نوعية الأخطاء الواجب تصحيحها -5وعلى من يقع عاتق التصحيح. كما يتضمن هذا البحث تسليط الضوء على ماهية تصحيح الأخطاء وأنواعها المتداولة والدور التي تلعبه في أقسام اللغات الأجنبية. بالإضافة إلى ردود أفعال المتعلمين ومدى تأثيرهم جراء هذه التصحيحات. ويرتكز هيكل هذه الأطروحة على استبيانين. الأول: يهدف إلى تسليط الضوء على مواقف المتعلمين اتجاه تصحيح أخطاءهم اللفظية في اللغة الانجليزية. إما الثاني فقد وجه للأساتذة الجامعيين من اجل معرفة انطباعاتهم حول أخطاء المتعلمين و استراتيجياتهم المفضلة في التصحيح.

Abstract

This dissertation is concerned with an investigation of university language learners of English as regards their preferences concerning oral error correction. It also sheds some light on university students' attitudes towards the correction of their spoken errors. It also deals with the different types and sources of errors in general with special emphasis on attitudes towards error correction related to the case of second year LMD students at Mostaganem University. The study deals also with the nature of corrective feedback, its different types and the role it plays in language learning.

The investigation conducted within this work, then, attempts to provide some answers to some fundamental questions in error correction in relation to the question framework offered by Hendrickson((1978).These questions are: should learners' errors be corrected? If so when should they be corrected, which ones should be corrected? How should they be corrected? And finally who should correct learners' errors? The theoretical insights in the first chapter are reinforced by an empirical work focusing on oral expression classes. Two questionnaires are elaborated to determine both students' attitudes towards oral error correction and teachers' reflex ions about the students' oral errors and their preferred correction strategies. The main aim behind this work is to attempt and bring some explanation to the issue of error correction both to the students and teachers worry concerning oral expression module.

General Introduction

It is well known that among the main concerns of applied linguistics is the study of second and foreign language acquisition. Concerning adult learners when starting to learn a foreign language, they are usually exposed to this new language only a few hours a week compared to the situation when learning a first language. This weekly short exposure to foreign language learning is rendered difficult as a result of the mother tongue interference. In fact throughout the process of foreign language learning, learners make both errors and mistakes the number of which differ from one learner to another. Thus mistake and error making has attracted the attention of linguists as far as language acquisition is concerned in general. Teachers, being the first concerned by the mistakes and the errors their students produced have always been the ones directly concerned with error and mistake correction. What to correct, how to correct and when to correct are the major questions they are confronted to. Most teachers consider providing feedback as an important tool to help students achieve a high proficiency in a foreign language. However, since learners vary widely in terms of their personality characteristics, motivation, expectations, and anxiety levels; they vary also in terms of their attitudes towards the correction of their errors in general and spoken errors in particular which are the object of the present work.

As already mentioned, making errors is inevitable in the process of foreign language learning. When it comes to errors learners make, experts in applied linguistics distinguish different types which are based on several criteria namely the degree of deviation from the native speakers' form, clarity of the message in the utterances, and the frequency in the learners' spoken language.

It should be noted that EFL learners' errors constitute a major area of study in foreign language research. And as far as the sources of errors are concerned, many specialists in

applied linguistics have pointed out that errors are no longer sought in the language learners' mother tongue. But unlike the traditional belief, it has become evident that mother tongue interference is not the sole source of errors, and there are many other sources from which errors originate. Richards (1978), for instance, showed his interest in errors whose origin is found within the structure of English language itself far from any interference from the learner's mother tongue that he refers to as "intralingual errors."

As a whole, the present study focuses on oral error correction using the five question frame suggested by Hendrickson (1978) "Should learners' errors be corrected? If so, when should learners' errors be corrected? Which learners' errors should be corrected? Who should correct learners' errors? And how should learners' errors be corrected?" quoted in Steffi Joetze (2011:3)

Some experts in the field of language learning and error correction believe that exposing language learners to naturally occurring samples of a target language is all that learners need to develop their foreign language, and that error treatment is harmful rather than helpful. For others, corrective feedback plays a significant role in helping language learners learn from their mistakes and avoid their reoccurrence. On the basis of such opposing views, some classroom teachers prefer to correct every single error their students commit while others do not interfere in correcting their students to encourage their students to participate in classroom activities. The question which arises here is: What are the attitudes of university students towards the teacher's behavior vis à vis the correction of their spoken errors?

In an attempt to provide an answer to this question, this research work is divided into three chapters. The first chapter deals with a theoretical review of issues related to the research work concerning the distinction between error and mistake, the different types of

errors, in addition to their sources. Corrective feedback is also one of the issues dealt with in this chapter.

The second chapter constitutes a practical side of the research work. It aims to report findings related to university students' attitudes vis à vis spoken errors and their corrections focusing on the teacher's correction strategies. To conduct this field work, forty second year LMD students from the English language department in Mostaganem University were selected to answer a twenty-seven item questionnaire elaborated purposefully for the study.

The student questionnaire was elaborated and administered to the students during the academic year 2010-2011. It should be noted that before the questionnaire was distributed to the subjects, I explained the purpose of the questionnaire so as to obtain the informants' consent to be my research subjects. The informants were on the one hand informed that the data obtained would be used for the research purpose only and reassured that their identities would not appear in the questionnaire. Then, the questionnaire items were explained to make sure they understand each one.

The third chapter is another empirical section of the study. It wheels around university teachers' concerns about their students' oral errors and their preferred strategies of correction. Thus, a questionnaire (see appendix: 86)was elaborated so as to have an idea about teachers' attitudes and strategies towards oral error correction. On the basis of data analysis and interpretation, the chapter includes a number of recommendations that teachers should take into consideration when responding to their students' spoken errors.

In fact, both of the students' and teachers' questionnaires attempt to stimulate a group of local university students' and teachers' preferences towards oral error correction feedback. The data collected is organized mostly into a two point likert-scale.

This research work is motivated by the fact of having observed that advanced foreign language learners produce incorrect output in spite of a more or less long period of exposure to the target language i.e. , English as a subject at school and at university. Normally, the reoccurrence of some types of errors should on no account be realized by second year university students, who, according to regular schooling, have capitalized a sufficient exposure to the English language so as not to reproduce in a frequent manner errors that seem to have acquired a status of fossilized ones and that still occur even in later stages of learning the target language i.e. at the level of second year university students who are supposed to be future practionners of English as a foreign language .

Certainly teachers to varying degrees and levels have treated some of the errors in class at different occasions .What motivates more the focus on oral errors and their treatment as the subject of my investigation is the idea that students, in addition to having been introduced to English through the development of the reading and writing skills, are supposed to get engaged in further skill development among which the oral performance. Furthermore, the decision is not only backed by the importance of the speaking skill as far as language practice is concerned, but also by the fact that students do not have the opportunity to see their mistakes as it is the case of written errors. Learners do not have time to observe their oral performance, but it is rather the teacher who identifies the errors and offers correction. Given the manner in which correction is offered, and the frequency of being corrected and the moral impairment correction may cause, learners may show some withdrawal from the scene of learning to the degree of demotivation.

Being convinced that learning is reinforced by risk taking , teachers need to accompany their students oral performance development with strategies that favor participation ,an activity fundamental to oral performance development on the one hand and , and help them avoid those errors that hinder development at the appropriate time , in the appropriate

learning occasion , and in an appropriate manner so as to play a role of a teacher- facilitator rather than an assessor i.e. , a teacher who assists the learners to improve the oral skill.

As a teacher whose job wheels around developing and promoting the competence of teacher trainees in most of the cases, the learner error issue became one of my research agenda to find out from the available literature on learner errors and error treatment why second language learners, and particularly foreign language learners make errors and how come that they do struggle to avoid error making, but still the error is there and there is no strategy or formula to palliate to it at all. Among the other concerns underlying motivation is what to do and how to react to errors in my teaching. The different theories of language learning and teaching gave me the opportunity to reflect critically on the classroom practice and look at it from a certain optical angle i.e. that of the students' and the other teachers'.

Apparently, scholars from different second language research trends believe there is no clearly fixed idea about language learning process, error making, and treatment. When it comes to teachers, some are constantly keeping an eye on learners' errors and error treatment believing it to be the appropriate way to improve the learners' output; others do not give much importance to errors and error treatment. Although error correction may be viewed as part of language instruction Ur (1996:171) quoted in Carol Griffiths (2008:290) believes "too much of it can be discouraging and demoralizing" but at the same time Ur (2000:16) quoted in Griffiths (ibid) emphasizes the importance of correction for different reasons: one reason is related to learners wants, and, thus teachers should respect learners' wishes. The other one has to do with the teachers' conception of the effectiveness of correction, i.e., despite the limited effectiveness of correction, commonsense would argue that if there is one thing that is less effective than correcting, it is not correcting.

As regards teachers who are in favor of corrective feedback, they argue that to be effective it is advisable that corrective feedback is informative, motivational and reinforcing. Bringing a learner to self-repair may bring about a friendly learning environment and less threatening than in case the teacher is the only repair- provider. Corrective feedback must be constructive giving the learner stamina for learning that happens in an environment which takes into account the error maker's feelings.

What makes error correction a difficult task to satisfy is that factors such as the students' attitudes towards error correction together with those of the teachers', the syllabus demands,

the amount of time the teacher operates within, the lesson objective, the kind of the students that form the group which may range from heterogeneous to much more heterogeneous and the teachers' proficiency often influence the classroom practice. It is within this line of thought that it is paramount for practicing teachers to engage in classroom based field work to assess and improve the corrective styles using the learner as a source since in turn it is going to impact learners themselves. As regards the scope of the study, the most important concern focuses on the learners' perceptions of the teachers' treatment of errors and how they would like to be corrected. The other concern of this study wheels around the way the teacher influences the language learning conditions and the manner in which he provides corrective feedback.

Chapter One

Literature Review

1.1 Introduction

There is no doubt that human learning is by nature a process that involves the making of mistakes. In fact, they constitute an essential factor in whatever process of learning and at whatever point in the process of learning which is of trial-and-error nature. Errors have played an important role in the study of language acquisition in general and in examining second and foreign language acquisition in particular. Researchers are interested in errors because they are believed to contain valuable information on the strategies that people use to acquire a language (Richards 1974; Taylor 1975; Dulay and Burt 1974). Errors are also associated with the strategies that people employ to communicate in a language. In the case of language learning, learners inevitably make mistakes in the process of acquisition, and consequently benefit from the feedback resulting from the mistakes. If the feedback constitutes a positive event which allows the learner to identify the point of failure and improve, the mistake in its turn informs about the cause(s) behind. When it comes to the term mistake within the context of language acquisition, a distinction is made between the terms mistake and error. Even the fact of making mistake or error has been the concern of scholars who investigated it from different linguistic trends.

In order to situate the study of foreign language acquisition in its broader context and relate it to some of the existing literature in the field of oral errors and learners' attitudes towards such errors and their treatment, a literature review approach will provide the basis to the present study. Within this context, focus will be will made on the nature of errors in foreign language learning with a distinction between a mistake and an error, as observed by some specialists. Furthermore, the different types of errors as well as the respective sources that bring them about will be dealt with.

In addition; issues related to oral error correction will be examined on the basis of the five question frame suggested by J. M. Hendrickson(1978:389) quoted in Steffi Joetze (2011:3) “Should learner errors be corrected? If so, when should learner errors be corrected? Which learner errors should be corrected? Who should correct learner errors? And how should learner errors be corrected?”

Furthermore, an investigation about learners’ and teachers’ attitudes towards oral errors and their treatment will be conducted to see if there exist or not any mismatches between them.

1.2 Error definition of and related terms

Dictionary definitions share many facets of error and mistake and are often used interchangeably in conversation. In addition, mistakes are inconsistent deviations and are inevitable. They are described as ‘false starts, ‘slips of the tongue’ or ‘slips of the pen’. They are also lapses which can be attributed to fatigue, inattention and the like and distinguished from the kinds of deviations (i.e., errors) that language learners make. Experts in error studies differentiate among errors, mistakes, lapses, and slip. They seem to be very much alike meaning one and the same thing; however, experts in applied linguistics identify subtle differences among these terms as they have important pedagogical implications in language learning. “Mistakes”, according to S. Pit Corder (1967) quoted in Krushna Chandra Mishra (2005:38) are deviations due to performance factors such as memory limitations (e.g. Mistakes in the sequence of tenses and agreement in long sentences, spelling, pronunciation, fatigue, emotional strain etc.).They are typically random and are readily corrected by the learner when his attention is drawn to them”. Norrish (1983) quoted in Krushna Chandra

Mishra (op cit) focusses on the inconsistent aspect of the mistake . He, Norrish (1983) even makes the difference between “lapse” and “slip”. In his terms,

“there is another type of wrong usage which is neither a mistake nor an error and can happen to any one at any time . This is lapse , which may be due to lack of concentration , shortness of memory , fatigue etc. A lapse bears little relation to whether or not a given form in the language has been learnt, has not been learnt or in the process of being learnt .[however ,] ... there is another type of common mistake: a careless slip caused by the learner’s inattentiveness in class”.

Dulay and Burt (1974b) in Susan M. Gass and Larry Selinker (2008:108) use rather the term “goofs” to describe errors and mistakes and distinguish L1 developmental goofs and ambiguous goofs while J. C Richards (1972)Krushna Chandra Mishra (2005:39) uses the term deviations which are different because of “their creative and non-error-like features”.

1.2.1 Error Vs Mistake

In fact; it is of a paramount importance to distinguish between a mistake and an error. According to Oxford Advanced Learner Dictionary (1999, 746), “a mistake is an action, opinion or word that is not correct (wrong), and error is the state of being wrong in belief or behavior”. In linguistics, however, the definitions of a mistake and error are rather diverse.

According to Allwright and Baily (1996: 84) “the typical definitions include some reference to the production of a linguistic form which deviates from the correct form”. Chaudron quoted in Steffi (2011:4) defines errors as 1) “linguistic forms or content that differed from native speaker norms or facts, and 2) any other behaviour signaled by the teacher as needing improvement”. As regards Carl James (1998) quoted in Coordinadora Marta Ancarani (---:35) considers the difference between an” error” and “mistake” to be

related to “intentionality” which plays a key role in distinguishing error from mistake. Error occurs when there is no intention to make one while a mistake is intentionally or unintentionally deviant and self –correctible and classifies errors according to modality, medium and level.

According to Brown, H.D. (1980:165) quoted in Xiao-Ming Yang, Dr. Huaxin Xu (2001: 16), “A mistake is a performance error that is either a random guess or a slip; it is a failure to utilize a known system correctly. An error is a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of a native speaker, reflecting the inter-language competence of the learner”. When it comes to mistakes, native speakers can recognize them i.e., their mistakes, when they occur and (they) correct themselves. However, according to S.P Corder (1973:259), learners of a language produce deviant utterances that he terms “errors” and occur because “learners have not internalized the formation rules of the second language”. In the case of native speakers, Corder (op cit) refers to “errors” as ‘breaches of the code’ or ‘cracking of the code’ because native speakers are able to correct their errors but believes the term potentially misleading in the case of learners. According to Lennon (1991) quoted in Ravi Sheorey (2006:185) an error is "a linguistic form or combination of forms which in the same context and under similar conditions of production would, in all likelihood, not be produced by the speakers' native speakers counterparts".

However, J. Edge (1989:37) suggests dividing mistakes into three categories: “slips, errors and attempts. Slips are mistakes that students can correct themselves; errors are mistakes which students cannot correct themselves; attempts are student’s intentions of using the language without knowing the right way”. When it comes to the factors lying behind the mistake, Michael Byram (2004:198) argues that “mistakes are caused by many factors such as tiredness but, unlike genuine errors, are not indicative of the state of the learner’s underlying knowledge of the language or transitional competence.” The above definitions reveal that

both errors and mistakes are attached to human beings, but they do differ in meaning in their process of language learning.

When it comes to errors, they are associated to children learning their first language henceforth , L1, and to foreign language learners, and they occur when the deviation is the result of the lack of knowledge of their corresponding language while mistakes ,quoting Rod Ellis (1994:51), "... are performance phenomena and are, of course, regular features of native-speaker speech, reflecting processing failures that arise as a result of competing plans , memory limitations, a lack of automaticity." However, Allwright and Baily (1996:83) quoted in Steffi Joestze (2011:4) argue that "The notion of error is not a simple one"

1.2.2The Significance of Errors in Foreign Language Acquisition

Given the relationship between foreign language learning and second language learning, it appears important to set the two apart as far as the setting of learning is concerned. In general, second language learning is a term used to refer to the fact of learning another language after the native language learning. Sometimes it may even refer to a third or fourth language learning. What is important is that it refers to non-native language learning, usually referred to as L2 though it may correspond to the third or fourth language after the native language learning. When it comes to learning an L2, it occurs in classroom situation or in natural environment. As far as foreign language learning is concerned, the concept differs slightly from second language learning in that the former learning happens in one's native country, the case of English in Algeria while the latter learning happens in an environment in which that language is spoken the case of an Algerian learning English in the united kingdom which does not necessarily happen in classroom settings.

In terms of analysis in the field of language acquisition, the term error has rather been the focus in the field of applied linguistics both in Contrastive Analysis and Error Analysis. In

foreign language learning process, the error is generally regarded as something which must be avoided. As a consequence, teachers adopt a repressive attitude towards it. On one hand, it is regarded as a sign of inadequacy of the teaching technique, and on the other, it is considered as a natural phenomenon that cannot be avoided, but rather accepted as a reality to be dealt with.

One of the most generally known approaches concerning the error through human history is to consider it a negative effect indicating failure and obstructing progress. The idea of errors being an obstacle to language learning has been especially supported by behaviorism. As regards Nelson Brooks (1960) the error has a relationship to learning in similar ways to that of a sin to virtue. Quoted in Rod Ellis (1994:300), he observes "like sin, error is to be avoided and its influence overcome, but its presence is to be expected". In fact, the behaviourists view errors as signs of ineffective teaching or as evidence of failure. They believe the occurrence of errors must be treated by provision of correct forms, that is to say, the use of intensive drilling and over teaching. The behaviourist approach dominated from the post-war period to the 1960's focusing on language learning as a matter of habit formation on the basis of stimulus response. Second language learning was a question of a transfer process i.e., L1 habits previously learnt would interfere in the process of L2 learning. This phenomenon of interference can either be positive in the case it reinforces L2 learning and negative when it hinders L2 learning is known as "negative transfer" in the behaviouristic literature. The behaviourists advocate the fact that the existing differences between L1 and L2 are at the basis of the learning difficulties of L2 and result in errors which were traced to non-learning rather to wrong learning. Quoted in Rod Ellis (1994:308) Lee (1968:180) argues that "the prime cause, or even the sole cause, of difficulty and error in foreign language learning is interference coming from the learner's native language". Marton (1981:150) quoted in

Krushna Chandra Mishra (2005:43) as well lends support to the interference phenomenon. He says,

Taking a psychological point of view, we can say that there is never peaceful coexistence between two language systems in the learner, but rather constant warfare, and that warfare is not limited to the moment of cognition, but continues during the period of storing newly ideas in memory.”

Errors were considered to be undesirable and were apprehended to become habits and, hence, there was agreement among the behaviourists not only to predict their occurrence but to avoid them as well. The behaviouristic view laid the foundation for a very strict attitude to errors leading to Contrastive Analysis.

1.2.2.1 Contrastive Analysis

The analysis of learners’ errors has long been the concern of applied linguistics, and thus it is worthwhile reviewing the major trends by the literature in the field both in Contrastive Analysis (CA) and Error Analysis (EA).

CA was the result of the behaviourist research scholars in the field of applied linguistics among whom Skinner (1957), and the structuralists one among whom De Saussure (1916) and Bloomfield (1933). CA is based on the systematic comparison of the two language systems and any specific parts of those systems and considers errors as something negative and should be avoided. Quoting Argondizzo, Carmen (2004:52) CA advocators believe[s] that “if we analyze the learners’ L1 and the system of the L2 they should be mastering, it would be possible to predict learners’ errors. Such predictions would eventually suggest strategies that may help students avoid mistakes and consequently become accurate language users”. In this case scholars used mostly written first language L1 data taken from authentic materials from

the target language culture and some data gathered from some native speakers via oral interviews and questionnaire. Scholars influenced by behaviorist psychology and Structural linguistics assumed that L2 errors were the result of a transfer of L1 habits. Thus linguistic creativity in L2 was limited to training the second language learner to mimic and memorize native speakers' patterns through the use of mechanical drilling.

When it comes to the process of error analysis, Krushna Chandra Mishra (op cit) lists the different procedures of error analysis adapted in CA namely 1) description of the two language systems, 2) selection of sets of items for comparison, 3) comparison to identify the areas of difference and similarity and 4) prediction of areas likely to cause errors due to language difference and learning difficulties. Later, attention shifted towards a hierarchy of errors. For Stockwell Bowen and Martin (1965), and Prator (1967), CA should arrange the linguistic differences in a hierarchy of difficulties for better effects and more efficient ways to help overcome the potential error areas,(in Krushna Chandra Mishra op cit :44).

1.2.2.2Error Analysis

Error analysis, which developed as a result of cognitive psychology and generative studies, namely (Chomsky, 1957, 1965, 1968), has introduced the study of systematic errors made by learners of a foreign language and attribute them due to the imperfect knowledge of that language. EA examines the learning of L2 along the same lines as the learning of the L1 and, unlike CA, considers errors as an evidence of positive aspect of learning, showing the strategies learners adopt when using the language. Quoting Michael Byram (2004:198)

Error analysis (EA), a branch of applied linguistics popular in the 60's , looked specifically at second language acquisition (SLA) whereas previously there was no generally accepted view that first at (L1) and second (L2)language learning differed significantly . EA differs from contrastive analysis by

proposing that learner errors are not just mistakes due to interference or transfer from the first language but evidence of underlying universal learner strategies.

The advocates of error analysis, which consists according to Ellis and Barkhuisen (2005:51) “of a set of procedures for identifying, describing and explaining learner error”, believe the contrastive analysis to be based only on predicting what the learner will do and failed to study what the learner actually does and argue that errors do not always result from native language interference but rather from the learner strategy in language acquisition, (Elena Gluth, 2008). Quoting Argondizzo Carmen (op cit), “learners are considered therefore creative speakers of the language rather than producers of imperfect language”. Within the same line of thought, quoting S.Pitt Corder, Vanpatten, B and Jessica Williams (2006:23) observe the change in attitude towards error since the behaviourist period following the appearance of Corder’s seminal 1967 paper. According to S. P Corder , “the significance of learners’ errors ” errors came to be viewed as evidence of learning in progress- indeed , a necessary step in language learning process- rather than one to be avoided”.

In fact EA is a quite different conception from the behaviouristic one .It asserts that without error there is no progress. The error as progress conception is based on Chomsky’s idea that a child generates language through innate universal structures. So, using this symbolic code, one can have access to different pieces of knowledge not as something mechanically learned but as mentally constructed through try and error. Therefore, the idea is that the second language learners form hypothesis about the rules to be formed in the target language and then test them out against input data and modify them accordingly. This is how the errors promote progress and improvement in learning. As S.P. Corder (1973: 292), claims “language learning is not so much a question of acquiring a set of automatic habits, but rather a process of discovering its underlying rules, categories, and systems by some sort of

processing by the learner of the data of language presented to him by the teacher”. In order for this discovery to take place, learners have to pass through several stages and processes. One of the chief factors incorporated into almost all stages of language learning is error making. As Colin Ronald Baker, Sylvia Prys Jones (1998; 503) observe “language errors are a normal and important part of the language learning process. Errors are not a symptom of failure. They are a natural part of learning”. In fact making errors is something inevitable in language learning, and it is a very clear sign that language learner is actually developing and internalizing the rules of the language. According to S.P Corder (1973: 257)

“whilst the nature and quality of mistakes a learner makes provides no direct measure of his knowledge of the language, it is probably the most important source of information about the nature of his knowledge. From the study of his errors, we are able to infer the nature of his knowledge at that point in his learning career and discover what he still has to learn. By describing and classifying his error in linguistics terms, we built up a picture of the features of the language which are causing him learning problems”.

Within similar line of thought, Kees De Bot, Wander Lowie, Marjolyn Verspoor (2005:127) put “A learner’s errors, therefore, provide evidence of the system of the language that he is using at a particular point in the course”. Kees De Bot, Wander Lowie, Marjolyn Verspoor (op cit) consider errors to be significant in three ways. First, to the teacher telling him “if he undertakes a systematic analysis, how far towards the goal the learner has progressed and consequently what remains for him to learn”. Second, to the researchers providing “evidence of how language is learnt and acquired, what strategies or procedures the learner is employing in his discovery of the language”. Third, to the learner “... indispensable to the learner himself, because errors are regarded as a device the learner uses in order to learn. It is a way the learner has to test his hypothesis about the nature of language he is learning. The making

of errors is therefore a strategy employed by both children acquiring their mother tongue and by those learning a second language”.

In fact, The incorrect utterances of a child learning his mother tongue are regarded as being evidence that he is engaged in the process of acquiring language, for those who attempt to describe his knowledge of the language, it is the errors which provide the important evidence.

In effect, teachers can make significant and practical use of error analysis as errors provide teachers with feedback on the effectiveness of their teaching techniques. They also show teachers what parts of the syllabus they have been following have been inadequately learnt or taught and need further attention .Moreover, they enable teachers to decide whether they can move on the next item they have been working on and provide the information for designing a remedial syllabus of re-teaching (S.P Corder 1273:265). Therefore, errors that learners make are major elements in the feedback system of the process of language teaching and learning. The information the teacher gets from errors allows him to measure and vary his teaching procedures and materials, to evaluate the pace of progress, and decide about the amount of practice necessary at any point of time during his teaching. As Corder quoted in Ph Hiligsmann (1997:72) observes “The teacher should be able not only to detect and describe errors linguistically but also understand the psychological reasons for their occurrence. The diagnosis and treatment of errors is one of the fundamental skills of the teacher”. (Corder 1981:35).Teachers should try to understand and learn more about the way a learner learns because it is only then that they can adapt themselves to his needs rather than impose upon him their preconception of how he ought to learn, and when he ought to learn. They should also be aware of the significance of errors in foreign language learning, and should look at them as a sign of development and progress in learning rather than as a symptom of failure

and inability to learn. Thus as Michael Byram (2004:198) “errors were to be seen as patterned and the task was to collect error data and identify the main types”.

1.3 Types of Errors

Errors have been classified generally from different points of view. Errors based on psycholinguistic origins, errors based on language skills, errors based on language components, and errors based on CLT point of view. Furthermore, there are other classifications showing that there is no agreement among scholars as far as classification is concerned but still there is more or less a common base of distinction of errors in terms of importance in language acquisition.

1.3.1 Psycholinguistic Origins

Dulay and Burt (1973,1974) in Krushna Chandra Mishra (2005 :40) distinguish four types according to the psycholinguistic origins : 1) “Interference errors” which are particular to native language structure not existing in the first language ,2) “first language development errors”, which are not related to the learner’s native language structure but are identified in the first language , 3) ambiguous errors that are neither developmental nor interference and 4) “unique errors” which do not reflect first language structure and are not found in first language acquisition data.

For W. Littlewood (1984:23) and Richards, J .C (1974) errors based on psychological origins are of different types: Interlingual, intralingual, and developmental. The first being a case in which the learner transfers rules from the mother tongue, the second one being a case in which errors result from the processing of second language while the third are according to Richards (1974:174) those errors which illustrate “the learner attempting to build up hypotheses about the target language” (qtd in Krushna Chandra Mishra , 2005). However,

Littlewood (op cit) emphasizes on the interlingual and the intralingual kinds only which occur as a result of overgeneralization and simplification. As far as Richards (op cit) is concerned, intralingual errors are different from developmental in that intralingual errors “reflect the general character of rule learning such as faulty overgeneralization, incomplete application of rules and failure to learn conditions under which rules apply”.

1.3.2 Errors Based on Language Skills

Errors based on language skills are those occurring respectively in the four skill areas of language namely reading, listening, writing and speaking. Errors based on language components are related to phonological, syntactic, morphological, semantic, lexical and stylistic language areas. According to Dulay et al (1989:146-147) quoted in Krushna Chandra Mishra (2005).

Language components include phonology (pronunciation), syntax and morphology (grammar), semantics and lexicon (meaning and vocabulary), and style. Constituents include the elements that comprise each language component. For example, within syntax one may ask whether the error is in the main or subordinate clause, and within a clause, which constituents is affected, e.g. the noun phrase, the auxiliary, the verb phrase, the adverb, the adjective, and so forth.

1.3.3 CLT View of Errors

The development of CLT focuses on the primacy of communication in language over other aspects and considerations of language. Among the principles of CLT toleration of errors represents an inevitable part in the language acquisition process. Errors under CLT are considered errors if they block communication. If communication is possible though with a

few slips and mistakes which from syntactic aspect may be viewed as errors, it will be considered that there is no error in the expression. Basing on this communicative approach to language teaching, Burt and Kiparsky (1972) in Krushna Chandra Mishra (2005) have made an important categorization of errors and distinguish between global and local errors. Global errors are those that affect overall sentence organization and significantly hinder communication. Local ones are those that affect single elements (constituents) in a sentence but do not usually hinder communication significantly. Generally errors are classified according to different language systems at which the error occurs namely at the level of phonetics, morphology, phonology, lexicon and semantics. Other broader classification may be based on the degree of deviation from the native speaker's form, the clarity of the message in the utterance, and the frequency of occurrence the learner's use of language.

1.3.4 Systematic vs. Incidental Errors

Prabhu, N.S. (1987) divides errors on the basis of their treatment rather than their nature. For instance, he divides errors into 'systematic errors' and 'incidental errors'. He distinguishes systematic errors as the kind of errors that deviate from the native speaker's form and involve long interruptions and linguistic explanation and exemplification from the teacher to correct the student's error or to help the student correct himself. This can be observed for instance when the teacher explains to a student why he has to use the progressive form, not the simple form of the verb in a given context. Incidental errors, on the other hand, Prabhu points out, are the kind of errors that do not require linguistic explanation or exemplification from the teacher, like when the teacher immediately corrects a pronunciation error made by student, or simply when he raises his eyebrows to draw the student's attention to the error.

1.3.5 Surface vs. Deep Errors

Hammerley, H. (1991) made distinctions between what he called 'surface errors' and 'deep errors'. Surface errors according to Hammerly need minor corrections. He points out that these errors do not require correction with explanation and mere editing of the error or simply putting it right with no explanation would be enough. While deep errors, he adds, require explanations of why the error was made and what the correct form is.

1.3.6 Blocking/Stigmatizing Vs Lapse Errors

Hendrickson (1978) adds a third type of error that students make in classroom interaction. He divides errors into three main types. The first type of this error is errors that block out communication. The second type is errors that have highly stigmatizing effect on the listener but do not block communication. The third type that Hendrickson added is errors that can be described as lapses that students usually have in their utterances. Such errors are quite common in the speaker's utterances, yet they hardly block communication between the speaker and his interlocutor.

1.3.7 High Frequency Vs Low Frequency Errors

Other educators, however, like Allwright (1975) think that errors should be treated on the basis of their occurrence in classroom interaction. Therefore; errors of high frequency should be given more attention and emphasis than errors of low frequency. Correction, hence, should be focused on errors recurrent in students' speech.

S. P Corder, (1973) further distinguishes between expressive and productive errors. Expressive or productive errors are those which occur in the language learner's utterances; and receptive or interpretive errors are those which result in the listener's misunderstanding of

the speaker's intentions. Competence in a language can be regarded as composed of expressive competence and receptive competence. These two competencies do not develop at the same rate. It is not uncommon to hear people say that they understand a language better than they can speak it, or vice versa. It is easier to look into productive errors than receptive errors. Analysis of productive errors is based on learners' utterances, but to investigate receptive errors, one needs to look at people's reactions to orders, requests, etc. The way a listener behaves can give us some clues as to whether s/he has understood the message or not. If a person responds "I am twelve" to a question like "what is your name"? This shows s/he did not understand the content of the question (Corder 1973:261-62). Corder (1974:124) in Rod Ellis (1994:52) offers a further elaborate procedure to classify errors on the basis of the importance of interpretation and distinguishes three types: normal interpretation, authoritative interpretation and plausible interpretation. The first occurs when the analyst is able to assign a meaning to an utterance on the basis of the rules of the target language, the second involves asking the learner to say what the utterance means, and the third can be obtained by referring to the context in which the utterance was produced or by translating the sentence literally in the learner's L1.

1.4 Sources of Errors

While for some scholars the main objective of error analysis focused on the explanation, other shifted their attention towards the sources of errors (Marina Dodigovic (2005). Why are given errors made? What cognitive strategies and styles or even personality Variables underlie certain errors? Such questions have often caught the interest of language acquisition scholars. The answers to these questions are somewhat speculative. For Taylor (1986) in Rod Ellis (1994:58), there are different error sources. Firstly, the psycholinguistic sources which are related to the nature of L2 knowledge system and the problems language learners confront in

using it in production. Secondly, the sociolinguistic ones are attributed to issues related to the learners' ability to adjust their language to the social context. Thirdly, the case of epistemic sources where learners reveal a lack of world knowledge while the discourse ones concern problems in the organization of information into a coherent text. Among the four sources, Abbott (1980) believes the psychological sources to be the most important ones given the purpose they serve to provide a psychological explanation that Rod Ellis (1994:58) represents in figure1 below.

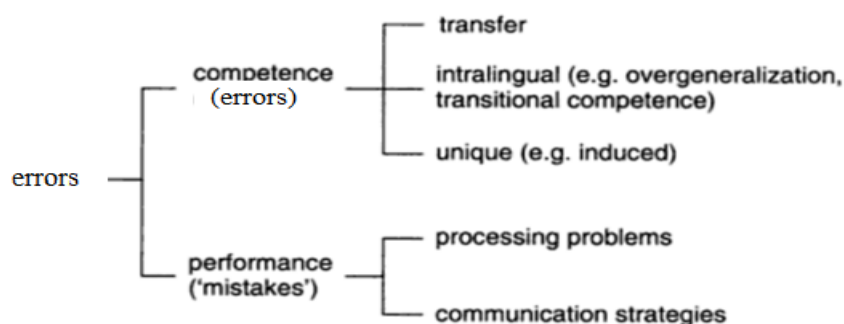


Figure 1: *Psycholinguistic sources* of errors

As far as competence errors are concerned, Lott (1980) further divides transfer errors into three cases. “Overextension of analogy”, a case where the learner misuses an item in the L1 especially when the item in L1 and L2 share approximately the same morphological construction which is illustrated by “process” in English and “processo” in Italian, “Transfer of structure”, which occurs as a result of using L1 phonological, lexical, grammatical or pragmatic features rather than that of the target language. As example related to the use of phonological feature of L1 transferred to L2 is the word “problem” produced as “broblem” in the case of Arabic language background because the Arabic language does not have the phoneme /p/. The last case is “interlingual/intralingual errors. These arise Quoting Rod Ellis

(1994) “when a particular distinction does not exist in the L1 that he illustrates with the use of “do ” instead of “make ” i.e. , “I am doing efforts.” instead of” I am making efforts.”

In his turn, Richards (1971) further identifies “Interference errors”, “intralingual errors” and “developmental” ones. The first occur as a result of “the use of elements from one language while speaking another.” An example might be when an Arabic language background learner of L2 English produces [ai not w3: k] because the corresponding form in Arabic is [læ ʔeʕməl]. When it comes to the second ones, they “reflect the general characteristics of rule learning and he further suggests four general types of intralingual errors namely over generalization, i.e.faulty case, incomplete application of rules and failure to learn conditions under which rules apply”. The third case concerns developmental errors which occur as a result of attempting to build up hypothesis about the target language on the basis of limited experience. And the forth relates to “false concepts hypothesized” where the learner does not fully comprehend a distinction in the target language.

Generalization is certainly a fundamental strategy in learning which allows us to organize our knowledge about the world and construct rules to predict similar cases. However as the word suggests and for some not yet encountered cases and unknown reasons, the rules do not always fit all cases and thus learning about the exception to the rules becomes obvious. To explain the phenomenon of overgeneralization, W. Littlewood (1984:23-24) illustrates with a non- linguistic case. The fact of allocating a certain group of animals to the category of ‘bird’ sharing various features, among which the habit of flying may be questioned when, encountering a new kind. Certainly, we will assume it has the same habit, but if the bird happens to be a penguin, the assumption will be an error and thus we will have over generalized the rule. When it comes to error sources, W. Littledwood (ibid) observes that the majority of intralingual errors in relation to language learning are cases of overgeneralization. In the case of overgeneralization in language learning, the rule forming simple past tense

marker which requires the use of the bound morpheme “ed” may be a case of overgeneralization when the learner encounters for the first time the verb ‘bring’ he will mechanically produce ‘bringed’. Accordingly, Overgeneralization is a case where learners create a deviant structure on the basis of their experience of other structures in the target language. Learners may even produce a deviant form combining two target language forms that Richard (op cit) illustrates with ‘he can sings’ while the English language allows ‘he sings’ and ‘he can sing’ .

Ignorance of rule restriction involves an unnecessary application of rules where they do not apply. It is a case where learners fail to observe the restrictions concerning the use of the rules. Instead of ‘they wanted me to rest’; the learner produces ‘they made me to rest’ for example.

Incomplete application of rules lead to systematic errors .There are instances where transformation rules , agreement and other complex structures are difficult to grasp by the learner , thus he makes a wrong use when applying them. Incomplete application of rules is a case in which the learner totally misuses the rules. Learners would produce declarative structure when a question structure is required. For example ‘you like this’ instead of ‘Do you like this?’

False concept hypothesis leads to non-systematic errors. According to J.C Richards (1971) quoted in Meenakshi Raman (2004:188) “there is a class of developmental errors which derive from faulty comprehension of distinction in the target language.” False concept hypothesis involves failure to comprehend a distinction in the target language , for example the use of ‘was’ as a marker of past tense, in the case of ‘ It was happened yesterday’

Dulay and Burt (1974b) in Rod Ellis (op cit) identify three broad categories of sources “developmental i.e. those errors that are similar to L acquisition, interference those errors that

reflect the structure of L1, and unique, those errors that are neither developmental nor interference” However, research findings have indicated that interlingual transfer is a significant source of error of almost all learners. In this connection Robert Wedzorce (2010) reveals that this learning strategy goes back to Selinker (1974) and that “researchers have proven that interlingual interference due to wrong L1 transfer is especially “vulnerable” to the beginning stages of second language learning (SLL); the L2 knowledge is not yet systematized and the mother tongue is the learner’s only logical resource.”(RobertWedzorce, 2010:9)

In addition , Selinker(1972) in Marina Dodigovic (2005:178) identifies five sources “(1) language transfer,(2) transfer of learning, (3) strategies of second language learning,(4) strategies of second language communication ,and (5) overgeneralization of the target linguistic material”. Richards and Simpson (1974) in Marina Dodigovic ,(op cit) identify seven sources of errors (1) language transfer, (2) intralingual interference , (3) sociolinguistic situation ,(4) modality of exposure to target language and production, (5) age ,(6) successions of approximative systems , and (7) universal hierarchy of difficulty. James (1998) on the other hand believes in three main sources of errors (1) interlingual, (2) intralingual, and (3) induced.

1.5 Error correction

The issue of whether or not to correct learners’ errors caught the attention of many scholars. In effect, there is no doubt that conversational interactions in a foreign language are of a paramount importance. However, several foreign language theories still disagree on whether or not to correct the students’ spoken errors in such conversations.Krashen (1995:73)quoted in Michael McIntyre (2009:92) argues that “Methods and materials should not be a test of the student’s abilities or prior experiences, should not merely reveal weaknesses, but should help the student acquire more [language] . Within similar vein,

Michael McIntyre (2009:92) believes that “One of the prime causes of raising the psychological barrier of the affective filter is the correcting of errors” which according to Krashen (ibid: 75) quoted in Michael McIntyre (ibid) “has the immediate effect of putting the student on the defensive. It encourages a strategy in which the student will try to avoid mistakes, avoid difficult constructions, and focus less on meaning and more on form. It may disrupt the entire communicative focus.”

As regards James (1998) in Marina Dodigovic (2005:89), error correction has three different degrees. The first one is intervention feedback, which informs the learner that there is an error but the learner is left to discover and correct him or herself. In this case, the learner is provided with some guidance as to what element to focus on. The second degree of correction is what James calls “correction proper”. It provides treatment that leads to revision and correction of particular error. The third degree of error correction is called remediation. It provides the learner with information that allows revision of the linguistic rule being applied. Harmer (1998:62) in Carol Griffiths (2008:290) considers error correction “a vital part of the teacher’s role” and “one of the things that students expect from their teachers” (Harmer, 2001:59). To come to a satisfactory conclusion, teachers should develop strategies to attract students’ attention to correction and provide cognitive input regarding correct language form. Of course correction must serve only the focus of the lesson objective. For instance, scholars in the field do agree if the focus is on fluency in communication, as is the case of a conversation class, the errors thus to be corrected are only those that impede communication. Too much correction, and correction of other non-influential errors, in this particular case, may be discouraging and demoralizing. As Philip Curran (2006:17) notes “In any case, when the main aim of using language is for spoken communication, constant interruptions to correct errors, great or small, will simply create a barrier to communication rather than facilitate it.” Carol Griffiths (ibid) argues that in correcting errors “...there is a variety of strategies ranging from very subtle non-

verbal communication, alerting the learner to the need to monitor their utterance, to the less subtle interventionist approach of cuing, repeating or recasting”. Griffiths (ibid) further notes “to avoid demotivation, correction need to be done in such a way that the students’ affective needs are also considered.” however, Hedge (2000:15) quoted in Griffiths (2008:290) is convinced about “the increasing evidence that learners progress faster with meaningful language practice in a rich linguistic environment with an informed policy of correction on the part of the teacher.”

1.5.1 Error Correction: The Nativist Approach

The nativist approach is a challenge to the behaviorists’ view of language development. This approach developed to support the fact that children can generate new sentences they have not heard before arguing that children process by virtue of innateness a language acquisition device which allows them to process and structure their language. In fact, it is in 1965, that Chomsky challenged the behaviourist view of language acquisition and demonstrated that children can generate new sentences they have never been exposed to. Chomsky believes the LAD an important device that Aitchison (1996) terms a’ blueprint for language’ which permits handling both first and second language acquisition. Nativists such as N. Chomsky(1965) and S. Krashen (1985) and have argued that telling the learner what does not work in the target language is unrewarding and at worst counterproductive in L2 learning. Nativists believe activities that are considered by the learner as unpleasant especially error correction and grammar instruction among others do not favor L2 learning. Moreover, studies conducted by some scholars support that correction of errors has also been considered to have negative effects.

1.5.2 Error Correction: An Apprehension

Previous studies in the field revealed that students preferred not to be corrected for each speaking and writing error because this practice undermined their confidence and forced them to waste so much effort focusing on form rather than on communication. Therefore correction turns to be an obstacle against the flow of conversation especially when the teacher interrupts the student before he has finished his utterance, and it is also a way to lower the student's motivation since correction is rather experienced as failure and as thus, the learner does not see his achievements in the process of language learning being highlighted. Error correction that simply tells a student that he or she has made an error can be very discouraging, which is one reason many teachers are reluctant to correct student errors. Teachers should emphasize the idea of language as an instrument for communication and encourage their students to express themselves freely rather than to worry so much about their errors. Teachers should be more tolerant with the students' errors in order to let them risk, guess, and enjoy learning and provide them with a feeling of security while using the language. Producing language and reducing the focus on error correction can build learners' self-confidence and promote language learning.

1.5.3 Error Correction: A Positive Activity

From a cognitive perspective, a considerable literature exists to support the positive effect of corrective treatment of errors on L2 learning. In effect the theory of Second Language Acquisition by excellence which accounts for error correction is the behavioristic theory which suggests that it is through correction that learning happens, i.e., when a mistake is made, the teacher should offer an immediate correction, and asks for its repetition to be learnt by the rest of the whole class.

Hendrickson (1978) argues "the correction of L2 learners' errors improve their proficiency". Levine (1975) also accounts for positive effect of correction and tackles in his

book, *A Cognitive Theory of Learning*, the unsafe consequences of non-correction. According to him, among the effects of not providing feedback to students is that both the speaker and the rest of the class will consider any erroneous utterance right to be learnt. Likewise, he carries out an experiment and proves his hypothesis that the teachers response to wrong utterances is very important as part of learning process since it prompts the learner to get rid of any negative hypothesis he wrongly thought of before.

Clearly, students' attitude towards correction is sometimes positive, especially in advance levels where students want to be corrected in order to improve their language and prevent the fossilization of their errors. Nevertheless, it is worthy to note that errors are learning steps that should be looked at in a positive way, since they are signs indicating that the learning process is taking place.

1.6 Hendrickson's Error Correction Frame

The issue of error correction concerning language learning has been addressed from different levels. Do (es) the error (s) really deserve correction if errors as some scholars argue are signs of learning which is taking place? And given that both the learners and the teacher constitute the most important elements concerned with error correction in terms of hierarchy between the learners and the teacher and among learners themselves, who should then correct the learner? Furthermore, because learners produce different types of errors during the process of learning, then, which error(s) are to be corrected, together with the manner correction happens, i.e., how to correct the learners and when exactly so that correction is fruitful. These questions constitute Hendrickson' frame quoted in Chaudron, Graig (1988:135) and are

1. Should learner errors be corrected?
2. If so, when should learner errors be corrected?
3. Which learner errors should be corrected ?

4. How should learner errors be corrected ?
5. Who should correct learner errors?

1.6.1 Should learner errors be corrected?

Literature on error correction reveals clearly that many foreign language educators have rejected the obsessive concern with error avoidance that generally characterizes audio-lingual-oriented language instruction (S.P.Corder, 1967, JM. Hendrickson,1977). Educators point out that producing errors is a natural and necessary phenomenon in language learning, and recommended that teachers accept a wide margin of deviance from the so called “standard forms and structures of the target language” (JM. Hendrickson, 1978:389-390). There seems to be both affective and cognitive reasons for tolerating some errors produced by language learners. Foreign language educators generally agree that tolerating some oral and written errors helps learners communicate more confidently in a foreign language. When it comes to the question should errors be corrected, Chaudron Grain (1988) cited in Richard W. Schmidt (1995:166) believes this issue to be ultimately determined by evidence of the efficacy of correction that he considers “a difficult phenomenon to demonstrate”. As regards Richard W. Schmidt (1995), “ Perspectives on the efficacy of error correction are distributed along a continuum which exhibits a range of positions from interventionists to non-interventionists.” In fact, he identifies three different positions as far as error correction is concerned. The interventionist position represented by “The audiolingual which saw language learning as a process of habit formation based on practice, typifies the interventionist position. Practitioners believed that students’ errors were harmful because they led to the formation of bad habits. If errors occurred, they were to be corrected immediately.” The second, i.e the non-interventionist whose advocates are “... typified by Krashen and Terrell(1983) in their Natural Approach, in which error correction is proscribed.” the third he observes is “ an

intermediate position , which does not proscribe ,but questions the efficacy of error correction, is that taken by Long (1977) who suggests that much of the corrective feedback supplied to L2 Learners is erratic , ambiguous, ill timed , and ineffective in the short term.” (Richard W . Schmidt , 1995:164) . Dick Allwright, & Kathleen M. Bailey (1991:103) believe perspectives to differ on the desirability of error correction reporting that Cathcart and Olsen (1976) found that learners say they want more correction than is typically offered by their teachers , a case , confirmed by Chenoweth et al. (1983) who obtained similar findings when learners reported wanting more correction than they were receiving in conversations with their native English speaking friends but a negative reaction was likely to happen in case of over-corrected. This led Dick Allwright, Kathleen & M. Bailey to argue that “The problem is to find the right balance all the time.Thus , even the first stage of decision – making process- that is, the question of whether to treat the error or to ignore it –is not a simple matter.”According to Heather Leilani Clark (2007 :38), Hendrickson (1978) identifies two conditions under which learners’ errors should be corrected . The first when learners are unable to identify the errors themselves , and the second when the correction will help them solve the semantic , syntactic , or lexical problems of linguistic features in the target language . He further argues that correction should occur when the task is focused on grammar manipulation rather than on communication.

1.6.2 When Should Learners Errors be corrected?

The question when to correct learner errors has received a great deal of attention. Perhaps the most difficult challenge of language teaching is determining when to correct and when to ignore students’ errors. According to Chaudron Graig’ (1988), the consensus related to the question “when should learner errors be corrected?” relates to the type of errors which “pertain to the pedagogical focus of the lesson, and to what extent they inhibit significantly

communication.” For Allwright, D. and Bailey Kathleen, M.(op cit) the teacher may deal with the error immediately, or delay treatment somewhat but still within the boundaries of the same lesson in which the error occurred. In the case of oral treatment of errors, the immediate error treatment may according to some teachers involve interrupting the learner in mid – sentence – a practice which can be disruptive and could eventually inhibits the learner’s willingness to speak in class at all causing a negative affective feedback. Teachers may also postpone the error correction. A teacher may decide to organize a lesson when a number of errors is shared by the students, but Allwright and Bailey revealed that psychology research literature shows that feedback becomes less effective as the time between the performance of the skill and the feedback increases. Fanslow (1977b) in Allwright and Bailey (1991) argues that teachers should offer learners the greatest possible variety of treatments ...because [learners] need to see their errors treated differently, in addition teachers need to keep on trying out different possibilities to see what happens.

1.6.3 Which Learner Errors should be corrected?

Another important question that foreign language specialists often ask is, ‘*Which learner errors should be corrected?*’ A considerable number of foreign language educators suggest that errors which impede the intelligibility of a message should receive high priority for correction. Teachers themselves can generally be expected to have their own priority concerning which errors merit correction. And those priorities tend to coincide with the nature of the activity in question. In communicative activities, for instance, errors that interfere with communication may receive priority over others, within the context of which errors to be corrected, Hendrickson (1978) quoted in Roberts A. Michael (1995: 166) identifies three types of error to be corrected namely 1) errors that impair communication, 2) errors that have highly and stigmatizing effects on the listener, and 3) errors that occur frequently. Errors that

impair communication are the ones scholars classify among the global errors that break down communication and spoil listeners from grasping the meaning the speaker intends to convey, these errors may be related to grammar, pronunciation or vocabulary. For Example, How long are you here for? Meaning the future is rather “how long have you been here? .Errors that stigmatize the learner are also global errors the occurrence of which pictures the learner’s failure to understand or respond according to the social rules that govern the use of the target language. “Pass me the book.” For instance may be shocking because the one asking for the book fails to use the polite request form. The errors that are produced frequently need to be corrected so that they do not become fossilized ones. For instance, the cases when a learner frequently uses the infinitive verb form with modal auxiliaries. Hendrickson recommends commenting on the fossilized errors, those which appear to be permanent in the learners’ language production. He articulates urgency in addressing these errors because in order for the student’s language acquisition to progress, the student will have to re-learn the rules that govern the acquired features that have become fossilized. For Hendrickson (1978) there is even an urgency to correct the fossilized errors because the permanencies of these errors have a great effect on the learner’s language acquisition progress.

1.6.4 How Learners’ Errors should be corrected?

When it comes to how to correct errors, Hendrickson suggests using strategies that do not embarrass or frustrate the learners, as these feelings could raise the affective filter and lower the student’s confidence to communicate in the language. Affect from Krashen’s perspective, is intended to include factors such as motivation, attitude, self-confidence and anxiety. (In Susan M. Gass, Larry Selinker, 2008). The filter operates according to whether it is up, a case where input is prevented from passing or low, in which case the input will pass and is

processed by the language acquisition device giving way to learning to take place. The affective filter is displayed as follows in Susan M. Gass, Larry Selinker (2008:402).

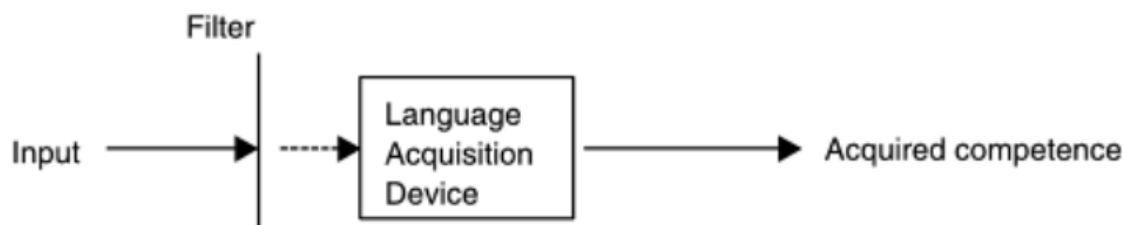


Figure 2: Operation of the Affective Filter

Source:from Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition by S.Krashen,1982,Pergamon

Still addressing the question “how to correct learners errors , S.P Corder (1967) in Heather Leilani Clark (2007:41) in his turn suggests the “discovery approach as it facilitates the learner’s ability to be aware and identify the errors ,giving possibility to the learners to change their existing hypotheses, and increasing the opportunity for intake to become uptake . For Olivia Frey (2010:1), the discovery approach to correction “is more implicit... [and] perhaps more fruitful”. Hendrickson 1978:393) quoted in Olivia Frey (ibid: 2) argues that the discovery approach might help learners make inferences and formulate concepts about the target language, and ...fix this information in their long –term memories. The “how to correct strategy requires that teachers deal with errors in a way that is both appropriate and effective. Opportunity must be given to the learner for self-correction first, and then moving to learner’s peers for assistance. This has a two –fold objective: interaction with the learner’s peers and checking the other learners’ about the language problem manifested by the student. It is only when both the learner and his peers fail that the teacher assists with correction. This will

certainly reduce the feeling of embarrassment from the part of the student as both he and his friends share the same error.

1.6.5 Who Should Correct Learner Errors?

“Who should correct learners’ errors?” is primarily the teacher’s responsibility. But scholars such as Wren (1982), Wingfield (1975), Cohen (1975) and others suggest that both self-correction and peer-correction should be encouraged to complement the teachers’ role in error correction. In the process of language learning, learners may realize some of their errors by themselves and require to be given opportunity for self-correction. They can even correct themselves when being given some hints about the errors by their teachers or peers.

The error correction issue is related to the term feedback which represents a crucial concept in the context of learner errors .When it comes to error correction in general, teachers have two choices: to correct or ignore correction. The fact of correcting learner’s error as it occurs offers possibility to the learner to realize that an error has been made and may create satisfaction of being corrected. But there may be no guarantee that the learner has identified the reason of the error. Furthermore, in the case of oral errors, correction may interrupt the flow of communication in the target language. Needless to mention the case when the learner receives repeatedly corrective feedback which is mostly discouraging, frustrating as it spoils the enthusiasm to speak in the target language. The effect of error correction on the learner has divided scholars versed in this field. Some believe that error correction is an influential feedback, and so allowing errors to go uncorrected since learners will assume their target language use is accurate, and thus internalize faulty language use.

Literature available concerning the issue of addressing the error provides strong arguments for both cases. Thus the teacher’s responsibility is called for so as to approach

errors with a reasoned strategy in which the learner constitutes the most important element being concerned with the teacher's decision of correction together with the lesson's objective to which the learner is exposed, and the hierarchy of errors that correspond. In other words , Some errors may disturb to varying degrees the lesson objective to be attained in which case they must be addressed according to their influence , others may be of negligible importance and thus do not require attention at all. Response to errors in both cases from the part of the learner and the teacher sends feedback signals that can be interpreted in different ways respectively. These feedback signals have been the concern of scholars from two standpoints. As far as the learner is concerned specialists in the field distinguish two cases of feedback namely negative and positive feedback displaying the learning process development. When it comes to feedback related to the teacher it informs about teaching strategy efficacy and future lesson plan decision making.

1.7 Feedback definition of

The term feedback is taken from cybernetics, a branch of engineering concerned with self-regulating systems. , i.e., it is a self-stabilizing control system which regulates speed, temperature etc depending on the device. In communication process, feedback refers to a response from the receiver which gives the communicator an idea of how the message is being received and whether it needs modification.

1.7.1 The Role of Feedback

According to Chun Lai, (2005:337) “feedback is a classical concept in learning, whose importance is acknowledged across different theories cognitive , placing learners at the center of the learning process , values feedback more for its informative function and takes it as a channel to provide learners with information to assist them in reaching their objectives by

reporting their mistake to them ... [it] is discussed more in an interactive manner and is the core of social interaction that drives learning. Whatever the perspective ...it is widely accepted that feedback plays a crucial role in learning second language.”

Yong (2005:338) further reveals the exploration research in the field of feedback in the area of language learning has been devoted to exploring its facilitative role. Positive feedback, confirmation of learner’s language production as being acceptable in the target language, helps learners to strengthen linguistic knowledge already registered in their interlanguage system. Whereas negative feedback , as an indication that certain features in learners’ language production are impossible in the target language , serves more as a catalyst for the reconstruction of learners’ interlanguage grammar and thus has attracted more research attention . For this very reason, identifying instances at which negative feedback matters has become the focus of research. As regards Schachter (1991) quoted in Yong (ibid), “The kind of knowledge to be learned, the kind of evidence presented to the learner, the situation in which the learning takes place and the cognitive capabilities of the learner all play a part in the efficient or non-efficient use of negative evidence.” Long (1998) reveals that current literature classifies feedback into three categories: explicit negative feedback, i.e., overt correction, implicit negative feedback in the form of communication breakdown, and implicit negative feedback in the form of recast. Bart pennies de Varies et al (2011) notes that Lyster and Ranta distinguish six types of corrective feedback:

“Explicit feedback”, in which case the teacher provides correction showing clearly the learner’s error while “ recasts” are cases where the teacher reformulates all or part of the student’s utterance except the error. S.P Corder (1967) in Steffi Joetze (2011:12) argued that feedback types as recasts, which simply provide the right form, inhibit the learners discovering the correct form. As regards “clarification request”, the teacher formulates a

question indicating that the utterance has been unclear or ill- formed and that a repetition or a reformulation is required. The “metalinguistic feedback” is characterized by the teacher’s response containing comments, information or questions related to the well-formedness of the student’s utterance, without explicitly providing the correct form. A student producing “she study grammar yesterday” the explicit feedback will be, you should say “studied “ not study while implicitly it will be yes , “she studied grammar yesterday”. And metalinguistic information might be “don’t forget to observe your tense marker.” “Elicitation” requires that the teachers try to elicit the correct form by asking for completion of a sentence, or asking questions, or asking for reformulation. And finally “repetition” in which case the teacher repeats the erroneous utterance in isolation. Trude Heift and Mathias Schulze (2007:156) displays feedback types as follow in the table below concerning oral classroom and Computer Assisted Language Learning.

Table 1: Feedback types in oral classroom and the CALL environment

Feedback type	ORAL Classroom	CALL
Explicit correction	You mean...	Correct answer
Recast	Teacher reformulation	correct answer
Clarification	What do you mean	Try again!
Metalinguistic feedback	Explanation of error type	Explanation of error type
Elicitation	Ellipsis	Highlighting
Repetition	Intonation	Highlighting

1.7.2 Affective Factors in Error Correction

Language acquisition is function of a number of factors each affecting the process in varying degrees. According to Stanley William Rothstein (1995:174) these factors are: developmental

factors, native language, exposure to language input, universal patterns of language acquisition and affective influences such as motivation , self-esteem and attitude toward the second language” Unlike child language acquisition which does not obey to the factors cited above because this stage of learning is controlled by an innate faculty that N. Chomsky terms “ Language Acquisition Device”, adult language skill acquisition is mostly depending on these factors.

Teachers, researchers and students all agree on the role these factors play on the process of second and foreign language learning. Dulay et al., (1982:46) quoted in Suzanne Graham (1997:93) advance the idea that “affective factors ... screen out certain parts of learners’ language environments’.” These affect the linguistic input resulting in motivation problems which of course impacts on the target language acquisition. For Stanley (ibid) “learner ability to receive meaningful input varies across circumstances and students... [and that] Low student interest and excessive error correction are discouraging and frustrating.” Within the same line of thought, Susan M. Gass, Jacquelyn Schachter (1989) report that a number of empirical studies since the 70’s have confirmed the existing correlation between affective factors and proficiency and believe the role of the affect to be absolutely indisputable.

Jane Arnold and H. Douglas Brown (1999:8) believe “the various emotions affecting language learning to be intertwined and interrelated in ways that make it impossible to isolate completely the influence of any one of them.” However, Arnold and H. Douglas Brown (ibid: 8, 12, 13) further identify three very influential affective factors namely anxiety, self-esteem and motivation. For them, Anxiety is the one that most widely hampers the learning process, and that it is associated with negative feelings such as uneasiness, frustration, self-doubt, apprehension and tension. Within this context , Heron (1989:33) in Arnold and H. Douglas Brown (ibid:8) makes reference to existential anxiety arising out of a group situation and is

manifested in three ways in the language classroom: “Acceptance anxiety” questioning acceptance among the group, “orientation anxiety” which has to do with understanding what is going on, and performance anxiety related to the ability of processing input into output.

Self-esteem is considered an indispensable concept in the literature of social sciences given its influence on human behavior. It is a feeling of self-respect or a favourable opinion of oneself. As regards S. Mercer (2011: 15), “Self-esteem is a global construct which is related to an individual’s value system and, thus, considered to have a more evaluative component.” For Y. Zhou (2011:116) Self-esteem in language learning includes two dimensions: (a) language self-esteem and ‘b) learning self-esteem.” Quoting Jane Arnold and H. Douglas Brown(1999:12), “self-esteem may be described on three progressively more specific levels: global or general self-esteem, situational self-esteem, which refers to one’s appraisals of oneself in specific situation such as education or work, and task self-esteem, which has to do with particular tasks in a specific situation.” They further reveal that Heyde (1979) found that all three correlated with performance on an oral production task by students learning French.

Motivation is also another very influential affective factor in language learning. Haggard, Atkinson and Atkinson 1979:281) quoted in (Jane Arnold and H. Douglas Brown, 1999:13) conceive motivation as a cluster of factors which “energize behavior and give it direction” Motivation involves the learner’s reasons for attempting to acquire a second language. This idea led Gardner and Lambert (1972) to distinguish integrative motivation and instrumental motivation. The first involves the fact of learning a language for integrative purposes among a group while the second one has to do with practical reasons serving the objective of promotion within one’s carrier for instance. When it comes to feedback, be it negative or positive, and as related to language learning, it constitutes an important factor which affects students’ motivation.

Teachers, researchers and psychologists support the idea that motivation and learning are no doubt directly connected and share the fact that motivation is regarded as a key issue in language learning processes. Thus teachers have to make use of specific strategies for motivation. Since language learning usually happens in a classroom atmosphere, motivation has to be involved in this environment so that teachers can influence positively both language learning processes and efficiency. As a specific task foreign language learning is also affected by the learner motivation.

Corrective feedback that tells a student in one way or the other that he or she has made an error may or might, depending on the student, be (very) discouraging and demotivating in terms of language learning. This will raise the affective factors accordingly, and thus inhibiting or spoiling the desire of learning to happen or to be triggered. This is the very reason for which teachers are unenthusiastic to correct errors at all while others would argue in favor of error correction only and only if it is most useful for the student. That is teachers should intervene to enhance motivation in foreign language classes. The controversies concerning learner errors correction has driven researchers to explore the field of attitudes towards error correction from both learners and teachers point of view.

1.8 Attitudes towards Error Correction

As this study is mainly concerned with students' attitudes towards oral corrective feedback, it is of a paramount importance to explore the meaning of the term attitude .In fact, a great deal of research has been carried out about the role of attitudes and motivation in ESL from the learners' perspectives. Prominent in this regard are the works of Gardner and Lambert, (1972)

As a matter of fact, there is no precise definition of the word attitude .The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of English (1995:66) defines attitudes as “the way you think

and feel about somebody, or something; the way that you behave towards somebody or something that shows how you think and feel". The International Dictionary of Adult and Continuing Education (2013:14) defines attitude as a "predisposition to perceive, feel or behave towards specific objects or certain people in a particular manner. Attitudes are learned from experience, rather than innate characteristics which suggest that they can be modified."i.e., they constitute a social construct in addition to being flexible and open to change.

Furthermore, attitude in general and language attitude in particular is a concept widely used in social psychology .And in his enquiry about attitudes, beliefs and values, Anderson (1975) in Britta Korth (2005:44) defines attitude as an individual's way of "thinking, feeling and reacting with regard to people , objects , social groups or events. Thoughts and emotions are based on the individuals experience and influence his /her response to these objects, groups (...),"

Concerning language learning, and error correction in relation to attitude, a positive attitude towards oral errors and their correction can be defined as a learned predisposition to respond in a favorable manner, with respect to oral errors by regarding them as natural occurrence, facilitators of learning and as indicators that learning is taking place. On the other hand, a negative attitude towards oral errors and their correction can be defined as a learned predisposition to respond in an unfavorable manner with regard to oral errors by considering them as an indicator of students' failure to learn the target language properly .And in this respect, error correction is perceived as ineffective , harmful and destructive.

Error correction in general is the primary concern of teachers given the information it signals as far as the teaching efficacy and the learning results are concerned. It should be noted that there is no one common or agreed upon way to conceive the error and its correction. The concern as well is that of the learners. They do have their own position about

the error and mainly the manner or the strategy used to correct it. As regards error studies, Eva et.al (1998:50-51) reports that “very few studies have examined and compared students and teachers views on the issues...” Kern (1995:71) in Eva et. al (ibid) supports the view that “learners’ and teachers’ beliefs are important to our understanding of language learning in institutional settings, and that research on learners’ beliefs can help “predict expectational conflicts that may contribute to student frustration , anxiety , lack of motivation, and in some cases ending of foreign language study. It is generally acknowledged that students consider error correction a helpful and scaffolding technique in language learning. Though, learners are apprehensive about making errors in language class even afraid of correction, error correction remains necessary though in some of the cases when attempts to self-correct are not successful. And thus teachers’ strategy and convenience is required.

When it comes to learners’ oral errors in classroom which is the concern of the present work, the latter has also been of main concern of educators, and researchers. Errors produced in such a case need also to be approached by taking into consideration students’ reactions and feelings as teachers do in other aspects of language learning.

It is important to understand that learners have different preferences i.e., styles in the way they would like to be corrected. Teachers also differ in the way they tend to correct their students. Some are inclined to correct all errors while others tend to be tolerant, and still others do not correct at all. Given the fact that foreign language learners’ differ from other in terms of methods of teaching they are exposed to together with the way they conceive the foreign language they are learning certainly students’ and teachers’ attitudes and preferences do differ. It is for this very reason that the second chapter is dedicated to students’ attitudes while the third one deals with teachers’ ones.

1.9 Conclusion

As has been illustrated in this chapter, the process of error correction, though significant and indispensable, can turn to be difficult and complicated. There exists a considerable literature that supports the positive effect of corrective treatment of errors on language learning. The behavioristic theory, for instance, suggests that it is through correction that learning happens. According to Hendrickson (1978), the correction of learners' errors improves their proficiency more than leaving their errors without correction. However, nativists such as Krashen (1982) and Chomsky (1986) consider error correction to be fruitless and counter-productive in foreign language learning.

Furthermore, the complexity of error correction lies in the decisions teachers should take in order to treat learners' errors appropriately so that correction proves to be helpful and sustains positive attitudes towards learning. Perhaps, the most difficult challenge of language teaching is determining when to correct and when to ignore students' errors. Other significant questions that most teachers ask as well are: which learners' errors should be corrected, how they should be corrected? And who learners should correct learner errors? Specialists in the field attempt to bring answers to these issues. In fact, the teacher assumes his responsibility in correcting students' errors, but research has suggested that self-correction and peer-correction have proven to be more significant in helping students overcome a considerable number of errors they make.

As observed within this chapter, learners' affective factors such as motivation, anxiety, etc represent also substantial elements that not only influence the effectiveness of error correction, but also the teacher's choice of corrective feedback. Moreover, research findings have revealed that on one hand, most teachers favor recasts as a preferable corrective feedback, and on the other hand, the majority of students seem to prefer being given an

opportunity to think about their errors and provide the correct form by themselves instead of being corrected by their teachers.

Students' Attitudes towards Oral Error Correction

2.1 Introduction

This chapter constitutes the empirical side of the research work to reinforce the theoretical side. In fact, it is a study based on a questionnaire conducted among university students from The Faculty of Literature, Languages, and Arts in one of the Algerian universities, Abdelhamid Ibn badis in Mostaganem. The element most concerned by the present case study, i.e., the learner is directly approached and given opportunity to express his/her attitudes towards oral errors , their treatments, as well as his/her preference concerning teacher's correction strategies.

The participants are second year LMD students who studied a three hour a week Oral Expression classes during their first and second academic years. A questionnaire of 27 questions was elaborated and administered to respondents. Once all the data was gathered, an analysis was conducted reinforced with interpretation.

2.1. Participants

In a quest for students' attitudes towards oral error correction, a sample of a community of LMD students from the English department has been randomly selected to respond to the students' questionnaire. The study was conducted at the faculty of Art and Literature, Abdelhamid Ibn Badis University, Mostaganem during the academic year (2010-2011). Within this context, 40 second year LMD students participated in the study. They were males and females, their age ranging between twenty and twenty-two years. They had a three hour a week Oral Expression classes during the first and second academic year. The main aim of the course consists of practicing and developing the speaking skill. By end of the second year, students are supposed to become more acquainted with the nature of this module as opposed to their first year LMD students' counterparts.

2.2 Instrument

For the purpose of reaching maximal objectivity, a questionnaire using mostly closed questions, and likert-Scale items, were used in this study. A Likert Scale provides measures in which subjects rate a number of attitudinal statements ranging from strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree from a procedure originally developed by the social scientist Rensis Likert. The Likert-Scale, the most widely used method of scale construction, was chosen for this research because of its relative ease of construction.

When it comes to the questionnaire, it comprises 27 questions and is divided into three parts. Part A is composed of six questions while part B includes thirteen questions. The questionnaire aims at investigating the students' attitudes towards oral errors and their correction. While part C composed of eight items deals with students' preferences for particular correction strategies.

2.3 Data Collection

To approximate certain objectivity, data was collected mainly using a questionnaire. The questionnaire handouts were randomly distributed to 40 LMD English students at Abdelhamid Ibn Badis University, Mostaganem, during the academic year (2010-2011). The questionnaire takers were solicited to respond anonymously, a way to make them avoid any feeling of discomfort or embarrassment while responding to the questions. They were, moreover, asked to pay serious concern to the questions and answer devotedly as they were sensitized of the important contribution their responses could bring to the research work. The results of each item are displayed in a table, followed by its analysis and interpretation.

2.4 Data Analysis and Interpretation

Item 1: Do you prefer your oral errors to be corrected?

This question was meant to identify the students' attitudes towards oral error correction, as shown in table1 below. The majority of the students' answers, (95%), reveal a great deal of willingness to have their oral errors corrected. A minority of them, (5%), is against the fact of being corrected. It can be deduced, then, that most of them are aware enough of the supportive role that oral error correction can play in their language learning process. Such awareness can be probably attributed to the informants' maturity and their strong desire to achieve a satisfactory mastery of the English language. However with regard to the minority of students who reject error correction, this may be ascribed to the fact that error correction hinders their communication in the classroom.

Table 1: Students' Attitudes towards Oral Error Correction

Item1	Yes	No
Do you prefer your oral errors to be corrected?	38	2
	95%	5%

Item 2: When do you like to be corrected?

This question was mainly asked to have an idea about the moment at which students prefer to be corrected when producing an incorrect an erroneous utterance. As indicated in table 2 below, 85% of the students express their preference for being corrected after they finish speaking while 10% like to be corrected immediately, and only 5% preferred being corrected after class when they are with their teacher. On account of the above results, it appears that a great deal of the students favor being corrected after they finish speaking. This may be to the fact that interrupting them while speaking often leads them to confusion and therefore hinders

communication. Furthermore, it seems that delayed correction gives them the chance to reflect on their errors and avoid their occurrence later on. However with regards to the few students favoring after-class correction, this can be attributed to their fear of their peers' mocking at their errors. For them, postponed correction is the best strategy to face-saving.

Table 2: When do students prefer to be corrected?

Item2	Immediately	After speaking	After class
When do you like to be corrected?	4	34	2
	10%	85%	5%

Item 3: How often do you like to be corrected?

This question aims to investigate students' preferred frequency of error correction. As table 3 shows, the majority of the students prefer to be always corrected on their spoken errors, 5% are in favor of an occasional correction, and only 2.5% of the participants want to be rarely corrected. The fact that most students favor correction all the time may indicate their fear of the fossilization of errors in their mind. However, the students who favor occasional correction think that too much correction makes them feel ashamed of their errors, and therefore hinders their communication in the classroom. Those who want to be rarely corrected may possess a negative attitude towards error correction since the latter represents an obstacle concerning their language learning process. But none of the participants rejects totally error correction.

Table3: Students' preferred Frequency of Error Correction

Item3	Always	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
How often do you like to be corrected?	37	2	1	0
	92.5%	5%	2.5%	0%

Item4: who should correct learners' errors?

The purpose behind this item is to ask students about the person they see more suitable to be in charge of correcting their spoken errors. As table 4 displays, the great majority of the students (95%) want the teacher to correct their spoken errors. In parallel, only 5% of them assume responsibility for correcting their own errors while none of the participants (0%) accepts to be corrected by the classmates. The majority of the participants (95%) consider the teacher the most important person in class, whom they trust to correct their errors. However, a minority prefer to correct their errors by themselves as this helps them to reconsider their errors and prevent their reoccurrence later on. None of the participants accepts peer correction because, on the one hand, they doubt their peers' language competence, and on the other, they want to keep away from their possible later ridicules or rather teases.

Table 4: Who should correct learners' errors?

Item4	Teacher	Classmate	Yourself
The person who should correct learners' errors.	38	0	2
	95%	0%	5%

Item 5: Does being corrected in the presence of your peers negatively influence your classroom participation?

The aim lying behind this question is to investigate the extent to which the correction of students' errors in front of their peers affects their classroom participation. 90% of the students maintain that being corrected in front of their peers does not influence their classroom participation, but a minority of participants admits their class room reticence after being corrected in the presence of their peers. It appears that a considerable number of students are not affected by error correction in front of their peers. This may reflect their conviction to learn through errors. Only few learners feel uneasy when corrected in front of their peers.

Table 5: The extent to which error correction affects students' classroom participation

Item 5	Yes	No
Does being corrected in the presence of your peers negatively influence your classroom participation?	4	36
	10%	90%

Item 6: Do you think oral error correction hinders your learning?

The purpose of this question is to point out whether oral error correction represents an obstacle in front of the learning process. The results thus obtained disclose that a considerable number of students, (90%), think that error correction does not represent an obstacle to the learning process, however, only 10 % of them do not agree. It seems that most students are aware of the important role of error correction as this contributes a lot to language learning and foreign language learning in particular.

Table 6: Oral error correction and the leaning process

Item 6	Yes	No
Do you think oral error correction hinders your learning?	4	36
	10%	90%

Item 7: I do not feel disturbed if the teacher interrupts me to correct my oral errors.

The item from part B attempts to investigate the students' attitudes towards being interrupted by the teacher for errors correcting. Table 7 shows that a great number of students i.e. 82.5% refuse to be interrupted for error correction and only 17.5% of the students accept to be interrupted and corrected by the teacher. However, a large majority of the students are against interruption for error correction. This is because interruption may cause embarrassment, anger, and will often develop a feeling of inferiority and therefore hinders their participation. Nevertheless, the few participants who accept to be interrupted believe errors as part of the learning process and their correction to be expected at any time. Perhaps for such a reason, they accept to be interrupted.

Table 7: Students' attitudes towards their teacher's interruption to correct their oral errors

Item 7	Agree	Disagree
I do not feel disturbed if the teacher interrupts me to correct my oral errors.	7	33
	17.5%	82.5%

Item 8: Students learn and understand better if they correct each other.

This question aims to determine the extent to which students correcting each other's errors helps to improve their learning and understanding. The great majority of the

participants are in favor of exchanging error correction among their classmates. Only 2.5% of the participants consider correcting each other as ineffective for the learning process. The students in favor of each other correction reveal their awareness concerning student-students interaction and the importance of exchanging error correction among classmates as this creates a friendly learning environment. Nevertheless, a minority of the participants does not trust each other.

Table8: The effect of students' correcting each other on their learning and understanding

Item 8	Agree	Disagree
Students learn and understand better if they correct each other.	39	1
	97.5%	2.5%

Item 9: The Teacher should encourage students to express themselves without correcting oral errors.

This item intends to figure out students' opinion about the teacher who encourages his students to speak without correcting their errors. As table 9 shows, 92.5% of the participants agree with the teacher who encourages students to express themselves freely without worrying about their mistakes. This will constitute a reassuring learning environment. Nevertheless, for the minority of the participants (7.5%), tolerating learners' errors is not appreciated since it may lead to imperfect learning

Table 9: Students opinion about the teacher who encourages his students to speak without correcting their oral errors

Item 9	Agree	Disagree
The teacher should encourage students to express themselves without correcting oral errors.	37	3
	92.5%	7.5%

Item 10: when my teacher corrects my oral errors, it makes me feel embarrassed and laughable.

This item aims to shed light on the students' psychological behavior after being corrected by their teacher. Table 10 shows that only a few participants, (10%), think they feel embarrassed and laughable when the teacher corrects them, but a great majority of the them insist on the fact that they don't develop any hang up and show no discomfort vis à vis the teachers' corrective feedback. The few participants who expressed their embarrassment when being corrected by the teacher seem to agree that such a feeling is not so much attributed to the teacher's error feedback but rather to their fear of their classmates' negative comments. The great majority of the participants, however, does not seem to develop any feeling of embarrassment because they believe errors are part of the learning process and their correction is constructive.

Table 10: Students' reactions towards oral error correction

Item10	Agree	Disagree
When my teacher corrects my oral errors, it makes me feel embarrassed and laughable.	4	36
	10%	90%

Item 11: I don't worry about making errors in English Oral Expression classes.

The item aims to investigate whether or not the students feel anxious about making errors in oral expression classes. As illustrated in table 11, a vast majority of the participants do not experience anxiety when making errors in English oral classes. However, only a minority of the students (10%) admits to feel afraid of making errors while speaking in oral classes. According to the students' responses, it can be deduced that the majority of them is aware that errors are part and parcel of the learning process. It is for this very reason, perhaps, that they do not worry about making them in their English classes.

Table 11: Students' anxiety about making Errors

Item11	Agree	Disagree
I do not worry about making errors in my English class.	36	4
	90%	10%

Item 12: Learners differ in their reaction to the oral error correction.

This item aims at finding out whether or not students agree that learners differ in their reaction to oral error correction. As shown in table 12, almost all the participants (97.5%) agree that learners differ in their oral error correction. Very few participants (2.5%) disagree. On account of the results, it could be deduced that most students are aware of the differences that exist among them in terms of learning styles, strategies, as well as their perceptions of errors and their correction. Perhaps, this figures prominently when some students react positively towards error correction, while others reveal a negative attitude towards it.

Table12: Students' responses to whether they think learners differ in their reaction to oral error correction.

Item 12	Agree	Disagree
Learners differ in their reaction to oral error correction.	39	1
	97.5%	2.5%

Item 13: Students learn more when their errors are corrected.

The objective of this item is to figure out the extent to which students learn when their errors are corrected. While the great majority of students (95%) are convinced they learn more when their errors are corrected, only a minority of them (05%) believes error correction to hinder their learning. By reason of the results above, it can be deduced that students are aware enough of the crucial role error correction can play to improve their language learning process.

Table13: The extent to which students learn when their Errors are corrected

Item13	Agree	Disagree
Students learn more when their errors are corrected.	38	2
	95%	5%

Item 14: I do not make the same error gain once the teacher corrects it.

The focal point in this item included in table 14 is to see whether the student repeats the same errors the teacher has already corrected. The majority of the participants, (90%), reveal that they do not make the same errors once corrected by the teacher. However, just a minority of students (10%) state they may repeat the same errors that were already corrected. On the

basis of the results, it can be observed that most students benefit from the teachers' corrective feedback since the latter helps them recognize their errors and avoid their occurrence once again.

Table14: Students' responses to whether or not they make the same error once the teacher corrects it.

Item14	Agree	Disagree
I do not make the same error again once the teacher corrects it.	36	4
	90%	10%

Item 15: I want to understand the reasons of my errors.

This item intends to find out whether students want to know the reasons behind their language errors. As displayed in table 15, all the participants agree about the importance of knowing the reasons for their language errors. Interestingly a full-length tendency to know the reasons behind their errors is manifested among all the students. The latter argue that the more they know the reasons of their errors, the easier they can get rid of them.

Table15: Students' responses to whether or not they want to understand the reasons of their errors.

Item 15	Agree	Disagree
I want to understand the reasons of my errors.	40	0
	100%	0%

Item16: I'm afraid others will laugh at me when I make errors while speaking English.

This item attempts to unveil whether students feel afraid their peers will laugh at them in case they make spoken errors. Only 12.5% of the participants admit their fear of their classmates' mockery at their oral errors, but the majority, (87.5%), reveals they do not care

about their peers' negative comments while they speak English. This leads to conclude that most students express themselves freely in Oral Expression classes .The carelessness about their mates' comments echoes their adulthood, their maturity and their perseverance to improve their speaking proficiency.

Table16: Students' responses to whether or not they are afraid that others will laugh at them when they make errors.

Item 16	Agree	Disagree
I am afraid other students will laugh at me when I make errors while speaking English.	05	35
	12.5%	87.5%

Item17: I learn more when the teacher corrects the errors that my fellow students make in class.

This item aims to explore the extent to which students learn from their fellows' errors and their correction. A large majority of students (97.5%) recognizes the fact that they benefit a lot from the teachers' corrections of their fellows' errors. However, only a minority of them (2.5%) claim not gain any thing when the teacher corrects their peers' errors. Apparently, most students seem to benefit when their teacher corrects their classmates' errors. For them, the teacher's correction gives them the chance to think about the reasons behind these errors, and therefore avoid their occurrence.

Table17: Students' responses about whether they learn from the teacher when correcting their fellows' errors.

Item 17	Agree	Disagree
I learn more when the teacher corrects the errors that my fellow students make in class.	39	01
	97.5%	2.5%

Item 18: I feel cheated of if the teacher does not correct the oral errors I make.

The purpose behind this item is to shed light on students' attitudes towards the teacher who does not correct their oral errors. As the table figures out, 95% of the students feel cheated of in case their teacher neglects the correction of their errors. Only a small minority of them (5%) accepts their errors to be passed over by the teacher. It appears that most students prefer their oral errors to be corrected. They even think that leaving errors without correction is a way of cheating them of since this may lead to error fossilization.

Table18: Students' responses about their attitudes towards the teacher's neglect of correcting their errors.

Item 18	Agree	Disagree
I feel cheated of if the teacher does not correct the errors I make.	38	2
	95%	5%

Item 19: The teacher gives some clues or example rather than immediate correction.

This question aims at finding out the extent to which students appreciate the teacher giving them clues rather than immediate correction. The majority of the informants appreciates the teacher's strategy providing some clues or examples rather than immediate correction, and a small minority of students (10%) rejects this correction strategy. According to most students, the fact of giving them some clues or examples instead of immediate correction will help them to think about their errors and find the correct form themselves, and therefore, avoid the error reoccurrence. Students seem to show a very little preference for immediate correction as this does not allow processing the reason of their error.

Table 19: Students' response about the strategy that entails the teacher giving some clues or examples rather than immediate correction.

Item 19	Good	Not good
The teacher gives some clue or example rather than immediate correction.	36	4
	90%	10%

Item 20: The teacher explains why the utterance is incorrect.

This item was mainly asked to see how students view the correction strategy through which the teacher explains why an utterance is incorrect. A large majority of the students (85%) welcome the teacher's strategy that explains why a given utterance is incorrect while (15%) expressed their dislike of such a strategy. For the majority, such a correction strategy helps them to reconsider their error and try to avoid its reoccurrence in future oral expression classes.

Table20: Students' attitudes towards the teacher's strategy which explains why a given utterance is incorrect.

Item 20	Good	Not good
The teacher explains why the utterance is incorrect.	34	6
	85%	15%

Item 21: The teacher points out the errors and provides the correct form.

This question aims at finding out the extent to which the students appreciate the strategy through which the teacher points out the errors and provides the correct answer. As displayed below, 65% of the informants express their dissatisfaction as regards this strategy. The remaining (35%), however, voice their appreciation. For most students this strategy do not

does not offer the chance to think about the error they make and provide self-repair. Moreover, this strategy causes students' confusion and hinders interaction .

Table 21: Students' attitudes towards the teacher who points out the error and provides correction

Item 21	Good	Not good
The Teacher Points out the errors and provides the correct form.	14	26
	35%	65%

Item 22: The teacher immediately corrects the error rather than taking time to discuss it.

This item intends to consider the students' opinion about the correction strategy in which the teacher immediately corrects the error without devoting time for its discussion. Most of the students, (95%), agree upon the ineffectiveness of the teacher's strategy which consists of immediately correcting the students' errors without providing explanation, and only 2% of them consider this strategy to be effective. On the basis of the results obtained, 95% of the informants are not in favor of the strategy to immediately correct the students' errors without an explanation. According to them, the ineffectiveness of such a strategy lies in the fact that learners will have their errors corrected without knowing the nature of their errors and the causes behind their occurrence. This leaves the learner lost, dependent on the teacher's intervention and unable to avoid the error.

Table22: Students’ attitudes towards the teacher’s immediate correction of the error without its discussion.

Item 22	Good	Not good
The teacher immediately corrects the error rather than taking time to discuss it.	2	38
	5%	95%

Item 23: The teacher repeats the students’ utterance up to the error and waits for self-correction.

This item is concerned with the identification of the students’ opinion about the correction strategy which consists of repeating their utterance except the error and expecting self-correction. The majority of students’ answers (95%) reveal their satisfaction with the teachers’ strategy through which he repeats the utterance up to the error and waits for the students’ self –repair. Most students are in favor of such a strategy as it encourages them for self-repair and allows them to get involved in self-progress. The minority who claim dissatisfaction with such a corrective feedback may feel as they are squeezed to offer correction while they know they cannot.

Table 23: Students’ opinion about the teacher who repeats the students’ utterance up to the error and waits for students’ self-correction

Item 23	Good	Not good
The teacher repeats the students’ utterance up to the error and waits for self-correction.	38	2
	95%	5%

Item 24: The teacher indicates the occurrence of errors by non-verbal behavior such as gestures or facial expressions.

The purpose of this item is to see the extent to which students appreciate the teacher who uses non-verbal behavior to indicate the errors. As illustrated below, a large majority of participants (92.5%) appreciate the correction strategy through which the teacher uses gestures or facial expressions to point out to the occurrence of errors. Only 7.5% of the participants show their dislike related to teacher’s use of non-verbal behavior to indicate errors .Perhaps, most students seem to favour the correction strategy entailing the teacher to use gestures or facial expressions, because such a strategy allows the recognition of errors by the students and eventually provide self-repair. However, the remaining minority think the use of gestures to indicate errors is ineffective since they rarely manage to recognize their errors and believe this strategy to be time-consuming for the class.

Table24: Students’ preference towards the use of non-verbal behavior as a correction strategy.

Item 24	Good	Not good
The teacher indicates the occurrence of errors by non-verbal behavior such as gestures or facial expressions.	37	3
	92.5%	7.5%

Item 25: The teacher corrects only the errors that interfere with communication.

This item is meant to measure students’ attitude about the teacher’s strategy which corrects only errors that interfere with communication. Only a minority of the respondents (5%) consider this correction strategy as being effective. The majority (95%) agree that focusing on communicative error correction only is not beneficial. According to them, this error correction strategy is but a partial error correction permitting some errors to be corrected and thus leading to incorrect language rule internalization, and therefore to imperfect learning.

Table25: Students' attitudes towards the teacher's correction of communicative errors only.

Item 25	Good	Not good
The teacher corrects only the errors that interfere with communication.	2	38
	5%	95%

Item 26: The teacher uses delayed error correction i.e., he provides correction at the end of the task.

This item examines the students' attitudes towards the teacher's use of delayed error correction. This item examines the students' attitudes towards the teacher's use of delayed error correction. As table 26 displays, with a percentage weight of 80%, the majority of students demonstrate their satisfaction with the teacher's use of delayed error correction. However, only 20% of the students consider such correction strategy as ineffective. In the light of such findings, it can be deduced that according to most students, delayed error correction is beneficial as it gives them the chance to concentrate more on the error, its correction, and subsequently to avoid its occurrence in the future.

Table 26: Students' attitudes towards the teacher's delayed error correction

Item 26	Good	Not good
The teacher uses delayed error correction, i.e., he provides correction at the end of the task.	32	8
	80%	20%

Item 27: The teacher uses postponed error correction (i.e., to provide correction the following day or week).

This item addresses the students' attitudes towards the teacher's use of postponed error correction. 85% of the students agree about the ineffectiveness of the teacher's postponed

error correction strategy. In fact, just a minority of students (15%) consider postponed error correction as being effective. The results show that most students do not appreciate the strategy entailing the teacher using postponed error correction. Since the latter usually occurs the following day or week, the students most often lose motivation to pay attention to the error and its correction. Moreover the teacher's feedback seems to be ineffective since students may forget the real context in which the error occurred.

Table: 27 Students' attitudes towards the teacher's postponed error correction.

Item 27	Good	Not good
The teacher uses postponed error correction, i.e., he provides correction the following day or week.	6	34
	15%	85%

2.6 Conclusion

Data collected from students' questionnaire reveals the significant role error correction plays in the process of foreign language acquisition. This is grasped prominently through the overwhelming majority of students who have generally revealed, on the one hand, positive attitudes concerning error correction given the advantages students derive from correction specially awareness of their errors ,and on the other hand , their preference to error correction strategies . Their maturity and strong desire to possess a good level in English has pushed a considerable number of students to retain a positive attitude towards corrective feedback and to accept its presence in their language classrooms. What appears of importance is the students' perception of teacher's corrective treatments. The data reveals communicative effectiveness can only be achieved in the context of varied strategies of error correction that suit the learners and the learning objective. The informants showed a positive attitude towards their teachers' correction policy and expressed in general teacher's correction over peer correction which might be attributed to the fact that teachers are rather the source of providing knowledge of the way the language system works.

Chapter Three

Teachers' Reflexions about

Oral Error Correction

3.1 Introduction

Since the teacher still plays a substantial role in the student's learning process, the third chapter constitutes another empirical section concerning university English teachers teaching students in the English department. A questionnaire was elaborated to investigate about the teachers' attitudes towards their students' oral errors and their corrections. All of them are oral expression teachers purposefully selected to bring some contributions to the research work.

Interestingly, although none of the teacher-respondents were specialized in teaching the speaking skill, they had, however, considerable experience in teaching the Oral Expression module. The teachers were kindly invited to respond objectively to 13 questions. Then each of these questions was equally analyzed and interpreted. In the end, some recommendations are provided to treat the students' oral errors.

3.2 Participants

A group of eight teachers of English participated to complete the questionnaire. Three of them are PhD teachers, while the others have a magister degree. They work at Abdelhamid Ibn Badis University of Mostaganem. They teach Oral Expression to both first and second year LMD students. Though none of them is specialist in the oral expression teaching, they possess a significant experience, reason for which they were selected for the questionnaire.

3.3 Instrument

For the purpose of investigating the teachers' point of views concerning their students' errors and their correction, a questionnaire including closed questions, was administered to

the participants. It is composed of 13 questions, all aiming at identifying the teacher's perception of oral errors and their role to prevent their occurrence in the students' speech. It is also divided into three sections. The first section aims at gathering general information about the informants such as gender and teaching experience. The second one intends to investigate the teacher's evaluation of their student's speaking skill and their oral errors. While the third deals with the teachers' strategies to palliate to their students' errors.

3.4 Data Collection

As mentioned before, data was collected by means of a questionnaire, presented to the informants who were kindly requested to answer anonymously, a way to prevent them from any sense of discomfort or annoyance when responding to the questions. Most teachers completed the questionnaire in 10 to 15 minutes.

3.5 Data Analysis and Interpretation

In this section, the results of each item from the teachers' questionnaire are displayed in a table followed by analysis and interpretation.

Item 1: How do you evaluate your students' level in oral performance?

This question was mainly asked to investigate the teacher's attitude towards their students' level in oral performance. As demonstrated below, six teachers out of eight state that their students have an average level in oral performance. The two remaining teachers, however, reveal two extremely different answers. One of them states that his students possess a good level in speaking, while the other thinks his students have a poor speaking skill.

From the results, it seems that most teachers (75%) consider their students' level in speaking to be neither good nor poor, but of an intermediate one. For them, such a level may be ascribed to their students' lack of motivation to ameliorate their speaking skill.

Table1.1: Teacher's attitudes about their students' oral performance.

Item 1	Good	Average	Poor
How do you evaluate your students' level in oral performance?	1	6	1
	12.5%	75%	12.5%

Item 2: How do your students react when you correct their oral errors?

This question serves to elicit the students' reactions when being corrected on their oral errors. As Table 2 displays, five out of eight teachers state their students' positive reaction when their spoken errors are corrected. In two cases, however, teachers report that their students show no reaction when being corrected. Only one teacher contends that his students most often react negatively towards the correction of their errors.

Table1.2: Students reactions towards the correction of their errors

Item2	Good	Average	Poor
How do your students react when you correct their oral errors?	5	1	2
	62,5%	12.5%	25%

Item 3: How do teachers consider students' errors? Teachers' failure, students' lack of competence, inefficient teaching method, students' lack of motivation.

This item aims to identify the reasons that stand behind students' oral errors. As shown below, most respondents to the questionnaire attribute students' oral errors to their lack

of competence which represents a higher percentage weight of (62.5%). In the second position comes the inefficiency of the teaching method with a percentage weight of 25%. Students' lack of motivation occupies the third rank with a percentage weight of 12.5%. However, the teachers' failure is not a reason at all.

It appears that the majority of the respondents ascribe the students' oral errors to their lack of competence. They believe the students having a university level should be mature enough and thus responsible for their own learning. Therefore, any incorrectly uttered word is the outcome of their lack of knowledge. However, 25% of the teachers attribute students' oral errors to the inefficiency of the teaching method. According to them almost all teachers of Oral Expression have no particular method they could use in teaching the speaking skill, except imitating their ex-teachers' methods such as the use of free topics, group work, etc. In fact, just one out of eight teachers attributes oral errors to students' lack of motivation. Nevertheless none of the respondents attribute to his or herself responsibility of the students' oral errors. University students should be autonomous in their learning process while teachers have only to provide help and guidance.

Table 1.3 Table 3: Teachers' responses to reasons of students' errors

Item 3	Teachers' responses	Results	
How do teachers consider students' errors?	teacher's failure	0	0%
	lack of competence	5	62,5%
	inefficient teaching method	2	25%
	students' lack of motivation	1	12,5%

Item 4: How do you think your students perceive their errors? Is it a normal part of learning process, or a failure of language acquisition?

These questions aim to investigate whether students perceive their oral errors as a normal process of learning, or as a failure of language acquisition. In fact, six out of eight teachers perceive the students' oral errors as failure to acquire the target language properly. However, only two teachers consider errors as a normal part of the language learning process. According to the results, most teachers (75%) seem to agree that the majority of their students conceive errors negatively and consider them as a sign of failure of language acquisition. In parallel, only a minority of teachers (25%) claim that their students assume errors as part of the learning process, and that making errors helps to learn the target language.

Table 1.4: Students' perception of their oral errors

Item4	a normal part of learning process.	a failure of language acquisition
How do you think your students perceive their errors?	2	6
	25%	75%

Item 5: Do you consider error correction as an essential part of your role as a teacher?

This question serves to see whether or not teachers give importance to error correction and consider it as part of their role. As displayed in the table below a large majority of teachers, (87.5%), consider error correction as an essential part of the teaching activities, and only a minority of them (12.5%) does not consider error correction to be essential.

In fact most teachers see error correction as an essential part of their task. This may be due to the supportive role that error correction plays to improve the students' speaking proficiency. However, a minority of teachers belittle the role of error correction. According to them, the most important role of the teacher is to encourage his students express themselves

freely in class rather than to provide them with a corrective feedback which may hinder their classroom participation.

Table1.5: Teachers’ responses to whether or not they consider error correction as an essential part of teaching.

Item 5	Yes	No
Do you consider error correction as an essential part of your role as teacher?	7	1
	87.5%	12.5%

Item 6: Learners’ errors should be corrected as soon as they are made in order to prevent the formation of bad habits.

This item intends to see whether or not the teachers prefer to correct their students’ errors as soon as they are made. As table 6 reveals, half of the teachers agree that learners’ errors should be corrected as soon as they are made for the sake of preventing the formation of bad habits. However, the second half believe that error correction should be postponed after the students finish speaking. In such a case, postponed error feedback may be more useful since it gives students the chance to think about their errors and may even lead to self-repair.

Table1.6: Teachers’ responses to whether or not they agree to correct students’ errors as soon as they are made.

Item 6	Agree	Disagree
Learners’ errors should be corrected as soon as they are made in order to prevent the formation of bad habits.	4	4
	50%	50%

Item 7: The teacher should use materials that expose students only to language they have already been taught in order to minimize their errors.

This question aims to investigate whether or not teachers should use materials that expose students only to the language they have already been taught in order to minimize their errors. In fact the statistics indicate that a large majority of teachers, (75%), seem to endorse the strategy that entails exposing students only to the language content they have already been taught in order to reduce their errors. According to these teachers when students focus their attention on one particular language item they have already seen, they may master it better and their errors may be reduced. Nevertheless, a minority of teachers (25%) consider exposing students to what they have already been taught only to minimize their errors as being ineffective. According to them, such a strategy does more harm than good, especially when it limits students' competence in the target language.

Table 1.7: Teachers' responses to whether or not they should use materials that expose students to the language taught for the sake of minimizing their errors.

Item 7	Agree	Disagree
The teacher should use materials that expose students only to language they have already been taught in order to minimize their errors.	6	2
	75%	25%

Item 8: When EFL students produce oral errors, to correct them it is useful to organize a lesson and explain the error.

This item intends to see the extent to which it is effective or not to correct students and explain the reasons of the errors. As table 8 displays, all of the teachers (100%) agree that organizing a lesson to explain the reason of their error is effective. Such a strategy not only helps students recognize the nature of their error, but also avoid its occurrence in the future as well.

Table 1.8: Whether or not teaching students a short lesson to explain the reason of their error correction is effective.

Item 8	Agree	Disagree
When EFL students make oral errors, it is useful to correct them and then teach them a short lesson explaining why they made an error.	8	0
	100%	0%

Item 9: When EFL Students make oral errors, it is useful to provide them with a lot of oral practice related to the language pattern causing them difficulty.

The aim of this item was to investigate whether providing students with a lot of oral practice solves the problem of error reoccurrence. As far as this item is concerned, all of the teachers (100%) approve the use of oral practice to help students get rid of their oral errors. According to them, repeating several times a particular correct language pattern helps them memorize this correct form.

Table1.9: Whether or not it is useful to provide students with oral practice to minimize their errors.

Item 9	Agree	Disagree
When EFL Students make Oral errors, it is useful to provide them with a lot of oral practice related to the language pattern causing them difficulty.	8	0
	100%	0%

Item 10: Since errors are part of learning, is too much error correction a waste of time?

This item was included to see if teachers consider too much correction as a waste of time. Visibly, five out of eight teachers (62.5%) consider much correction as ineffective for the language learning process. The respondents agree that since errors are part and parcel of the learning process, much feedback is just a waste of time. However, the three remaining teachers (12.5%) think that the more correction students receive, the better their oral performance be.

Table1.10: Teachers' responses to whether or not they consider much correction as a waste of time.

Item 10	Agree	Disagree
Since errors are part of learning, is too much error correction a waste of time?	5	3
	62.5%	12.5%

Item 11: If students are permitted to make errors, it will be difficult for them to communicate correctly.

The purpose of this item was to investigate whether or not teachers agree that students will not speak correctly in English in case they are permitted to make errors. As seen below, it appears that the majority of teachers (75%) reach agreement that allowing students to make oral errors in English is ineffective. This is because such an attitude will encourage students not to care about errors, and may lead to an increase in the number of errors students make. Therefore, too much tolerance will not help students improve their oral performance at all. Only two teachers (25%) share the fact that allowing students to commit errors is not that harmful since these are part of learning and much correction effects negatively their classroom participation.

Table 1.11: Teachers' responses to question asking whether permitting students to make errors, will result in their having difficulty speaking correctly.

Item 11	Agree	Disagree
If students are permitted to make errors in English, it will be difficult for them to communicate correctly.	6	2
	75%	25%

Item 12: Students are to blame for making oral errors in English.

This item was included to see whether or not teachers think that students are to blame for making oral errors in English. In effect, the statistics show that most respondents (87.5%) agree that students are to blame for committing spoken errors in English. However, only one teacher voices the opposite view.

Apparently, the majority of teachers blame students for their oral errors, because the latter are supposed to be adults and mature enough to be responsible for their own learning. Only one disagrees thinking this could be due to the fact that errors are a natural part of learning any foreign language and their presence in students' speech as being normal and expected.

Table1.12: Whether or not teachers think that students are to blame for making Oral errors in English.

Item 12	Agree	Disagree
I think students are to blame for making oral errors in English.	7	1
	87.5%	12.5%

Item 13: I think teachers should encourage students to express themselves rather than continually correcting them.

The purpose lying behind this item is to see whether or not teachers endorse encouraging students to express themselves instead of continually correcting their oral errors. As the results indicate below, it seems that all respondents agree that what is more important and effective is to encourage students express themselves freely in English rather than to over-correct them. According to the teachers, when students are corrected on every error made, they may feel disappointed or even embarrassed in front of their classmates, the reason why most of them reduce or cease entirely their classroom participation.

Table 1.13: Teachers' Responses to whether or not they support encouraging students express themselves rather than continually correcting their errors.

Item 13	Agree	Disagree
I think teachers should encourage students to express themselves rather than continually correcting them.	8	0
	100%	0%

3.6 Recommendations to chapter three

It is well known that throughout their target language study, students make a certain number of errors. It is an important part of their learning process. And as an essential part of his career, the teacher has to provide his students with the kind of corrective feedback that will help them improve their language learning. Of course almost all teachers encourage their students to continue learning in spite of the fact of making mistakes so as not to hinder communication. In effect, some students are more sensitive than others, so giving constructive corrective feedback can be a tricky thing. The following are, therefore, some suggestions for teachers to correct students without hurting their feelings.

To begin with, the most important thing the teacher should remember when giving out correction is to respond positively to errors. This is because being negative may only serve to bring down the student's self-esteem and give him a sense of hopelessness. A teacher, for instance, may say to his student *"you made good effort here, but I think if you try..... it will be better next time."* This makes the student reassured as he knows the teacher appreciates the effort the student is making.

Moreover, it is so crucial for a teacher to know his students and their personalities as best as he can. The way in which he provides correction will probably need to vary among

students. In effect, some students are more sensitive than others. Therefore, while immediate correction may work out with indifferent students, delayed error correction is considered more appropriate for reticent or susceptible ones.

Furthermore, in order for correction to be effective, it has to be used for the right reasons. It is worth noting that correction is not a sort of punishment. Correction, however, is no more than an attempt to change what was wrong and make it better in the future. A student should not be reproached for committing an error. Instead, as mentioned before, the teacher should make it a positive experience for the student; something he can get rid of the next time and from which he can learn a lot.

Research on oral errors suggests that errors are indispensable in foreign language learning and their correction may result in improved learning. However, if a teacher keeps stopping students amid stream to correct their errors; this may be counterproductive as students may lose self-confidence, become reluctant to take risks, grow dependent on the teacher for correction or get discouraged and confused. A number of language teaching theoreticians, therefore, advocate the significance of using selective correction techniques for responding to students' errors. They maintain that teachers should correct only the most important errors or those of certain type. Research also shows that teachers do not treat all errors that do occur. If correction has to be done selectively, it implies that teachers have to decide which errors should be prioritized for correction. In this connection, certain types of errors are more important than others. Therefore, it would be necessary for teachers to know the hierarchies of those errors. The most important errors ranked by researchers and educators are (a) those that are relevant to the pedagogical focus, (b) those that occur frequently and (c) those that hinder communication. The hierarchy of errors established by teachers certainly differs according to the lesson learning objective. In the case of oral performance the focus is rather oriented towards those that hinder communication.

3.7 Conclusion

The third chapter then revolves around the teacher, as he plays a fundamental role in the learner's error correction. The analysis of the questionnaire data, in fact, has revealed that the majority of teacher respondents possess a positive attitude towards their students' oral errors and their corrections. Most teachers consider errors as a normal part of the learning process and their correction as their essential duty. Additionally, the list of recommendations provided at the end of the chapter is also worth consulting especially when teachers tend to correct their students' spoken errors.

General Conclusion

This dissertation provides a broad overview of some theoretical issues related to oral corrective feedback, and learners' attitudes towards the correction of their spoken errors. We attempted to demonstrate, throughout this work, the nature of a language error and what sets it apart from a mistake. Moreover, the different types of errors are highlighted, in addition to their sources. It is noteworthy that corrective feedback with its different types has also been a focal point in this investigation.

Therefore, the first inquiry has dealt with university learners' attitudes vis à vis the correction of their spoken errors as well as their preferred teachers' correction strategies. In effect, most student respondents have revealed a positive attitude towards the correction of their spoken errors. Interestingly, a considerable number of them appreciate correction after they finish speaking, and favour to receive corrective feedback from their teacher rather than their classmates. They explain this choice by the fact that the teacher is the most competent person, whom they trust best for error correction. The research findings have revealed as well that most students deny any feeling of shyness or anxiety when being corrected in front of their classmates. In fact, a great deal of them have claimed to learn more when being corrected on their spoken errors, and subsequently feel cheated of if their errors are entirely ignored or passed over by the teacher. Similarly, research findings have displayed that most students appreciate the teacher's correction strategy which explains the reason why a given utterance is incorrect and provides some clues or examples rather than immediate correction.

The second inquiry, which highlights university teachers' reflections about their students' oral errors and their preferred correction strategies, has shown that most teachers contend that students possess an average level in oral performance. For them, such a level could be attributed to their students' lack of motivation to improve their speaking skill. Also

as the results display, most teachers have ascribed their students' oral errors to their lack of competence. In the same vein, a large majority of teachers consider error correction as an essential part of the teaching activities. According to them, this may be due to the supportive role that error correction plays in improving speaking proficiency.

On the basis of these results, some implications may be proposed. The study included second year LMD students of English; however, choosing another level for investigating students' attitudes towards error correction may result in other findings. Moreover, in this study, only quantitative analyses were taken into consideration, but conducting qualitative analysis, such as interviews, observations are also encouraged for further research. Besides, the role of error correction in language teaching has been an issue for a given time, as viewpoints vary as to whether correction is effective or not. In effect, people rarely consider the learners' perception on oral error correction. The reason why it is necessary to do a research associated with their opinion about oral error correction.

It is worth stressing that throughout their foreign language study, learners commit a considerable number of errors. The latter is a necessary and a natural part of their language learning process. And as one of his important duties, the teacher has to provide his students with the kind of corrective feedback which helps them improve in their language learning process. Nevertheless, it is so crucial for the teacher to understand that learners have different preferences, that is to say styles in which they like to be corrected. Also some students favor a focus on form, while others do not. Similarly, some students like to be corrected on every single error they commit, while others want error correction to be a selective one.

The results have revealed that most university students have extremely a positive attitude towards oral error correction. In fact; they seem to welcome being corrected more than their teachers expect. As a matter of fact, they believe that correction helps overcome

their oral errors and improve their speaking skill. However, it is remarkable also, that the majority of students favor postponed correction, that is the one which comes after they finish speaking. For them, immediate correction makes them feel confused and may push them to cease participation entirely in the classroom.

To sum up, the findings of this research can be useful for language teachers and learners as well. Both can take them for granted in their teaching and learning procedures. However, it should be noted that this research work has dealt only with one error correction aspect that is graduate students' attitudes towards the correction of their spoken errors. In fact, other error correction aspects, different from this , that one could deal with, in a comparative study between graduate and post -graduate students in terms of their attitudes vis à vis the correction of their oral errors. Such a study-one should note-is of a paramount importance and it can add insights into this area of research.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Students' Questionnaire

Appendix 2: Teachers' Questionnaire

Students' Questionnaire

General Information

Gender : Male Female Level
Instructions

- ❖ The following questions address the correction of Oral errors. Respond to each question based on your English language learning experiences up until now. Tick the box that -reflects your best answer.

Part A

1-Do you prefer your oral errors to be corrected?

Yes No

2-When would like to be corrected?

Immediately after you finish speaking after class (between you and your teacher)

3-How often do you want to be corrected?

always occasionally rarely never

4- Who should correct your errors?

Teacher classmate yourself.

5- Does being corrected in the presence of your peers negatively influence your classroom participation?

Yes no

6-Do you think oral error correction hinders your learning?

Yes no

Part B

7-I do not feel disturbed if the teacher interrupts me to correct my oral errors.

Agree disagree

8-Students learn and understand better if they correct each other.

Agree disagree

9-The teacher should encourage students to express themselves without correcting oral errors.

Agree disagree

10-When my teacher corrects my oral errors, it makes me feel embarrassed and laughable.

Agree disagree

11-I don't worry about making errors in my English classes.

Agree disagree

12- Learners differ in their reaction to oral error correction.

Agree disagree

13-Students learn more when their errors are corrected.

Agree disagree

14-I don't make the same error again, once the teacher corrects it.

Agree disagree

15-I want to understand the reasons for my language errors.

Agree disagree

16-I am afraid other students will laugh at me when I make errors while speaking English.

Agree disagree

17-I learn more when the teacher corrects the errors that my fellow students make in class.

Agree disagree

18- I feel cheated of if the teacher does not correct the oral errors I make.

Agree disagree

Agree disagree

Part c

The following are some oral correction strategies. Tick the box that represents best your answer.

19-The teacher gives some clues or example rather than immediate correction.

Good not good

20-The teacher explains why the utterance is incorrect.

Good not good

21-The teacher points out the errors and provides the correct form

Good not good

22-The teacher immediately corrects the error rather than taking time to discuss it.

Good not good

23-The teacher repeats the student's utterance up to the error and waits or self correction.

24 The teacher indicates the occurrence of errors by non-verbal behavior such as gestures or facial expressions.

Good not good

25-The teacher corrects only the errors that interfere with communication.

Good not good

26-The teacher uses delayed error correction (i.e., provides correction at the end of the Task).

Good not good

27-The teacher uses postponed error correction (i.e, provides correction the following day or week).

Good not good

Teachers' Questionnaire

The purpose of this questionnaire is to gather information about students' attitudes towards correcting their oral errors. You are kindly invited to answer all questions. Data collected will remain confidential and used by the researcher only. Please, tick the appropriate box and provide complete answers whenever necessary.

Section One: General Information

Gender: male female

Teaching experience:

Fewer than 5 years. More than 5 years, but fewer than 10 years. More than 10 years.

Section two: Student General Evaluation

1. How would you evaluate your students' level in oral performance?

Good

Average

Poor

2- How do your students react when you correct their oral errors?

They react positively

They react negatively

3- Would you consider students' errors as:

a- Teachers failure.

b- Students' lack of competence

C- inefficient teaching method

D- students lack of motivation

4- How do you think your students perceive their errors?

A: normal part of learning process

B- failure of language acquisition

5- Do you consider error correction an essential part of your role as a teacher?

Yes No

Section Three: Say if you agree or disagree with the following statements by ticking next to the appropriate answer.

6-Learners errors should be corrected as soon as they are made in order to prevent the formation of bad habits. Agree disagree

7- The teacher should use materials that expose students only to language they have already been taught in order to minimize their errors. . Agree disagree

8-When EFL students make oral errors, it helps to correct them and later teach a short lesson explaining why they made that error. Agree disagree

9-When EFL students make oral errors; it usually helps to provide them with lots of oral practice with the language pattern that seems to cause them difficulty. Agree disagree

10-Since errors are normal part of learning, much correction wastes time.

Agree disagree

11-If students are permitted to make errors in English; it will be difficult for them to speak correctly

later on. Agree disagree

12-I think students are to blame for making oral errors in English. Agree disagree

13-EFL teachers should encourage students to express themselves rather than continually correct their errors. Agree disagree

