

# Impact of Palestinian EFL Teachers' Attitudes toward Oral Errors on Their Students' Attitudes and Choice of Error Treatment Strategies

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**BOSTON COLLEGE**  
Lynch School of Education

Department of  
(Teacher Education, Special Education, and Curriculum & Instruction)  
(Language & Literacy)

IMPACT OF PALESTINIAN EFL TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARD  
ORAL ERRORS ON THEIR STUDENTS' ATTITUDES AND CHOICE OF  
ERROR TREATMENT STRATEGIES

Dissertation

By

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submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirement for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

August, 2010

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **Impact of Palestinian EFL Teachers' Attitudes toward Oral Errors on Their Students' Attitudes and Choice of Error Treatment Strategies**

By

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Dissertation Director: Dr. Audrey Friedman

This mixed-method study, combining both qualitative and quantitative procedures, aimed at investigating the impact of Palestinian EFL teachers' attitudes toward oral errors on their students' attitudes and choice of oral error correction strategies. The study sample consisted of (151) high elementary and secondary school Palestinian EFL teachers and (774) of their students, distributed proportionately between males and females. Both groups responded to a teacher and a student questionnaire respectively. The sample also included (12) teacher participants, each of whom was observed and interviewed twice in the course of the study, and (12) student participants, each of whom took part in two focus group interviews.

Data obtained from different sources (i.e. case study vignettes, questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, and observations) provided significant evidence that the majority of both Palestinian EFL teachers and students had positive attitudes toward oral errors and their correction. However, the data also revealed some discrepancy between students and teachers regarding what, how often, when, how, and by whom errors should be corrected. The study also showed that although students wanted to improve their accuracy in English to be well prepared for accuracy-oriented formal tests, the majority

of them preferred not to be marked down on every error they made. Further, the study revealed that different error correction strategies had different cognitive, affective, and behavioral impacts on different students.

The study recommends that both EFL teachers and learners develop more positive attitudes toward oral errors and their correction. In addition, teachers should have at their disposal a wide variety of error correction strategies to be able to deal more appropriately and effectively with student oral errors. The study also recommends that teachers get the right amount and timing of error correction for each individual student preferences, language proficiency, personality type, and learning styles, which cannot be achieved without the teachers having a dialogic interaction with their students and students being able to voice up what their perceptions of and preferences for oral error correction strategies are, what errors they want to be corrected, and who should correct them.

## **DEDICATION**

To all those who limitlessly supported and inspired me,

To make this dissertation the best it could ever be.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The fulfillment of this dissertation would have been next to impossible without the sincere and relentless support of a number of people. First and foremost, I wish to express my deepest gratitude to my academic advisor and dissertation committee chair, Dr. Audrey Friedman, for her guidance, persistent support, and constant encouragement throughout my study at Boston College and while writing my proposal and dissertation.

I would also like to thank my dissertation committee members, Dr. Patrick McQuillan and Dr. Patrick Proctor. I will never forget the long-term support and insightful guidance and constant encouragement they provided me with during my course work at Boston College and the comments and suggestions I received from them, which enabled me to create a much stronger piece of research.

A special appreciation also goes to the teachers and students who consented to participate in this study and were generous enough to willingly provide their time and effort. I would also like to thank the supervisors of English in the governmental schools in the City of Gaza because their help and support made the accomplishment of this research possible.

I am also very grateful to my scholarship sponsors, USAID, Open Society Institute and AMIDEAST, whose support helped me pursue my graduate education and accomplish this work.

Finally, I owe my family, friends, and colleagues a lot of gratitude for all their support and sacrifice.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EFL	<i>English as a Foreign Language</i>
EFA	<i>Exploratory Factor Analysis</i>
ESL	<i>English as a Second Language</i>
FL	<i>Foreign Language</i>
GPA	<i>Grade Point Average</i>
S.	<i>Student</i>
Ss.	<i>Students</i>
T.	<i>Teacher</i>
Ts.	<i>Teachers</i>
TEFL	<i>Teaching English as a Foreign Language</i>
ZPD	<i>Zone of Proximal Development</i>



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# CHAPTER ONE

## ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY PROBLEM

### INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the current study was to investigate the attitudes underpinning Palestinian EFL teachers' choice of certain oral error correction strategies, the impact of such strategies on the development of students' attitudes toward such errors and their correction, and the relationship between teachers' intentions and learners' perceptions of oral errors and their treatment. To achieve the study objectives, a mixed-methods, multiple case study design comprising both qualitative and quantitative research styles was used. The qualitative aspect of the study, which was meant to get a profounder understanding of individual teachers' and students' perceptions, investigated the attitudes of (12) Palestinian EFL teachers and (12) high elementary school students (7-10 graders, aged between 13 and 16) and secondary school students (11-12 graders, aged between 17 and 18) toward oral errors and their treatment. The quantitative aspect of the study surveyed those attitudes among (151) Palestinian EFL teachers and (774) students in the City of Gaza, Palestine and produced quantified conclusions.

Qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection including questionnaires, observations, focus groups, and semi-structured interviews were used to gauge teachers' attitudes, to assess the extent to which these attitudes were reflected in their classroom behavior, and to elicit their perceptions of how they viewed oral errors. Moreover, the attitudes of a selected sample of students was investigated in an attempt to find out how



teachers' choices of oral error treatment strategies contributed to shaping students' attitudes toward learning English in general and oral errors and teacher corrective behavior in particular.

The sections that follow in this introductory chapter will shed more light on the study problem, purpose, questions, objectives, significance, limitations, and definitions of some key terms used in the study. Furthermore, being the backcloth of the whole dissertation, this chapter will give a synopsis of English language teaching and learning in Palestine.

## **STUDY PROBLEM**

Language, prior to and in the age of communication, of information super-highways, of networking, and of electronic email, is at the core of our existence as humans. It defines us and shapes our being more than any other asset we possess. Language builds and cements our social relationships, helps us think and allows us to reflect, is used first to educate us and subsequently by us to educate others. Without it no war can be declared nor can peace be announced, and neither ships nor babies can be named (van Lier, 1995). Language is also a vital area of study for a better understanding of ourselves, enriching our life, enlarging our vision, and improving our situation.

This is exactly what English, the most powerful tool to communicate internationally, is expected to do for its learners (Brown, 2000; Borg, 2001). Learning English has become a significant priority for individuals who want to be prepared to better survive in this highly competitive world (Chrystal, 2003). As a result, learners of English who have devoted themselves to serious learning want to learn the best curricula

and practices to achieve more efficient and effective proficiency (Chen, 2005). Consequently, teachers of those learners should spare no effort to help them achieve what they aspire to.

In Palestine, one of the most culturally, ethnically, and linguistically homogeneous countries, whose people have a strong zeal for education, English was introduced to the Palestinian education system during the British Mandate (1918 – 1948) as the language of the ruling country and since then it has been the only foreign language in the school syllabus. Historically, students began to learn English as a compulsory school subject in grade seven. Since the taking over of the Palestinian Authority in 1994, the situation has changed dramatically. In 1996, the teaching of English began in grade five, and since 2001, English has been introduced in grade one.

Theoretically, if Palestinian students study English for a number of years, they should be able to communicate fluently and accurately upon graduating from secondary school. Unfortunately, this is not the case. In reality, after spending so many years learning English at school, most Palestinian students cannot communicate fluently in English and their language is largely devoid of accuracy (Project Hope, 2009). No doubt, this is a rather unnatural and unexpected outcome because the ultimate objective of teaching any foreign language should be enabling learners to communicate fluently and accurately. These students' failure to communicate successfully and effectively in English indicates that there is a missing link between expectations and achievement, theory and reality, and learning and teaching.

Various interrelated factors influence students' success in foreign language learning. One of these factors is the guidance teachers provide when correcting their students' errors. Despite a noticeable decline in its popularity in recent years as a result of increased concern with communication, the practice of error correction has continued to receive wide attention and acceptance in foreign language teaching because the basic assumption underlying its practice still persists: effective correction plays an important role in language development (Truscott, 1999). How teachers perform this task usually influences students' learning development and impacts their paths to becoming successful foreign language learners (Graves, 1983).

This is particularly significant in a foreign language context, as it is the case in Palestine, where students' intrinsic motivation can be low, and English may not seem relevant to students because it is not part of their daily lives (Brown 2001). It is worthwhile mentioning in this respect that Palestinian students are required to study English as a compulsory subject of the school curriculum. Many researchers comment on the impact, usually negative, that obligatory language learning has on language learners' attitudes (Bateman, 2002). To make matters worse, Palestinian students learn English in large classes (i.e. 40 to 50 students) with limited contact hours (about 3 hours a week), which makes learning English an apparently insurmountable challenge for them (Rose, 1999). To compound the problem, Palestinian students are taught English as a body of knowledge through translation and memorization of rules in preparation for traditional examinations privileging form over content and accuracy over fluency (Kharma & Hajjaj, 1989). Palestinian students, like other foreign language learners worldwide, also present a

rather perplexing disarray of aptitudes, interests, and competencies (Al-Mutawa & Kailani, 1989), even in so-called homogeneously grouped classes.

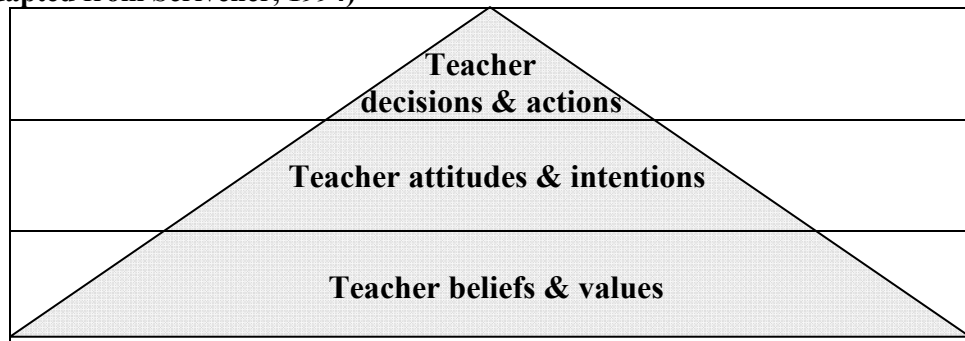
Correcting the errors of students with low intrinsic motivation, with limited exposure to and use of language, and with specific individual differences, while at the same time trying to help them develop and maintain positive attitudes toward language learning are basic challenges confronting Palestinian EFL teachers of high elementary and secondary classes. To be able to overcome such challenges successfully and truly help students develop and maintain positive attitudes toward learning English, even when their oral errors are being corrected, Palestinian EFL teachers should critically review the oral error treatment strategies they currently use because of the cognitive and affective impacts which such strategies may have on shaping learners' attitudes toward learning English. Such attitudes, in their turn, may greatly impact students' achievement in this language.

How teachers perceive and react to students' oral errors is greatly influenced by their preparation and attitudes toward such errors. Some teachers have been prepared to effectively deal with students' oral errors; others have not. Teachers inadequately and improperly prepared can cause emotional and psychological impairment not only in English language learning but also in students' overall educational futures (Gracia-Nevarez, Stafford, & Aria, 2005). In addition, EFL teachers' attitudes toward students' oral errors can play a crucial role in determining what strategies or techniques the teacher uses when dealing with such errors. Some teachers may possess positive attitudes toward oral errors and consider them signals of students' learning and experimenting with the

foreign language (James, 1998). Others may have negative attitudes toward those errors and consider them intolerable deviances that should be eradicated as soon as they occur, regardless of the negative impact that such an intervention may have on students. Teachers' positive attitudes toward students' errors should be sustained or even strengthened, while negative attitudes should be changed and replaced by more positive ones.

With increasing numbers of Palestinian school children learning English as a foreign language and for much longer periods of time, educational investment goes up and stakes run high, which necessitates, if not mandates, that teachers become more aware of their attitudes, and that they grow more sensitive to their students' oral errors and the treatment strategies they use to correct them. At this respect, what should always be remembered is that teachers are not atheoretical beings as they have most likely assimilated theories of practice over years of actual experience in the classroom as teachers and/or learners (Wright, 1990). Thus, any decisions teachers make or any strategies they use, as illustrated in Figure 1.1 below, are based on well-established theories of language teaching and learning, which are the product of previous teaching and learning experiences, values, beliefs, attitudes, and intentions (Freeman & Richards 1993; Scrivener, 1994). Teachers' instructional theories and attitudes, although in many cases unconsciously held, have an effect on teachers' classroom behavior, influence what students actually learn, and powerfully determine what instructional strategies teachers employ (Bennett, 1976; Brophy & Good, 1974; Burns, 1990).

**Figure 1.1**  
**Teacher Decisions and Actions Determined by Teacher's attitudes, Intentions, Beliefs & Values (Adapted from Scrivener, 1994)**



Therefore, if teachers are to use more effective oral error treatment strategies, it may be necessary for them to revise, refine, or change preexisting beliefs and attitudes which may not be compatible with students' preferences, needs, learning styles, and personalities (Clark & Peterson, 1986; Clark & Yinger, 1979). In other words, attitudinal change should be an essential and inevitable part of any pedagogical innovation or change aimed at enhancing the art of foreign language teaching and learning (Bernat, & Gvozdenko, 2005).

Despite the key role which teachers' attitudes play in the success (or failure) of the teaching-learning process and in understanding teachers' classroom behavior, teacher attitudes have been under-researched in foreign language classroom research worldwide (Kennedy & Kennedy, 1996) in general, and in Palestine in particular. If improvement in foreign language teaching and learning is to be achieved, teachers' attitudes should not be overlooked as teachers' attitudes toward what they do and why they do it hold promise for understanding the frequently noted discrepancies between theoretical understanding of foreign language learning and classroom practice (Kleinsasser & Savignon, 1991).

Another equally important factor influencing students' successes in learning a foreign language is learner attitude toward the foreign language and the learning situation (Nunan & Lamb, 1996). Teachers, once more, play a vital role in shaping and sustaining their students' attitudes as it is widely recognized that the attitudes of teachers toward their teaching subjects can have a profound effect on the attitudes and success of their students (Bishop & Nickson, 1983; Bobis & Cusworth, 1995; Deighan, 1971; Haladyna Shaughnessy, & Shaughnessy, 1983; Phillips, 1973; Zammit, Allebeck, Andreasson, Lundberg, & Lewis, 2002). Also, it has long been believed that teacher enthusiasm for the subject has a positive effect on the learning of their students. When teachers are favorably disposed to their subjects and students, they are also likely to have a positive effect on their students' learning (Harmer, 1995; Holliday, 1997). Conversely, when teachers are unfavorably disposed, they are likely to negatively affect their students' learning (Van der Walt, 1990).

In short, despite the crucial role played by teachers' and students' perceptions of and attitudes toward oral errors and their correction, there is a dearth of research studies investigating such perceptions and attitudes, on the one hand, and research comparing teachers' and students' perceptions and attitudes, on the other (Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2005). This study endeavors to help fill this void.

### **STUDY PURPOSE**

While addressing students' oral errors, Palestinian EFL teachers may be employing oral error treatment strategies that may either facilitate English language learning and develop students' positive attitudes, or hinder their learning and impose

constraints on their oral behavior, which may result in students forming negative attitudes. As the choice among different error treatment strategies is deeply rooted in teachers' attitudes toward language, learners, and errors, one of the main purposes of the current study was to unearth those attitudes in order to find out how they influenced teachers' choice of error treatment strategies and how such strategies affected students' attitudes toward learning English in general and oral errors and their correction in particular. More specifically, this research was designed to understand teachers' attitudes regarding oral error treatment and how such attitudes, whether positive or negative, were reflected in their instructional practices and their students' learning and perceptions.

Through interviews, observations, questionnaires, and focus groups, this study also elaborated on the relationship between teachers' attitudes toward oral errors and their behaviors in practice. It was also hoped that the study would help teacher participants become aware of their personal attitudes toward oral errors, reevaluate them, and eventually replace negative attitudes with more positive ones. Such attitude change, in its turn, was hoped to prompt teachers to develop and use more effective and constructive oral error treatment strategies, which would not only contribute to enhancing students' language proficiency and achievement, but also to helping them develop more positive attitudes toward English language learning. Revision and reevaluation of teachers' attitudes are indispensable for effecting a deeper and more complex change because it is not enough for people to act differently, which is a surface phenomenon, but rather they have to change the way they think about certain issues (Kennedy, 1988).



The study also purported to measure the correlation between teachers' attitudes toward oral errors and their instructional behavior as reflected in the oral error treatment strategies they employed. To achieve this purpose, data obtained from the teachers' and students' questionnaires as well as from the observation sheets were subjected to exploratory factor analysis in order to determine the extent to which the oral error treatment strategies teachers used were proportional to their attitudes toward such errors. Descriptive statistics including percentages, means and standard deviations were also calculated.

Furthermore, one of the study purposes was to investigate what error treatment strategies Palestinian EFL teachers used and how such strategies were distributed. Different oral error treatment strategies were observed, categorized, and analyzed in order to examine and compare their effectiveness. Such effectiveness was measured by students' evaluation of such strategies via responses to questionnaires and contributions to the focus group interviews. As Cathcart and Olsen (1976) point out, 'One step towards arriving at effective correction techniques is an evaluation and comparison of students' attitudes, teachers' attitudes, and teachers' behavior' (p. 52).

Moreover, it was hoped that the study would contribute to enhancing not only the teaching and learning of English in Palestine but also in other contexts worldwide, as English language teachers everywhere possess attitudes toward oral errors and need to grow more aware of such attitudes and become more sensitive to the oral error treatment strategies they use and provide both clear cognitive information and positive affective feedback while addressing those errors (Brown, 1994). It was also hoped that the study

would familiarize teachers in other contexts with various oral error treatment strategies so that they can choose what they think to be the most appropriate ones based on students' individual language needs, learning styles, proficiency levels, and individual differences.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The current study attempted to answer the following main research question and six sub-questions:

### **Main Question**

To what extent do Palestinian EFL teachers' attitudes toward their students' oral errors affect their students' attitudes and choice of oral error treatment strategies?

### **Sub-Questions**

1. What is the nature of Palestinian EFL teachers' attitudes toward their students' oral errors?
2. What strategies do Palestinian EFL teachers use to correct their students' oral errors?
3. How do Palestinian EFL teachers' attitudes affect their choice of the strategies they use to treat students' errors?
4. What is the nature of Palestinian EFL students' attitudes toward oral errors and their correction and how much do converge or diverge with those of their teachers?
5. What are Palestinian EFL students' preferences for particular types of oral error correction strategies and to what extent do they converge or diverge with those of their teachers?
6. What are the effects of different oral treatment strategies employed by Palestinian EFL teachers on the development of their students' attitudes?

## **STUDY OBJECTIVES**

The current study aimed to achieve the following:

1. To identify the nature of Palestinian EFL teachers' attitudes toward their students' oral errors.
2. To investigate the strategies which Palestinian EFL teachers use to correct their students' oral errors
3. To determine whether or not Palestinian EFL teachers' attitudes toward students' oral errors affect teachers' choice and use of particular oral error treatment strategies.
4. To investigate the extent to which oral error treatment strategies used by Palestinian EFL teachers affect and shape their students' attitudes toward oral errors and strategies of their correction.
5. To identify pedagogies that may help Palestinian EFL teachers develop and use more constructive oral error treatment strategies.

## **STUDY SIGNIFICANCE**

The significance of identifying and understanding teachers' attitudes as a starting point, in any teacher preparation or professional development program is gradually being recognized by educators and researchers (Ajzen, 1988; Bernat, & Gvozdenko, 2005; Clemente, 2001). According to Baker (1988), consciously or unconsciously, teachers' attitudes play a crucial role in language's growth or decay, restoration or destruction. How teachers truly perceive and address students' oral errors depends greatly on their attitudes toward such errors. Therefore, any efforts aimed at helping teachers develop and use more effective oral error correction strategies require increasing teachers' awareness

of their own attitudes toward such errors and aiding them to reevaluate and, when necessary, change such attitudes. To help teachers become more aware of their attitudes, such attitudes need first to be articulated, analyzed, and then contrasted with those of other teachers and those of their own students, which the current study tried to achieve. In this vein, Shultz (2001) asserts that understanding learners' attitudes toward error correction will help teachers cope with student errors in language classes.

Despite the fact that students represent the focal point of the teaching-learning process, research rarely considers students' perceptions of and attitudes toward oral errors and their correction because the focus of such research has mostly been on one side of the table – the teachers (Chenoweth et al, 1983). What makes this study significant is that it gave equal importance to both sides of the table and described what happened to the students when they were corrected as well as how teachers felt when their students made errors and what their motives were when they corrected students' oral errors.

Furthermore, Palestinian EFL teachers' awareness of their attitudes toward oral errors may enhance their ability to reflect critically upon their instruction in general and their error correction strategies in particular. Critical reflection is a crucial element in helping teachers assess their personal pedagogy and students' learning. According to Cloud et al. (2000), effective instruction occurs when teaching is modified in response to the results of formal and informal assessment of student progress, to feedback from students during activities, and to teachers' and others' observations. In order to modify their error correction strategies in response to various feedback sources, Palestinian teachers *must* have a repertoire of appropriate and effective error correction techniques

that they are able to use to respond, in a constructive manner, to their students' oral errors and to enhance their students' learning. Besides, those teachers who already have a wide variety of strategies available for the treatment of errors but do not typically make full use of those strategies must be encouraged to do so. It was hoped that the current study would prove significant in this endeavour by helping teachers become aware of their attitudes toward oral errors, reflect on their teaching practices, and familiarize themselves with various oral correction strategies.

Moreover, results from the current research may inform EFL teacher preparation programs, teacher educators, syllabus designers, educational administrators and policymakers devise, use, and adapt educational textbooks and instructional materials intended to help Palestinian students overcome such errors by making such textbooks and materials more focused on the nature of such errors and on their treatment strategies. Furthermore, the investigation of Palestinian EFL teachers' attitudes toward oral errors will also be valuable in understanding teachers' classroom practices. Moreover, knowing learners' attitudes toward a language is valuable in language education and language-related policymaking (Wright, 1999). Educational administrators and policymakers are key persons in the human resource planning for institutions. If they have enough data and input, they will be able to make better decisions regarding hiring, selecting, and evaluating personnel.

In addition, there is little information available for language teachers to effective strategies of oral error treatment (Burt, 1975; Woods, 1996). As a result, treatment strategies used to deal with student oral errors are dependent upon individual teachers'

decisions, which may include, according to Richards and Lockhart (1994), decisions about (1) whether learner errors should be corrected, (2) which kinds of learner errors should be corrected, and (3) how learner errors should be corrected" (p. 189). Since there is no way for teachers to know the extent of the effectiveness of their decisions, the study findings may suggest some rationales for teachers' decisions.

For a long time now, many researchers have investigated various types of error treatment strategies to verify their benefits (e.g. Allwright, 1975; Bang, 1999; Bell, 1992; Bartram & Walton, 1991; Carroll, Swain, & Roberge, 1992; Cathcart, & Olsen, 1976). In many cases, though, researchers compared two or more different types of treatment to find out whether particular strategies were more effective than others, there has been little research conducted to examine actual learner errors that language teachers corrected and to analyze the types of treatment strategies used to deal with those errors (Ferris, 2002). As it is difficult to have clear standards of error treatment for all types of settings, the current study will attempt to examine the validity and effectiveness of types of oral error treatment strategies in the Palestinian context.

The study may also enable Palestinian directorates and departments of education to hire better qualified, potential EFL teachers and to more successfully evaluate the effectiveness of their instruction particularly when attitudes toward errors and preparation for their effective treatment are concerned. Furthermore, the findings of this study can help facilitate teacher participants' self-evaluation and professional development and enhance their understanding of students' attitudes toward various oral error treatment strategies and students' learning preferences. A study that would compare and match

teacher and student attitudinal systems would be another step in explaining effective foreign language teaching behaviors. This exploratory study is needed to help teachers delve into their students' attitudes toward error correction and other practices common to foreign language teaching and learning.

Further, the study may provide an opportunity for Palestinian EFL teachers to reflect on their practice and share their own opinions and experiences concerning teaching English in general and oral error treatment in particular because, as in many other contexts, teachers' practical knowledge is usually neither recognized nor valued and consequently teachers are rarely listened to nor given the opportunity to participate in any decisions concerning their own teaching. Moreover, participant teachers may be inspired, through conversations and observations, to reconsider the error correction strategies they generally use and to reevaluate their effectiveness, especially when their students are given the chance to articulate how different correction strategies affect their perceptions, feelings, and learning.

In addition to its general significance outlined above, the study has a personal significance and relevance to the researcher. In the researcher's experience as an EFL learner whether at Gazan schools or at Egyptian universities, he was one of those unfortunate students whose teachers and teacher educators tended to use ineffective oral error treatment strategies to correct their errors, which negatively impacted his language proficiency and attitudes. Such negative experiences have made the researcher grow more sensitive to error treatment in general and to oral error treatment strategies in particular. As a result, throughout the researcher's career as an EFL teacher and teacher educator, he

has been trying to use what he has believed to be effective and inoffensive error treatment strategies. However, awareness and belief on the researcher's behalf are not enough as his oral correction strategies may be perceived differently by his students. Therefore, asking students about their perceptions of and attitudes toward different error treatment strategies will help the researcher better judge the effectiveness of the treatment strategies he has been using.

Furthermore, the current study helped the researcher compare and contrast his oral error treatment strategies with those of participant teachers. The researcher was particularly interested in knowing how teachers treat their students' oral errors, how they and the researcher were similar, where they differed, and what they could learn from each other so that each of them could become a more effective instructor. Eventually, the results of the research and exchange of experiences would be transferred to and directly affect their students' learning, which is the ultimate goal of their existence as teachers and teacher educators.

### **STUDY LIMITATIONS**

There are some limitations to this study, the most important of which is inherent to mixed-type research methodology. Despite the fact that such methodology offers strengths such as answering a broader and more complex range of research questions because research is not confined to a single method or approach and providing stronger evidence for a conclusion through convergence and validation of findings, this type of research methodology is not without its weaknesses (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).



Although the teacher and student questionnaires provided valuable and significant information, generally speaking, there is a limit to what questionnaires can tell us. The quantitative questionnaires' items were phrased in the researchers' terms and required that participants respond to existing items rather than allowing them to address issues that were meaningful to them. The qualitative prompts and answers of the questionnaires were admittedly short and perhaps superficial (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner, 2007). Moreover, some participants obviously put more thought into their answers than did others. Furthermore, with the questionnaire, there was no chance to follow up on teachers' and students' responses or to clarify meanings.

Although interviews, focus groups, and observations could provide a richer and more detailed picture of participants' attitudes, a single researcher may face difficulties while carrying out both qualitative and quantitative research, especially if two or more approaches are expected to be used concurrently and the relatively long time which such research type may require (Creswell, 2005). In addition, although the quantitative sample (i.e. (151) teachers and (774) students) of this study provided a varied population mix, no generalization can be drawn because it was not a true random sample. Despite these drawbacks, however, it can be argued that the findings of this study provided useful information that may contribute to our understanding of teachers' and students' perceptions of and attitudes toward classroom error correction.

As some aspects of the classroom processes do not yield themselves easily to observation, they cannot be measured in a reliable way (Clark & Peterson, 1986). In the current study, these aspects included teachers' and learners' attitudes, and the impact of

oral error treatment strategies on students' attitude development. Additionally, considering the small size of the qualitative sample (i.e. (12) teachers and (12) students), only limited generalization may be warranted. However, documentation of student focus groups, and teacher interviews, and the two questionnaires' open-ended questions yielded rich, thoughtful, and plentiful qualitative data that may well offer patterns that could provide support for generalization. Further, because the study was designed to investigate strategies of error treatment used by EFL teachers working within a specific social and geographical context (i.e. the City of Gaza, Palestine), no universal conclusions can be drawn from it, despite the fact that it addressed the universal problem of determining the most effective methods of correcting EFL learners' oral errors and enhancing their learning of English. The study results may indeed offer strategies that would impact such learning in a positive way.

Finally, like most teacher educators/researchers, the researcher claims no neutrality because he had a stake in what happened in the research project. This outsider-insider status of the researcher could be both the biggest asset and greatest liability of practitioner research (Fecho, 2000).

### **DEFINITIONS OF TERMS**

This section offers definitions of some key terms used in the study. Terms that are generally disputed will be defined more comprehensively than undisputed and, thus, relatively straightforward ones. Terms to be defined in detail include error, mistake, error correction, error treatment, and attitude. All other terms will be concisely defined in Table 1.1 below.

## **Error vs. Mistake**

In general terms, 'error' is equated with 'mistake'. However, the distinction between the two terms seems to be more complicated. Corder (1967) points out that errors produced by learners can be distinguished either as competence errors or performance errors, which he calls 'errors' and 'mistakes' respectively. Therefore, according to Corder's distinction, 'errors' are deviated learner language due to the lack of knowledge of the proper rule, whereas 'mistakes' are deviated learner language due to learners' failure to apply linguistic competence. As it is difficult to decide whether students' deviated language is a result of lack of competence or failure to apply knowledge of rules, for the sake of this research 'error' and 'mistake' will be used interchangeably.

Moreover, a more operational definition inherent to language learning and teaching will be used when reference is made to errors and mistakes. Therefore, in this research either term will be used to refer to observable surface features of learner language that deviate from Standard English and/or that are deemed inappropriate by a language teacher (Chaudron, 1986).

## **Error treatment vs. Error correction**

A few researchers in the field of language acquisition and learning distinguish clearly between the terms 'treatment' and 'correction' (e.g. Allwright & Bailey, 1991, Ellis, 1994), while the majority of them do not (e.g. Bartram & Walton, 1991; Edge, 1989). Those who do consciously avoid the use of the term 'correction' in their study do so because the word 'correction' implies a permanent 'cure,' which is different from

'treatment,' which is impermanent. Allwright and Bailey (1991) argue that even if a teacher corrects an error and manages to elicit a right answer from the students, it does not mean that the error has been cured permanently and, therefore, they consider the use of the term 'correction' inappropriate. Dovetailing the majority of researchers, this research will use the terms 'correction' and 'treatment' interchangeably.

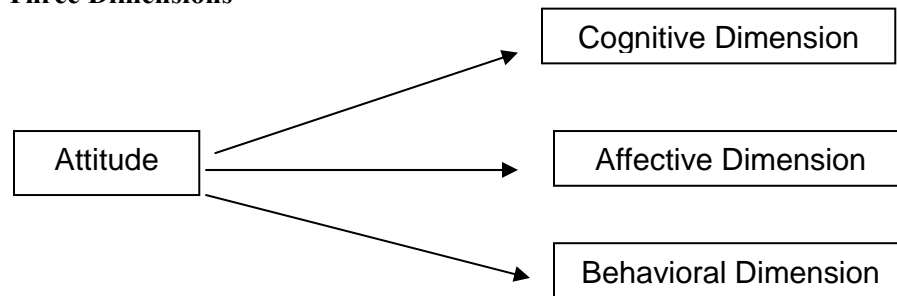
### **Definition of the Term 'Attitude'**

Although the term 'attitude' has never been precisely defined and has varied in meaning from one researcher to another, it is generally agreed that attitudes are composed of elements from the affective, cognitive, and behavioral domains (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). The affective component or dimension of an attitude has been referred to as a feeling or an emotional response of liking or disliking, a gut reaction, or sympathetic nervous activity; the cognitive component includes knowledge and beliefs of the attitude object that describe its characteristics, and its relationship to other objects; and the behavioral component includes overt actions or intentions of action, and verbal statements regarding future behavior (Breckler 1984, Katz 1960, Morris & Stuckhardt 1977). According to Morris and Stuckhardt (1977), attitudes have six characteristics: they are learned; they have a specific social referent; they are interrelated; they are relatively stable and enduring; they vary in quality and intensity; and they give rise to motivational behavior.

Definitions put forward for the term 'attitude' attempt to incorporate some of the agreed components and characteristics mentioned above. Stressing the affective and behavioral components, Triandis (1971) defines an attitude as an idea charged with

emotion which predisposes a class of actions to a particular class of social situations. To Eagly and Chaiken (1993), who particularly underscore the affective and cognitive components, an attitude is a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favor or disfavor. A more comprehensive definition which incorporates the three components, and therefore will be adopted in this study, is offered by Fishbein and Ajzen, (1975), who define ‘attitude’ as a learned predisposition to respond in a consistently favorable or unfavorable manner with respect to a given object, person, institution, or event. The different dimensions of an attitude are illustrated in the Figure 1.2 below.

**Figure (1.2)**  
**Attitude Three Dimensions**



In the light of Fishbein and Ajzen’s definition of the term ‘attitude’ above, a positive attitude toward oral errors and their correction can be defined as a learned predisposition to respond in a consistently favorable manner with respect to oral errors by considering them as a natural occurrence in the foreign language classroom, as facilitators and enhancers of language teaching and learning, as an indicator that learning is taking place, as an integral part of foreign language learning road and not wrong turns on that road, etc. In a similar vein, error correction is perceived as valid, beneficial,

restorative, etc. Conversely, a negative attitude toward oral errors and their correction can be defined as a learned predisposition to respond in a consistently unfavorable manner with respect to oral errors by considering them as an indicator of students' failure to learn the foreign language, as impediments on the road of language teaching and learning, etc. Similarly, error correction is perceived as invalid, harmful, destructive, etc.

Illustrated in Table 1.1 below are concise definitions of some other key terms used in the current study.

**Table (1.1)**  
**Definitions of Study Key Terms**

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Communicative Competence	The ability to interact well with others with accuracy, clarity, comprehensibility, coherence, expertise, effectiveness and appropriateness (Spitzberg, 1988).
Corrective feedback	Any indication to the learners that their use of the target language is incorrect. This includes various responses that the learners receive. When a language learner says, "He go to school everyday," corrective feedback can be explicit, for example, "No, you should say goes, not go," or implicit "Yes, he goes to school every day," and may or may not include metalinguistic information (e.g. "Don't forget to make the verb agree with the subject.") (Lightbown & Spada, 1999).
Elicitation	Feedback attempting to elicit a correct utterance from a learner, such as a leader where the learner would merely fill in the blank with the correct phrase, or a specific question to elicit a particular response (Lyster & Ranta, 1997).

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Explicit feedback	Teacher's metalinguistic explanation of grammar or vocabulary, the teacher's use of grammatical terminology, or cases where the teacher directly elicits completion of the utterance by strategically pausing to allow the student to fill in the blank (Carroll, et al., 1992).
Implicit Feedback	Indirect feedback, including recasts and repetitions, requiring the learner to make inferences on their utterance (Carrol, et al., 1992).
Language achievement	A learner's proficiency resulting from what has been taught or learned after a period of instruction (Richards, Platt, & Platt, 1992).
Language proficiency	The degree of skill with which a person can use a language, such as how well a person can read, write, speak, or understand language (Richards et al., 1992).
Negotiation of meaning	Exchanges between learners and their interlocutors as they attempt to resolve communication breakdowns and to work toward mutual comprehension (Pica, Holliday, Lewis, & Morgenthaler, 1989).
Oral Error/Mistake	The spoken rather than written utterance which deviates from Standard English and/or that is deemed inappropriate by a language teacher (Allwright & Bailey, 1991; Chaudron, 1986).
Positive Feedback	Teachers' responses to students' questions and performance in a constructive way that facilitates the student's learning (Allwright & Bailey, 1991).
Recast	The restating of a learner's utterance, but without the error, thus demonstrating the correct form (Lyster & Ranta, 1997).

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Repetition	Feedback whereby the teacher emphatically follows up the feedback, including responses with repair of the non-target items as well as utterances still in need of repair (Lyster & Ranta, 1997).
Strategies	Elaborate and systematic plans of action capable of producing an intended result or having a striking effect (Oxford, 1990).

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### **SUMMARY**

Students learning a foreign language will never cease making errors throughout the language learning process. Brown (2000) admits the inevitability of such errors and goes to the extent of considering absence of errors as an impediment because learners will not then benefit from the correction of those errors. Furthermore, research asserts that most EFL teachers enjoy correcting student errors and consider it an integral part of their role as teachers. A strong majority of students have positive attitudes toward oral error correction and consider it necessary for learning the foreign language. Knowing that language learning attitudes are dynamic and changing constructs closely associated with the learning environment, and that students' attitudes toward learning English are affected by their attitudes toward their teachers of English and by their teachers' attitudes toward them, we should recognize that students' positive attitudes may change if they perceive the learning environment as hostile and error correction as harsh. Therefore, the sustainability of students' positive attitudes toward errors and their correction and the replacement of negative attitudes by positive ones requires some sort of affective support provided by student-friendly error correction strategies.



# CHAPTER TWO

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### INTRODUCTION

In order to situate the study in a larger context and relate it to what already exists in the field of oral errors and teachers' and learners' attitudes toward such errors and their treatment, pertinent literature will be reviewed and synthesized with the intention of providing a theoretical foundation to the current study. This review will initially concentrate on issues of error treatment in foreign language learning. In this vein, current theoretical assumptions as well as findings from empirical research on oral errors and the strategies of their treatment will be reviewed in an attempt to provide answers to five questions originally put forward by Hendrickson (1980). These questions ask whether errors should be corrected or not, what errors should be corrected, when and how errors should be corrected, and finally who should correct them.

Then, the review will examine issues related to attitudes, their dimensions and measurement. This will be followed by a discussion of EFL teachers' and learners' attitudes toward oral errors. Reviewed literature will entail both empirical and conceptual studies which highlight how such attitudes are formed, what impact they have on foreign language teaching and learning, and how negative attitudes held by EFL teachers and learners can be replaced by more positive ones.

## ORAL ERROR TREATMENT

The topic of error treatment in the foreign language (FL) classroom tends to spark controversy among language teachers and researchers. At this respect, Major (1988) points out that the trends in language teaching tend to go from one extreme to another: teaching grammar rules or not; correcting learner errors or not; emphasizing only forms or only functions. Attitudes toward error treatment have also been swinging back and forth between extreme positions: effective or ineffective; valid or invalid; beneficial or harmful. Lee (1997) documents such controversial trends, pointing out that direct error treatment was indispensable from the 1950s to the 1960s, but while it was condemned due to its harmful effects in the late 1960s, the need for and value of error treatment was more critically perceived in the 1970s and 1980s. Put differently, throughout time, language teachers and researchers have tended to locate error correction on a continuum ranging from ineffective and possibly harmful (Truscott, 1999) to beneficial (Russell & Spada, 2006), and possibly even essential for learning grammatical structures (White, 1991). Controversy over error treatment remains unsolved today and is further enkindled by controversial students' opinions about error correction since students are on the receiving end and often have their own views of *if* and *how* correction should happen in the classroom.

Given these widely varying views, one may wonder what a language teacher should do amidst such controversies engulfing error correction. Most of these controversies, if not dilemmas, are embedded in Hendrickson's (1978) five fundamental questions concerning error treatment: 1) Should learner errors be corrected? 2) If so,

when? 3) Which learner errors should be corrected? 4) How should they be corrected? and 5) Who should correct them? In response to each of these questions, a number of conclusions have been drawn. Those conclusions will shed more light on the nature of those controversies and how they can be dealt with.

### **Should Learner Errors Be Corrected?**

Despite Hendrickson's (1978) affirmative answer to this question and the existence of compelling reasons for carrying out correction (e.g. Many learners expect their errors to be corrected and can feel disappointed or aggrieved if they are ignored; the provision of error correction can significantly accelerate the process of language learning by providing information about rules and the limits of language use, which would otherwise take students a long time to infer on their own), for decades now, this question has been fiercely debated, initiating a great deal of theoretical and empirical research (Panova & Lyster, 2002; Salem, 2004; Truscott, 1999). As a result of such debate, different approaches and methods to language teaching have viewed errors and their treatment differently. Following is a review of these approaches and methods.

#### **Audiolingualism.**

The audio-lingual method, a mechanistic approach to language learning, was developed in the United States during World War II and became highly influential throughout the 1950s and 1960s (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). Proponents of audiolingualism assumed that learning a language was a habit formation process, which explained their widespread use of mimicry and memorization, and the great effort they exerted to prevent the occurrence of errors (Brown, 2000). Consequently, language teachers were guided to

correct every single error immediately after it occurred in order to avoid fossilization and bad habit formation, which several theoreticians (e.g., Guntermann, 1993; Hirsch, 1989) have argued to be unavoidable if no sufficient error treatment is given during early stages of learning (Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Richards & Rodgers, 1986). Mings (1993) points out that errors, in the audio-lingual tradition, were to be avoided as if they were sinful. Students were neither required nor permitted to discover and correct their own errors. Error avoidance was generally achieved through repetitive drills and manipulation of language with little regard to meaning or context (Larsen-Freeman, 2000).

As one of the aims of audiolingualism was not just learning but rather over-learning (i.e. being able to repeat language chunks without even stopping for thinking), learners were expected to memorize correct forms of the language and encouraged to produce error-free utterances. As a result, they were able to neither create the utterances nor negotiate meanings by themselves (Major, 1988).

Such negative attitudes toward errors, however, have dramatically changed since the late 1960's, as the trend away from the audio-lingual method to foreign language teaching has contributed to a reexamination of student learning styles and to a renewed interest in the use of language as a means of communication (Celce-Murcia, 2001; Richards & Rodgers, 1986). This trend has resulted in the evolvement of new and numerous approaches to foreign language teaching.

### **The Cognitive Approach.**

The cognitive approach, contrary to the audio-lingual approach that assumed language as a habit formation process, viewed language learning as involving active mental processes, rather than mere habit formation, and gave importance to the learner's active participation (Richards & Lockhart, 1994). All language skills were considered indispensable and accorded great importance. While vocabulary development and grammar teaching (whether deductively or inductively) were emphasized, pronunciation was de-emphasized, with the understanding that a native-like pronunciation was an unrealistic expectation and was impossible to achieve in FL learning (Skehan, 1998). In the cognitive approach, errors were viewed as part of the learning process that could be used constructively as an indication of students' learning needs.

### **The Communicative Approach.**

The communicative approach to language teaching, developed in the United Kingdom through the work of anthropological linguists who viewed language chiefly as a system for communication (Celce-Murcia, 1996; Mings, 1993), has become the fashion in most countries worldwide since the early 1970s. The communicative approach emphasizes the importance of helping students understand others and make themselves understood. It presumes that a fun, relaxed, energized classroom motivates learners to take risks to speak the language (Pica, 1988; Richards & Rodgers, 1986).

Unlike obsessive error correction of audiolingualism, in the communicative approach errors are expected, accepted, and indeed celebrated rather than condemned (Jensen, 1997; Littlewood, 2008) with little error treatment provided, because using the

target language communicatively and fluently in various communicative situations is considered to take priority over using flawless language (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). Therefore, language teachers adhering to this approach are required to help students enhance their communicative competence not only in knowing grammar rules, but also in knowing sociolinguistic rules (Littlewood, 1980; Littlewood, 2008; Major, 1988).

### **The Noticing Approach.**

Educators and researchers subscribing to the noticing hypothesis (Ellis, 1991; Gass & Varonis, 1994; Schmidt, 1990, 1995, 2001) recognize the value of error correction and assign it a facilitative role in drawing student attention to form. Schmidt (1990, 1995, 2001) argues that noticing is requisite for learning, and, therefore, learners must consciously pay attention to or notice input in order to acquire a foreign language. From this perspective, error correction serves as a spur for noticing because correction triggers learners to recognize the gap between their interlanguage - the type of language they produce as foreign language learners - and the target norm (Selinker, 1972). Basing his study on Schmidt's noticing hypothesis, Leow (1999) concludes that when students are asked to be aware of and analyze language structure it leads to hypothesis testing and rule formation. Leow also found that increased awareness contributes to more recognition and accurate production of forms and that awareness facilitates foreign language learning.

### **The Affective-Humanistic Approach.**

The affective-humanistic approach, based on the premise that methods associated with audiolingualism had dehumanized language learning, emphasizes the importance of learners' feelings and emotions as part of the learning process by bringing affective

considerations to language learning (Reid, 1999). Thus, learning a foreign language was seen as an act of self-realization (Larsen-Freeman, 2000) as the student, the teacher, and their feelings were owed respect (Arnold, 1998).

According to Celce-Murcia (1991), teachers adhering to the affective-humanistic approach pay special attention to the following factors in an effort to reduce the learners' affective filter (i.e. an impediment to learning caused by negative emotional responses to one's environment (Krashen, 1982). First, the learning environment must be pleasant where the class atmosphere is viewed to be more important than course material or teaching methods. Second, communication that is meaningful to the learner is emphasized. Third, peer support and interaction are essential for learning; as a consequence, instruction includes much pair work and small group activities with the intention of creating meaningful communication. Finally, the teacher's role has shifted from that of deliverer of instruction and knowledge to that of facilitator and counselor. In their attempts to avoid putting students into anxious situations and reduce learners' affective filter, teachers evade explicit error correction and largely foster self-correction.

#### **Nativist or Mentalist Approach.**

Adherents to the nativist or mentalist theories, based on Chomsky's (1986) 'Theory of Universal Grammar', believe that humans depend on a language acquisition device, a kind of rule learning mechanism in their minds, which allows them to learn a language on the basis of the positive input that is available to them. Those adherents also claim that the formation and restructuring of second language grammars is solely attributable to this innate human linguistic mechanism, working in tandem with positive

evidence (i.e. information about when a particular form applies) (Cook, 1991; Schwartz, 1993). Accordingly, in this view, error correction has little impact on language learning, merely affecting performance, but not leading to change in underlying competence (Schwartz, 1993). Krashen (1982) even believes that error correction is both useless for learning and dangerous in that it may lead to a negative affective response.

### **Comprehension-based/Natural Approach.**

Proponents of the comprehension-based/natural approach believe that foreign language learning happens in the same way as acquiring the native language. Listening comprehension is considered the most important and basic skill that will allow the other three language skills (i.e. speaking, reading, and writing) to grow spontaneously, provided the conditions are right (Terrell & Krashen, 1983). The emphasis here is on natural exposure to language in the form of comprehensible input. It respects the initial pre-production period, expecting speech to emerge not from artificial practice but from motivated language use, progressing from early single-word responses to more and more coherent discourse. Terrell and Krashen also assert that production is delayed and learners are not asked to speak until they feel ready to do so. According to the comprehension-based/natural approach, learners can comprehend material that is more difficult than what they can produce, and can develop more proficiency by receiving meaningful input that is a step beyond their present level of competence (Richards, et al., 1992). This approach also focuses on meaningful communication rather than grammatical correctness. Error correction is avoided on the grounds that it may be unnecessary and counterproductive (Celce-Murcia, 1991).



Contentions that tend to diminish the role of error correction in language learning have been challenged by empirical research conducted in both laboratory and classroom settings. The results of those studies have demonstrated a facilitative effect of error correction for second and foreign language development (Bell, 1992; Carroll and Swain, 1993; Lyster, Lightbown, & Spada, 1999; Mackey, 2006; Nunan & Lamb, 1996; Tomasello & Herron, 1989). For instance, the results of Carroll and Swain's (1993) study assert that corrections are helpful for language learners to acquire abstract linguistic generalizations because correction can help them narrow the range of possible hypotheses that can account for the data. Moreover, Nunan and Lamb (1996) note that making errors and subsequent teacher corrections can provide the learners with valuable information in the target language. In their study, Tomasello and Herron (1989) found that learners who were first allowed to make mistakes and were then corrected improved their target language performance more than learners who were given language rules in advance.

### **Which Learner Errors Should Be Corrected?**

Having agreed with the principle of error correction, the next question to ask is "*Which oral errors should be corrected?*" Traditional treatment of errors consisted of the teacher's immediate correction of any utterance containing a deviant form. More recent literature argues that it is pointless to correct every error especially those which are the result of the learner's attempts to communicate beyond their existing resources (Butler & Winne, 1995). Literature also argues that errors are inevitable and an integral part of the process of foreign language learning as it reflects the active way in which learners test out hypotheses about the nature of the language they are learning (Izumi, 2002; Krashen,

1985; Swain, 1995, 2000). As such, those errors should not just be tolerated, but should be welcomed in order to encourage learners to take risks (Bartram & Walton, 1991; Scrivener, 1994).

Much literature in favor of error treatment has agreed with the effectiveness of selective error correction. For example, Hammerly (1991), Stern (1992), and Truscott (2001) assert that systematic and selective error correction is one of the most effective teacher strategies. These and many other proponents for selective error correction imply that teachers have to decide which errors should be prioritized for correction (Truscott, 2000; Walz, 1982). Burt (1975) and Truscott (2001) point out that certain types of errors are more important than others and consequently have higher priorities for correction. Therefore, it would be necessary for teachers to know the hierarchies of errors to be prioritized. Although there are many different types of criteria available for such prioritization, the majority of language educators and researchers commonly prioritize the following errors: (1) Errors relevant to the pedagogical focus, (2) Errors occurring frequently, (3) Error gravity (those errors that impair communication or impact the overall comprehensibility of an utterance), and (4) Errors related to the learners' next stage of development (Allwright, 1975; Cohen, 1975; Hendrickson, 1980; Walz, 1982). Following is more elaboration on these criteria of error prioritization.

### **Pedagogical Focus.**

It has been suggested that the seriousness of learner errors and the kind of correction strategy used to deal with those errors depend on the objectives or pedagogical focus of a lesson (Nunan & Lamb, 1996; Wen, 1999). Cohen (1975) asserts that errors

related to a specific pedagogic focus deserve greater attention than other errors. Likewise, Walz (1982) maintains that the features of the target language that have been recently taught in a class should be one of the criteria to decide which errors to correct. This is due to the fact that learners might be confused if the teacher does not correct errors directly related to what they have just studied in a class.

In a similar vein, Hammerly (1991) points out that such errors are basically different from errors related to what they have not yet been taught and consequently each type of error requires different responses. Hammerly terms these two types of learner errors as “*distortion*” and “*fault*” respectively. Faults occur whenever learners attempt target language structures that are beyond what they have learned and, as a result, fail to perform. There is not much point, according to Hammerly, in correcting faults, as there is no reason why students should be able to use correctly structures they have not yet studied. In addition, correcting faults may result in wasting precious classroom time and/or leaving students unnecessarily confused. Since a teacher is unable to correct faults effectively, the focus of correction must be on distortions, errors directly related to what learners have recently studied.

In short, the teacher who chooses the pedagogical focus as a criterion for error correction has to modify the choice of the hierarchy in which to correct errors depending not only on the pedagogical objectives of a particular lesson, but also on what individual learners have so far learned in the target language.

### **Error Frequency.**

Another criterion, high-frequency errors, has also been identified as a focus for oral error correction (Allwright, 1975, Mings, 1993). Frequent errors are those frequently committed by individual students and by many students in a class, and are normally produced on common features of language. Thus, learning the right forms of more frequent and more basic errors has more value for students than learning the right forms of less frequent or minor errors (Guntermann, 1978; James, 1998). Hendrickson (1980) stresses the significance of finding out the frequently committed errors at various stages of foreign language learning because frequent errors could provide the information necessary for building hierarchies of language teaching and learning.

### **Error Gravity.**

Error gravity is the extent to which the erroneous piece of language deviates from the native speaker's forms (James, 1998). Many researchers agree with the idea that the errors which hinder communication are considered to be the most important to correct (Brown, 2000; Cohen, 1975; Edge, 1989; Larsen-Freeman, 2000). Hammerly (1991) suggests that if teachers are faced with numerous errors, they should only correct those that significantly affect intelligibility and ignore those that do not. In their study conducted in (1972), Burt and Kiparsky provide a distinction between "*global*" and "*local*" errors based on their communicative importance. In their study, *global* errors are defined as errors that seriously obstruct communication and cause misunderstanding of a message. On the other hand, *local* errors are defined as errors that are isolated sentence elements, such as noun and verb agreement that make a structure in a sentence awkward,

yet, do not hinder the comprehension of the message. According to Dulay, Burt, & Krashen (1982), in order to communicate with others successfully, learners must learn *global* aspects of language. Therefore, *global* errors must receive high priority for correction. In summary, the graver an error, the more deserving of correction it is (James, 1977).

### **Errors Related to the Learner's Next Stage of Development.**

The assumption underlying the correction of errors related to learners' next stage of development is that learners would be able to respond to such corrections because they are developmentally ready to discover the target language rule. According to Pienemann (1984), if teachers point out and correct the errors that learners are not yet ready to learn, error correction has little value. Similarly, Clapitt (2001) asserts that no matter how many times a certain structure is corrected, learners will not be able to use it properly on a regular basis until they are ready to learn and internalize that structure. Therefore, teachers have to consider each individual learner's current stage of development in terms of the different language aspects he or she is about to learn.

This assumption resonates with the Vygotskian notion in which learning is seen to emerge as the result of interaction within the zone of proximal development (ZPD) (i.e. the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers (Vygotsky, 1978). This notion of guided support is known as scaffolding and refers to a situation where a knowledgeable participant can create supportive conditions in which the novice

can participate, and extend his or her current skills and knowledge to higher levels of competence (Donato, 1994). Applied to language learning, the concept of the ZPD brings together all of the relevant pieces of the language learning situation, including “the teacher, the learner, their social and cultural history, their goals and motives, as well as the resources available to them, including those that they dialogically construct together” (Aljaafreh & Lantolf, 1994: 468).

Deciding which criterion should be used to correct oral errors is dependent upon individual teacher’s beliefs and attitudes, and the objectives and context of the lesson. However, in any case, selective and systematic correction with those highlighted criteria allows language teachers to deal with errors more objectively (Allwright, 1975; Bang, 1999; Bell, 1992). Selective correction also allows learners to enhance their motivation and self-confidence (Bang, 1999; Burt, 1975). Most importantly, using the correction criteria highlighted above appears to be a more efficient and enjoyable instructional strategy than responding to all errors and continually interrupting students midstream.

### **When Should Learner Errors Be Corrected?**

The timing of error correction will be dictated by a number of factors: is it a new error or one that has been encountered before? Should it be dealt with immediately or should it be postponed (Allwright & Bailey, 1991; Long, 1977)? However, there are advantages and disadvantages to any timing. Immediate treatment interrupts learners’ flow and may not be positively effective (Vigil & Oller, 1976). Error treatment postponed to a future lesson will be less effective, as time elapses between the error and the

treatment (Chaudron, 1977, 1988; Long, 1977). Yet, postponing may be necessary, particularly if the error is common to the whole class (Holley & King, 1971).

Despite such lack of general consensus concerning when errors should be corrected, foreign language educators and researchers advise that correcting every student error is counterproductive to learning a foreign language. Students often feel threatened or embarrassed as a result of over-correction. Research by Carroll et al. (1992) indicates that students would rather not be marked down for each oral error because it destroys their confidence and because they prefer to communicate successfully rather than perfectly.

Language learners take many risks in unstructured communicative practice. Therefore, teachers need to consider whether their corrective techniques infuse a feeling of success in language usage and learning on behalf of their students (Panova & Lyster, 2002). Along these lines, Bartram and Walton, (1991) and Parrott (1993) encourage teachers to reserve frequent error correction for structured grammar practice and to tolerate more errors during guided or free oral communicative exercises.

Several studies reveal that classroom teachers will likely correct learners' errors either when they relate to the pedagogical focus of the lesson or when they significantly inhibit communication (Brown, 2000; James, 1998). Thus, when correcting students' errors, it is necessary for teachers to consider, first of all, the nature and purpose of the activity being undertaken. If, for example, students are being drilled in order to practice pronunciation of a word or phrase in an accuracy-based activity, then they should be stopped immediately when they make a mistake (Larsen-Freeman, 2000); otherwise they

will continue repeating defective language, which is pointless (Macintyre, MacMaster, & Baker, 2001). With regard to fluency-based activities, the usual advice is to delay correction until the end of the activity so as to avoid interrupting the student's flow of speech.

### **How Should Learner Errors Be Corrected?**

Aside from the questions of whether to correct errors or not, when and which errors to correct, there is another important question to ask: “*How should learner errors be corrected?*” Although providing correct forms of learner errors is one of the most popular techniques among many language teachers (Hendrickson, 1980), the use of various types of treatment strategies is recommended and considered to be more effective and successful than relying upon a single strategy (Muncie, 2000). Holley and King (1971) suggest that teachers should not use the methods which make learners feel embarrassed or frustrated, and thus teachers should be more sensitive about how to respond to and correct learner errors.

In the sections that follow, literature pertaining various types of oral error treatment strategies suggested by theorists and practitioners in the field of foreign language teaching and learning will be reviewed. The starting point will be reviewing the effectiveness of both explicit and implicit types of correction strategies. This will be followed by reviewing literature focusing on the degree of explicitness of treatment strategies and how this degree should change in accordance with learners' variety in terms of the level of target language proficiency and the purpose of target language



learning. Finally, the review will focus on the relationship between the degree of explicitness and the types of learner errors.

### **Explicit vs. Implicit Correction.**

Teachers' treatment of errors can be broadly distinguished as either explicit or implicit (Ayoun, 2001). Explicit correction entails detailed direct correction during which teachers provide learners with exact forms or structures of their erroneous utterances. On the other hand, implicit correction is indirect and entails teachers indicating the presence of errors or providing clues with the intention of peer-correction or self-correction (Ferris & Hedgcock, 1998). As opinions about explicit and implicit error correction vary, some studies advocate the effectiveness of explicit types of correction, while others advocate the effectiveness of implicit ones (Sheen, 2004).

Carroll and Swain (1993) provide empirical evidence about the advantages of explicit over implicit corrective feedback. They explored the relative effects of different types of error correction. The results showed that treatment groups, which were provided with error correction, generally outperformed the comparison group both on an immediate posttest and on a delayed posttest administered a week later. Among the treatment groups, the group which received the most explicit corrective feedback outperformed other treatment groups. Carroll and Swain reasoned that explicit feedback might have been of more benefit because it identified the precise location and nature of erroneous performance, while implicit error correction required learners to engage in a good deal of mental guesswork. Therefore, explicit correction for those errors could

provide learners with opportunities to acquire the correct usage without any frustration or confusion.

Myers (1997) also suggests that teachers should explicitly correct incorrectly uttered words or phrases. Further, Saito's (1994) studies revealed that implicit types of correction, which require self-correction, are less effective than explicit types in terms of the learners' achievement as well as attitudes. In a similar vein, Nassaji and Swain's (2000) study concluded that there was a tendency for more direct and explicit prompts to be more useful than less direct and implicit ones. Their finding is consistent with those of Carroll, et al. (1992) study, which revealed the effectiveness of explicit correction because there are certain situations when implicit feedback fails to indicate the source of the error and requires much inference on the part of learners. In such cases, it seems that teachers should provide the correct forms or structures as a model, so that learners can clearly perceive their problems.

Moreover, proponents of explicit error correction claim that implicit corrective strategies are less effective than explicit ones in attracting learners' attention. Seedhouse (1997), for example, reported that teachers were unwilling to tell learners directly when they made an error, and this eventually confused the learners as to when they were being corrected. He recommended the provision of more direct and overt correction in order to benefit the learner. Earlier studies (e.g., Chaudron, 1977; Fanselow, 1977) on corrective discourse in second language classrooms similarly pointed out potential ambiguities caused by the indirectness inherent in implicit error correction. According to Chaudron (1988), repetitions, one of the most common types of implicit error correction, produced

ambiguity since they could be understood as having either negative (correcting) or positive (agreeing, appreciating, understanding) implications.

Although these studies suggest that error correction must be explicit enough for learners to notice it as correction without any ambiguities, there is an argument against these viewpoints as proponents of implicit correction claim that explicit error correction may interrupt learners' form-meaning mapping (i.e. recognizing a letter/sound string as a legitimate word in the target language and knowing the meaning of this letter/sound string) (Jiang, 2002). Doughty (2001), for example, reports that cognitive intrusion would be welcomed if the intruding element were cleverly introduced by the teacher to attract any available learners' roving attention, while the interruption that diverts learners' focal attention to form may prevent the learners from effective form-function mapping. In short, it has been suggested that interruption should be unobtrusive, attracting roving attention to form while leaving focal attention for processing meaning. Furthermore, Long (1991) cautions that learners' overt attention to forms driven by explicit error correction may hinder the flow of communication in content- and meaning-based language classrooms.

Similarly, Lightbown (2000) points out that evidence supports the idea that explicit error correction is usually ineffective in changing language behavior. Woods (1989) also asserts that explicit correction of learner errors not only hinders the improvement of communicative competence but also produces negative consequences in learners. In a similar vein, Hammerly (1991) notes that learning can only take place when students experience the cognitive modifications that will enable them to use each

structure correctly. In other words, learners have to be encouraged to discover the right forms or structures by themselves, sometimes using teachers' hints, in order to remember the accurate language; therefore, teachers' implicit clues are considered to be more useful than explicit correction for the learners. Likewise, Lyster (1998) maintains that self-correction provides the learners with opportunities to acquire the process of target language learning.

To conclude, there is an evident controversy among educators and researchers in terms of the effectiveness of both explicit and implicit correction. However, both types of treatment offer certain advantages and disadvantages; thus, it would be better for teachers to acquaint themselves with and use various techniques depending on individual learners and the context of lessons. In line with this, some researchers, such as Hendrickson (1984) and Carroll and Swain (1993) suggest that error correction strategies should be used in hybrid fashion and several strategies that vary in their explicitness have to be introduced to cater to the following various factors.

***Factors for Deciding Degrees of Explicitness in Oral Error Correction.***

Both kinds of error correction, explicit and implicit, are relevant for foreign language development. However, the degree of explicitness required may hinge upon other factors such as learners' levels of proficiency (e.g., Philp, 2003; VanPatten, 1990), readiness for certain linguistic features (e.g., Han, 2002b, Mackey & Philp, 1998; Philp, 2003), the targeted linguistic features (e.g., Doughty & Williams, 1998; Gass, Svetics, & Lemelin, 2003; Schmidt, 1995; VanPatten, 1994), and the contexts where correction is provided (e.g., Ellis, Basturkmen, & Loewen, 2001; Nicolas, Spada, & Lightbown, 2001;

Oliver & Mackey, 2003). In other words, in some cases implicit correction is sufficient to promote learning while in others it is not, and as such in some cases explicit correction can be the only type that will elicit a reactive response from the learner. At this respect, Hendrickson's (1984) study outlined three learner factors that have to be considered in order to decide the degree of explicitness in error correction: (1) learners' level of proficiency in the target language; (2) learners' purposes of target language learning; and (3) types of errors. Following is a more detailed elaboration on these three factors.

*Level of Learners' Target Language Proficiency.*

How much learners are able to express themselves orally in the target language is one of the most important factors in determining what types of error treatment strategies should be used. According to Hendrickson (1984), when learners' level of proficiency increases, they become more capable of correcting their own errors. Since beginners and intermediate learners have acquired less knowledge about the target language systems than advanced learners have, their limited linguistic competence is often insufficient to allow them to find the locations of their errors and correct them (Mantello, 1997). Consequently, more detailed information of errors is necessary for those learners. On the other hand, simple indication of the location or presence of errors can be enough for more advanced learners as they are able to deal with their own errors more efficiently (Hendrickson, 1984). In short, for the lower proficient learners, more explicit correction should be given and *vice versa*.

### *Purpose of Target Language Learning.*

In addition to the level of proficiency, for what purpose learners want to develop their target language performance is also an important factor in deciding the type of error treatment strategies to use. Eskey (1983) comments on that by stating that learners who pursue higher education or those who are preparing for standardized tests are required to acquire more accurate language and therefore more of their errors should be corrected. Language learners who learn a foreign language to be able to communicate effectively in everyday life situations are more interested in fluency, and consequently fewer of their errors should be corrected (Littlewood, 2008).

### *Types of Errors.*

Finally, literature also suggests how the degree of explicitness should vary according to the types of errors being committed. Some researchers, such as Robb, Ross, & Shorteed (1986), assert that for local errors implicit correction strategies work sufficiently. They also maintain that the practice of highly detailed correction on local errors may not be worth teachers spending their time and energy on them, and that less time-consuming correction methods to direct learners' attention to their local errors can be more efficient. In contrast, global errors may need more explicit and detailed correction.

### *Degrees of Explicitness of Oral Error Treatment Strategies.*

Literature reveals a wide variety of strategies that teachers currently use to correct oral errors. Lyster and Ranta (1997) and Lightbown and Spada (1999), for instance, make a distinction between four types of error correction strategies that exhibit different levels

of explicitness – clarification requests, recasts/reformulations, elicitation, and metalinguistic feedback - and argue that some are better than others. Following is more elaboration on these various strategies.

#### *Clarification requests.*

In the language classroom, a clarification request (i.e. the teacher indicates to a student that his or her preceding utterance was not clearly understood and a repetition or reformulation is required), fulfills two functions: it signals to the learner that his or her utterance has been misapprehended or is in some way inappropriate, and it simultaneously lodges a plea for the learner to return to the utterance and effect a repair (Saxton, 2000). A clarification request includes phrases such as ‘Pardon/Excuse me...’. It may also include a repetition of the error as ‘What do you mean by...?’ An example of clarification request may go as follows: ‘Teacher: What did you do yesterday? Student: I went movies. Teacher: Excuse me. Student: I went movies. Teacher: You went where?’ An underpinning assumption of clarification requests is that they and the repairs they inspire are produced in a spirit of maintaining the flow of conversation when communication is ruptured in any way (Most, 2002).

#### *Recasts/Reformulations*

A recast/reformulation, an implicit error treatment strategy, can be defined as a reformulation of all or part of a learner’s utterance minus the grammatical error but without changing the meaning (Loewen, 2007; Lyster & Ranta, 1997). Teachers using recast repeat a student’s utterance, using correct forms where the student has made an error, but do not draw attention to the error and maintains a central focus on meaning.

When students produce incorrect grammar or pronunciation, the teacher can rephrase their responses so as to provide feedback on the content of what they say as well as a model of correct usage, without drawing specific attention to the error (e.g., Student: "Canada have many natural resource." Teacher: "Yes, Canada has many natural resources. Can you name some of them?") (Lightbown & Spada, 1999).

Truscott (1999) proposes that recasting students' faulty utterances might help students make inferences about the target language and aid them in fixing this information in their long-term memories. A recast can be an alternative way of expressing the student's idea, an expansion, a simplification for the benefit of other students, an indication that the student did not speak clearly enough, or an attempt to express the speaker's point to the others (Nabei & Swain, 2002). Recast is a complex verbal behavior influenced by the teaching environment, the interaction context, and the learner's cognitive orientation (Shim, 2007).

One condition for recasts to foster foreign language learning is, therefore, that they should be embedded in the process of 'negotiation of meaning' and, in this way, do not interrupt the flow of discourse (Long & Robinson, 1998). Negotiation of meaning can be defined as exchanges between learners and their interlocutors as they attempt to resolve communication breakdowns and to work toward mutual comprehension (Pica, et al., 1989).



### *Elicitation*

Elicitation is a form of feedback that attempts to draw a correct utterance from the student instead of providing the answer (Yao, 2000). Unlike recast, elicitation does not pertain to the teacher reformulating the erroneous utterance, but rather pushes the learner, implicitly or explicitly, to reformulate it into a correct form (Nassaji, 2007). Thus, elicitation provides opportunities for self-repair (Lyster, 1998; Lyster & Mori, 2006). An example of elicitation could be: ‘Student: "I goed to school yesterday." Teacher: "You did what? You...?"’

### *Metalinguistic Feedback*

Metalinguistic feedback as a corrective strategy entails pointing out the nature of the error by commenting on, or providing information about the well-formedness of the student's utterance without explicitly providing the correct form (Yao, 2000; Lyster & Ranta, 1997). With metalinguistic feedback the teacher raises students’ awareness using metalinguistic comments and explicitly indicating that an error has occurred. The teacher might, for example, say: ‘That’s wrong’ ‘No, not that’ or just ‘No’. She might also ask a rhetorical question such as: ‘Is that the answer which is in your book?’ Grammar explanations or lexical paraphrases are also considered metalinguistic feedback (Russell & Spada, 2006). It is worthwhile mentioning at this juncture that teachers do not use overwhelming linguistic data as they may overload learners’ cognitive capacities, which in turn brings about confusion and ambiguity (Lochtman, 2002; Lyster, 1998).

## **Who Should Correct Errors?**

The last question posed by Hendrickson is “*Who should correct errors?* In the correction of oral errors, a hierarchy of people (i.e. the teacher, the student who makes the error, other students in class) is involved in providing external and internal correction (Walz, 1982). External error correction is provided by teachers and peers. Ellis (1991) maintains that teachers have a traditional right to supply learners with feedback regarding the correctness or appropriateness of their responses. Teachers’ correction also seems to be necessary for learners as it helps them notice the gap in their language performance. According to Carnell (2000), teachers’ feedback clarifies goals, gives a sense of direction, identifies mistakes, and provides advice.

However, teachers’ correction of students’ oral errors may necessitate that they assume contradictory roles. To facilitate successful language learning, teachers must establish positive affect among students. The positive affect derives from a variety of teacher behaviors, including humor, encouragement, personal interest, and a "natural" use of language (Magilow, 1999). Magilow also argues that teachers also engage in the inherently confrontational activity of error correction, which conveys, in many ways, precisely the opposite message: confrontation, potential discouragement, and a focus on forms instead of content, as well as hidden messages such as "I am more proficient in the foreign language than you" and "your language is still erroneous despite all efforts to help you improve it.". To add insult to injury, this power display - defined by Lantolf and Genung (2002) as the capacity (and privilege) to project and impose one’s perspective on others without taking account of their perspectives - typically occurs in front of an

audience of the student's peers, and thus each correction subtly reminds students of the asymmetrical power relationship in the classroom - an imbalance that exists in spite of the teacher's attempts to smooth it away through encouragement and humor (Magilow, 1999).

Peer correction does not involve a specific technique other than asking another student to respond. However, the teacher must be careful to maintain a spirit of cooperation among students and a positive attitude toward both error-making and error-correcting as components of language learning (Walz, 1982). Interviews in Carnell's (2000) study revealed that students liked to receive correction from their peers. They indicated that it was easier to talk with friends than with a teacher; with friends they felt more freedom and could say whatever they wanted. It is suggested that peer correction in language learning can be more powerful than teacher correction because its concern is with topics of interest and relevance to the learners (Kessler, Quinn, & Fathman, 1992). However, for peer feedback to be effective and even acceptable it has to be solicited in cooperative classrooms where students have the opportunity to interact with each other (Roskams, 1999).

Internal error correction is provided by the learner him-/herself. Self-regulated learners generate correction through a monitoring process which, according to Butler and Winne (1995), is a cognitive process that assesses states of progress relative to goals and generate feedback that can guide further action. However, Walz (1982) notes that even in self-correction the teacher plays a role by calling the student's attention to the fact that an error has been made. Finally, it appears that teachers need to extend wait-time between

hearing learners' response to error correction and topic-continuation moves in order to provide opportunities for learners to detect any input-output mismatches (James, 1998; Lyster, 1998). Doughty and Varela (1998) assert providing students with opportunities to repair their errors. This turns out to be of benefit for the students to detect the disparity between their output and the teacher's input embedded in their feedback. Surely, it should be the goal of instruction to improve learners' ability to monitor the development of their own target language (Chaudron, 1988).

Taking all the theoretical and empirical evidence highlighted above into account, on balance, error correction seems to be very important for not only the learners but also for many teachers. Bartram and Walton (1991) point out that several problems will arise if teachers do not correct errors: teachers will feel guilty; students, students' parents and school authorities will complain to teachers; teachers will be thought of as lazy, lacking responsibility or being incapable; and student's anxiety will increase. It also seems that whether error correction is carried out or not, it involves not only pedagogical but also administrative ramifications. If this is the case, it may be difficult for teachers to discard error correction. Moreover, error correction strategies can function as a teaching device that can play a fundamental role in the area of language teaching and learning (Mesgar, 2008). Selecting these strategies cautiously and knowingly can have great and positive effects on the improvement of the learners (Bowen, Madsen, & Hilferty, 1985; Broughton, Brumfit, Flavell, Hill, & Pincas, 1994).

## **PROBLEMS OF CORRECTING ORAL ERRORS**

Teachers wishing to provide effective and helpful error correction encounter a number of serious problems. Some are problems that get in the way of effective correction; others are undesirable side effects of correction. According to (Truscott, 1999), in order to provide effective correction for a student's error, the teacher must first determine exactly what the error is, which may turn to be difficult because of the inherent complexity of a foreign language, and such problem can be compounded when those teachers are not native speakers of the language, as it is the case in Palestine. Even teachers with expert knowledge may not understand the reason why the student committed it, the most important aspect of the error, and consequently, a correction that is based on a misunderstanding of the error's source could do more to confuse than to enlighten the student (Truscott, 1996).

Furthermore, the correction process may be further complicated by the context in which the teacher works, as teachers commonly work in circumstances that are far from ideal for careful analysis of errors (Truscott, 1999). According to Truscott, in the classroom context oral errors occur quickly, often amidst extraneous noise, and learners' pronunciation is often unclear because of their limited ability to express themselves in the target language, which sometimes creates uncertainty about the intended meaning, making it difficult for the teacher to determine exactly what error(s) occurred. Even when the teachers fully understand the error, they are still faced with the problem of clearly presenting the correction, along with any necessary explanation, and again, it must be

done in the context of ongoing activities, so other factors will also make their claim on the teacher's attention (Truscott, 2001).

In its pursuit to help language teachers overcome some of the outlined problems, research in foreign language learning recommends that different types of error treatment strategies need to be studied independently and together for information about their role in second and foreign learning so that the claims regarding their impact on learning have yet to be fully or decisively substantiated. In general, the questions currently being asked in the field concern how error treatment facilitates foreign language learning, which factors influence this process, and what teachers should consider when they correct oral errors. To answer these and other questions pertinent to oral error correction, Han (2002) proposes three core requirements: (1) learners' errors should be understood as a natural product of learning, (2) teachers should have knowledge of their students, i.e., learning backgrounds, level of proficiency, cognitive strategies, and their linguistic and psychological readiness to learn a particular linguistic feature at a certain point in time, and (3) teachers should not expect that error correction will result in instant improvement but should keep in mind that learning takes time.

As it has been evident so far, there has been much controversy regarding oral errors and their correction. However, despite all this controversy, the usefulness of error treatment has been established and the majority of researchers have unshaken belief of its indispensability in foreign language teaching and learning. Yet, literature does suggest that error correction has to be provided selectively, and although literature tends to recommend implicit types of correction strategies, there are certain cases where providing

the correct forms explicitly is more appropriate. Apart from learners' proficiency levels and learning purposes, the types of errors are one of the most important criteria that must be considered when teachers select correction methods.

In summary, despite the potential benefit of error correction, it will only be effective if students are amenable to the idea and are willing to take on board teachers' comments (Moss, 2000). Hence, in order to ensure that students are receptive to error treatment, it is necessary to find out their preferences for and attitudes toward correction and feedback, as well as how sensitive or resilient they are to such correction. Probably the most difficult aspect of error correction process is tailoring corrections to individual students because teachers who wish to use effective error correction strategies must consider their effect on each individual student (Hayet, 2006).

The following sections of the literature review will focus on teachers' and learners' attitudes toward oral errors and their correction. However, these sections will start with pointing out the relationship between attitudes and language teaching and learning. Then issues pertinent to attitude dimensions and measurement will be discussed.

### **ATTITUDES, LANGUAGE LEARNING, AND ERROR CORRECTION**

Attitudes toward an educational issue are extremely influential in either facilitating or hindering how it is perceived and learned because attitude is a disposition to respond favorably or unfavorably to an object, person, institution or event (Ajzen, 1988). There is a pervasive belief that teachers' attitudes have an important impact on how students feel about themselves as well as on the rate at which they acquire academic skills. In their comprehensive review of the affective dimension of teaching, Khan and

Weiss (1972) express this viewpoint by stating that teachers are an important influence on students' attitude despite the existence of very little direct evidence on the extent to which students' school-related affective behavior is influenced by those attitudes held by teachers. Khan and Weiss conclude their literature review by pointing out that the relationship between teachers' and students' attitudes has been regarded as self-evident with no need for empirical research. Research also shows that teachers' attitudes influence both their expectations for their students and their behavior toward them. These attitudes, expectations, and behaviors influence both student self-image and academic performance (Alexander & Strain, 1978).

Favorable feelings about and experiences with the teacher, classmates, materials, activities, tasks, procedures, and so on, can forge positive attitudes toward learning a foreign language. Conversely, unfavorable feelings and experiences of failure (e.g. correction of every oral error) can lead to negative attitudes as it might hurt students' feelings (McDonough, 1981). Many researchers (e.g. Green, 1993; Hermann, 1980; Krashen, 1982) have noticed that one set of factors related to great achievement in the language classroom is the attitudes of those who participate in this process: both students and teachers.

Although attitudes are not the only factors that impact the teaching and learning process, they direct learning and influence it most considerably (Hermann, 1980). This means that teachers' positive attitudes enhance students' learning, while their negative attitudes impede it. In this way, negative attitudes can prove to be very costly and detrimental for all stakeholders and replacing negative attitudes with more positive ones



becomes mandatory. The good news, at this respect, is that although difficult, attitude change is not impossible as they are not set in concrete (Healey, 2005).

How attitudes develop and change will be elaborated on below. However, this will be preceded by more elaboration of the three dimensions of attitudes held by teachers and learners, as more familiarity with attitudes and their dimensions facilitates their development and change.

### **Dimensions of Attitudes**

Attitudes have three interrelated dimensions: cognitive, affective, and behavioral. Following is a more detailed account of these three dimensions.

#### **Cognitive Dimension.**

Beliefs, an essential component of the cognitive dimension of attitudes, are mental constructs emanating from teachers' experience (Aiken, 1980). Researchers investigating the influence of teachers' beliefs on their behaviors have concluded that beliefs motivate instructional practices in the classroom (Pajares, 1992); beliefs tend to shape teachers' instructional practices (Johnson, 1992); beliefs guide teachers' thought and behavior (Borg, 2001); and beliefs establish the teachers' 'sense of plausibility' concerning the relevant teaching approach, and that, in turn, controls behavior in the classroom (Clemente, 2001). Similarly, Pajares (1992) undertook a thorough survey of teachers' beliefs in education and came to the conclusion that beliefs play a critical role in defining behavior and organizing knowledge and information.

Research also reveals that teachers start the teaching profession with preconceived thoughts and attitudes toward teaching, gained from their experiences as learners and

teachers, which shape their performance in the classroom (Freeman, 1990; Hargreaves, 1992; Wallace, 1991). This indicates that attitudes are instrumental in shaping teachers' roles and behaviors in their classrooms.

### **Affective Dimension.**

The affective dimension of attitudes has to do with emotions and feelings (i.e. likes and dislikes). Positive feelings lead to positive attitudes toward the attitude object, whereas negative feelings lead to negative attitudes (Dovidio, Kawakami, Johnson, Johnson, & Howard, 1997). This emotional element of attitudes can be voluntary or involuntary, verbal or nonverbal (Clemente, 2001). One can be aware of an emotional reaction or completely unaware and unable to control the response. These feelings can be elicited by behaviors, verbal statements or other characteristics of the target person (Downey & Damhave, 1991). Clemente (2001) explored teachers' attitudes toward some language learning methods and came to the conclusion that the affective dimension of teachers' attitudes plays an important role in any language teaching approach or method they choose and use.

### **Behavioral Dimension.**

The behavioral dimension of attitude includes the readiness or disposition to behave in a certain way. Research has shown that the behavioral dimension is strongly correlated with the affective and cognitive dimensions (Hovland, 1960). According to Eisner (1984), in language teaching, the adoption of specific methods of teaching depends on teachers' feelings and beliefs about language teaching and learning and consequently behavior will be more or less accepting according to the attitudinal affect

and belief. It has been assessed that the attitude/behavior relationship is a cause-effect relationship (Hargreaves & Fullan, 1992), which would mean that attitudinal change could be an important facilitator in the effective implementation of any teaching approach. However, it is not enough for teachers to merely understand the underlying theories and principles of any approach; they have to change their attitudes and consequently their behaviors in order to implement a teaching approach successfully (Wicker, 1971).

In conclusion, teacher's established beliefs and feelings toward an instructional issue determine teachers' observable behavior, which, in its turn, is the manifestation of the interaction between the different attitude dimensions. Therefore, any effective and lasting attitude change should encompass all of those dimensions.

### **Attitude Development and Change**

Formation and change of attitude are not two separate things; they are interwoven. People are always adopting, modifying, and relinquishing attitudes to fit their ever-changing needs and interests (Halloran, 1967). Influenced as an individual by parents, siblings, peers, teachers, and other sources of information and identification, an individual's attitudes begin to develop in childhood and become crystallized in young adulthood (Kuh, 1976). This means people with whom one associates have an important influence on one's attitudes. Aiken (2002) stresses the role which emotional ties, affiliation, loyalty, and security play in attitude formation and conditioning. Lippman (1973) emphasizes the social as well as the individual aspects of attitude formation by noting that through social interaction, certain attitudes will be adopted to obtain personal

acceptance and satisfaction of needs as an individual's attitudes will depend, to a considerable extent, on the attitudes and norms of the group to which the individual belongs, though the attitudes held by the individual will be modified by his or her own personality.

Attitudes cannot be changed by simple education because acceptance of new attitudes depends on who is presenting the knowledge, how it is presented, how the person is perceived, the credibility of the communicator, and the conditions by which knowledge is received (Payne, 1980). Attitudes can be changed by a number of sources including other people, family, media, religious institutions, or the attitude object itself (Triandis, 1971). McGuire (1969) suggests five aspects of attitude change: attention, comprehension, yielding, retention, and action. These stages range from paying attention to an object to accepting influence and acting according to the changed attitude. McGuire also outlines five communication processes that influence attitude change: source, message, channel, receiver, and destination. In addition, different theories that try to explain how people's attitudes develop and change have been put forward by educational and growth psychologists. A concise elaboration of four of these theories follows.

### **Reinforcement Theory.**

The reinforcement theory, developed by the behaviorist school of psychology, notably by B. F. Skinner earlier last century, conceptualizes a positive or negative attitude toward a particular object as developing whenever the object is repeatedly accompanied by an event that produces reward or punishment (Laird, 1985). According to this viewpoint, a student will develop a positive attitude toward schoolwork if the student's

school-related efforts are rewarded; in much the same way, the student will tend to develop a negative attitude toward a particular person or a group of people if interactions with that person or group are unpleasant (Aiken, 1980).

### **Modeling Theory.**

Many attitudes are not the result of direct reinforcement but are learned indirectly by observing the activities of people who are perceived as significant and imitating them (Bandura, 1977). As a person grows to maturity, numerous individuals – parents, peers, teachers, movie stars, and politicians, among others – serve as models of attitudes and behavior (Aiken, 1980). In the process of modeling the behavior of people who are important to him or her, a person makes provisional attempts to act and believe like the model is perceived to act and believe (Payne, 1980).

### **Consistency Theory.**

By way of contrast with the reinforcement and modeling theories, which are Stimulus-Response theories that pay little attention to mental states, the consistency theory, which focuses on an individual's efforts to maintain consistency among various attitudes that he or she holds, is more cognitively oriented (Aiken, 2002). According to this theory an individual attempts to perceive the relationships among people and among events as tending toward consistency or balance and consequently if a state of imbalance occurs within these relationships, then the individual will change an attitude or a behavior to achieve balance (Aiken, 1980; Heider, 1956).

### **Dissonance Theory.**

The dissonance theory posits that when a person is persuaded to act in a way that is not congruent with a pre-existing attitude, he or she may change the attitude to reduce dissonance (Smith & Ragan, 1999). Hirschman (1965), who was the first to draw attention to the implications of the cognitive dissonance theory for the process of attitude development and change, in particular to the key implication of the theory, states that a change in attitudes may follow, rather than precedes behavioral change. The dissonance theory maintains that a person who is experiencing cognitive dissonance – which naturally results in an unpleasant state – will attempt to reduce the dissonance by one of several stratagems: by changing an attitude, by changing a behavior, or by minimizing the importance of the dissonant elements (Aiken, 1980). The implication of this theory is that one way to change an attitude is to create a state of cognitive dissonance in the individual (Festinger, 1957).

### **Guidelines for Effecting Changes in Teacher and Learner Attitudes**

The different attitude formation and change theories outlined above imply that teachers' and students' attitudes are prone to change if certain conditions capable of triggering such change are made available. In this vein, McGuire (1969) and Kolesnik (1970) provide some guidelines for practitioners interested in effecting changes in teacher attitudes which may interfere with effective schooling. In order to cater for the two integral parties involved in the educational enterprise (i.e. teachers and learners), these guidelines will be slightly modified to include both learners and teachers.

1. Attitudes are most likely to undergo change in settings where teachers and learners feel an atmosphere of trust and openness. Resistance to attitude change is to be expected where there is a feeling on the part of teachers and learners that they are being exploited or manipulated without being given full information.
2. Active participation of teachers and learners in programs where attitude change may be involved is important. Passive listening or simply reading does not create conditions of change as readily as does taking part in group discussion, role- playing, or other social interaction.
3. When a teacher's or learner's attitude is new or less intense, it may change when information relevant to the situation is encountered. This is especially true when the information does not vary strongly with what the teacher or learner already believes.
4. If a new attitude, when expressed through verbal statements or other behavior, is rewarded through such events as social support or teaching/learning successes, it is likely to be strengthened and permanently acquired.
5. Joining a group, which holds the attitudes and values sought by teachers and learners, is usually an effective way to foster desirable attitude change. The attitudes held by teachers and learners constitute an important kind of influence upon other teachers and learners.
6. If a change, which implies a new attitude, is sponsored by a person who is admired and respected, the teacher or learner is more likely to adopt the new attitude than if the same change is proposed by someone with little status.

7. Intensive emotional experiences, sometimes produced by conflict or confrontation, usually result in changed attitudes. There may be a risk involved since such experiences may be counterproductive. Consequently, it may be desirable that such risks first be taken under simulated or role-playing conditions.
8. A teacher's or learner's attitude may change if opportunity is provided for critical self-examination of one's own beliefs and value assumptions. As highlighted in the dissonance theory, it is difficult to continue with glaring inconsistencies in one's own system of beliefs, feelings, and behaviors.
9. A direct experience with the attitude object, calling for a change in one's own behavior, is more effective if the event is accompanied by an opportunity for reflection, discussion, and reading about the situation, with a group of others who are also concerned.
10. Attitude change is usually a long process involving many types of experiences, acquisition of information, emotional reactions, and constant change in one's behavior.

In order to effect any changes in teachers' and students' negative attitudes and help them develop more positive ones, these attitudes need to be identified and measured.

The following sections focus on attitude measurement.

### **Attitude Measurement**

Attitudes are difficult concepts to measure and existing research makes inferences about attitudes through an examination and analysis of behaviors and/or statements of belief (Payne, 1980). Perhaps the most objective way of determining attitudes toward



specific things is to observe how people behave in relation to those things. That is, what a person actually does or says in a situation where the attitude object or event is present may be interpreted as indicating his or her attitude toward the particular object or event. However, since it is not unusual for people to play roles or practice deception, even direct behavioral observation may not always be a valid indicator of attitude in a given situation or at a particular time (Oppenheim, 1992).

Moreover, an individual's affective and cognitive characteristics can be incorrectly inferred from the individual's behavior and difficulties can occur when determining which behavior to observe and how to record the behavior (Anderson, 1981). Also, it is possible for an observer to misrepresent the behavior of an individual (Purkey, Cage, & Graves, 1973). To overcome such observation drawbacks in measuring attitudes so that correct conclusions can be drawn, Anderson (1981) suggests that correct inferences are more likely to be made when multiple observations are made of the same behavior in the same setting over time and when the different dimensions of attitudes are clearly defined and care is taken to only observe these attitudes in an appropriate context.

Still, a more common procedure for attitude measurement than direct observation is to ask people specific questions in an interview or a questionnaire and to infer their attitudes from their answers. Two assumptions underlie this method: 1) respondents are aware of their attitudes and are willing to reveal them to questions in an interview or a questionnaire; 2) this procedure is unobtrusive (i.e. the very process of asking people what their attitudes are does not affect the attitudes under study (Foddy, 1993). Purkey, et al., (1973) point out that these self-report methods have two main problems: 1)

individuals may supply answers that they think the researcher wants or answers that are socially acceptable rather than answering how they truly feel about the subject; 2) individuals may resort to acquiescence (i.e. an individual who is unsure of his/her response has a tendency to agree with the question being asked. All that a researcher can do to overcome these problems is to measure the attitude expressed with the full realization that respondents may be consciously hiding their true attitudes or that the social pressure of the situation made them really believe what they express, while trying at the same time to minimize, as far as possible, the conditions that prevent respondents from telling the truth, or else to adjust the interpretation of the data accordingly (Thurstone & Chave, 1929).

Traditionally, language-attitudes research has used two different techniques: direct measurement and indirect measurement (Giles & Johnson, 1987). Direct measurement of language attitudes involves the use of a series of direct questions, in the form of either written questionnaires or oral interviews, which ask for the participants' opinions about aspects of the researched language(s) or aspects of language teaching techniques (Ryan, Giles, & Sebastian, 1982). This method focuses on people's beliefs and may ask questions about language evaluation, methods of language learning preferences, desirability, and reasons for learning a particular language (Deaux, 1993). Indirect methods of measuring language attitudes are designed to keep the research participant from knowing that his or her language attitudes are being investigated (Fasold, 1984). For example, indirect questions would be asked about oral errors, and participants might not be informed that interviews or questionnaires are about attitudes toward oral errors.

In conclusion, if more accurate measurements of the different dimensions of attitudes and more realistic interpretations are to be obtained, it is recommended that an array of research methods be used. The important point here is that any attempt to measure attitudes should, if possible, take the three attitude dimensions into consideration. The behavioral dimension could possibly be measured by observation or through analysis of verbal statements whilst the cognitive and affective dimensions could possibly be measured through self-report methods (Aiken, 1980). Care should be taken to triangulate different sources of data obtained through these different methods so that the most accurate measurement and interpretation of attitudes can be obtained.

Issues related to attitude measurement have significant implications for the current study. First, realizing the limitations of the different attitude measurement methods when each is used singly, the researcher used an array of measurement methods (i.e. questionnaires, interviews, observations, and focus-groups). This was done with the intention of obtaining the most accurate measures possible when data from different sources were triangulated. Second, despite all efforts that were exerted by the researcher during the planning stage and data collection stages to make things go on as authentically as possible, participants would not be expressing themselves openly and would be consciously or unconsciously hiding their real attitudes. Therefore, during the interpretation of the research results, the researcher took these limitations into consideration. Finally, the study used both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods, which would give more breadth and depth to the collected data and

consequently the chances of getting more accurate data and more reliable interpretation increased.

Now that issues related to error correction and attitudes have been discussed in more general terms, the sections that follow will specifically discuss teachers' and learners' attitudes to oral errors. Then, the relationship between attitudes and foreign language learning will be highlighted.

## **TEACHERS' AND STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARD ORAL ERRORS**

### **Teachers' Attitudes toward Oral Errors**

Teachers play an essential role in the educational achievement of students. The attitudes and behaviors of teachers toward their students can be portrayed in a positive or a negative way. Such attitudes can have an effect on the academic achievement or failure of the student (Khan & Weiss, 1972). Hence, if teachers do not have a positive attitude toward a subject, it is likely that this will influence the success of their students who will tune into the teacher's non-positive attitude. The attitudes, which teachers display in class, are instrumental in forming those of their students. If teachers are enthusiastic about their subjects, if they look happy to be in the classroom, if they obviously enjoy their students and take pleasure in talking to them in the foreign language, then many of the behaviors the teachers model will carry over to at least some of their students (Hadden, & Johnstone, 1983).

Teachers' attitudes toward students' oral errors are an important factor in the language teaching-learning process. Having such an essential role, language teachers' attitudes have been the focus of many studies. Byrnes, Kiger, & Manning's (1997) study,

for example, assessed the importance of several factors that have been hypothesized to influence teachers' language attitudes. First, they looked at previous experiences teachers had with oral errors because the literature in social psychology suggests that effective error treatment is associated with positive attitudes. Second, they explored the effects of education level, grade level taught, and formal training. They found that formal training was associated with positive language attitudes as it provided teachers with skills and knowledge to work effectively with language learners. (M=25.55 for those with training, M=34.53 for those without training).

They also found that earning a graduate degree also was associated with positive language attitudes as increases in educational experiences were associated with the development of critical thinking skills and cognitive sophistication (M=29.76 for those with a graduate degree, M=34.02 for those without a graduate degree). That is, negative, stereotypic attitudes were less likely to be found among persons who exercise complexity in their reasoning. Consequently, Byrnes et al. hypothesized that the higher the teachers' education level, the more positive their language attitudes. Moreover, Johnson (1999) argues that most language teachers have both formal and informal language learning experiences and those experiences can have a powerful impact on their attitudes.

Likewise, EFL teachers' attitudes toward students' oral errors vary. Some teachers may have positive attitudes toward oral errors and consider them signals of students' learning and experimentation with the foreign language. Others may have negative attitudes toward such errors. Negative teacher attitudes toward oral errors may produce teacher behavior that can lead to, or at least sustain, teachers having negative

attitudes toward the students themselves, which, in turn, affects student achievement (August & Hakuta, 1997; Cummins, 2000; Díaz-Rico, 2000). Research also indicates that teachers' attitudes toward language errors may influence their evaluation of student performance and achievement and may lead to underestimation of their students' language ability.

Byrnes, et al., (1997) also found that teachers' formal educational training, teaching experience, and place of employment were important factors associated with EFL teachers' attitudes toward students' oral errors. This supports Elbaz's (1981) research findings that a teacher's knowledge is influenced by teacher's experiences. Such experiences ultimately affect teacher behavior. Importantly, effective teacher behavior has been linked to positive student outcomes (Brophy & Good, 1986). Effective teacher behavior involves being sensitive to EFL students' needs and encouraging students to improve language skills. Current literature suggests that such teachers' beliefs about their students' oral errors and language abilities have the potential to influence learners' attitudes to language and shape their experiences and actions in the classroom (Bernat & Gvozdenko, 2005).

### **Students' Attitudes toward Oral Errors**

Most language-teaching professionals realize that students' learning potential increases when attitudes are positive and motivation runs high (Gardner, 1972). By systematically reinforcing the adoption of certain valuable, but unfamiliar attitudes and strategies, and by discouraging the use of old ones, teachers can make the "impossible" possible (Spencer & Arbon, 1996). Research into the relationship between positive

attitudes and successful learning of a second or foreign language supports this simple observation. However, it is important to understand that many variables are involved because we are dealing with complex social and psychological aspects of human behavior (Clemente, 2001). For instance, students' ability to learn a foreign language can be influenced by their attitudes toward the target language, the target language speakers and their culture, the social value of learning the foreign language, and also the students' attitudes toward themselves as members of their own culture (Ellis, 1994).

Brown (2000) describes several studies that highlight the effects of attitude on language learning and concludes that positive attitudes toward the self, the native language group, and the target language group enhance learners' proficiency in the foreign language as well as in their native language. Learners' attitudes color their experiences (Marzano, 1992) because attitudes are the filter through which all learning occurs. When students with positive attitudes experience success, these attitudes are reinforced; whereas students with negative attitudes may fail to progress and become even more negative in their language learning attitudes. Because attitudes can be modified by experience, effective language teaching strategies can encourage students to be more positive toward the language they are learning (Mantle-Bromley, 1995).

Like teachers, learners also differ in their attitudes toward error correction. For some, no adverse affective effect is likely unless the corrections are delivered in a very aggressive or unfair manner; for others, there is a serious danger that correction will produce embarrassment, anger, inhibition, feelings of inferiority, and a generally negative attitude toward the class, the teacher, and possibly toward English (Truscott, 1999).

To make correction effective and avoid harmful side effects, the teacher must see each student as a unique puzzle, asking how that student will respond to correction in its many possible forms, varying, for instance, in the type of error corrected, the frequency of correction, the explicitness of correction, the amount and type of accompanying explanation, and the forcefulness of the correction (ibid). As a result, Truscott maintains that teachers should become aware of the learning styles or learning preferences of their students and attempt to use a variety of activities and practices that may cater for all their learning preferences.

Teachers can reduce the harms of error correction, while, at the same time, taking their students' differences, preferences, and learning styles into consideration, if they create a low stress, friendly and supportive learning environment; foster a proactive role on the part of the students themselves to create an atmosphere of group solidarity and support; be sensitive to students' fears and insecurities and help them confront those fears; use gentle or non-threatening methods of error correction and offer encouragement; and consciously seek to promote student interest and enjoyment (von Wörde, 2003).

## **RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ATTITUDES AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING**

Most researchers of second and foreign language learning have concluded that a student's attitude is an integral part of learning and that it should, therefore, become an essential component of second and foreign language learning pedagogy (Gass & Selinker, 2001). There are several reasons why research on students' attitudes toward language learning is important. First, attitudes toward learning are believed to influence behaviors



(Weinburgh, 1998) because, as pointed out earlier, attitudes, which are related to thoughts as well as to feelings and emotions, govern how one approaches learning, which in the case of language requires exposure to a different culture and also to the difficult task of mastering a second or foreign language (Brown, 2000). Second, it has been found that there is a relationship between attitudes and student achievement (Schibeci & Riley, 1986).

Growing more aware of the strong relationship between attitudes and language learning, researchers have begun to concentrate on determining exactly how attitudes affect language learners. What they have discovered is that the effects are more pervasive than one might assume, that effects are cognitive and social in nature, and that existing evidence points to a causal relationship between attitude and language learning (Gardner, 1985). Gass and Selinker (2001) assert that numerous studies with statistical evidence indicate that motivation, which is partially caused by attitude, is a predictor of language-learning success and consequently individuals who are motivated will learn a language faster and to a greater degree than those who lack such motivation.

A similar assertion has been provided by Macintyre et al. (2001), who conducted an analysis to find the overlaps among four different models of motivation for second language learning. Their analysis resulted in the emergence of attitudinal motivation as the first and strongest factor. Similarly, Masgoret, Bernaus, & Gardner (2001) assert that attitudes and motivation are key factors that influence the rate and success of second language learning in the classroom. Anderson (2000) even argues that attitudes shaped by the social context are the most important factors in determining the success of formal

classroom language instruction. Empirical evidence also clearly demonstrates a relationship between attitude, motivation, and language proficiency (Gardner, 1985). Furthermore, Syed's (2001) qualitative study shows the importance of attitude in motivation for second and foreign language learning.

It is evident now that there is a relationship between attitudes and language learning. Therefore, both positive and negative attitudes have a strong impact on the success (or failure) of language learning. The attitude of an individual depends heavily upon different stimuli. Stern (1983) claims that the affective component contributes at least as much and often more to language learning than the cognitive skills, and this is supported by recent researches. All studies adduce that affective variables have significant influences on language success (Skehan, 1989; Gardner, 1985; Spolsky, 1989). Discovering students' attitudes toward language will help both teachers and students in the teaching-learning process. Therefore, teachers and educators have to pay special attention to the crucial role of the affective domain.

### **SUMMARY**

As has been illustrated in the sections above, the process of error treatment, though significant and indispensable, can turn to be difficult and complicated. The significance of error correction arises from the fact it is an important part of managing classroom interaction, which leads to more effective language learning. The complexity of error correction lurks in the large number of decisions teachers must make in order to treat learners' errors appropriately so that correction proves to be helpful and be able to sustain or even strengthen positive attitudes toward learning the language.

# CHAPTER THREE

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### INTRODUCTION

This research used a mixed-methods, multiple, descriptive case study (Stake, 2005), combining both qualitative and quantitative procedures in data collection and analysis, to investigate the types of oral treatment strategies Palestinian EFL teachers employed while correcting their students' oral errors and to examine the extent to which these strategies reflect teachers' attitudes toward such errors. The use of a mixed methods research design is particularly important as the approach moves beyond simply measuring attitudes to investigating the enactment of such attitudes. Although questionnaire data aggregate large numbers of individual responses, they sacrifice the description of individual contexts (Moser & Kalton, 1971). To achieve the goal of rich description that tells a more thorough story, interview protocols, focus group interviews, and observation schemes were developed and used in this research. Data obtained from different data collection sources, both quantitative and qualitative, more sufficiently answer the research questions and provide an important understanding of the essential information regarding EFL teachers' and students' attitudes toward oral errors and the strategies of their treatment.

This chapter, which outlines the study's theoretical framework, describes in detail the procedures followed in the investigation of the impact of Palestinian EFL teachers' attitudes toward students' oral errors on teachers' choice of error treatment strategies and

on students' attitudes. The different sections in this chapter will, first, provide the rationale for the choice of a multiple case study and mixed-methods approach in the current research. Second, the study populations and samples will be illustrated. Third, the data collection, analysis, and interpretation methods will be highlighted. Finally, the study's ethical considerations will be outlined.

### **WHY A CASE STUDY?**

Yin (2003) has defined a case study as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (p. 13). A case study also provides a unique example of real people in real situations, enabling readers to understand how ideas and abstract principles fit together (Nisbett & Watt, 1984). In addition, a case study can penetrate situations in ways that are not always susceptible to numerical analysis (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000).

Merriam (1998) provides a number of key characteristics of case study research. A case study is a bounded study of an individual, a group of individuals, an organization, or multiple organizations, etc. The phenomenon of interest is bounded through the choice of research problem and questions. This, in its turn, dictates the appropriate setting and/or the sample from which to develop a rich understanding of the phenomenon. Cases can be simple in terms of their bounded nature, but are always a microcosm of a larger entity. As a result, a significant part of any case is a thorough description and bounding of the context. The context may be a given classroom, a school or a school district. Multivariate case studies typically examine the interplay of multiple variables in order to provide as

complete an understanding of an event or a situation as possible. Multi-method case studies explore a phenomenon in preparation for further study, accumulate instances of a phenomenon or preset contrasting or comparative examples of a phenomenon. Researchers use multiple methods (e.g. interviews, participant observations, surveys, etc.) to collect data (Yin, 2003). Case studies are also multidisciplinary because they call on multiple perspectives to thoroughly understand the phenomenon of interest. Case studies can be descriptive, historical, biographical, exploratory, explanatory, theory building, theory confirming, and so forth.

A multiple-collective or multi-site (Stake, 2005) case study was used in the current research to enable the researcher to jointly study a number of cases while investigating attitudes toward oral errors and their treatment. Individual cases were selected because it is believed that understanding them leads to better theorizing about still a larger collection of cases (Yin, 2003). As case studies are complex and multilayered, they are particularly useful for their rich description and heuristic value (Yin, 1994). Description illustrates the complexities of a situation, depicts how the passage of time has shaped events, provides vivid material, and presents differing perspectives or opinions (Stake, 2005). When more than one case is studied, the researcher can conduct cross-case analyses for comparison purposes (Miles & Huberman, 1994). These analyses respect the integrity of each case and seek commonalities as well as differences across cases. Because of their particularistic focus, case studies are “an especially good design for practical problems – for questions, situations, or puzzling occurrences arising from everyday practice” (Merriam, 1998, p. 11).

A further benefit of multiple-case studies is that they are generally considered to strengthen or broaden the analytic generalization (i.e. not a generalization to some defined population that has been sampled, but to a previously developed theory of the phenomenon used as a template with which to compare the empirical results of the case study (Yin, 2003). This can be done through literal replication, in which cases are designed to replicate each other and produce corroborating evidence, or through theoretical replication, in which cases are designed to cover different theoretical conditions and produce contrasting results for predictable, theoretical reasons (Yin, 1994). Miles and Huberman (1994) generalize that the more cases in a study and the greater the variation across cases, the more compelling an interpretation can be. By looking at a range of similar and contrasting cases, the precision, validity, and stability of the findings can be strengthened.

Case study, according to Merriam (1998), is not done to find out the “true” or “correct” interpretation of something, but rather to show participants’ opinions and views. Therefore, it is important for the researcher to keep in mind that there are no true or false answers; it is only participants’ opinions, feelings, and thoughts that are relevant to the investigation. Hence, the current study was not meant to point out any “correct” or “wrong” ways of oral error treatment strategies. It only intended to illustrate these specific teachers’ and students’ individual perceptions and attitudes regarding oral errors and the various strategies of their treatment within a real-life context, over which the study had no control.

## **WHY A MIXED-METHODS APPROACH?**

A mixed-methods approach was used in the current study because it would yield richer, more valid, and more reliable findings than evaluations based on either a qualitative or quantitative method alone (Howe & Eisenhart, 1990). In this approach, data sources and methodologies complement one another by adding both breadth and depth to the study of how teachers' attitudes toward oral errors influence their choice of oral error correction strategies and their students' attitude toward those errors and their treatment (Halvorsen, Lee, & Andrade, 2008). A further advantage is that a mixed-methods approach is likely to increase the acceptance of findings and conclusions by the diverse groups that have a stake in the research results (Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989) as it combines qualitative (interpretive) and quantitative (postpositivist) research paradigms (Halvorsen, et al., 2008). Although traditional researchers have seen the two paradigms as separate and confrontational (e.g. Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Secrest, 1992), in the current study qualitative and quantitative research paradigms were treated in line with those researchers who have described the two paradigms as complementary, integrative, and conciliatory (e.g. Greene, et al., 1989; Patton, 2002). Furthermore, a mixed-methods design compensates for the shortcomings of a single method approach (Brewer & Hunter, 1989), allowing for the triangulation of data sources (Campbell & Fiske, 1959). When results from the two paradigms are combined, biases and weaknesses inherent in each paradigm are minimized (Cook & Campbell, 1979).

When teachers' and learners' attitudes are concerned, it becomes necessary, if not mandatory, to go beyond just measuring their attitudes in order to be able to investigate

the enactment of such attitudes, particularly negative ones. This necessitates the employment of methods beyond attitude surveys because survey data tend to aggregate large numbers of individual responses, so that description of individual contexts is sacrificed and probing deeply into an issue becomes impossible (Creswell, 2005). Because teachers' and students' attitudes are understood to involve a complex array of conflicting beliefs, feelings, and behaviors (i.e. dimensions of attitudes), both across individuals and within individuals across time, a study of teachers' and students' attitudes demands methods that allow for the collection of different types of data, that collect data overtime, and that can culminate in a thick description of teachers' and students' attitudes in a particular context (Geertz, 1973).

Thus, solely quantitative methods of data collection, such as questionnaires, are not favored on the grounds that the collection of discrete data cannot yield a holistic understanding (Spielmann & Radnofsky, 2001). Equally, the use of only qualitative methods, such as interviews, focus groups, and observations for obtaining information about teachers' and students' attitudes have been met with criticism on the grounds that they may generate individuals' thoughts and attitudes without sufficient thoroughness (Gracia-Nevarez, et al., 2005). Moreover, the validity of qualitative methods has been questioned because they are likely to be influenced by participants' self-flattery, and/or a desire to be socially acceptable, and/or a desire to be consistent with their own previous statements (Peacock, 1998). Therefore, the current study used a mixed-methods research design to bring about a more profound understanding of the research phenomenon and to maximize the acceptability and validity of results.



Making the case for utilizing a mixed-methods research design, many researchers (e.g. Ebenezer & Zoller, 1993; Hadden & Johnstone, 1982) assert that the most convincing arguments in the field of attitude research have been those utilizing qualitative and quantitative techniques, usually including questionnaires supported by classroom observations, individual structured or semi-structured interviews and group or focus group interviews. Mixed-methods research designs are good for probing teachers' and students' perceptions and feelings on aspects of particular interest to researchers. Moreover, Potter, and Wetherall (1987) maintain that attitude instruments measure only one aspect of individual views and that deeper understanding of attitude toward an object can only be revealed by a study of the attitude in the context of its use. In a similar vein, Osborne, Simon, and Collins (2003) point out that an attitude cannot be separated from its context and the underlying body of influences that determine its real significance. Therefore, a mixed-methods research design was used in this current study so that quantitative data could be enhanced and validated by qualitative methodology.

Moreover, mixed-methods research is particularly advantageous for assessing attitudes toward foreign language learning as it facilitates obtaining a broad view of the opinions of large numbers of teachers and students in a relatively short time with the addition of more in-depth understanding of the experiences and attitudes of a smaller number of them (Parkinson, Hendley, Tanner, & Stables, 1998; Sinclair, Mark, & Clore, 1994). Last but not least, mixed-methods research will not only show the viewpoint of the researcher but also, and most importantly, that of the participants. Both quantitative and qualitative data analyses would delve deeper into the practice of oral error treatment in a

specific teaching context (i.e. the City of Gaza, Palestine) and provide valuable information about the relationship between types of oral error treatment strategies, teachers' attitudes toward errors, and students' attitudes toward and preferences for error treatment strategies.

The following sections will specifically elaborate on the methodology of the study and will describe the population, the sample, the instrumentation, the pilot study, the research design, and data analysis and interpretation procedures.

### STUDY POPULATIONS

The study populations include high elementary and secondary school Palestinian EFL teachers and students teaching and learning in governmental (i.e. state) schools in the City of Gaza during the school year (2009-2010). The number, distribution, and gender of the study populations are illustrated in Table 3.1 below.

**Table 3.1  
Number, Distribution, and Gender of Study Populations**

Directorate (i.e. School District)	Number of EFL Teachers	Number of Students			
		High Elementary <b>Males</b>	Secondary <b>Males</b>	High Elementary <b>Females</b>	Secondary <b>Females</b>
East Gaza	241	21815	3486	22816	4267
West Gaza	226	18907	6534	20724	6358
<b>Total</b>	<b>467</b>	<b>40722</b>	<b>10020</b>	<b>43540</b>	<b>10625</b>

## STUDY SAMPLES

Two study samples were drawn from the study populations. The two samples included a teacher sample and a student sample.

### Teacher Sample

One hundred and fifty one Palestinian EFL high elementary and secondary school teachers from the City of Gaza teaching in governmental schools comprised the teacher study sample. All the sample teachers, as it was the case with all the study population, were non-native speakers of English, who learned English in a foreign language context and consequently their exposure to and use of English were mostly confined to formal learning and teaching settings. The sample proportionately included both genders (76 males and 75 females) and different years of experience (See Tables 3.2 and 3.3 below). All 151 teachers responded to the teachers' questionnaire. Due to practicality factors only 12 teachers were interviewed and observed (For some basic information about case study teacher participants, see Table 3.4 below.). Strategic and practical considerations were made during the selection of teachers in order to identify quantitatively and qualitatively different experiences and attitudes. These considerations were made on the ground that the context in which teachers exist and work is of importance to the experiences they have and the attitudes they hold.

**Table 3.2**  
**Distribution of Teacher Sample According to Gender**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Cumulative Percentage</b>
Male	76	50.33	50.33
Female	75	49.67	100.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>100.00</b>	

**Table 3.3**  
**Distribution of Teacher Sample According to Years of Experience**

<b>Teaching Experience</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Cumulative Percentage</b>
Fewer than 5 years*	76	50.33	50.33
More than 5 but fewer than 10 years	48	31.79	82.12
More than 10 years	27	17.88	100.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>100.00</b>	

(\*The larger number of this teacher category is due to the fact that, during the school year (2008-2009) and because of political conflict between the two Palestinian governments in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, most teachers in the Gaza Strip schools abstained from teaching and were replaced by novice teachers.)

**Table 3.4**  
**Basic Information about Case Study Teacher Participants**

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Qualifications</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b># Years of Experience as an EFL Teacher</b>	<b>Type of School</b>	<b>Grade of Class Observed</b>
Teacher Participant #1	BA in English	Male	7	High Elementary	8
Teacher Participant #2	BA in English & Education	Male	24	Secondary	11
Teacher Participant #3	BA in English & Education	Male	4	High Elementary	10
Teacher Participant #4	BA in English & Education	Male	2	High Elementary	7
Teacher Participant #5	BA in English & Education	Male	11	Secondary	11

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Qualifications</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b># Years of Experience as an EFL Teacher</b>	<b>Type of School</b>	<b>Grade of Class Observed</b>
Teacher Participant #6	BA in English	Male	10	Secondary	12
Teacher Participant #7	BA in English	Male	5	High Elementary	10
Teacher Participant #8	BA in English & Diploma in Education	Female	9	Secondary	12
Teacher Participant #9	BA in English & Education	Female	7	High Elementary	9
Teacher Participant #10	BA in English & Education	Female	2	Secondary	11
Teacher Participant #11	BA in English & Education	Female	3	High Elementary	7
Teacher Participant #12	BA in English & Education	Female	2	High Elementary	9

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### **Student Sample**

As illustrated in Table 3.5 below, a sample of 774 of high elementary and secondary school students (390 males and 384 females) responded to the students' questionnaire. This sample varied in students' grade, number of years they learned English (See Table 3.6 below.), and the number of spoken English courses they studied outside school (See Tables 3.7 and 3.8 below.). Due to practicality factors, only (12) students took part in the focus-group interviews aimed to elicit qualitative data about students' attitudes toward and perceptions of oral errors and the error treatment strategies

used by their teachers (For some basic information about the focus group participants, see Table 3.9 below).

**Table 3.5**  
**Distribution of Student Sample According to Gender**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Male	390	50.39
Female	384	49.61
<b>Total</b>	<b>774</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Table 3.6**  
**Distribution of Students Sample According to Years of Learning English**

<b>No. of years of learning English</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
6	169	21.83
7	259	33.46
8	218	28.16
9	128	16.53
<b>Total</b>	<b>774</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Table 3.7**  
**Distribution of Student Sample According to Attendance in Courses in Spoken English**

<b>Courses in spoken English</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
No	616	79.59
Yes	158	20.41
<b>Total</b>	<b>774</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Table 3.8**

**Distribution of Student Sample According to Number of Courses Attended in Spoken English**

<b>Number of courses in spoken English</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
None	616	79.59
1	74	9.56
2	48	6.20
3	12	1.55
4	9	1.16
5	7	0.90
6	3	0.39
7	2	0.26
10	1	0.13
12	2	0.26
<b>Total</b>	<b>774</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Table 3.9**  
**Basic Information about Focus Group Student Participants**

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Type of School</b>	<b># Years of Studying English</b>
Student Participant #1	12	Male	Secondary	8
Student Participant #2	11	Male	Secondary	7
Student Participant #3	11	Male	Secondary	7
Student Participant #4	8	Male	High Elementary	8
Student Participant #5	9	Male	High Elementary	9
Student Participant #6	12	Female	Secondary	8
Student Participant #7	11	Female	Secondary	7
Student Participant #8	10	Female	Secondary	6
Student Participant #9	8	Female	High Elementary	8
Student Participant #10	9	Female	High Elementary	9
Student Participant #11	9	Female	High Elementary	9
Student Participant #12	10	Female	High Elementary	10

## **DATA COLLECTION METHODS**

Consistent with mixed-methods research designs and collective case study research paradigms, various methods of data collection (i.e. questionnaires, interviews, observations, and focus groups) were used in this study. The questionnaires were used to facilitate responses to the research questions, while the interviews, observations, and focus groups were utilized to obtain a more thorough understanding of questionnaire responses, to provide teachers and students with an opportunity to express their feelings and opinions, and to help the researcher capture the teachers' and students' own voices

and examine their words and behaviors in an attempt to understand the phenomenon being investigated more profoundly and answer the research questions. Following is a detailed description of the different data collection methods used in the study.

### **Observations**

In order to obtain information about the different strategies used by the 12 participant teachers while treating their students' oral errors and their students' reactions, two nonparticipant, classroom observations, each of which lasted for 40 minutes, were conducted. Observations were used because they would be more telling, since they could shed light on teachers' and students' attitudes toward correction of oral errors. Non-participant observations were specifically chosen for the current study because the researcher was able to stand aloof from the observed classrooms' activities, with no interaction with participants during data collection. According to Ostrowe (1998) and Cohen, et al., (2000), non-participant observations are advantageous because the researcher is less influenced by the group and the data are more objective because the researcher is less invested in the observed phenomenon and is less likely to overstate what is observed. Further, researchers can use more aids for recording information, as they are not hiding their role. This non-participant role can also eliminate the "reactivity" of the researcher's presence in the classroom.

However, this type of non-participant observation is not without limitations; the presence of the non-participant observer may result in what is termed "observer's paradox" or "Hawthorne Effect" (i.e. the phenomenon where the observation of an event is influenced by the presence of the observer/investigator with the result that the group



may not behave naturally (Adair, 1984). This makes it difficult for researchers to discover the meanings attached to events, and consequently are more likely to impose their subjective interpretations on the events they witness (Cohen, et al., 2000).

The limitations of non-participant observations alerted the researcher during data analysis and interpretation by making him compare and contrast data from different sources. Moreover, in order to overcome any biases in data analysis and interpretation, the researcher used different lenses including those of the participants themselves as well as the lenses of people external to the study.

Furthermore, observations were scheduled when it was convenient for teachers and were conducted in the natural course of the class. As a result, no extra preparation or change in lesson plans and/or timetables was required for teachers or students. During the observations, the researcher maintained detailed descriptions of students' oral errors and teachers' treatments of them by using the observation record sheet illustrated in Appendix (A). The observation protocol included three broad domains of interest: (a) oral errors made by students; (b) teacher's treatment of those errors; and (c) students' reactions to error correction.

## **Interviews**

Information about teachers' attitudes toward oral errors and the strategies they used to treat those errors, were partially obtained via a series of interviews with 12 Palestinian EFL teachers. Two formal interviews were conducted with each participant teacher, the first of which took place prior to the first classroom observation, while the second was conducted after the second observation had occurred. The two interview

protocols (See Appendix B and C) were semi-structured with open-ended questions designed to engage teachers in conversation about their teaching experiences, their oral error treatment strategies, and their attitudes toward such errors without being limiting or inhibiting to them. Every interview began with a description of the purpose of the study and a description of the ethical rules used for research, including confidentiality, consent, and autonomy. The researcher also emphasized that participation in the study was voluntary.

Teachers' interviews in this study were performed individually so that the researcher could unearth individual views and perspectives toward oral errors and strategies of their treatment in a more effective way than group interviews would allow (Kvale, 1996), and posed an alternative to written responses. This format allowed the researcher to access the thinking of a teacher and to determine some of its aspects that could not be captured through observation or other modes of data collection (Patton, 1980). Furthermore, throughout the phase of collecting classroom observation data, the researcher was engaged in informal conversations with participant teachers about their oral error treatment strategies.

These interviews were audio-taped and excerpts were transcribed for subsequent analyses. Kvale (1996) argues that by recording interviews, the interviewer can concentrate on the topic and the dynamics of the interview. In this way, the taped interviews made it possible for the researcher of the current study to listen to the recording over and over again. In this way clearer analyses and interpretations emerged.

Interview transcriptions were analyzed according to basic themes developed from the interview questions. Under each separate theme, portions of dialogue were detailed. Concomitantly, the transcriptions were analyzed to seek out commonalities and patterns emerging from other interview questions. A qualitative narrative was generated from these data.

## **Questionnaires**

To achieve the objectives of this study, two five-point Likert questionnaires, one for teachers (See Appendix D) and another for students (See Appendix E) were designed. Some questionnaire items were written by the researcher, while others were borrowed from questionnaires developed and administered by other researchers. The Likert scale (or method of summated ratings), the most widely used method of scale construction, was chosen for this research because of its relative ease of construction, its use of fewer statistical assumptions, and the fact that, in contrast to other scaling techniques, no judges are required (Guy, & Norvell, 1977; Maurer & Andrews, 2000; Tittle & Hill, 1967). To obtain more detailed information about teacher and student respondents' attitudes toward oral errors and their correction, the questionnaires included some open-ended questions.

As in all methods of scale construction, the first step in the process was to compose a series of statements that covered all aspects of the phenomenon under study (i.e. Palestinian EFL teachers' and students' attitudes toward oral errors and strategies of their correction) in such a way that statements could distinguish between teachers and learners holding favorable and those holding unfavorable attitudes (i.e. neutral or extreme statements were avoided). Participants' responses to the Likert-scale items of the two

questionnaires were coded as follows: A response of "strongly disagree" was coded as a numerical value of one, "disagree" of two, "neither agree nor disagree" of three, "agree" of four, and "strongly agree" of five.

An attitude scale could act as a cost-effective and easy-to-administer instrument for gathering baseline data on teachers' and learners' attitudes on particular issues, especially where large groups of teachers and learners are concerned (Payne, 1980). Although the scores may not give insights into the exact nature of an individual's attitudes, a closer examination of teachers' and learners' patterns of responding to favorable and unfavorable statements, followed by interviews or focus-group discussions with teacher and student participants, would reveal potential contradictions in their attitudes, and thus the areas which need further clarification and support would be identified (Aiken, 1980). Moreover, the administration of the attitude scale and subsequent discussion of teachers' and students' responses gave them the opportunity to become more aware of their attitudes. If awareness of one's attitudes is the first step towards clarifying them and developing the appropriate frame of reference in which to receive new ideas, then attitude scales could certainly help in achieving this endeavor (Payne, 1980).

In addition, participants' responses to each open-ended question were subjected to a content analysis (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005), which consisted of several iterations. On the first pass, the researcher transferred the data from the paper questionnaire to the electronic file. In the next round of coding, an attempt was made to establish patterns in

the data by grouping together closely related items. Finally, it was decided to group the responses at a more conceptual level, using more general themes identified from the data.

In the sections that follow, a more detailed description of the teachers' and students' questionnaires is outlined.

### **Teachers' Questionnaire.**

As illustrated in Appendix D, a teacher questionnaire consisting of 35 items, the majority of which used the Likert scale, was employed to survey teachers' attitudes toward their students' oral errors and their opinions of the oral error treatment strategies they used. The questionnaire was partially constructed by the researcher (i.e. the researcher developed some items, while others were developed from ideas and questions used in previous questionnaires (e.g. Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope , 1986; Shin & Krashen, 1996).

### ***Teachers' Questionnaires' Validity.***

A pilot study of the teachers' questionnaire was applied on a random sample of 40 teachers to test its validity and reliability after the questionnaire's items had been randomized. The questionnaire internal consistency, which refers to the correlation of the degree of each item with the total average of the questionnaire and the correlation of the average of each field with the total field average, was calculated. The questionnaire validity was calculated by using Pearson Formula of the Likert-scale items, and their Cronbach's alpha coefficient was estimated. Items that had low correlations with the total score were deleted, and other survey items that had been used by prior researchers were

added. A split-half of alpha coefficient was computed and coefficients of stability were also calculated in terms of factor analysis.

According to Tables 3.10, 3.11, and 3.12, the coefficient correlation of each item within its field is significant at levels  $p < 0.01$  and  $p < 0.05$ . Table (3.13) shows the correlation coefficient of each field with the whole questionnaire. These different tables show that the questionnaire was highly consistent and valid as a tool for the study.

**Table 3.10**  
**Teacher Questionnaire Pearson Correlation Coefficient of Attitude Items with the Total Degree of Attitude Field**

<b>*No.</b>	<b>Items</b>	<b>Pearson correlation</b>	<b>Sig.</b>	<b>Sig. level</b>
7	When learners are allowed to interact freely in groups or pairs, etc., they learn each other's errors.	0.736	0.000	$p < 0.01$
8	Learners' errors should be corrected as soon as they are made in order to prevent the formation of bad habits.	0.589	0.000	$p < 0.01$
9	The teacher should use materials that expose students only to language they have already been taught in order to minimize their errors.	0.390	0.013	$p < 0.05$
10	When EFL students make oral errors, it helps to correct them and later teach a short lesson explaining why they made that error.	0.588	0.000	$p < 0.01$
11	When EFL students make oral errors, it usually helps to provide them with lots of oral practice with the language patterns that seem to cause them difficulty.	0.354	0.025	$p < 0.05$
12	Since errors are a normal part of learning, much correction wastes time.	0.777	0.000	$p < 0.01$

<b>*No.</b>	<b>Items</b>	<b>Pearson correlation</b>	<b>Sig.</b>	<b>Sig. level</b>
13	If students are permitted to make errors in English, it will be difficult for them to speak correctly later on.	0.772	0.000	$p < 0.01$
14	I think students are to blame for making oral errors in English.	0.805	0.000	$p < 0.01$
15	Students learn and understand more if they correct each other.	0.402	0.010	$p < 0.05$
16	EFL teachers should encourage students to express themselves rather than continually correct their errors.	0.718	0.000	$p < 0.01$
17	Students differ in their reaction to oral error correction.	0.532	0.000	$p < 0.01$
18	Students learn more through error correction.	0.434	0.005	$p < 0.01$
19	Errors are a natural part of learning any language.	0.481	0.002	$p < 0.01$
20	EFL teachers should use different strategies for oral error correction.	0.561	0.000	$p < 0.01$
21	Teachers' corrections of students' oral errors help students learn and improve their English.	0.731	0.000	$p < 0.01$
22	Students should avoid making errors when learning English.	0.471	0.002	$p < 0.01$
23	Students do not make the same error again after the teacher corrects it.	0.318	0.046	$p < 0.05$
24	Teachers should correct all the oral errors students make because ignored errors result in imperfect learning.	0.399	0.011	$p < 0.05$
25	In general, it is important that my students make as few errors as possible in their oral English.	0.557	0.000	$p < 0.01$

(\*These are the numbers of the Likert-scale items pertinent to attitudes toward oral errors and their correction as they appear in the original teacher questionnaire.)

**Table 3.11**  
**Teacher Questionnaire Pearson Correlation Coefficient of Strategy Items with the Total Degree of Strategy Field**

<b>*No.</b>	<b>Items</b>	<b>Pearson correlation</b>	<b>Sig.</b>	<b>Sig. level</b>
26	The teacher provides a clue or example rather than immediate correction.	0.687	0.000	p< 0.01
27	The teacher points out the error and provides the correct form.	0.320	0.044	p< 0.05
28	The teacher immediately corrects the error, rather than taking time to discuss it.	0.613	0.000	p< 0.01
29	The teacher repeats student's oral language up to the error and waits for the student to self-correct.	0.406	0.009	p< 0.01
30	The teacher identifies the error when it occurs using nonverbal behavior, such as facial expressions.	0.368	0.020	p< 0.05
31	The teacher corrects only the errors that interfere with communication.	0.473	0.002	p< 0.01
32	The teacher interrupts students, midstream to correct their oral errors.	0.655	0.000	p< 0.01
33	The teacher uses delayed error correction (i.e. provides correction at the end of the task).	0.670	0.000	p< 0.01
34	The teacher uses postponed error correction (i.e. provides correction the following day or week).	0.607	0.000	p< 0.01
35	The teacher completely ignores students' oral errors.	0.474	0.002	p< 0.01

(\*These are the numbers of the Likert-scale items pertinent to strategies of oral error their correction as they appear in the original teacher questionnaire.)

**Table 3.12**  
**Teacher Questionnaire Correlation Coefficient of each Field with the Total Degree of Questionnaire**

<b>Field</b>	<b>Pearson Correlation</b>	<b>Sig.</b>	<b>Sig. level</b>
Attitude	0.890	0.000	p< 0.01
Strategy	0.425	0.006	p< 0.01



### ***Teacher Questionnaire: Reliability.***

Generally speaking, a questionnaire is reliable when it gives the same results if it is reapplied in the same conditions (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006). The reliability of the Teacher Questionnaire was measured by Cronach's Alpha and Spilt-half techniques. As illustrated in Tables 3.13 and 3.14 below, the questionnaire was reliable in measuring teachers' attitudes toward oral errors and the strategies they prefer for correcting them. Cronach's Alpha coefficient for attitude was (0.877), and for strategy was (0.712) and the Spilt- half coefficient for attitude was (0.796) and for strategy was (0.817).

**Table 3.13**  
**Teacher Questionnaire Reliability Coefficient**

<b>Cronbach's Alpha Technique</b>		
<b>FIELD</b>	<b>Items</b>	<b>Correlation</b>
Attitude	19	0.877
Strategy	10	0.712

**Table 3.14**  
**Teacher Questionnaire Spilt-Half Reliability Coefficient**

<b>Split-Half Technique</b>			
<b>FIELD</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>BEFORE</b>	<b>AFTER</b>
Attitude	19	0.661	0.796
Strategy	10	0.691	0.817

### **Student Questionnaire**

A questionnaire, utilizing a few open-ended questions and numerous 5-point Likert-scale items, was used to investigate (1) students' attitudes toward oral errors in English and their correction, and (2) students' preferences for particular correction strategies. The questionnaire was partially constructed by the researcher (i.e. the researcher developed some items, while others were adopted and adapted from ideas and questions used in previous questionnaires (e.g. Horwitz, et al., 1986; Shin & Krashen,

1996). The students' original questionnaire was constructed in English and then translated into Arabic to ensure that student respondents had no difficulty in understanding the various questionnaire items. Thus, the questionnaire version, to which the students responded, included items in English and opposite them their Arabic equivalents (See Appendix E)

***Student Questionnaire: Validity.***

In order to determine the validity of the Student Questionnaire, a pilot study, which randomized the 33 Likert-scale items, was applied on a random sample of 60 students. The internal consistency of the survey items was calculated and its Cronbach's alpha coefficient was estimated. Depending on the results of the pilot survey, items with low correlations with the questionnaire total score were deleted and new ones, used by prior researchers, were added.

The internal consistency validity was calculated by using Pearson Formula. As seen in Tables 3.15, 3.16, and 3.17 below, the correlation coefficient of each item within its field is significant at levels ( $p < 0.01$ ) and ( $p < 0.05$ ). The results illustrated in these tables show clearly that the questionnaire was highly consistent and valid as a tool for the study. However, these results show much lower correlations than those of the teacher survey, which exemplifies that children's attitudes are harder to assess.

**Table 3.15**  
**Student Questionnaire Pearson Correlation Coefficient of Attitude Items with the Total Degree of Attitude Field**

<b>*No.</b>	<b>Items</b>	<b>Pearson correlation</b>	<b>Sig.</b>	<b>Sig. level</b>
8	I think it is OK that the teacher interrupts me to correct my oral errors.	0.459	0.000	p< 0.01
9	I think the teacher is right when he/she blames me for making oral errors in English.	0.379	0.003	p< 0.01
10	Students learn and understand more if they correct each other.	0.468	0.000	p< 0.01
11	I think it is better if the teacher speaks to me privately at the end of class and corrects my errors.	0.459	0.000	p< 0.01
12	The teacher should encourage students to express themselves without correcting oral errors.	0.401	0.001	p< 0.01
13	When my teacher corrects my oral errors, it makes me feel inadequate and not smart.	0.679	0.000	p< 0.01
14	I think my classmates think that I am not smart or competent when the teacher corrects my errors.	0.486	0.000	p< 0.01
15	I don not worry about making errors in my English classes.	0.505	0.000	p< 0.01
16	Learners differ in their reaction to oral error correction.	0.450	0.000	p< 0.01
17	Students learn more when their errors are corrected.	0.647	0.000	p< 0.01
18	I encourage myself to speak English in class even when I am afraid of making errors.	0.415	0.001	p< 0.01
19	Errors are a natural part of language learning.	0.625	0.000	p< 0.01
20	The teacher should correct all oral errors I make because if they are ignored, I will not learn to speak correctly.	0.664	0.000	p< 0.01

<b>*No.</b>	<b>Items</b>	<b>Pearson correlation</b>	<b>Sig.</b>	<b>Sig. level</b>
21	When the teacher corrects my oral errors, it helps me learn and improves my English.	0.411	0.001	p< 0.01
22	I do not make the same error again, once the teacher corrects it.	0.266	0.040	p< 0.05
23	I believe it is important to avoid making errors in the process of learning English.	0.445	0.000	p< 0.01
24	It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in our English class because I am afraid of making errors.	0.368	0.004	p< 0.01
25	I want to understand the reasons for my language errors.	0.259	0.046	p< 0.05
26	I am afraid other students will laugh at me when I make errors while speaking English.	0.437	0.000	p< 0.01
27	I learn more when the teacher corrects the errors that my fellow students make in class.	0.398	0.002	p< 0.01
28	I feel cheated if the teacher does not correct the oral errors I make.	0.349	0.006	p< 0.01
29	I think the teacher should have different strategies for correcting students' oral errors.	0.292	0.023	p< 0.05

(\*These are the numbers of the Liker-scale items pertinent to attitudes toward oral errors and their correction as they appear in the original student questionnaire.)

**Table 3.16**  
**Student Questionnaire Pearson Correlation Coefficient of Strategy Items with the Total Degree of This Field**

<b>*No.</b>	<b>Items</b>	<b>Pearson correlation</b>	<b>Sig.</b>	<b>Sig. level</b>
30	The teacher gives some clue or example rather than immediate correction.	0.703	0.000	P< 0.01
31	The teacher explains why the utterance is incorrect.	0.419	0.001	P< 0.01
32	The teacher points out the error and provides the correct form.	0.749	0.000	P< 0.01
33	The teacher immediately corrects the error rather than taking time to discuss it.	0.506	0.000	P< 0.01
34	The teacher repeats the student's utterance up to the error and waits for self-correction.	0.676	0.000	P< 0.01
35	The teacher indicates the occurrence of errors by nonverbal behavior, such as gestures or facial expressions.	0.391	0.002	P< 0.01
36	The teacher corrects only the errors that interfere with communication.	0.350	0.006	P< 0.01
37	The teacher interrupts to correct oral errors.	0.576	0.000	P< 0.01
38	The teacher uses delayed error correction (i.e. provides correction at the end of the task).	0.374	0.003	P< 0.01
39	The teacher uses postponed error correction (i.e. provides correction the following day or week).	0.591	0.000	P< 0.01

(\*These are the numbers of the Liker-scale items pertinent to strategies of oral error their correction as they appear in the original student questionnaire.)

**Table (3.17)**  
**Student Questionnaire Correlation Coefficient of Field with  
the Questionnaire Total Degree**

<b>FIELD</b>	<b>Pearson Correlation</b>	<b>Sig.</b>	<b>Sig. level</b>
Attitude	0.908	0.000	p< 0.01
strategy	0.802	0.006	p< 0.01

***Student Questionnaire: Reliability.***

The Student Questionnaire's reliability was measured by Cranach's alpha and the Spilt-half techniques. As it can be seen in Tables (3.18) and (3.19), the questionnaire was reliable as the Cranach's alpha coefficient for attitude was (0.769) and for strategy was (0.724) and the Spilt-half coefficient for attitude was (0.554) and for strategy was (0.840).

**Table 3.18**  
**Student Questionnaire Reliability Coefficient**

<b>Field</b>	<b>Cranach's Alpha Technique</b>	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>Correlation</b>
Attitude	22	0.769
Strategy	10	0.724

**Table 3.19**  
**Student Questionnaire Spilt-Half Reliability Coefficient**

<b>Field</b>	<b>Split-half Technique</b>		
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>BEFORE</b>	<b>AFTER</b>
Attitude	22	0.384	0.554
Strategy	10	0.725	0.840

## **Focus Groups**

Four focus-group interviews moderated by the researcher were conducted with 12 elementary and secondary school Palestinian EFL students distributed between 2 groups. One group consisted of 5 males and the other was comprised of 7 females. Each group was interviewed twice in the course of the research. The purpose of the focus group interviews was to obtain a more in-depth understanding of the attitudes and perceptions that Palestinian EFL students had toward oral errors and the error treatment strategies used by their teachers. Focus groups, through face-to-face interaction among participant students and between them and the researcher, facilitated greater insights into why certain attitudes were held (Babbie, 1990). They also produced data and insights that would be less accessible without the interaction found in a group (Morgan, 1988).

In the focus group, group interaction is employed to generate data and as a source of data analysis (Goldman & McDonald, 1987; Gordon & Langmaid, 1988; Morgan, 1988). Group forces or dynamics become an integral part of the procedure with participants engaged in discussion with each other rather than directing their comments solely to the moderator. It is assumed that group interaction will be productive in widening the range of responses, activating forgotten details of experience, and releasing inhibitions that may otherwise discourage participants from disclosing information (Merton et. al., 1956). Hess (1968) describes the benefits from participant interaction as synergism, snowballing, stimulation, security, and spontaneity. Asbury (1995) is one of many researchers to argue that focus groups produce data rich in detail that are difficult to achieve with other research methods.

The focus groups for the current study were conducted in Arabic to ensure that student participants had no difficulty in understanding the questions and express themselves more proficiently because they did not have the language proficiency that would enable them to contribute significantly intelligently to the discussion in English. Focus group interviews were recorded and translated and portions were transcribed by the researcher. The transcriptions of the interviews were analyzed and themes were derived. Under each separate theme, portions of dialogue were detailed according to individual participant response. Concomitantly, the transcriptions were analyzed to seek out commonalties and patterns emerging from other interview questions.

An overview of the study methods and the implementation schedule are illustrated in Table (3.20) below.

**Table 3.20**  
**Overview of Study Methods & Implementation Schedule**

<b>Data Collection Methods</b>	<b>No. of Participants</b>		<b>Implementation Schedule</b>
	<b>Teachers</b>	<b>Students</b>	
<b>Questionnaires</b>	151	774	March 2010
<b>Interviews</b>	10	—	March 2010: 1 <sup>st</sup> Interview April 2010: 2 <sup>nd</sup> Interview
<b>Observations</b>	10	774	March 2010: 1 <sup>st</sup> Observation April 2010: 2 <sup>nd</sup> Observation
<b>Focus Groups</b>	—	12 <b>(Divided into 2 groups)</b>	March 2010: 1 <sup>st</sup> Focus Group Interview April 2010: 2 <sup>nd</sup> Focus Group Interview



## DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

### Qualitative Data Analysis

The problem of qualitative data analysis lies in creating some sort of meaning out of what can often be a vast quantity of data and to do so in such a way that any meaning attributed stands up to analytic rigor (Opie, 2004). According to Fisher (1999), this is no easy task because of the volume and complexity inherent in the organization of qualitative data which typically runs into difficulties about what organizing scheme to adopt as data may be organized in logically infinite number of ways and every decision implies an organizing framework from the simple use of chronological order for field notes, to case methods (people, institutions, social situations, etc.), to topical filing systems. Moreover, the analysis of textual data is much more open to the subjectivity of the researcher and as such its reliability and validity are often seen as more suspect (Opie, 2004). However, despite the diversity in qualitative data sources and the countless ways in which they can be analyzed, there are some recurring features of qualitative data analysis.

#### **Common Features of Qualitative Data Analysis**

While possible approaches to qualitative data analysis are very diverse, there are recurring features. According to Cohen, et al, (2000) and Miles and Huberman (1994), these features are as follows.

*Ascribing codes to the initial sets of materials obtained from different sources.*

Creating units of analysis can be done by ascribing codes (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The code is a word or abbreviation that is so sufficiently close to what it describes

that the researcher can see at a glance what it means. For example, the code “trust” might refer to a person’s trustworthiness; the code “power” might refer to the status or power of the person in the group. At this stage the codes are essentially descriptive and, according to Bodgan and Biklen (1992), might include: situation codes; perspectives held by participants; ways of thinking about people and objects; activity codes; strategy codes; methods codes. However, to be faithful to the data, the codes themselves should be derived from the data responsively rather than being created pre-ordinately.

By coding the data, the researcher will be able to detect frequencies (which codes are occurring most commonly) and patterns (which codes do occur together) (Miles & Huberman, 1984). Hammersley and Atkinson (1993) propose that the first activity is that the researcher reads and rereads the data to become thoroughly familiar with them, noting also any interesting patterns, any surprising, puzzling or unexpected features, any apparent inconsistencies or contradictions (e.g. between what people say and what they do).

*Adding comments, reflections, etc. (commonly referred to as “memos”).*

Memos, one of the most important techniques for developing qualitative research ideas, are an extremely versatile tool which can be used for many different purposes. At this juncture, the term memo refers to any writing that a researcher does in relationship to the research other than actual field notes, transcription, or coding. A memo can range from a brief marginal comment on a transcript or a theoretical idea recorded in a field journal to a full-fledged analytic essay (Maxwell, 1996; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Mills, 1959). What all of these different types of memos have in common is that they are ways

of getting ideas down on paper (or in a computer), and of using this writing as a way to facilitate reflection and analytic insight.

When thoughts are recorded in memos, researchers can code and file them just as they do their field notes and interview transcripts, and return to them to develop the ideas further. Not writing memos is the research equivalent of having Alzheimer's disease as researchers may not remember their important insights when they need them (Maxwell, 1996). Memos should be thought of as a way to help researchers understand their topic, setting, or study, not just as a way of recording or presenting an understanding they have already reached (Mills, 1959). Memos can be written on methodological issues, ethics, personal reactions, or anything else.

Whatever form memos take, their value depends on two things: a) the researcher engages in serious reflection, analysis, and self-critique, rather than just mechanically record events and thoughts; and b) the researcher organizes the memos in a systematic, retrievable form, so that the observations and insights can easily be accessed for future examination (Maxwell, 1996).

***Going through the data to identify similar patterns, themes, sequences, etc.***

This involves grouping the units into clusters, groups, patterns, themes, and coherent sets to form domains. A domain is any symbolic category that includes other categories (Spradley, 1979). At this stage it might be useful for the researcher to recode the data into domain codes, or to review the codes used to see how they naturally fall into clusters, perhaps creating overarching codes for each cluster. Spradley suggests that establishing domains can be achieved by four analytic tasks: (a) selecting a sample of

verbatim interview and field notes; (b) looking for the names of things; (c) identifying possible terms from the sample; (d) searching through additional notes for other items to include.

***Establishing relationships and linkages between the domains***

Establishing relationships and linkages between the domains ensures that the data, their richness and “context-groundedness” are retained. Linkages can be found by identifying conforming cases, by seeking underlying associations (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993) and by connections between data sets.

***Making speculative inferences.***

Making speculative inferences is an important stage, for it moves the research from description to inference. This stage requires the researcher, on the basis of the evidence, to posit some explanations for the situation, some of their key elements and possibly even their causes. Making speculative inferences is the process of hypothesis generation or the setting of working hypotheses that feeds into theory generation or theory confirmation.

***Summarizing.***

By this stage, the researcher will be in a position to write a summary of the main features of the situation that have been searched so far. The summary will identify key factors, key issues, key concepts, and key areas of subsequent investigation. It is a watershed stage during which the data collection, as it pinpoints major themes, issues, and problems that have arisen from the data, suggests avenues for further investigation. The concepts used will have been a combination of those derived from the data

themselves and those inferred by the researcher (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1993). By this stage, the researcher will have gone through the preliminary stages of theory generation or theory confirmation.

In addition to common features of qualitative data analysis outlined above, Miles and Huberman (1994) view qualitative data analysis as consisting of three concurrent “flows of activity”: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Following is more elaboration on these three components.

### **Data Reduction.**

Qualitative data can easily become overwhelming, even in small projects. Hence, a researcher needs to find ways of keeping data manageable. This process should start even before the data are collected (i.e. when the researcher focuses the study and makes sampling decisions about people to interview, places to visit, etc.). During and after data collection, the researcher has to reduce the data mountain through the production of summaries and abstracts, coding and writing memos, etc. Miles and Huberman emphasize that this is part of analysis and not a separate activity. Decisions about what to select and to summarize, and how this is then to be organized, are analytic choices.

### **Data Display**

Qualitative data are typically in the form of large amounts of text. Therefore, better means of organizing and displaying the information are needed, and may be found in the use of matrices, charts, networks, etc. These are also ways of achieving data reduction. They have a vital function both during data collection and afterwards, so that

the researcher gets a feel for what the data are telling him or her, what justified conclusions can be drawn, and what further analyses are needed.

### **Drawing and Verifying Conclusions**

A researcher starts to draw conclusions about what data mean from the start of data collection, noting patterns and regularities, positing possible structures and mechanisms, etc. These are then firmed up during and after data collection. Miles and Huberman (1994) stress that patterns, etc., should be verified throughout process (i.e. the researcher is testing the validity and reliability of conclusions). Questions to be asked by the researcher at this stage may include: Is an explanation plausible? Can evidence that confirms this explanation be found? Can a finding be replicated in another data set?

These three flows of activity, together with the activity of collecting the data itself, form a continuous iterative process. For example, coding a data set (data reduction) will lead to ideas of how the data may be displayed, which may help form a tentative conclusion about the operation of a mechanism, or for changing the display or coding system.

#### *Methods for Drawing Conclusions.*

Qualitative researchers appear to have little difficulty in making sense of their data and generating conclusions. However, the issue here is more whether or not these conclusions are valid and correct, which is referred to as verification. Miles and Humerman (1994) list the following methods for drawing conclusions.

- *noting* patterns, themes or trends; seeing plausibility (i.e. do patterns, conclusions, etc., make sense?);

- *clustering* (i.e. grouping similar events, people, processes, etc. together);
- *making metaphors* (i.e. rich, data-reducing and pattern making devices which help to connect data with theory);
- *counting* (enables the researcher to see what is there by counting frequency of occurrence of recurrent events);
- *making contrasts and comparisons* (i.e. establishing similarities and differences between and within data sets; subsuming particulars into the general (i.e. linking specific data to general concepts and categories);
- *factoring* (i.e. attempting to discover the factors underlying the process under investigation; noting relations between variables (using matrix displays and other methods to study interrelationships between different parts of the data);
- *finding intervening variables* (i.e. trying to establish the presence and effects of variables intervening between observed variables);
- *building a logical chain of evidence* (i.e. trying to understand trends and patterns through developing logical relationships);
- *making conceptual/theoretical coherence* (i.e. moving from data, to constructs, to theories through analysis and categorization).

*Methods for Verifying Conclusions.*

Miles and Huberman (1994) list tactics that a researcher might use for testing and confirming the findings. These tactics are grouped into three categories: (i.e. assessing data quality, testing patterns, and testing explanations).

## *Assessing Data Quality*

### *Checking for representativeness.*

There are many pitfalls to gathering of representative data. The informants and the events or activities sampled may be non-representative. Safeguards include the use of random sampling where feasible; triangulation through multiple methods of data collection; and constructing data display matrices. Analyses may be biased, not only because the researcher is drawing inferences from non-representative processes or data, but also because of the researcher's own biases as an information processor. Auditing processes by colleagues help guard against this.

### *Checking for researcher effects.*

These come in two versions: the effects the researcher has on the case, and the effects the researcher's involvement with the case has on him or her.

### *Triangulation.*

Triangulation in qualitative research usually means that researchers use different sets of data, different types of analyses, different researchers, and/or different theoretical perspectives, to study one particular phenomenon (Denzin, 1978). These different points of view are then studied to situate the phenomenon and locate it for the researcher and reader alike. At the same time, a careful reflection on what the researchers use as the particular points (of view) to triangulate the phenomenon tells us as much about the "location" of the researchers themselves as it does about the phenomenon itself.

### *Weighting the evidence*

Some data are stronger than others, and the researcher naturally places greater reliance on conclusions based on the former. Stronger data are typically those the



researcher collects first-hand; those he or she has observed directly; those coming from trusted informants; those collected when the respondent or participant is alone rather than in a group setting; and those arising from repeated contact (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

*Testing Patterns.*

*Checking the meaning of outliers.*

Outliers are the exceptions, the ones that do not fit into the overall pattern of findings or lie at the extremes of a distribution. Outliers can be people, cases, settings, treatments, or events. These outliers should not be hidden or forgotten during data analysis, conclusion drawing, and conclusion verification stages.

*Following up surprises.*

Surprises can be salutary. The researcher may well be surprised because something is at variance with his or her theory of what is going on. This then provides the opportunity to bring that theory to the surface, possibly to revise it, and to search for evidence relevant to the revision.

*Looking for negative evidence.*

This is the tactic of actively seeking disconfirmation of what the researcher thinks is true. While this is in principle straightforward, the researcher is likely to have some reluctance to spending a large amount of time on this activity. If the data contain disconfirmations of what the researcher thinks is true, then his or her task is to come up with alternative, broadened, or elaborated explanation.

*Testing Explanations.*

*Ruling out spurious relationships.*

If the researcher appears to have established a relationship, he or she should consider whether there may be a third factor available which underlies, influences, or causes the apparent relationship.

*Replicating a finding.*

If a finding can be repeated in a different context or data set, then it is more dependable. Given that once the researcher finds a relationship or develops a theory, there is a strong tendency for him or her to find confirming evidence (and to ignore disconfirming evidence). It is even better if someone else, not privy to the findings, confirms it. This is a particular type of triangulation.

*Checking out rival explanations.*

It is good practice for the researcher to try to come up with one or more rival explanations, which could account for all or part of the phenomenon he or she is studying. Keeping these ‘in play’ while the researcher is analyzing and gathering further data helps to prevent the premature closure effect (i.e. where the researcher "fails to move beyond the face value of the text content" (Wilson & Hutchinson 1990:123).

*Getting feedback from informants.*

This process of “member checking” performs several useful functions. It honors the implicit (or favorably explicit) contract between researcher and informant to provide feedback about the findings. It also provides an invaluable means for corroborating them. While problems of jargon and terminology may need to be attended to, the researcher

should be able to present findings in a way that communicates with informants and allows them to evaluate the findings in the light of their superior experience of the setting.

After common features and components of data analysis, methods of drawing conclusions, and methods for verifying conclusions pertinent to qualitative data have been outlined above, in the sections below, analysis of case studies, with special focus on mixed-methods, multiple case studies will be discussed.

### **Analysis of Multiple Case Studies**

Case study data analysis, in particular, generally involves an iterative, spiraling, or cyclical process that proceeds from more general to more specific observations (Creswell, 1998; Silverman, 2000). Ongoing analysis is integrated into each phase of the data collection. Examining responses to the teachers' and learners' questionnaires and teachers' initial interviews in addition to analysis of data obtained from the observations provided cues to new topics and questions for the second interview and focus groups. Once all data were collected, they were organized into manageable formats. Data reduction may include quantification or other means of data aggregation and reduction, including the use of data matrices, tables, and figures (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The intention is to move from description to explanation and theory generation or theory confirmation (Cohen, et al., 2000).

Because in multiple case studies each case may represent a different thematic finding, such as a different type of teacher attitude to oral error, single case as well as cross-case analysis focusing on a small number of pervasive and important themes that

run across different cases will be conducted. As such, a multiple case study requires two stages of analysis: the within-case and the cross-case analysis. In the former, each case is first treated as a comprehensive unit in and of itself, and the data analyzed and triangulated within the integrity of that case; the cross-case analysis then seeks to build abstractions across the cases (Merriam, 1998). Yin (1994) describes this as an attempt to build a general explanation that fits each of the individual cases, even though the cases will vary in their details. Miles and Huberman (1994) note that cross-case analysis is an attempt to see processes and outcomes that occur across many cases, to understand how they are qualified by local conditions, and thus to develop more sophisticated descriptions and more powerful explanations. Simply summarizing superficially across some themes or main variables by itself tells little. Researchers have to look carefully at the complex configuration of processes within each case, understand the local dynamics, before they can begin to see patterning of variables that transcend particular cases.

In analyzing the case study interviews, the observation record sheets, and focus-group interviews, the researcher of the current study used a three-step interpretivist approach (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The first step involved reading through the entire set of data sources once to determine patterns and themes that will eventually become codes used to identify phrases or ideas that represent patterns. Codes were allowed to emerge as the researcher read through the qualitative data sources (Merriam, 1998) and a record of all possible codes was kept. Next, the researcher reread the qualitative data sources and marked places in them that reflected different codes. The third step was both divergent (i.e. categories of coded text were expanded) and convergent (i.e. categories of

coded text were combined) (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Finally, the researcher organized the findings around the study questions by both descriptively and interpretively reanalyzing the data (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

### **Qualitative Data Interpretation**

The qualitative data obtained from the questionnaires, the interviews, and the observation sheet were interpreted through a descriptive/interpretive lens, the most common practice in second and foreign language teaching research. The researcher provided sufficient evidence for claims or interpretations to make them clear, credible, and convincing to others. The researcher also considered alternate explanations, and accounted for results that ran contrary to the themes that emerged or for differences among triangulated sources. It was worthwhile at times to consult case participants for their interpretation of data or findings.

Throughout the interpretation process, the researcher explicitly linked the emerging themes and findings to larger theoretical and practical issues. However, generalization to populations, as in most case studies, was avoided because it may lead to unwarranted inferences as a result of the small sample size. Instead, as it is the case in second language and foreign language research, the researcher proposed some models and/or principles based on the results to be supported, tested, compared, or refuted by others in subsequent research (Schmidt & Frota, 1986).

### **Validity and Reliability of the Research Conclusions.**

Within the qualitative research tradition, validity and reliability describe to what extent the categories of conceptions correspond to research participants' conceptions (Healy & Perry, 2000; Patton, 2001). The starting point of this research was that 12 Palestinian EFL teachers and 12 high elementary and secondary school EFL students described their experiences in order to create an understanding of their attitudes to oral errors and their treatment. Reliability and validity were supported by two criteria: themes illustrated with quotations from the interviews and focus groups and member checking, which assumes that participants would best know the meanings of their words and entails the researcher taking the data back to the teacher and student participants to judge the credibility of the information during the process of data collection and analysis (Kuzel & Like, 1991). This approach implies that in this study quotations had two meanings - to illustrate the results and to give the reader a chance to judge the reasonableness of the interpretation.

### **Quantitative Data Analysis and Interpretation**

A main purpose of quantitative data analysis is to draw conclusions about the study participants by computing useful statistics. The quantitative data obtained from the Likert-scale items of Palestinian EFL teachers' and students' questionnaires and the observation scheme were subjected to following various statistics.

#### **Determining the Central Tendency in the Distribution of a Variable.**

The determination of central tendency helps a researcher answer a basic question about the study: What is a typical value of a variable? The common theme of the answer

to such a question is the need to express what is typical of a group of cases. For example, in the current study a basic question was: What is the impact of Palestinian EFL teachers' attitudes toward oral errors on their choice of oral error treatment strategies? Or: What is the impact of certain error treatment strategies on Palestinian EFL students' attitudes toward English? One of the measures of central tendency is the 'mean' or arithmetic average. The mean was calculated by summing the observations and dividing the sum by the number of observations.

#### **Determining the Spread of a Distribution.**

Determining the spread of a distribution may be as much a factor, or more, than the central tendency in answering the study basic questions. Spread refers to the extent of variation among cases—sometimes cases cluster closely together and sometimes they are widely spread out. A measure of spread, one often used with interval-ratio data, is the standard deviation. It is the square root of the average of the squares of the deviations of each case from the mean. The standard deviation is (0) when there is no variation among the cases. It has no upper limit, however.

#### **Determining the Association among Variables.**

The associations among the study variables were determined by calculating the Simple Linear Correlation (Pearson  $r$ ) in order to determine the extent to which the study various variables are correlated. In pursuing answers to some basic questions such as (1) Are teachers' oral error treatment strategies affected by their attitudes toward such errors? (2) Are students' attitudes toward oral errors affected by the oral error treatment strategies their teachers use? – the current research investigated if different study

variables were correlated. To achieve this endeavor, the quantitative data from the teachers' and students' questionnaires and observation scheme were used to draw conclusions about correlative connections.

To claim a correlative relationship between variables is to claim that teachers' attitudes toward oral errors, for example, influence their oral error treatment strategies and that these strategies influence their students' attitudes toward errors. In trying to determine the extent of correlation among variables, it is assumed that a relationship has more than one effect and an effect has more than one correlative association as in the real world a causal process is seldom, if ever, limited to two variables. If for example, the researcher of the current study only looked at the association between oral error treatment strategies and students' achievement in English, he was likely to draw the wrong conclusions.

To provide an evidence of correlative connections between the study variables, asymmetric measures of associations are used to provide such evidence. In these measures, if the researcher treats one variable as independent and another as dependent, and then he or she computes the appropriate measure and finds that it is sufficiently different from zero, the researcher will have evidence of a possibly correlative relationship. For example, if in the current study the researcher had data on teachers' attitudes toward oral errors and the oral treatment strategies they used, he could compute a measure of association between the two variables. However, a simple association was not sufficient because other variables were likely to influence the dependent variable, and



unless the researcher took these extraneous variables into account, his estimate of the correlative association would be wrong.

### **Factor Analysis.**

As the quantitative aspect of the current study was non-experimental, isolating the study variables from other factors and determining the regression coefficient of one variable when another was regressed would almost produce wrong results. Rather, it was necessary to consider other latent factors likely to affect the study variables. To achieve this, factor analysis was used in this study to analyze interrelationships among variables and to explain these variables in terms of their common underlying dimensions (factors). The main applications of factor analytic techniques are: (1) to reduce the number of variables and (2) to detect structure in the relationships between variables, that is to classify variables (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1992). There are basically two types of factor analysis: exploratory and confirmatory. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) attempts to discover the nature of the constructs influencing a set of responses and Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) tests whether a specified set of constructs is influencing responses in a predicted way. In this study, EFA was conducted on the teachers' and students' responses to the two questionnaires to identify key areas of teachers' and students' attitudes toward oral errors and error treatment strategies.

EFA is generally used to establish whether one or more factors do underlie a large number of variables; if so, the analysis identifies the number of factors and which of them makes up which factor. EFA is sometimes called a data reduction technique because the researcher can use the outcome to choose a smaller number of variables than those

initially measured. EFA does not test hypotheses by means of a formal test of significance. Instead it explores the possibility of a factor structure underlying the variables. The analysis provides a large amount of information, which the researcher can then use to specify factors. Thus, EFA allows the researcher to make informal inferences instead of carrying out formal inferential tests of significance.

The current study met the criteria for data and number of participants that are usually suggested for the use of EFA. These criteria, according to Brace, Kemp, and Snelgar, (2006), include, but are not confined to, the following:

1. The variables should at least be of ordinal level of measurement.
2. The variables should be normally distributed.
3. The relationships between variables should be reasonably linear.
4. For a successful factor analysis at least (100) participants should provide data, and some say (200) or more. Two pointers are:
  - a. There should be more participants than variables. Kline (1994) suggests a minimum ratio of (2:1), but the more the better. Thus, if the researcher wishes to explore the factor structure underlying a questionnaire that contains (35) items, then he or she should test a minimum of (70) participants.
  - b. There should be more participants than extracted factors. Kline suggests a minimum ratio of (20:1). In truly EFA, however, the researcher does not know how many factors there will be and therefore the more participants the researcher tests, the more likely it is that any factors underlying the measured variables will be revealed, and a sample size of (200) hundred is a sensible minimum target.

As the questionnaires of the current study were administered to (151) teachers and (774) students, the number of participants was large enough for EFA to reveal the factors that underlay the measured variables. Moreover, as most of the items of the questionnaires used Likert-scale of measurement, this meant that they were ordinal in nature. Further, the variables were normally distributed and the relationships between them were reasonably linear.

#### **The Independent *t*-test.**

The independent *t*-test was used to evaluate the differences in means between two groups of participants (e.g. males and females) and to examine whether or not there were any statically significant differences attributed to gender. This test was also used because the data in the present study were parametric. Data are considered parametric if they have the following three assumptions: normality, equal variances, and independence. The quantitative data obtained from the present research met these three assumptions. First, the data were obtained from a population that was normal. Second, the populations from which the data were obtained had equal variances. And, third, the data were measured on an interval scale (Nisbet, Elder, & Miner, 2009).

#### **Cronbach's alpha.**

Cronbach's alpha was used to measure the internal consistency of the Likert-scale items of the two questionnaires and to see how closely these items were related as a group. A "high" value of alpha is often used (along with substantive arguments and possibly other statistical measures) as evidence that the items measure an underlying (or

latent) construct. Technically speaking, Cronbach's alpha is not a statistical test - it is a coefficient of reliability (or consistency).

### **Split-Half Analysis.**

To compute the reliability of the questionnaires, the researcher used Split Half Analysis, in which the sum scale was divided in some random manner into two halves. If the sum scale is perfectly reliable we would expect that the two halves are perfectly correlated (i.e.,  $r = 1.0$ ). Less than perfect reliability will lead to less than perfect correlations.

## **SAFEGUARDS AGAINST BIAS**

It is, arguably, impossible to eliminate bias in research, be it qualitative or quantitative, due to factors such as the limitations of measurement capabilities and the nature of the object of study, especially when people's attitudes are concerned. Case studies are dependent on the sensitivity and integrity of the investigator. The researcher is the primary data-gathering instrument, and all researchers are not equally skilled in observation and interviewing. Additionally, there is limited standardization in data analysis, and there may be confusion between data and data interpretation, resulting in selective presentation of evidence. Further, there may be unethical selection of data, bias, and failure to distinguish between stated and observed behaviors and attitudes. However, to ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the final results, bias can and should be minimized. A combination of three lenses was used as safeguard against bias in the current study: the lens of the researcher, the lens of the study participants, and the lens of people external to the study (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

## **Lens of the Researcher**

Triangulation of different data sources (e.g., interviews, observations, focus groups, and questionnaires) and different perspectives (e.g., those of teachers and students) was used as a means of enhancing credibility and safeguarding against research bias (Denzin, 1978). The emphasis was on developing a converging line inquiry based on multiple forms of evidence rather than a single incident or data point in the study (Creswell and Miller, 2000). Triangulation was not just used as a tactic at the end of the study but rather as a strategy to build a chain of evidence while still in the process of data collection (Xu, 2006).

## **Lens of Study Participants**

One strategy to safeguard against research bias was to use study participants' lens. This entailed staying for a considerable period of time with the teacher and student participants in order to establish rapport with them and to better capture and understand their feelings and attitudes. This type of prolonged engagement (i.e. the investment of sufficient time to achieve certain purposes; learning the schools and participants; testing for misinformation introduced by distortions either of the self or of the respondents, and building trust with the participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) safeguarded against bias.

Another strategy was member checking during the process of data collection and analysis. Member checking assumes that participants would best know the meanings of their words; therefore, the data were taken back to the teacher and learner participants to judge the credibility of the information while the researcher was still in the field.

## **Lens of People External to the Study**

Peer debriefing was used to minimize bias. The researcher's peers who were professionals outside the context and who had some general understanding of the study were asked to analyze materials, test working hypotheses and emerging designs, and listen to the researcher's ideas and concerns (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993).

## **ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Ethics has to do with the application of moral principles to prevent harming or wronging others, to promote the good, to be respectful, and to be fair (Sieber, 1993). Ethical considerations were of particular concern in the current study and were applied throughout the research process because research comes into the life of people who are focused in various ways, taking up their time, involved in activities they would not otherwise have been involved in, and providing the researcher with privileged knowledge about themselves (Opie, 2004).

Several safeguards were employed to protect participants' rights and feelings. Care was taken to avoid leaving the teacher and student participants feeling that they had been instrumentally and cynically manipulated. For example, the researcher guarded against portraying participants in any way that might damage their self-esteem. This included such things as editing out 'ums' and 'ers' from reported speech because research participants may feel that literal transcription makes them appear incoherent (even if they are anonymous).

It is possible that teacher and student participants will feel as if the researcher is evaluating their teaching and learning abilities, as that is often the purpose of

observations in schools. To ensure a level of comfort, the researcher explicitly stated before, during, and after the study that the goal of the study was in no way to evaluate the teachers' teaching abilities. This was done to make the teachers feel more comfortable as well as to avoid any unauthentic teaching practices. Moreover, it was explicitly stated to students that the observations were in no way evaluating their abilities. Similarly, this was done to ensure a level of comfort with participant students and to encourage them not to alter their normal behavior because of the researcher's presence in the classroom. Informed consent forms from teacher and student participants as well as from students' parents/guardians were obtained before they took part in the study. Privacy and confidentiality of all participants was guaranteed through hiding any information or details, which could identify their identities. In the research report, for example, participant teachers and students were referred to by numbers and thus no real names or pseudonyms were used.

## **SUMMARY**

The qualitative data obtained from interviews, focus groups, and the two questionnaires' open-ended questions were meant to supplement and flesh out what was discovered in the quantitative data by generating a fine-grained view of how Palestinian EFL teachers and students perceived oral errors and their correction strategies. Relying solely on quantitative data obtained from the two questionnaires' Likert-scale items would have provided the study with a considerable width without any chance to follow up on participants' responses or to clarify meanings. Equally important, depending completely on qualitative data obtained from a small number of teacher and student

participants would have generated in-depth insights that lacked width. For this reason, the current study adopted and adhered to a mixed-methods research design.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS AND FINDINGS

#### INTRODUCTION

In the previous three chapters of the present study, the research problem, objectives, significance, limitation, theoretical background, previous research, research methods, participants, and instruments were discussed. This chapter presents the findings from the analysis of the teacher and student questionnaires, the observation scheme, interview and focus group protocols – concerning Palestinian EFL teachers' and students' attitudes toward oral errors and the strategies of their correction – in response to the overarching research main question and six sub-questions outlined in Chapter One. Findings are mapped out into six sections, each of which answers one of the research questions. As has been mentioned in Chapter Three, the research questions are answered using multiple data sets, and different data sets are used to answer different questions.

#### QUESTION ONE

What is the nature of Palestinian EFL teachers' attitudes toward their students' oral errors? Strong majorities of Palestinian EFL teachers had positive attitudes toward oral errors and error correction. This conclusion is self-evident from the analysis of teachers' responses to the attitude items of the questionnaire. This analysis revealed, as seen in Table 4.1 below, that the most dominant attitude among teacher respondents was that errors are a natural outcome of learning any language. This attitude was ranked first

with a percentage weight of (86.4%).<sup>1</sup> This attitude was closely followed by the belief that EFL teachers should use different strategies for oral error correction, which was ranked second with a percentage weight of (84.9%). Stemming naturally from this last belief was the one that students differ in their reaction to oral error correction, which was ranked third with a percentage weight of (82.0%). This positive trend toward oral errors and their correction is enhanced by the teacher respondents' belief that teachers' corrections of oral errors help students learn and improve their English, which was ranked fourth with a percentage weight of (81.9%). Still a good majority of teacher respondents (i.e. 77.5%) believed that students learn more through error correction.

**Table 4.1**  
**Teacher Questionnaire Sum of Responses, Mean, Standard Deviation, Percentage Weight and Rank of Each Item in the Attitude Field**

<b>Items</b>	<b>Sum</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>% weight</b>	<b>Rank</b>
Errors are a natural part of learning any language.	652	4.318	0.976	86.4	1
EFL teachers should use different strategies for oral error correction.	641	4.245	1.039	84.9	2
Students differ in their reaction to oral error correction.	619	4.099	1.082	82.0	3
Teachers' corrections of students' oral errors help students learn and improve their English.	618	4.093	0.955	81.9	4
EFL teachers should encourage students to express themselves rather than continually correct their errors.	598	3.960	1.051	79.2	5
Students learn more through error correction.	585	3.874	1.085	77.5	6
In general, it is important that my students make as few errors as possible in their oral English.	577	3.821	1.090	76.4	7

<sup>1</sup> The percentage weight is calculated by dividing the mean of an item by the highest score it can get on the likert-scale and then multiplying the result of the division by (100). For example, the percentage weight of (86.4%) of the teacher attitude that was ranked first was calculated by using the mean of this which was (4.318), as illustrated in Table 4.1 below. Then, the mean was divided by the highest score this attitude could get on the Likert-scale which was (5). Next, the result of the division of these two numbers was multiplied by (100). The result was (86.4%).

Items	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation	% weight	Rank
When EFL students make oral errors, it helps to correct them and later teach a short lesson explaining why they made that error.	548	3.629	1.111	72.6	8
Learners' errors should be corrected as soon as they are made in order to prevent the formation of bad habits	541	3.583	1.416	71.7	9
When EFL students make oral errors, it usually helps to provide them with lots of oral practice with the language patterns that seem to cause them difficulty.	539	3.570	1.134	71.4	10
Students learn and understand more if they correct each other.	536	3.550	1.247	71.0	11
When learners are allowed to interact freely in groups or pairs, etc., they learn each other's errors.	517	3.424	1.241	68.5	12
The teacher should use materials that expose students only to language they have already been taught in order to minimize their errors.	485	3.212	1.242	64.2	13
Students do not make the same error again after the teacher corrects it.	471	3.119	1.194	62.4	14
If students are permitted to make errors in English, it will be difficult for them to speak correctly later on.	459	3.040	1.442	60.8	15
Teachers should correct all the oral errors students make because ignored errors result in imperfect learning.	441	2.921	1.339	58.4	16
Students should avoid making errors when learning English.	439	2.907	1.293	58.1	17
Since errors are a normal part of learning, much correction wastes time.	396	2.623	1.427	52.5	18
I think students are to blame for making oral errors in English.	310	2.053	1.148	41.1	19
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9972</b>	<b>66.040</b>	<b>8.801</b>	<b>69.5</b>	

Furthermore, the positive attitudes which Palestinian EFL teachers held regarding oral errors and their correction manifested themselves when we find that only a minority of those teachers (i.e. 41.1%) believed that students are to blame for making oral errors in English, while only (58.1%) of teacher respondents believed that students should avoid making errors. Moreover, extreme attitudes such as too much correction wastes time and teachers should correct all the oral errors students make because ignored errors resulted in imperfect learning were ranked relatively low on the attitude scale with a percentage weight of (52.5%) and (58.4%) for each of them respectively.

These positive attitudes toward oral errors and their correction were also maintained in what the (12) teacher interviewees recounted. For instance, Teacher Participant #1 equated making errors with learning, because, in his viewpoint, "... if you don't make any errors you can't learn, as many students learn from these errors." This attitude of viewing making errors and learning as inseparable companions also resonated with what Teacher Participant #4 clearly emphasized when he said, "There is no learning of a foreign language without making mistakes." Expressing the inevitability of learning a language without making errors and the compulsivity of such errors, Teacher Participant #4 asserted, "Errors can't be avoided when we study a foreign language. I mean to learn any language, you must make mistakes." Furthermore, the (12) teacher interviewees unanimously said that their students' errors informed their lesson planning and instruction. In her turn, Teacher Participant #9 equated making errors with cleverness when she said, "Making errors is a sign of cleverness."

In line with these positive attitudes held by Palestinian EFL teachers toward oral errors and their correction, when asked how teachers could encourage their students to view errors positively, a number of teachers responded that the teacher should demonstrate to students that errors are a normal part of learning any language, making errors is not the end of the world, and telling them that he who makes no mistakes, does nothing. Still, other teachers said that such encouragement can be achieved by assuring students that errors are the first step of success and that making errors is not something bad as without these errors they will not learn anything. Such positive attitudes toward oral errors and their correction were also demonstrated in teacher responses to the question asking them if they considered error correction an essential part of their role as teachers. As seen in Table 4.2 below, 144 (i.e. 95.36%) of the 151 teacher respondents answered this question affirmatively.

**Table 4.2**  
**Teachers' Viewpoints of Correction as Essential Part of Their Role as EFL Teachers**

<b>Do you consider error correction an essential part of your role as a teacher?</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	144	95.36
No	7	4.64
<b>Total</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>100.00</b>

## QUESTION TWO

What strategies do Palestinian EFL teachers prefer and use to correct their students' oral errors? The researcher used a combination of data sets: the oral error correction strategy items of the teacher questionnaire (i.e. 28-37), teacher questionnaire open-ended questions, classroom observation sheet, interviews with Palestinian EFL teachers, and focus group interviews with Palestinian EFL students.

An analysis of teachers' responses to questionnaire strategy items illustrated in Table 4.3 below reveals that the error correction strategy entailing the teacher pointing out the error and providing the correct form was the most favored by teacher respondents as it was ranked first with a percentage weight of (79.5%). This strategy was immediately followed by the strategy entailing the teacher providing a clue or example rather than an immediate correction with a percentage weight of (78.8%). Ranked third by those teachers was the error correction strategy entailing the teacher identifying the error when it occurs using nonverbal behavior with a weight percentage of (76.0%). The strategy comprising the teacher repeating students' oral language up to the error and waiting for the student to self-correct was ranked fourth with a percentage weight of (70.5%).

The least favored error correction strategy among the respondent teachers was the one entailing the teacher completely ignoring student's oral error with a percentage weight of (28.6%). This strategy was preceded by the strategy involving the teacher using postponed correction with a percentage weight of (37.7%). Another strategy obtaining a considerable minority with a percentage weight of (41.9%) was the one entailing the teacher interrupting students amid stream to correct their oral errors.

**Table 4.3**  
**Teacher Questionnaire, Sum of Responses, Means, Standard Deviation, Percentage Weight and Rank of Each Item in the Strategy Field**

Items	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation	% weight	Rank
The teacher points out the error and provides the correct form.	600	3.974	1.089	79.5	1
The teacher provides a clue or example rather than immediate correction.	595	3.940	1.150	78.8	2

Items	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation	% weight	Rank
The teacher identifies the error when it occurs using nonverbal behavior, such as facial expressions.	574	3.801	1.161	76.0	3
The teacher repeats student's oral language up to the error and waits for the student to self-correct.	532	3.523	1.428	70.5	4
The teacher uses delayed error correction (i.e. provides correction at the end of the task).	465	3.079	1.521	61.6	5
The teacher corrects only the errors that interfere with communication.	408	2.702	1.413	54.0	6
The teacher immediately corrects the error, rather than taking time to discuss it.	406	2.689	1.489	53.8	7
The teacher interrupts students amid stream to correct their oral errors.	316	2.093	1.267	41.9	8
The teacher uses postponed error correction (i.e. provides correction the following day or week).	285	1.887	1.263	37.7	9
The teacher completely ignores students' oral errors.	216	1.430	0.949	28.6	10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4397</b>	<b>29.119</b>	<b>4.515</b>	<b>58.2</b>	

However, the analysis of the data obtained from the observation scheme sheet revealed consistencies as well inconsistencies with teachers' responses to the error correction strategy items illustrated above. As seen in Table 4.4, which illustrates the strategies used by (12) Palestinian EFL teachers, each of whom was observed twice during the course of the study, the recurrence of the strategy entailing the teacher correcting in his/her voice during all observed classes occupied the first rank with a percentage of (39.70%). Despite evident discrepancy in the percentages of this strategy

recurrence, this was consistent with the rank which the teachers responding to the error correction strategy items of the questionnaire assigned to this particular strategy.

Nonetheless, the strategy entailing the teacher providing clues so as to help students self-correct, which was ranked second with a percentage weight of (78.8%) on the teacher questionnaire, was ranked fifth on the observation sheet with a percentage of just (5.20%). Such divergence and inconsistency are further enhanced when one looks at the error correction strategy entailing the teacher identifying the error when it occurs using non-verbal behavior, which was ranked third with a percentage weight of (76.0%) on the teacher questionnaire, while this same strategy had no trace inside the classroom, and thus came last in the observation sheet with a percentage of (0.0%). A similar inconsistency is evident in the strategy entailing the teacher repeating student's oral language up to the error and waiting for the student to self-correct, which was ranked fourth with a percentage weight of (70.5%) on the teacher questionnaire, whereas on the observation sheet it was ranked eleventh with a percentage of (1.70%).

Furthermore, the strategy entailing the teacher completely ignoring the student's oral errors was ranked low by the teachers responding to the questionnaire with a percentage weight of (28.6%). It was also ranked low on the observation sheet with a percentage of (3.40%). It is worthwhile mentioning at this juncture that it proved very difficult and tricky for the non-participant researcher to decide precisely whether the observed teachers recognized that an error had been made and they deliberately ignored it and let it go without correction or absence of correction was due to the fact that the teachers failed to recognize that an error had been made.



The analysis of the observation sheet data also revealed that the strategy entailing the teacher asking other students to correct came second with a percentage of (19.00%), and the one in which the teacher let students self-correct came third with a percentage of (12.90%). The least used oral correction strategy was the one entailing the teacher using non-verbal behavior, which came last with a percentage of (0.0). It was preceded by the two strategies entailing the teacher echoing up to error and students volunteering to provide corrections, each of which received a percentage of (1.70%).

When asked to describe an effective oral error strategy he used, Teacher Participant #4 said, "Self-correction and peer correction are the best strategies because they don't strain students and thus they feel relaxed." Teacher Participant #10, while responding to the same question, pointed out that an effective strategy was writing the errors on the board and asking students to correct them. She thought that this strategy would help students remember the correction and learn from it. While describing an effective strategy he used, Teacher Participant #3 said, "I let the student speak without interrupting him because if you interrupt him, he will not participate at all. After the student finishes, I will repeat some of his mistakes using echoing. The students will realize that he has made a mistake and the correct sentence has been given by the teacher." In her response to the same question, Teacher Participant #9 said, "I can't just use one method. It depends on the situation in class. I keep giving more examples and I ask them to give me examples." In a similar vein, Teacher Participant #8 said, "When the student makes an error, the teacher corrects the error, only when no other student can provide will the teacher herself correct the error."

**Table 4.4**

**\*Observation Sheet Frequencies and Sums of Observations, Means, Standard Deviation, Percentage, and Rank**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	Sum	Percentage	Rank
T. corrects in his/her voice	6	3	4	3	3	4	4	4	5	2	2	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	46	39.70	1
T. asks other Ss to correct	3	4	4	2	3	2	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	22	19.00	2
<b>Correction Strategies</b>	0	0	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	15	12.90	3
question intonation.	0	2	0	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	6.00	4
T. provides clues so as to help S self-correct.	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	5.20	5
T. ignores error.	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	3.40	6
T. asks S. to repeat.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	2.60	7
T. provides negative feedback.	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	2.60	7
S. echoes what T. says.	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	2.60	7
T. asks S to point out correct answer from two alternatives.	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	2.60	7
Ss volunteer to provide correct answer	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1.70	11
T. echoes up to error.	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1.70	11
T. uses non verbal behavior.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>100</b>	

\*This table illustrates the frequency of each correction strategy across all (24) classroom observations of the (12) study teacher participants (i.e. 2 observations per teacher). The percentage for each strategy was calculated by dividing the number of each strategy frequencies by the total number of all strategies' frequencies and then multiplying the result of the division by 100.

### QUESTION THREE

How do Palestinian EFL teachers' attitudes affect their choice of the strategies they use to treat students' errors? An analysis of the data obtained from the attitude and strategy items of the questionnaire revealed that Palestinian EFL teachers' attitudes toward oral errors strongly affected the oral error correction strategies they used when correcting such errors. As seen in Table 4.5 below, almost all of the teachers' questionnaire responses indicated that error correction was an essential part of their role as EFL teachers. Furthermore, a strong majority of them adopted a moderate attitude towards such errors by trying to avoid the two extremes of error correction (i.e. correcting all or ignoring all errors). In this respect, it can be noticed that teachers who believed that correcting students' oral errors helps students learn and improve their English represented (81.9%) of the (151) teacher respondents, and those who believed that students learn more through error correction represented (77.5%) of the same respondents.

Conversely, the strategy entailing the teacher completely ignoring students' oral errors was ranked very low with a percentage weight of (28.6%) by teacher respondents. These same teachers ranked the strategy entailing the teacher correcting all the oral errors relatively low as only (58.4%) of them agreed with this strategy. In addition, (71.7%) of teachers believed that learners' errors should be corrected as soon as they are made, and thus (78.8%) of them ranked high the strategy entailing the teacher pointing out the error and providing the correct form. On the contrary, teachers of those beliefs ranked the strategies entailing the teacher using postponed and delayed correction relatively low with a percentage weight of (37.7%) and (61.6) respectively.

**Table 4.5**  
**Relationship between Teachers' Attitudes toward Oral Errors and the Strategies Teachers Prefer to Use to Correct Errors**

No.	Oral Correction Strategy	% weight	Teachers' Attitudes to Oral Errors	% weight
1	The teacher points out the error and provides the correct form.	79.5	Learners' errors should be corrected as soon as they are made in order to prevent the formation of bad habits.	71.7
2	The teacher immediately corrects the error, rather than taking time to discuss it.	53.8	Learners' errors should be corrected as soon as they are made in order to prevent the formation of bad habits.	71.7
3	The teacher corrects only the errors that interfere with communication.	54.0	EFL teachers should encourage students to express themselves rather than continually correct their errors.	79.2
			Teachers should correct all the oral errors students make because ignored errors result in imperfect learning.	58.4
4	The teacher uses delayed error correction (i.e. provides correction at the end of the task).	61.6	Learners' errors should be corrected as soon as they are made in order to prevent the formation of bad habits.	71.7
5	The teacher uses postponed error correction (i.e. provides correction the following day or week).	37.7	Learners' errors should be corrected as soon as they are made in order to prevent the formation of bad habits.	71.7
7	The teacher completely ignores students' oral errors.	28.6	Students learn more through error correction.	77.5
			Teachers' corrections of students' oral errors help students learn and improve their English.	81.9
			Teachers should correct all the oral errors students make because ignored errors result in imperfect learning.	58.4

To examine whether there were any other possible variables that could have been affecting the relationship between Palestinian EFL teachers' attitudes toward students' oral errors and the strategies those teachers used to treat such errors, the researcher tried to find out whether there were any statistically significant differences at ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) in Palestinian EFL teachers' attitudes toward oral errors and the strategies of their treatment attributed to teacher gender. To this end, the researcher conducted a *t*-test, whose results are illustrated in Table (4.6) below. As seen in this table, there were no statistically significant differences at ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) in attitude and strategies between the two groups of teachers attributed to their gender.

**Table (4.6)**  
**Gender, Sample Number, Mean, Standard Deviation, t, Significance Value, and Significance Level to Determine Gender Differences between Male and Female Teachers**

<b>Field</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b>	<b>sig. level</b>
<b>Attitude</b>	Male	76	66.211	9.448	0.239	0.811	not sig.
	Female	75	65.867	8.153			
<b>Strategy</b>	Male	76	29.526	4.411	1.116	0.266	not sig.
	Female	75	28.707	4.611			

“t” table value at (772) d f. at (0.05) sig. level equals 1.96

“t” table value at (772) d f. at (0.01) sig. level equals 2.58

To find out what types of oral errors are generally corrected by Palestinian EFL teachers the researcher analyzed the data obtained from the observation scheme sheet. The results of this analysis shown in Table 4.7 below reveal that pronunciation occupied the first rank with a percentage of (72.4%), grammar occupied the second rank with a percentage of (17.2%), and last came lexis with a percentage of (10.3%).

**Table 4.7**  
**Frequencies, Percentage and Rank of Each Item in the Field of "Error Treatment Strategies"**

No. of Observations	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	Sum	%	Rank
<b>Type of error</b>																					
<b>Grammar</b>	4	4	1	2	2	2	1	0	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	20	17.2	2
<b>Pronunciation</b>	7	6	7	8	6	8	7	7	8	4	5	3	2	2	1	1	1	1	84	72.4	1
<b>Lexis</b>	1	2	3	1	2	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	10.3	3
<b>Total</b>	12	12	11	11	10	10	9	9	9	6	6	3	2	2	1	1	1	1	116	100	

## QUESTION FOUR

What are the Palestinian EFL students' attitudes toward oral errors and strategies of their correction? The researcher analyzed the data gathered from the Student Questionnaire and focus group interviews. The analysis showed that, like their teachers, Palestinian EFL students had positive attitudes toward oral errors and the strategies of their correction. Such positive attitudes manifested themselves in students' responses to the questionnaire open-ended question asking them whether they preferred their oral errors to be corrected or not. An overwhelming majority of student respondents (i.e. 91.73%), as seen in Table (4.8) below, answered this question affirmatively.

**Table 4.8**  
**Students' Preferences for Oral Error Correction**

Do you prefer your oral errors be corrected?	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Yes</b>	710	91.73
<b>No</b>	64	8.27
<b>Total</b>	<b>774</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Moreover, a strong majority of student respondents felt that oral errors and their correction helped them learn English better. Therefore, it is no wonder that one finds that

(91.0%) of those students, as seen in Table 4.9 below, said that they learned more when their teachers corrected the errors which their peers made in class, and a slightly smaller percentage of them (i.e. 90.7%) believed that the correction of their oral errors helped them improve their English. Still, another strong majority of students (i.e. 90.5%) believed that students learned more when their errors were corrected and (87.9%) of them considered errors a natural part of language learning.

**Table 4.9**  
**Means, Standard Deviation, Percentage Weight and Rank of Each Item in the Attitudes**  
**Field of Student Questionnaire**

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	% weight	Rank
I learn more when the teacher corrects the errors that my fellow students make in class.	4.549	0.789	91.0	1
When the teacher corrects my oral errors, it helps me learn and improves my English.	4.536	0.811	90.7	2
Students learn more when their errors are corrected.	4.523	0.847	90.5	3
Errors are a natural part of language learning.	4.397	0.911	87.9	4
I want to understand the reasons for my language errors.	4.328	0.941	86.6	5
The teacher should correct all oral errors I make because if they are ignored, I will not learn to speak correctly.	4.173	1.123	83.5	6
I think the teacher should have different strategies for correcting students' oral errors.	4.155	1.102	83.1	7
I do not make the same error again, once the teacher corrects it.	4.081	1.063	81.6	8
I encourage myself to speak English in class even when I am afraid of making errors.	4.068	1.135	81.4	9
Learners differ in their reaction to oral error correction.	3.935	1.110	78.7	10
Students learn and understand more if they correct each other.	3.711	1.368	74.2	11
I feel cheated if the teacher does not correct the oral errors I make.	3.609	1.343	72.2	12
I think it is OK that the teacher interrupts me to	3.609	1.344	72.2	13

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	% weight	Rank
correct my oral errors.				
I believe it is important to avoid making errors in the process of learning English.	3.428	1.330	68.6	14
I do not worry about making errors in my English classes.	3.190	1.329	63.8	15
I think it is better if the teacher speaks to me privately at the end of class and corrects my errors.	2.877	1.522	57.5	16
I am afraid other students will laugh at me when I make errors while speaking English.	2.851	1.506	57.0	17
It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in our English class because I am afraid of making errors.	2.773	1.442	55.5	18
The teacher should encourage students to express themselves without correcting oral errors.	2.699	1.406	54.0	19
I think the teacher is right when he/she blames me for making oral errors in English.	2.660	1.469	53.2	20
I think my classmates think that I am not smart or competent when the teacher corrects my errors.	2.426	1.330	48.5	21
When my teacher corrects my oral errors, it makes me feel inadequate and not smart.	2.261	1.318	45.2	22
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>78.840</b>	<b>8.155</b>	<b>71.7</b>	

These findings aligned with the students' responses to the question asking them if they think oral error correction hinders their learning, (681) (i.e. 87.98%) of the (774) students responded negatively to this question as can be seen in Table 4.10 below.

**Table 4.10**  
**Students' Responses to Question Asking Whether Error Correction Hinders Learning**

Do you think oral error correction hinders your learning?	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	93	12.02
No	681	87.98
<b>Total</b>	<b>774</b>	<b>100.00</b>



It seems that students' beliefs in correcting oral errors forced a good majority of them (i.e. 83.5%) to go to the extreme of demanding that the teacher correct all the oral errors they committed. This result is strongly aligned with students' response to the question asking them which teacher they preferred: the teacher correcting all, some, or no errors. As seen in Table 4.11 below, a good majority (i.e. 79.84%) of student respondents preferred the correction of all of their oral errors and a strikingly remarkable minority of just (1.68%) preferred the non-correcting teacher.

**Table 4.11**  
**Students' Preferences for a Particular Type of Teacher**

<b>Whom do you like more?</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
a teacher who corrects all oral errors	618	79.84
a teacher who sometimes corrects oral errors	143	18.48
a teacher who never corrects oral errors	13	1.68
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>774</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Student focus group participants also expressed such positive attitudes toward oral errors and their correction. Student Participant #6, for example, said, "Error correction has a positive effect on me because it pushes me to revise this piece of information." Participant #9 also said, "I want my teacher to correct my errors so as not to make the same error again. There is a little shame because I fail to give a correct answer, but it is natural." These positive attitudes were also emphasized in students' responses to the open-ended questions of the student questionnaire. A majority of respondents thought that they learned, benefited, understood, improved their learning from the correction of their oral errors. One respondent said, "I prefer that my errors be corrected because I am a kind of person who learns from her errors and if my errors are not corrected, I'll continue making the same errors." Another student said, "She who does not make errors does not

learn." Other students considered error correction as an indication that their teacher cared for them, a means for becoming more knowledgeable and growing more aware of the points of weakness in English, and a motive for studying hard to avoid committing such errors in the future.

Moreover, a majority of focus group student participants considered errors and their correction advantageous and beneficial. For instance, Student Participant #6 said, "When one makes an error, one will never forget the right answer, and it is impossible to make the same mistake again. When I make an error, and the teacher corrects me, the right answer will be fixed in my mind. I'll benefit from the errors which my classmates make because when a classmate makes an error and the teacher corrects it, my attention will be drawn to this error and I will never forget the correction." Equally, in their responses to the questionnaire open-ended questions, some respondents expressed similar opinions such as, "When I make an error and the teacher corrects me I will be able to differentiate between what is correct and what is incorrect and this is beneficial for me", "When errors are corrected, I understand better and this will minimize the number of errors committed", and "I feel satisfied when my errors are corrected because it helps me learn and because there are people who care for me. I even feel curious when I have my errors clarified".

Students' preference for oral error correction made just a considerable minority of them (i.e. 45.2%) feel inadequate and not smart when the teacher corrected their oral errors. This means that (54.8%) of them did not experience such feelings. Similarly, only a minority of (48.5%) thought that their classmates would think that they were not smart

or competent enough when the teacher corrected their errors. Further, a small number of student questionnaire respondents underwent negative experiences when their errors were corrected. These experiences included feeling embarrassed, ashamed, annoyed, angered, tensed, frustrated, ridiculed, teased, confused, depressed, trivial, upset, and worried. At this respect, some of them said, "I lose my self-confidence," "I feel sad and resistant to participate," "I feel humiliated," and "It is psychologically painful." Some focus group participants expressed similar experiences. Student Participant #7, for example, said, "Sometimes the teacher won't allow the student who makes mistakes to go on with the activity and asks her to sit down and the teacher herself does the rest of the task. This makes the student feel embarrassed, ashamed, and extremely anxious. This student will refrain from participating in class another time for fear of making errors and the teacher causing her to feel embarrassed." Student Participant #12, in her turn, said, "Error correction may detract from the student's personality and standing inside the classroom."

### **QUESTION FIVE**

What are Palestinian EFL students' preferences for particular types of oral error correction strategies and to what extent do they converge or diverge with those of their teachers? To answer this question, the researcher made use of different data sets. First, a descriptive statistical analysis of data obtained from the error correction strategy items of the students' questionnaire was conducted. As illustrated in Table 4.12 below, the questionnaire results show that the most preferred oral correction strategy was the one entailing the teacher repeating the student's utterance up to the error and waiting for self-correction. Students ranked this strategy first with a percentage weight of (87.9%). This

strategy was closely followed, by the one entailing the teacher pointing out the error and providing the correct form. The percentage weight of this strategy was (87.1%). Furthermore, a strong majority of students (i.e. 83%) expressed preference for the strategy entailing the teacher explaining why the utterance is incorrect, and another (79.1%) of them wanted correction to be confined to errors interfering with communication.

On the other hand, Table 4.12 also shows that the least preferred oral error correction strategy among Palestinian EFL students was the one entailing the teacher using postponed error correction, which they ranked last with a percentage weight of (27.6%). This strategy was preceded by the one that required the teacher to correct the error immediately, rather than take time to discuss it with students. This strategy percentage weight was (36.9%). Furthermore, the strategy entailing that the teacher uses delayed correction was ranked relatively low (i.e. 51.1%) by student respondents.

**Table 4.12**  
**Sum of Responses, Means, Standard Deviation, Percentage Weight and Rank of Each Item in the Strategy Field**

Item	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation	% weight	Rank
The teacher repeats the student's utterance up to the error and waits for self-correction.	3401	4.394	1.164	87.9	1
The teacher points out the error and provides the correct form.	3369	4.353	1.208	87.1	2
The teacher explains why the utterance is incorrect.	3213	4.151	1.376	83.0	3
The teacher corrects only the errors that interfere with communication.	3063	3.957	1.465	79.1	4
The teacher indicates the occurrence of errors by nonverbal behavior, such as gestures or facial expressions.	2549	3.293	1.686	65.9	5

Item	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation	% weight	Rank
The teacher gives some clue or example rather than immediate correction.	2475	3.198	1.776	64.0	6
The teacher interrupts to correct oral errors.	2214	2.860	1.745	57.2	7
The teacher uses delayed error correction (i.e. provides correction at the end of the task).	1979	2.557	1.700	51.1	8
The teacher immediately corrects the error rather than taking time to discuss it.	1428	1.845	1.380	36.9	9
The teacher uses postponed error correction (i.e. provides correction the following day or week).	1067	1.379	1.008	27.6	10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>24758</b>	<b>31.987</b>	<b>4.666</b>	<b>64.0</b>	

Although both teacher and student questionnaire respondents, despite noticeable differences in percentage weight, ranked the strategy entailing the teacher completely ignoring students' oral errors last with a percentage weight of (37.7%) and (27.6%) respectively, there were still noticeable differences between Palestinian EFL teachers' and students' preferences for oral error correction strategies when preferences of the two groups are compared. As seen in Table 4.13 below, there appears to be a considerable discrepancy between the two groups. A noticeable difference between teachers' and students' preferences for oral error correction strategies can be traced in three strategies. Firstly, while teachers ranked the strategy entailing the teacher pointing out the error and providing the correct form first with a percentage weight of (79.5%), students ranked it second with a percentage weight of (87.1%). Secondly, while students ranked the strategy entailing the teacher explaining why the utterance is incorrect fifth with a relatively low percentage weight of (65.9%), teachers ranked it third with a noticeably higher

percentage weight of (72.6%). Finally, while teachers ranked the strategy entailing the teacher immediately correcting the error rather than taking time to discuss it eighth with a percentage weight of (53.8%), the students ranked it ninth with a percentage weight of (36.9%).

**Table 4.13**  
**Comparison between Palestinian EFL Teachers' and Students' Preferences for Oral Correction Strategies**

Oral Correction Strategy	Teachers		Students	
	% Weight	Rank	% Weight	Rank
1. The teacher gives some clue or example rather than immediate correction.	78.8	2	64.0	6
2. The teacher explains why the utterance is incorrect.	72.6	4	83.0	3
3. The teacher points out the error and provides the correct form.	79.5	1	87.1	2
4. The teacher immediately corrects the error rather than taking time to discuss it.	53.8	8	36.9	9
5. The teacher repeats the student's utterance up to the error and waits for self-correction.	70.5	5	87.9	1
6. The teacher indicates the occurrence of errors by nonverbal behavior, such as gestures or facial expressions.	76.0	3	65.9	5
7. The teacher corrects only the errors that interfere with communication.	54.0	7	79.1	4
8. The teacher interrupts me to correct my oral errors.	41.9	9	57.2	7
9. The teacher uses delayed error correction (i.e. provides correction at the end of the task).	61.6	6	51.1	8
10. The teacher uses postponed error correction (i.e. provides correction the following day or week).	37.7	10	27.6	10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>62.64</b>		<b>63.98</b>	

Still more divergence between teachers' and students' preferences for oral error correction can be discerned in several strategies. For example, while the strategy entailing the teacher repeating the student's utterance up to the error and waiting for self-correction was ranked first with a percentage weight of (87.9%) by students, it was ranked fifth with a percentage weight of (70.5%) by teachers. Another instance of such discrepancy manifests itself in the strategy entailing the teacher correcting only the errors that interfere with communication, which was ranked fourth with a percentage weight of (79.1%) by students, while ranked seventh with a percentage weight of (54.0%) by teachers.

Attempting to further investigate whether the relationship between students' attitudes toward oral errors and their preferences for certain correction strategies were attributed to student gender, and if this relationship had statistically significant differences at ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ), the researcher conducted a *t*-test, whose results are illustrated in Table (4.14). These results show that there were statistically significant differences between male and female students in the attitude field in favor of females. Nonetheless, the same *t*-test results reveal that there were no statistically significant differences between the males and females in the strategy field.

**Table (4.14)**  
**Gender, Sample Number, Mean, Standard Deviation, t, Significance Value, Significance Level to Determine Differences between Male and Female Students**

<b>FIELD</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b>	<b>sig. level</b>
<b>Attitude</b>	Male	390	78.141	8.087	2.410	0.016	p< 0.05
	Female	384	79.549	8.172			
<b>Strategy</b>	Male	390	31.828	4.904	0.955	0.340	Not sig.
	Female	384	32.148	4.412			

“t” table value at (772) df at p<0.01 equals 1.96

“t” table value at (772) df at p<0.01 sig. level equals 2.58

In addition to data obtained from students' responses to the Likert-scale items of the questionnaire, the researcher used data from students' responses to the open-ended questions to investigate Palestinian EFL students' preferences for particular types of oral error correction strategies. In their responses, a good majority of students expressed preferences for explicit and immediate correction strategies. To this end, one respondent said, "I prefer that the teacher interrupts me and corrects my errors and explains it to me so that I won't repeat the same errors." Another respondent preferred that the teacher repeats the errors with their correction, writes them on the board, and explains a little about the error. Another respondent said, "Interrupting the student when she makes a mistake and correcting her as the correction will keep carved in her memory because she was interrupted to be corrected." Another added, "The teacher should listen to everything the student says and then the teacher should repeat what has been said emphasizing the wrong utterances for all students to benefit from such correction." Another said, "Teacher points out the location of error, why it is wrong, provides correction and discusses it with students."

Although the majority of student respondents were keen on having their errors corrected as explicitly as possible, they preferred that the oral error correction strategies should be as friendly as possible and devoid of embarrassment and humiliation. Therefore, a good number of them wanted their errors to be corrected confidentially, just between the error maker and the teacher or providing correction in general terms without specifying a particular student. At this respect, one questionnaire respondent said, "Correcting my errors in a way devoid of embarrassment: just explanation and



clarification." Another emphasized, "The teacher should provide the error correction to the students without specifying a particular one because making the error a general issue does not embarrass anybody." A third respondent recommended, "When I make an error, the teacher should take me aside and explain my errors to me in the absence of other students." Still others wanted the correction to be in a dignified and respectful way. In this vein, one respondent said, "I want my errors to be corrected and discussed without reducing my self-confidence." Another respondent preferred that the teacher uses delayed correction, after the student finishes her answer, without reprimand or humiliation.

Data obtained from students' contributions to the focus group interviews were also used to investigate Palestinian EFL students' preferences for particular types of oral error correction strategies. These data revealed that student participants had preferences similar to those expressed by students in their responses to the Likert-scale and open-ended items of the questionnaire. In this respect, Student Participant #7 said, "In my opinion the best strategy is that the teacher gives the student the chance to self-correct." To Student Participant #1, the best strategy was the one entailing the teacher correcting students' errors soon after they are made and then writing the correct form on the board so that students could write the correction and explanation in their notebooks because in this case they will not forget the correction. Still, Participant #3 considered the strategy entailing the teacher allocating time for common errors among the students and the problems they face as a good strategy for oral error correction. Confidential error correction was also emphasized by Student Participant #2, who said: "The student goes to the teacher after class and asks the teacher about errors which the student made, but not

in front of the students. The teacher should take the student and explain the errors and their correction to him."

### **QUESTION SIX**

What are the effects of different oral treatment strategies employed by Palestinian EFL teachers on the development of their students' attitudes? The researcher used data from the student questionnaire and focus group interviews to respond to this question. Although the Palestinian EFL students' attitudes toward oral errors and their correction were generally positive and a striking majority of them (i.e. 91.73%) said that they preferred their oral errors to be corrected and justified such preference by viewpoints such as "Students learn from the correction of their errors and benefit from it in their practical life," "Correction helps students become more accurate in English and prepares them for the forthcoming exams," and "Correction helps students become more knowledgeable," it can be noticed that the different attitude dimensions (i.e. cognitive, affective, and behavioral) were valued differently by students. Generally speaking, the cognitive dimension of students' attitudes mattered more to students than the other two dimensions, of which the affective dimension mattered more than the behavioral one.

As seen in Table 4.15 below, a strong majority of student questionnaire respondents (i.e. 90.5%) thought that students would learn more when their errors were corrected and (90.7%) of them believed that teacher error correction of oral errors helped students learn and improve their English. Still, (83.5%) of those student respondents believed that all their oral errors should be corrected because ignored errors would lead to learning incorrect English.

**Table 4.15**  
**Palestinian EFL Students' Attitudes toward Oral Error Correction**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Percentage Weight</b>
1	Students learn more when their errors are corrected.	90.5
2	When the teacher corrects oral errors, it helps students learn and improve their English.	90.7
3	All oral errors made by students must be corrected because if ignored errors will lead to the formation of incorrect English.	83.5

In line with their valuation of the cognitive dimension of attitudes, when the student questionnaire respondents were asked if oral error correction hindered their learning, as seen in Table 4.16 below, (681) students (i.e. 87.98%) out of the (774) respondents responded negatively to this question. Further, highly valuating the role of errors and their correction, (78.84%) of student respondents said that they preferred the teacher who corrected all errors. However, if this correction was provided by a peer and not the teacher, correction would be a little less favorable. This is reflected in the fact that just (74.2%) of the students thought that they learned and understood more when they corrected each other.

**Table 4.16**  
**Student Responses to Question Asking if Error Correction Hindered Learning**

<b>Do you think oral error correction hinders your learning?</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Yes</b>	93	12.02
<b>No</b>	681	87.98
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>774</b>	<b>100.00</b>

The affective dimension of Palestinian EFL students' attitude toward oral errors and their correction, although important, seems to have mattered less than the cognitive dimension and on many occasions students were evidently divided and expressed mixed

feelings. Although (91.73%) of the students responded positively to the question that asked them if they preferred their errors to be corrected, a comparatively small number of them (i.e. 52.33%), as seen in Table 4.17 below, responded positively to the question that asked them if they felt happy when a classmate corrected them. Students who responded positively to this question justified their responses by statements such as "There is no stigma or shame when another student corrects my errors," and "Error correction by a peer enhances our friendship and solidarity in the classroom." Students who responded negatively to this question qualified their responses by statements such as "When I am corrected by a peer, I feel that he/she is better than me, a thing that may negatively affect my morale," "I feel ashamed and annoyed because I feel that my peer is more knowledgeable than I am," "I feel stupid," "I feel worthless," "The peer will give the correction out of malice, while the teacher will do it out of a desire to help us learn."

In line with those mixed feelings toward oral errors and their correction, although (63.8%) of student respondents said that they did not worry about making errors, (55.5%) of them said that it embarrassed them to volunteer to answer in class because they were afraid of making errors, and another (57.0%) of them said that they were afraid that other students would laugh at them when they made errors.

**Table 4.17**  
**Percentage Weight of Student Responses to Sample of Attitude Items**

Attitude Item	% Weight
I do not worry about making errors in my English classes.	63.8
It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in our English class because I am afraid of making errors.	55.5
I am afraid other students will laugh at me when I make errors while speaking English.	57.0

When asked about the reactions they experienced after being corrected among their classmates, some student respondents said that they experienced positive affective reactions; others said that they experienced negative experiences; while others still expressed mixed feelings. Those experiencing positive affective reactions accounted for such experiences by statements such as "I feel satisfied and curious because there are people who care for me and because it helps me learn and clarify my errors." Students who experienced negative affective reactions as a result of error correction said that they underwent experiences of fear, worry, irritation, shame, anger, humiliation, depression, embarrassment, confusion, and tension. Others expressed negative experiences by saying, "When errors are corrected in an arrogant way, I will never dare to answer any question," "I feel that my dignity has been detracted in front of my peers," "I lose my self-confidence," "I shiver and feel embarrassed," "I feel trivial," and "I feel unhappy and upset." Other students experienced mixed feelings when they were corrected. Those mixed feelings included shame, annoyance and satisfaction. Those students experiencing mixed feelings demonstrated this by using statements such as "I feel satisfied because I learn from my errors; however, I feel annoyed and embarrassed", "If too many errors are

corrected, I feel embarrassed; nonetheless, if just a few errors are corrected I accept this because I like to learn from my errors."

## **SUMMARY**

The data analyzed in this chapter and obtained from different sources provide significant evidence that both Palestinian EFL teachers and students had positive attitudes toward oral errors and the strategies of their correction. As discussed throughout this chapter, both groups generally agreed that error correction is necessary for the enhancement of language learning. However, the data also revealed that students and teachers often disagree on the amount of error correction that there should be in class. Moreover, the data revealed some discrepancy between teachers' beliefs and students' perceptions of oral errors and the effectiveness of their correction strategies. Although students wanted to improve their English proficiency, not every one liked being marked down on every error he/she made and different error correction strategies had different cognitive, affective, and behavioral impacts on them. Data also revealed that teachers had at their disposal a wide variety of error correction strategies to deal with learner errors; however teachers persisted in using a limited number of those strategies. As should be clear from the data gathered for the current study and from previous research, for most teachers today it is not a case of deciding whether there should be error correction or not, but the much more difficult task is offering the right amount of error correction for individual student preferences, language level, personality type, and learning styles.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

#### INTRODUCTION

After presenting the research findings in response to the research main question and six sub-questions in detail in Chapter Four, this final chapter interprets the study major findings and attempts to provide an integrated account of them with reference to previous research, some of which was discussed in Chapter Two, on attitudes toward oral errors and the strategies of their correction in Palestinian EFL classes. In concordance with qualitative and mixed-methods research designs, this chapter will present the summary and conclusions of the present study in the form of themes derived from the discussion and interpretation of the data. In the light of these emerging themes, a number of recommendations for EFL teacher preparation programs, Palestinian directorates and departments of education, Palestinian EFL teachers, and Palestinian EFL students will be provided. The chapter will conclude with the present research limitations and suggestions for possible future research.

#### EMERGING THEMES

The analysis of the different data sets collected in the course of the current study has resulted in the emergence of a considerable number of overarching themes which interpret and summarize the present research findings. These themes, combining data from the study's different sources, largely derive from the research questions illustrated

in Chapter One and answered in Chapter Four. Following is a detailed account of those emerging themes.

### **Teachers and Students Generally Have Positive Attitudes toward Oral Errors and Their Correction**

Data collected from both teachers and students in this study showed clearly that the majority of them had positive attitudes toward oral errors and their correction. These attitudes were evident in the perceptions which the majority of teacher and student participants expressed as an overwhelming majority of them considered errors inevitable and integral to the process of learning a foreign language.

In this vein, a great majority (i.e. 86.4%) of teacher respondents considered errors a natural outcome of learning any language and (81.9%) of them believed, that teachers' corrections of oral errors helped students learn and improve their English. In line with this, Teacher Participant #1 said, "Making errors means that the students are learning, and if you don't make errors, you can't learn.". Similarly, Teacher Participant #3 considered errors a natural occurrence in the language classroom, and teachers had to believe in that." Furthermore, in their responses to the questionnaire open-ended questions, many teachers expressed favorable attitudes toward oral errors and their correction. One teacher considered making errors an integral part of language learning and error correction an essential part of a teacher's work. Another teacher stated that error correction played a facilitative role in the learning process as "error correction helps students improve their language."



In addition, when asked to describe their feelings when their students made oral errors, some teachers expressed feelings of happiness, gladness, and pride. For example, Teacher Participant #2 said, "I'm glad when my students make errors because they [students' oral errors] tell me that I have succeeded in making them say something in English that is important to them. It also shows me at what level they are and so I can assess what I can do next with them. If they don't say anything, I don't know what their level is and I don't know how to help them"

The majority of Palestinian EFL students maintained positive attitudes toward oral errors and their correction. Agreeing with their teachers, an exceptionally large number of Palestinian EFL students expressed positive attitudes toward oral errors and their correction. This is evident in the overwhelming majority (i.e. 91.73%) of the student questionnaire respondents who said that they wanted their oral errors to be corrected. Almost a similar majority (i.e. 91.0%) of those students felt that oral error correction helped them learn English better. Similarly, a slightly smaller percentage (i.e. 90.5%) of students believed that they learned more when their errors were corrected. Still, (87.9%) of them considered errors a natural part of language learning.

In line with this, in their response to the questionnaire, some students said that when their oral errors were corrected, they felt that the teacher cared for them; others felt comfortable, pleased, and glad. One student respondent even equated making errors with learning when she said, "She who doesn't make errors doesn't learn." These positive attitudes were also emphasized by Student Participant #11, who said, "I want my teacher to correct my errors so as not to make the same error again. There is a little shame when I

fail to give a correct answer, but it is natural." What is more, some students considered oral error correction as advantageous because it sharpened their attention, encouraged them to learn, developed their faculties, pushed them to work hard to become more diligent, and sped up their learning. In this respect, a student questionnaire respondent said, "As long as my oral errors are corrected, they will become fewer and my language will become more accurate." In a similar vein, Student Participant #8 said, "The advantage of error correction is that I remember the point I erred in and never forget it."

Similar attitudes toward oral errors and their correction can be found in Bargiel-Matusiewicz and Bargiel-Firlit's (2009) study, in which (100%) of (316) student respondents believed that making errors is something natural and unavoidable and that lack of errors equaled lack of progress. In their answers to the questionnaire open questions, some of those respondents said that they felt glad to have their errors corrected and that they felt comfortable when these errors were corrected. Further, Katayama's (2007) study of American students studying Japanese as a foreign language found that (92.8%) of the study student respondents had positive attitudes toward oral error correction and wanted their teachers to correct their oral errors. Similarly, in Saudi Arabia, Mosbah (2007), whose study sample consisted of (60) school students studying English as a foreign language, found that (98%) of the questionnaire respondents had positive attitudes toward error correction and wanted their errors to be corrected. Jeon and Kang's (2005) student participants always wanted their errors to be corrected. In Ancker's (2000) international study, (76%) of the students interviewed said that the teacher should always correct their errors; otherwise, they wouldn't learn to speak

English correctly. Moreover, Schulz's (1996) study found that (95%) of Arab students wanted to be corrected in class, when they made errors. Further, Cathcart and Olsen (1976) found that (75%) of their (146) study participants wanted correction all the time.

EFL students' favorable attitudes toward oral errors and their correction may be attributed more to extrinsic rather than to intrinsic motivation. According to Brown (2001), in an EFL setting, intrinsic motivation can be low, and English may not seem relevant to students since it is not part of their daily lives and they just study it for tests, which forms a strong extrinsic motivation. In this case, extrinsic motivation means motivation to get good grades, which count directly toward students' grade point average (GPA). In a similar vein, Schulz (2001) speculates that FL students' strongly favorable attitudes toward error correction could be attributed to the way in which the foreign language is tested. Students sitting for discrete-point tests focusing on accuracy, as it is the case with Palestinian school students, would be much more in favor of error correction.

### **Considerable Numbers of Palestinian EFL Teachers and Students Have Negative Attitudes toward Oral errors and Their Correction**

A considerable number of teachers and students in this study did not maintain positive attitudes toward oral errors. When some teacher participants were asked about how they felt when students made errors, Teacher Participant #1, for example, said, "If they repeat an error previously corrected, I feel upset." Teacher Participant #3 expressed similar feelings when he said, "If the students make errors in something I taught previously, I would feel annoyed about it." Similarly, Teacher Participant #10 said, "I

feel sad especially when I have corrected the error before." Teacher Participant #11 also expressed a similar feeling when she said, "When students persist in making mistakes after being corrected, I sometimes feel angry."

Many student participants also did not maintain positive attitudes seemingly reflected in the quantitative data, and consequently expressed some negative feelings toward oral errors and their correction. For example, Student Participant #7 said, "When I am the only one who makes this error, I feel ashamed and embarrassed." This feeling of embarrassment was also affirmed by Student Participant #12 when she said, "It is very embarrassing to make an error in something which the teacher has already corrected because, then, the student will be teased and ridiculed by her classmates." To make matters worse for students making errors, the teacher may jump in and provide extremely negative, if not destructive, feedback. In this vein, Student Participant #8 said, "When I make a mistake in something that has been corrected, the teacher starts scolding me and asking me why I was absent-minded and inattentive."

Students responding to open-ended questions of the questionnaire noted similar negative feelings to error correction, especially errors that are repeatedly corrected. Students' negative feelings resulting from the correction of their errors included, but were not limited to confusion, helplessness, inferiority, inadequacy, shamefulness, annoyance, tension, frustration, anxiety, depression, tease, and ridicule. One of the respondents plainly said, "When my errors are corrected in front of my classmates, I go red; I shiver and feel embarrassed; I feel angry; I feel teased and afraid of participating another time."

Students' negative attitudes toward oral errors and their correction in the current study conform to findings in other studies. In their study conducted in Polish schools, Bargiel-Matusiewicz and Bargiel-Firlit's (2009) found about half of the (316) research participants associated making a mistake with guilt, and others with bad marks or grades. Those students used avoidance techniques when they were not certain if what they were going to say was correct. Similarly, in her study of (209) non-English major EFL students at An-Najah National University in Palestine, Thaher (2005) found that students' negative attitudes toward oral errors and their correction were attributed to their fear of making errors in the presence of their classmates, fear of being laughed at or criticized, and fear of losing face in front of peers. In his study, Tunaboylu (1993) found that the negative attitudes toward errors resulted from the heavy psychological pressure created by making errors.

Although in their responses to the questionnaire Likert-scale items, an overwhelming majority of students in the present study expressed positive attitudes toward oral errors and their correction, thanks to the qualitative aspects of the current research (i.e. focus group interviews and questionnaire open-ended questions), these negative attitudes were identified. This may be attributed to the fact attitude investigation, particularly of negative ones, necessitates the use of methods that go beyond attitude surveys to probing deeply into these attitudes, culminating in thick description, and thus uncovering more information about them and expanding our understanding (Geertz, 1973). As pointed out earlier in Chapter Three, mixed-methods research designs are

capable of yielding richer, more valid, and more reliable findings than evaluations based on either a qualitative or quantitative method alone (Howe & Eisenhart, 1990).

Such discrepancy between students' responses to the questionnaire and focus group questions may have arisen from the fact the students responded to the questionnaire in the presence of their teachers, and thus students might have been afraid of saying something that contradicted what their teachers expected them to say. Consequently, an overwhelming majority of students expressed favorable attitudes toward errors and their correction. However, during the focus group discussions, participant students were able to express themselves freely because no teacher was present.

### **Error correction is never 'one-size fits all'**

Educational research asserts that teaching and error correction strategies are highly context- and individual-specific. Students possess diverse learning styles and prefer different instructional practices (Katayama, 2007). Consequently, as different students have different learning styles and thus learn differently, their errors should be corrected differently as well. Naturally, students have different feelings and reactions to error correction; therefore, teachers should know their students well and become alerted to their learning styles and personalities (Sze, 2009). Teachers should realize that error correction is never 'one size fits all'. This theme was clear in different accounts of teachers' interviews and questionnaires as well as students' focus groups and questionnaires.

Given that students have different learning styles, their oral errors should be corrected differently; (84.9%) of teacher respondents believed that EFL teachers should use different strategies for correcting students' oral errors and (82%) of them saw that students differ in their reaction to oral error correction. These perceptions were also stressed by Teacher Participant #8 when she said, "Different students learn in different ways, and I know that some students insist that you correct them, and I have no problem doing that." In another context she assured, "It depends on the students. Some students were definitely surer of themselves and sure of what they wanted and had no problem of me stepping in and correcting them."

Teacher Participant #4 stressed a similar point of view with regards to considering individual differences when correcting oral errors. In this vein, she said, "It depends on the students themselves. Some students accept this correction, while others feel angry when they are corrected." Teacher Participant #7 expressed a similar opinion by asserting, "It really depends. Some students feel OK when they are stopped and corrected, but I think others become very furious; they don't feel good. Some students feel ashamed, while others feel normal when the teacher corrects their errors." Similar opinions were also reflected in teachers' responses to the open-ended items of their questionnaire. For example, one teacher respondent said, "Some students accept correction; others feel embarrassed." Another teacher said, "Students' reactions to error correction depend on their levels: weak students feel OK when they are corrected, but good ones feel embarrassed."

Differences among students in their preferences for different error correction strategies were crystal clear in the students' responses to the focus group and questionnaire different items. In their responses to the questionnaire Likert-scale items, (86.6%) of student respondents favored explicit error correction that entailed metalinguistic explanation because they wanted to know why they made those errors, (83.1%) thought that the teacher should use different strategies for correcting students' oral errors, (72%) were in favor of immediate correction as they thought that it was okay if the teacher interrupted them to correct their errors, and (57.5%) were in favor of delayed and confidential correction.

Similarly, Student Participant #1 expressed preference for immediate and explicit error correction by saying, "In my opinion, the best strategy is when the teacher corrects my error soon after I make it and then writes the correct form on the board so that I can write it in my notebook. In this case, I will not forget the correction." Student Participant #2, on the other hand, preferred delayed and confidential error correction. He qualified this preference by saying, "The teacher should take the student aside and not in front of other teachers either, the student tells the teacher about the difficulties he faces and the teacher helps correct them for him." Student Participant #7 expressed another preference when she said, "I think the best strategy is that the teacher gives the student the chance to self-correct."

In their responses to the questionnaire items, student respondents expressed preferences for a wide range of error correction strategies which included, but were not limited to, the teacher taking the student aside and explaining the error to him/her,



interrupting students and correcting their errors, eliciting information that may lead to correction, the teacher repeating the errors with their correction and writing them on the board, saying and writing the words and explaining a little about the error, pointing out the error and giving students a chance to self-correct, and saying the correct utterance and having students repeat.

Despite the fact that most teacher participants admitted that different students need to be corrected differently and that teachers should have at their disposal different error correction strategies so that they could choose the most appropriate ones according to students' personalities, learning styles, level of proficiency, and preferences, in the majority of the observed classes teachers did not walk the talk. During those observations, the researcher noticed that most of the teachers used a very limited number of oral error correction strategies and these strategies did not change from one student to another. As can be seen in Table 4.4 above, out of the (13) error correction strategies listed on the observation sheet, the most widely used strategy was the one entailing the teacher correcting in his/her voice. This strategy was ranked first with a percentage of (39.70%). Second came the strategy entailing the teacher asking other students to correct with a percentage of (19.00%). Third came the strategy entailing the teacher letting students self-correct with a percentage of (12.90%). These three strategies combined together accounted for (71.60%) of the strategies used by the teachers. This means that the other (10) strategies accounted for just (28.40%) of the total number of oral error correction strategies employed by the observed teachers, a thing which indicates absence, rather than presence, of selectivity. What can be concluded is that in real practice teachers

do not use and do not have at their disposal either a variety of error correction strategies that may fit different students' preferences, personalities, and learning styles.

In this vein, it stands to reason that if teachers are to be effective in the error correction strategies they decide to use, they should act in accordance with their espoused beliefs and attitudes. However, in reality, this is not the case (as the current study reveals) because there is a discrepancy between what teachers say they believe (their “espoused” theories) and the ways in which they act (their “theories-in-action”) (Argyris & Schon, 1974). As teachers develop strategies that are effective for them, they become more and more reluctant to give them up, no matter what teaching methodologies they say they support. In a study carried out in the U.S.A., (88%) of teachers returned to their old ways within three weeks of being told about or subjected to the latest educational research on teaching methodologies (Open University, 1984). If there is a large discrepancy between what teachers say they believe and what they actually practice, not only do teachers send out confusing signals to the students and to teaching colleagues, but these errors also reflect back onto the teacher (Argyris & Schon, 1974).

The study findings concerning the theme of 'error correction is never 'one-size fits all' and that different students prefer their errors to be corrected differently conform to the findings of many previous studies. For instance, Lynch (2009) found that teachers' use of various error correction strategies depending on individual learners and the context of lessons is recommended because it is more effective and successful than relying upon a single technique and contributes to increased motivation, involvement, and interest among students.

Furthermore, different studies found that students preferred different strategies depending on their age, gender, culture, personalities, learning styles, and the reason why they studied English. For example, Mosbah's (2007) study of Saudi school students found that elicitation was favored over explicit correction by the teacher and short and simple grammar explanation was regarded important in error treatment. Jeon and Kang's (2005) study of Korean adult students found that giving explicit rule explanation by the teacher was the most preferred error correction strategy. Lee's (2002) study of multinational ESL learners found that explicit correction, recast and grammatical explanation were the most preferred oral error correction strategies. Cathcart and Olsen's (1976) found that explicit correction, metalinguistic feedback, and elicitation were the most preferred correction strategies. Still, Katayama's (2007) study of (588) EFL students at several Japanese universities found that students' most favored strategy was the one entailing the teacher giving a hint which might enable the student to notice the error and self-correct, followed immediately by the technique entailing the teacher pointing out the error and providing the correction.

It is self-evident then that all of these studies as well as the present research stress the importance of understanding, on behalf of both teachers and students, of what makes an error and giving students a chance to self-correct. Moreover, these studies point out students' reluctance to participate in the classroom interactions is triggered by their avoidance to be the laughingstock of their peers and consequently get discouraged and humiliated. No doubt, such avoidance deprives students of valuable learning opportunities. As no one wants to be laughed at and humiliated, unless the risk of

participating and making errors is eliminated, students will continue to be reluctant (A. Friedman, pers. comm.).

### **Selectivity should be the norm in oral error correction**

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 (Celce-Murcia, 1985; Cohen, 1975; Hammerly, 1991; Ur, 1996, among others) advocate the significance of the use of selective correction techniques for responding to students' errors. They maintain that teachers should correct only the most important errors or those of a certain type. Research on teacher treatment of students' errors shows that students would rather not be marked down for each oral error, because it destroys their confidence (Carroll et al. 1992). Research also shows that teachers do not treat all the errors that do occur (Hairston, 1986). If correction has to be done selectively, it implies that teachers have to decide which errors should be prioritized for correction (Walz, 1982). Bartram and Walton (1991) assert that 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 commonly 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 (Truscott, 2001).

However, teachers are often faced with difficult choices about how best to correct oral errors without discouraging learners and thwarting their desire to learn (Allwright & Bailey, 1994). They also need to be confident that they treat errors in such a way that the learners will, in fact, alter their output for the better. Therefore, teachers must provide learners with appropriate cognitive feedback as well as affective support (Brown, 1994). As oral activities generally aim at encouraging students to speak using whatever language they have at their disposal, a teacher should not keep interrupting them to correct their errors. This may result in shifting the activity focus from concentration on communication to concentration on some grammatical or phonological issues (Scrivener, 2005; Ur, 1996). Therefore, teachers should avoid interrupting the flow of the conversation or discussion; instead they may select some major errors made by the majority of students or individual students and then choose the appropriate time for dealing with them.

This theme of selectivity emerged in various areas of the data sets: teacher questionnaire, student questionnaire, teacher interviews, and student focus groups. For example, when asked about whether teachers should correct all, some, or none of students' oral errors, Teacher Participant #8 said, "Oral errors usually occur when we have classroom discussion and my main aim then is to have people talk and participate as much as possible ... So I wouldn't stop them as soon as they make an error and correct them... It [error correction] changes the topic of the conversation from what we were talking about into a grammar or a pronunciation issue". The impossibility and impracticality of correcting all errors were also emphasized by Teacher Participant #3

when he said, "I correct some mistakes because it is impossible to correct all errors ... You have (44) students in class, so you just correct the most common and important errors." Teacher Participant #5 gave another reason for correcting some, rather than all, oral errors, when he said, "In fact, I correct some errors, not all of them because students will be shy and hesitant, which creates an obstacle or a problem." Teacher Participant #9 justified her selectivity while correcting students' oral errors by saying, "I correct some errors depending on the aim and focus of the activity. If my focus is on fluency, I correct fewer errors, but if the focus is on accuracy, I can correct more errors."

Even when the focus is to help students become more accurate in their use of oral English, the number of times teachers interfere in the course of the discussion is important. Even here teachers should be selective. Teacher Participant #1 emphasized, "And there is the issue of how many times you correct. I think that it is useful to be alerted about some mistakes that you have made but it is not useful being corrected five times in a minute as you can't remember all of them, so I try to be selective. I come with some errors students made in general in the classroom and some errors which individual students made and try to correct just one or two of them.... You can't just overwhelm students. Just have them consciously think about one or two things and let them practice a lot of reading, a lot of writing, and a lot of speaking, and they can move on."

Student participants also emphasized the theme of selectivity. For example, while recalling one of her previous teachers, Student Participant #7 said, "She was really good. She really made this point about selecting oral errors, taking one or two things, and thinking about errors systematically. Just hitting one or two that you are going to focus

on, and just focus on those and don't overwhelm the students with fifteen kinds of errors that they make." Similarly, Student Participant #6 said, "If I make six errors, the teacher mustn't correct all of six errors. The teacher should correct the things we have studied and just give hints about things we haven't studied yet so as to make understanding them easier in the future when we study them." This issue of restricting teacher's correction to a small number of errors focusing mainly on language points students have already studied was also evident in what Student Participant #1 said, "The teacher is obliged to correct errors related to what he has taught me, but he is not obliged to correct errors related to things he hasn't taught us yet." Student preference for selectivity in oral error correction was affirmed by one student questionnaire respondent: "If too many of my errors are corrected, I'll feel embarrassed. However, if just a few errors are corrected, I accept this because I like to learn from my errors." Other student respondents qualified their preference for selective error correction by statements such as "A lot of corrections and explanations complicate the learning process," and "Class time is not enough for correcting all errors."

Regardless of what teachers and students expressed in their responses to the questionnaire or to interview and focus group questions about selectivity of error correction, the classroom observations undertaken by the researcher revealed significant discrepancies between what was said and what actually took place inside the classroom. The observed teachers, similar to teachers in the real world, came in all shapes and sizes and exhibited a wide range of ways of thinking, working, and correcting errors. It can be reassured, in this vein, that most of those teachers did not walk the talk as their correction

of oral errors was to a great extent devoid of selectivity. This claim can be supported, first of all, by the data collected from classroom observations and exhibited in Table 4.10 above. A glance at that table reveals that pronunciation errors received (72.2%) of the total number of all errors corrected throughout the (24) classroom observations. This statistic easily refutes claims of selectivity uttered by those teachers.

Further, observed teachers greatly varied in the number and type of errors they corrected. For example, some teachers did not let a single error go without correcting it and were very keen on doing so to the extent that two of them corrected correct utterances (which they mistakenly thought to be erroneous). At the other extreme, some teachers either never or scarcely corrected students' errors. However, in the middle of the continuum were teachers who were truly selective.

Such discrepancy between what teachers say they believe and how they really act can be attributed, as explained earlier, to what Argyris and Schon (1974) describe as espoused theories and theories-in-action. Moreover, in questionnaires and interviews respondents and participants might have wanted to impress the researcher by fabricating the truth and giving untrue answers. Or rather, they were talking about ideal situations or what people expected them to say rather than their true attitudes toward and beliefs of oral errors and the strategies they used to correct them. Surely, this is another merit of mixed methods research designs which triangulate data from different sources. In this respect, observations were more telling as they could shed light on teachers' real attitudes and actions inside the classroom.



Findings of this research concerning the theme of selectivity resonate with those of Katayama's (2007) study in which almost half (47%) of the (588) respondents disagreed with the statement 'Teachers should correct all errors that learners make in oral English' and qualified their disagreement by stating that 'correcting all errors would affect students' feelings', and that 'erroneous English is all right as long as it's understandable'. The findings of the current study also conform with Mantello's (1997) study results in which students confirmed their tendency toward selective error correction, as they were in favor of less correction and the teacher devoting more time to a smaller number of errors. In a similar vein, the students in Lasagabaster and Sierra's (2005) study expressed a preference for not being corrected constantly, as they felt inhibited and consequently they preferred to communicate more freely rather than being continuously corrected. Along these lines, Loewen's (2007) study findings suggest that too much error correction can shift the primary focus from communication to linguistic forms. Finally, selectivity, according to McKeating (1981), helps teachers address a few errors thoroughly, rather than try to deal superficially with everything at once.

### **Maximum Exposure to and Practice of English in a Supportive and Friendly Atmosphere Maximize Students' Proficiency and Minimize Errors**

According to O'Connor (1980), language starts with the ear, and speech is the gift of imitation. Thus, if teachers want their students to learn and master oral English, and consequently minimize their oral errors, they should seize every opportunity to expose students to English. In this vein, Krashen and Terrel (1983) argue that exposure to

abundant comprehensible input could eventually lead to mastery of the foreign language in much the same way that a child's language gradually comes to match the environment.

Overuse of Arabic and frequent translation from English into Arabic and vice versa, common practices in Palestinian EFL classes, have reverse results on students' learning of English as follows. Firstly, these practices minimize students' exposure to English, a necessary requirement in a foreign language context where students' exposure to English is mainly limited to the classroom. Secondly, such practices will reduce students' efforts to listen attentively to English because they are certain that translation into Arabic will follow. Finally, the chances of Arabic interference with English increase resulting in a noticeable augmentation in the number of oral errors committed. These points were clear in what Teacher Participant #2 said while emphasizing the need to maximize students' exposure to English, "Expose them to English. Let them watch movies or videos, get them to get used to thinking in English, and don't translate from English into Arabic ... they need to be very well exposed to English." Teacher Participant #8 also added, "You have to speak to them in English, not in Arabic. Even though you are an Arabic speaker, you have to keep speaking to them in English and not in Arabic; they will get used to it in time."

In contrast to what those participant teachers emphasized in the questionnaire and the interviews, without a single exception, Arabic was used in all observed classes at various levels. For example, in one of the classes during the 40-minute class, the teacher spoke Arabic for about (30) minutes. Other teachers used Arabic for about (50%) of class time, and a small number of them used Arabic less than that.

Moreover, in order to improve their oral English skills, students must be encouraged to speak and practice English and should not be intimidated by the expectation that they will be harshly interrupted and corrected. Accounts related by students in this study about feelings of fear, anxiety, embarrassment, frustration, and anger indicate that errors and their correction are an ever-present threat to hurting their feelings and self-esteem. In order to create an environment conducive to effective learning, EFL teachers should do their best to alleviate their students' fears and anxieties through growing more sensitive to students' feelings and avoiding hurting them. More importantly, students themselves should grow more sensitive to each other's feelings and refrain from mocking and ridiculing each other when one of them commits an error.

Students learning a foreign language are doomed to making errors because learning a foreign language, according to Dan-Yu (2007), is a process of making errors and unceasingly correcting them. Therefore, a teacher's main focus while teaching English should be on creating a friendly and safe atmosphere for his/her students to develop their language skills, including their oral skills, without feeling threatened or frightened (Carroll et al., 1992). In particular, teachers should refrain from using correction strategies resulting in making students feel embarrassed and ashamed. Teachers should remember that people make errors when learning any new skill, but that they learn from their mistakes when they receive constructive and supportive feedback (Cohen, 1975). This also necessitates that teachers become more empathetic with students. Empathy, which, according to Ur (1996) and Scrivener (2005), is one of the

characteristics of good teachers and effective instruction, simply means that the teacher puts him/herself in students' place and tries to see things through their eyes.

In this respect, when asked about how they felt when they studied English as a foreign language and their errors were corrected, most teacher participants expressed negative feelings such as shyness, embarrassment, frustration, depression, disempowerment, intimidation, and fear. Teacher Participant #9, for example, qualified her response by saying, "I felt afraid and ashamed. I didn't like making any mistakes because I was an excellent student and I was afraid of the teacher and my classmates. At the secondary school, teachers tried to make fun of the students who made mistakes." It can be easily deduced that teachers experienced the same feelings as their students did. Therefore, teachers should not replicate in their classrooms the same demeaning experiences they themselves resented when they were students.

When reflecting on their own experiences as language learners, some participant teachers derived some important lessons that informed their own teaching and their error correction strategies. In this vein, Teacher Participant #8 said, "My teachers were very strict. They were correcting our errors in a very direct and harsh way. It was effective for you because it made you conscious of your errors, but at the same time it intimidated you in some ways. I think it's a wrong practice because you shouldn't intimidate your students ... I expect errors ... This is why I am not like my old teachers ... when someone says, 'Oh, you said this wrong.' If such a way is used, they will get embarrassed because they are corrected directly in front of their classmates." A similar opinion was also expressed by Teacher Participant #12, who said, "I'm really aware of not making

students feel bad in front of the class. I look for patterns in pronunciation as well as grammar and I correct just these.” She also added “... so it’s not putting someone on the spot for having said something wrong. I won’t, basically never, sit and say you said that wrong.” Unfortunately, this was not the case in most of the observed classes. In some classes there was a lot of error hunt, which implies that teachers were on the look for students' errors and then proceeded to correct them (Rosen, 1993).

Teachers should also realize that learning a foreign language takes time and effort on behalf of all those involved. Consequently, they should not expect dramatic changes in students' achievement and complete eradication of errors in a matter of days, months, or even years. Therefore, teachers should not be too pushy and should not expect miracles. They should understand, given the nature of learning a foreign language, progress will be slow and moving from one stage of learning to another takes time. Teachers should not be discouraged or disheartened when their students do not accurately say or use what they have been teaching. Moreover, teachers should be patient and give their students ample time to internalize the points in question. This message was forcefully expressed by Teacher Participant #12, who, when asked to advise language teachers about students' oral errors, said, "You have to be very patient and take your time because nothing is going to happen in one day or two days. You have to be patient. It really takes time."

Along these lines, Dulay, et al (1982) advise teachers to create an atmosphere where students are not embarrassed by their errors because, according to Maleki (2005), a major obstacle to foreign language learning is the fear of making mistakes, a major terminator of motivation in foreign language learning. Without learner motivation no

strategy can succeed. Woodrow's (2006) investigation proved that language anxiety is negatively associated with the students' spoken English, especially when one presents oneself in public. Speaking in front of others, even in one's native language, has a tremendous psychological impact on people, as speakers are always fearful of making errors and seeming inadequate and incompetent in front of others. Speaking in English rather than in one's native language will surely double, if not triple, such psychological burden and increase anxiety. Teachers are advised to reduce stress and anxiety because the motivation to learn may be vitiated by methodological straitjacket and they may encounter a classroom environment fraught with lack of cohesiveness and rebellion (Maleki, 2005). Kern (1995) points out that the attitudes of teachers and students are important for understanding the process of learning, because they can help us prevent those conflicts that may augment frustration, anxiety and lack of motivation on the part of students, or even their giving up the learning of the foreign language.

### **Palestinian EFL Teacher Preparation Programs Should Implant in Would-be Teachers Lifelong Learning Skills**

Dissatisfaction with the teacher preparation programs which teacher participants attended was expressed by a good majority of teacher participants. Such dissatisfaction, resulting from some serious inadequacies and deficiencies of those programs, was emphasized by Teacher Participant #7, who said, "I need to know more about methodology, to know how to prepare lessons, to focus on problems faced by students." Teacher Participant #9 also expressed a similar dissatisfaction when she said, "I think I was not prepared well enough to be a good teacher of English. I have a BA in English

language teaching, but I graduated without having the ability to prepare a good lesson plan. Even though we had practicum at schools, we felt confused all the time."

It seems that the EFL teacher preparation programs which the majority of teacher participants attended suffered from the chronic disease with which programs intended for preparing practitioners are usually afflicted. Those EFL teacher preparation programs most often "consist of bits of psychology, bits of linguistics, methodological tips, and chunks of teaching practice with the result that student teachers rarely see for themselves the process of [theory and practice] integration which by implication they themselves are supposed to exemplify" (Brumfit, 1983: 202). Some of the teacher participants stressed this disintegration between the theory and practice of teaching. In this vein, Teacher Participant #4 said, "What we studied at the university is different from what we need in order to be able to teach at school.... The theory is totally different from practice." This opinion was confirmed by Teacher Participant #5, who when thinking back of his teacher preparation program, said, "There were huge gaps between theory and its application."

Palestinian EFL teacher preparation programs should not be confined to imparting knowledge and theoretical contents divorced from practice. These programs need to implant in student teachers the seeds of learning how to learn. In other words, these programs should equip student teachers with the skills and tools that may help them become lifelong learners, inquirers, and researchers in their own classrooms. This kind of teacher preparation has become an indispensable necessity in an ever-changing life and school context where, according to Toffler (1980), knowledge grows increasingly

perishable as today's "fact" becomes tomorrow's misinformation, and where, according to Rogers (1969):

The only man who is educated is the man who has learned how to learn; the man who has learned how to adapt and change; the man who has realized that no knowledge is secure, that the only process of seeking knowledge gives a basis for security (104).

Furthermore, schools should be able to address students' intellectual needs in the twenty-first century (Darling-Hammond, 2000) and provide students with an access to quality education, where teachers prepare them well for their futures. To prepare teachers for unceasingly emerging and changeable needs, teacher preparation programs must not teach merely knowledge - although research by Olsen (2008) indicates that a knowledgeable teacher is better equipped to facilitate student learning than teachers who have not been academically prepared - but also ways to manipulate, enhance, and apply this knowledge. This means student teachers must learn how to learn, and their preparation should be viewed as an inquiry-oriented endeavor (Claudet, 1999).

Preparing student teachers along these lines should enable them to address emerging needs through endlessly acquiring new knowledge and skills. This necessitates that teacher preparation programs adapt their traditional models of teacher education in a way that may help their graduates become better teachers, particularly of young children, through providing purposeful and systematic preparation aimed at enabling student teachers to become lifelong learners. This kind of teacher preparation will be helpful in two ways. First, teachers will be able to make up for any inadequacies or deficiencies in their teacher preparation programs. Teacher preparation programs, however



comprehensive and ambitious they are, may fail to provide student teachers with all the tools, skills, and knowledge they may need to perform their work professionally and satisfactorily throughout their different teaching career trajectories. Thus, to make up for any deficiencies or inadequacies in their teacher preparation programs or to cope efficiently with new contents and/or skills, student teachers should be trained to be inquirers and researchers inside and outside their classrooms. Assuming such roles, Teacher Participant #7 said, "I surf the Internet to find out what other teachers would do and try to figure out what other people think as effective because it was not explicitly taught to me in my own teacher preparation program."

Second, teachers can make up for any shortage in instructional materials or activities. When set textbook contents do not cater to the needs and individual differences of their students, then it becomes teachers' responsibility to devise and/or search for complementary materials that may meet different students' needs. Once more teachers need to become inquirers, researchers, and even material writers to devise and make available appropriate materials and activities for their students. Teacher Participant #12 capitalizes on this point by saying, "When my students need help, and I don't necessarily have the tools, I have to go to the Internet or to some reference books or journal articles to figure out what I think should work out."

No doubt, teacher preparation programs with their various roles and tasks are the cornerstone in the process of education enhancement at all levels, especially since good preparation of teachers contributes directly and decisively to the enhancement of quality of education, of which teachers constitute a main pillar. Nonetheless, despite the decisive

role played by teacher preparation programs, research reveals that they are faced with serious problems that affect their performance and the efficiency of their teacher graduates. Therefore, restless efforts should be made to achieve a comprehensive modernization of teacher preparation programs in the Palestinian faculties of education, so as to be able to go in tandem with world scientific and professional development, while taking into consideration the Palestinian context in general, and each program's environment in particular, on a systematic basis that guarantees effectiveness of teaching and learning, and total quality as an approach to educational reform.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS AND RATIONALE**

In the light of the findings, conclusions, and themes outlined above, the remaining sections of this chapter will provide some recommendations accompanied with rationale to the different stakeholders in teaching and learning English as a foreign language in Palestinian. Those stakeholders include Palestinian EFL teacher preparation programs, Palestinian EFL teachers and students, and directorates and departments of education. The last section provides some suggestions for possible future research in the area of attitudes toward oral errors and their correction.

#### **Recommendations for EFL Teacher Preparation Programs**

It was concluded from the findings of this study as well as reviewed literature that effective oral error correction facilitates students' language learning, and that how teachers correct students' oral errors is deeply rooted in their values, beliefs, intentions, experiences, and attitudes. Therefore, it is recommended that Palestinian EFL teacher preparation programs take the following points into consideration.

- When hiring instructors for educating and training Palestine EFL teachers, teacher preparation programs should pay special attention to those instructors' attitudes toward errors and their correction. This is particularly important because if these instructors' have negative attitudes toward errors and their correction, they will first hinder their student teachers' learning of English, and secondly student teachers may consciously or unconsciously adopt and reflect such negative attitudes when they become EFL teachers themselves.
- Teacher preparation programs should use accurate selection procedures capable of allowing into these programs only candidates with positive attitudes toward teaching, students, and errors and their correction. In other words, these programs should admit only student teachers whose personalities and attitudes do not "run counter to those which the collective experience of educators regards as necessary or acceptable" (Stevens, 1977, 72). Therefore, teacher preparation programs should have at their disposal various procedures capable of helping them diagnose candidates' attitudes, values, self-perceptions, and personality traits (e.g. patience, sympathy, empathy, passion, warmth, tolerance, fairness, creativity, flexibility, enthusiasm, poise) desirable for would-be teachers (Britten, 1985; Robinet, 1977; Wragg, 1974).
- If EFL teacher preparation programs fail to identify prospective teachers' negative attitudes at the admission stage, they should work hard on changing such attitudes throughout the program's lifespan. Despite the difficulty of attitude change, attitudes are not impossible to change, because, according to Healey (2005), they are not set in concrete.

- Teacher preparation programs should make error correction an integral part of what it takes to prepare effective EFL teachers. Although error correction is considered to be an indispensable part of language teaching, unfortunately, in most teacher preparation programs it is the most negligible part. In their efforts to remedy such situation, EFL teacher preparation programs should put error correction top on their list of priorities and provide courses concerned with effective error correction aimed at equipping student teachers with a wide array of effective oral correction strategies so that they can choose the best ones that fit different situations and different students. If these programs fail to offer such courses, in most cases teachers' correction will be unintentional and devoid of a real understanding of the theories and principles underpinning each error correction strategy (Islam, 2007).
- Teacher preparation programs should have and develop a sound philosophy and educational methodology concerning teaching English in general and error correction in particular. This is because these programs often focus on the academic content of the courses which student teachers study without taking into account other important aspects that should be developed in student teachers. This necessitates that in addition to its content base, a teacher preparation program should be specialization-oriented, skills-oriented, and community-oriented in order to really contribute to society development (Fox & Gay, 1995).
- EFL teacher preparation programs should support student teachers to develop personally and professionally in order to keep pace with ongoing developments in their field. In this way their graduates will be able to compensate for any inadequacies

in their preparation programs. For instance, when these programs fail to equip student teachers with effective error correction strategies or fail to enable them to better judge the appropriate amount or timing of oral error correction, as expressed by some teacher participants, those teachers will be able to make up for such shortcomings. To this end, these programs should develop the spirit of self-learning and self-dependence in student teachers by giving them a chance to think, work, and access information by themselves. Teaching methods that are merely concerned with the acquisition of knowledge do not develop the student teachers' capabilities. They need modern and effective ways of teaching and practices that help develop their analytical, critical, and reflective thinking. In line with this, these programs should do their best to keep abreast with technological advances to implant in students the skills of development and creativity.

- EFL teacher preparation programs should focus on the practical as well as the theoretical aspects of teacher preparation. Without a multiplicity of activities to integrate the practical into the theoretical, it is difficult to promote student teachers' creativity. Teacher preparation programs should recognize that the theory and practice of teacher education are not primarily opposed, only brought into relationship with each other secondarily, but they are originally interwoven in characteristic manner because at the roots of every pedagogical practice there are always elements of theory and even the simplest pedagogical practice is based on particular norms (Klafki, 1988). To be able to integrate the theoretical and practical, teacher preparation programs should be practice-based, where student teachers use explicit mechanisms

for exploring and extending their potential as teachers; use theory explicitly related to solving some practical problems, such as problems related to oral errors and their correction; increase autonomy and responsibility in the student teacher as a learner-teacher and teacher-learner, through allowing greater opportunities for self-initiated and self-directed enquiries; and help student teachers feel free to be themselves within the program structure, as the preparation program should be about student teachers being themselves, not about becoming somebody else (Brumfit, 1979; Robotton, 1988).

- In order to develop the skills of creativity in student teachers, teacher preparation programs should identify modern and effective teaching methods, try to abandon the familiar and embark on reforming the methods of instruction, assessment, error correction, etc. because imitation and spoon feeding, common practices on teacher preparation programs, are a prescription for killing the spirit of innovation and creativity in student teachers (Florida, 2002).
- As student teachers have developed tendencies to the use of technology, teacher preparation programs should exploit students' technological preferences and invest them in creative educational activities pertinent to the art of effective English language teaching, including error correction.
- Teacher preparation programs should provide a diversification of activities to meet the individual differences among student teachers and be concerned with training the senses of observation as the basis for the development of all brain capacities including

analyzing, interpreting, concluding, and judging (Armstrong, 2002) when dealing with different instructional issues in general, and oral error correction in particular.

- Contemporary educational trends confirm the need for an educational system that achieves overall quality. The operations of this system are distinct and their outcome is creative. Therefore, EFL teacher preparation programs should reconsider and review, on an ongoing basis, the methods and tools used for preparing student teachers and make sure that their preparation is characterized by modernity, continuity, and comprehensiveness commensurate with the building of informed and creative student teachers who are aware of the problems and needs of their students (as far as teaching methods, including error correction, are concerned), as well as the requirements of their own professional growth and progress.
- As teacher preparation is an integrated system in which all parties involved work cohesively and collaboratively with each other to achieve the desired educational objectives, EFL teacher preparation programs should possess a contemporary frame of mind that deals with the student teacher through a comprehensive and integrated framework. This framework helps student teachers discover their strengths and thus can work on developing their capacities and prove themselves when they are given the opportunity to produce and create. In addition, such framework assists in the diagnosis of student teachers' weaknesses and the activation of treatment programs at each step of teacher preparation processes to achieve overall growth (Cárdenas, 2006).
- Teacher preparation programs should provide professional development opportunities for all their instructors. The concept of professional development usually refers to an

ongoing, planned, collaborative, and participatory process aimed at the professional development of individuals and groups to meet their needs and help them upgrade the quality of their professional practices to a high level of efficiency and effectiveness (D'Andrea & Gosling, 2005). The actualization of informed and calculated professional development will help meet the needs of all instructors on teacher preparation programs and the cultivation of knowledge, skills, and attitudes so as to keep abreast with educational developments through which teacher preparation programs become capable of preparing student teachers as lifelong learners. Successful professional development of instructors can be brought about by the use of a wide range of development strategies tailored to every instructor's individual needs as there is no 'one-size-fits-all' formula; rather, success will come from tailoring each situation to the unique needs of each one of them (Benninghof, 1996).

- Teacher preparation programs should help their student teachers learn how to identify the specific learning styles, learning modalities, and talents of their pupils so they will be better able to provide instruction that caters to individual student's needs and abilities.

### **Recommendations for Palestinian EFL teachers**

In the light of the study findings and conclusions, following are some recommendations for Palestinian EFL teachers.

- Palestinian EFL teachers should be tolerant of students' oral errors, develop positive attitudes toward such errors, and view them as an inevitable and integral part of the foreign language learning road and not wrong turns on that road.



- Palestinian EFL teachers should be able to create a friendly, stress-free, student-sensitive, safe and supportive environment conducive to learning where errors are perceived as a natural occurrence in the process of foreign language learning, as well as an indicator that learning is taking place. Minimizing students' anxiety is an essential element of successful teaching and learning.
- Palestinian EFL teachers should expect that their students are prone to making even more errors than their counterparts in other contexts worldwide because errors tend to occur more if the elements of the target language are different from those of the students' mother tongue, as it is the case with Arabic and English. According to Lado (1957), linguistic similarity makes learning a new language easy, whereas the more differences that exist between the two languages, the more difficult it is to learn and consequently the more errors are to be made.
- Palestinian EFL teachers should believe in the usefulness of oral errors and their correction. If, on the contrary, teachers have negative attitudes toward such errors and perceive them as a 'bad thing', students would become wary of making errors, and thus do not volunteer to participate in class. In this case, they are very unlikely to learn anything at all.
- Palestinian EFL teachers should be aware of and have at their disposal a wide range of oral error correction strategies because different students learn in different ways and certain individuals learn in different ways at different times (Elliot & Calderhead, 1993). Further, different types of errors require different types of correction strategies. This is because the process of error correction is far more complex than is

acknowledged by any one strategy, or even a small number of them. At this respect, although the majority of teachers taking part in this study agreed on the importance of teachers being knowledgeable about and using a wide array of oral correction strategies, the study found that teachers were familiar with and used a very limited number of these strategies.

- When correcting their students' oral errors, Palestinian EFL teachers should use individualized correction that entails tailoring oral error correction in accordance with students' learning styles, personalities, preferences, level of proficiency in English, motivation, and attitudes so that correction results in improved learning. Specifically, Palestinian EFL teachers should keep in mind that students with low levels of proficiency in English may have negative attitudes toward learning English in general and oral errors and their correction in particular. This necessitates that teachers be more accepting and tolerant of those errors. By so doing, teachers will reduce students' negative attitudes by creating an atmosphere that is less threatening and more effective for language learning.
- Palestinian EFL teachers should realize that oral error correction aims at building confidence, raising awareness, acknowledging achievement and progress, and helping students become more accurate in their use of English. Therefore, oral error correction should not end up in what Rosen (1993) calls 'error hunt', which in the teaching of oral language implies being on the look for students' errors and then proceeding to correct them.

- Palestinian EFL teachers should use more explicit and direct rather than implicit and indirect oral error correction strategies because the majority of students in the present study expressed extreme preference for explicit and direct oral error correction strategies. They thought that explicit correction was more recognizable and engaging for them and helped them learn better and produce correct language afterwards. Implicit correction, in their opinion, may go unnoticed and may be confusing.
- Palestinian EFL teachers should avoid the extremes of oral error correction. In other words, teachers should not be overcorrecting nor non-correcting. Over-correction of students' errors results in intimidation, embarrassment, frustration, anxiety, confusion, humiliation, and low self-esteem. Non-correction makes the students think that the teacher is incompetent and/or careless. In addition, absence of error correction may lower students' achievement on the accuracy-oriented tests they are obliged to sit for. The best way of finding out whether the right number of errors is being corrected is by asking students directly or by giving them a survey (Harmer, 2007). It might be interesting to explore the idea of a 'correction-contract', in which the teacher and students formally agree when and what kind of errors should be corrected (Hedge, 2000; Scrivener, 2005). What should always be remembered is that both extremes of error correction should be avoided as far as possible because both may produce negative attitudes toward oral errors and their correction as well as toward learning English in general.

- EFL teachers should choose the most appropriate time to correct student errors because mistimed error correction could be harmful for the students and may develop negative attitudes toward error correction (Allwright & Bailey, 1991).
- Palestinian EFL teachers should have a dialogic interaction (Aljaafreh & Lamtolf, 1994) with their students. The aim of such interaction should be obtaining firsthand knowledge of what students think of error correction and finding out how they prefer their oral errors to be corrected in order to make the best use of oral error correction. Students' perceptions of and preferences for error correction are essential because error correction is provided for students' sake (Chenoweth, et al, 1983). Numerous language educators and researchers (e.g. Green, 1999; Horwitz, 1988; Schulz, 2001), as well as the results of the present study, support the view that students' perceptions of instructional effectiveness differ considerably from those of their teachers. Accordingly, matching students' preferences and teachers' practices is important for successful language learning as it enables students to maximize their classroom experience. On the other hand, mismatch between students' learning styles and teachers' teaching styles may impair learning (Schulz, 2001) as students tend to be bored and inattentive, do poorly on tests, get discouraged about learning English, and may conclude that they are not good at English and give up (Oxford, Ehrman, & Lavine, 1991).
- Palestinian EFL teachers should keep abreast with emerging professional knowledge through conversing with and observing other teachers. In this way their knowledge,

understanding, and awareness of more effective instructional and corrective strategies can be increased.

- Palestinian EFL teachers should keep reminding their students that it is natural to make errors because students learn from their own errors.
- Teachers should willingly take part in workshops, seminars, and learning communities intended for updating their professional knowledge and familiarizing them with different error correction strategies so that they may learn how to handle oral errors effectively.
- Teachers should motivate students' self-learning and encourage them to participate in the correction of their oral errors. Involving students in the correction of their errors raises their awareness about the language they are learning because 'what you tell me, I forget; what I discover for myself, I remember (Ur, 1996; Scrivener, 2005), and thus learn'.
- Palestinian EFL teachers should praise students for their success and correct them for their failure. In this way teacher's positive attitude can dramatically change student's performance irrespective of their level and types of errors (Harmer, 2007).
- Palestinian EFL teachers should know that learning ability varies from person to person and all language learning is based on continual exposure, hypothesizing, testing, and reinforcing the ideas behind them (Bartram & Walton, 1991).
- Whatever kind of error rectification Palestinian EFL teachers conduct, they should keep in mind that they not only correct an error but they also correct a human being.

## **Recommendations for Palestinian EFL Students**

In the light of the study findings and conclusions, following are some recommendations for Palestinian EFL students.

- Palestinian EFL students should welcome and be open to oral errors and their correction because correction helps them clarify their understanding of the meaning and construction of the language.
- Palestinian EFL students should not view errors as inhibitory, but rather as evidence that they are learning.
- Palestinian EFL students should have a voice in how their oral errors should be corrected through working together with their teachers so that error correction can be integrated in a meaningful way. As correction is provided for students' sake, students, therefore, should tell the teacher about what will work best for them, what their attitudes toward correction are, and how sensitive or resilient they are to some error correction strategies.
- Palestinian EFL students should take some responsibility for error correction, as it should not be the responsibility of the teacher alone.
- Palestinian EFL students should always remember that they definitely benefit from error correction, deepen their understanding, and thus avoid errors and learn English more effectively.
- Palestinian EFL students should not be afraid of error correction as it helps them become more aware of where, when, and why they make errors regardless of the error correction strategies their teachers use.

- Palestinian EFL students should realize that the most efficient way to learn from errors is not by simply waiting for the teacher to provide them with the correct forms, but by attempting to discover them and test different hypotheses (Carroll, et al, 1992).

## **Recommendations for the Palestinian Directorates and Departments of**

### **Education**

In the light of the study findings and conclusions, following are some recommendations for Palestinian directorates and departments of Education.

- Palestinian directorates and departments of education should develop a better understanding of the role which oral error correction can play in the teaching and learning of English among Palestinian EFL teachers and students.
- Palestinian directorates and departments of education should hire better qualified potential language teachers whose personalities, values, beliefs, intentions, and attitudes do not "run counter to those which the collective experience of educators regards as necessary or acceptable" (Stevens, 1977, 72) when errors and their correction are concerned.
- The Palestinian directorates and departments of education should be able to identify EFL teachers having negative attitudes toward oral errors and their correction through conducting classroom observations and conversing with both teachers and students. Once teachers with negative attitudes toward oral errors and their correction have been identified, they should be provided with professional training aimed at changing negative attitudes into more positive ones.

## **Recommendations for Future Research**

Due to the limitations of the current study, outlined in Chapter One, in addition to the limitations inherent in mixed-methods research designs, no generalizations were possible, and hence, more research needs to be done. Therefore, for further understanding of the topic of teachers' and students' attitudes toward oral errors and their correction, future research should consider the following areas for investigation:

- How teachers' and students' attitudes toward oral errors and their correction can be best identified.
- To what extent efforts aimed at changing teachers' and students' negative attitudes toward oral errors and their correction are successful.
- Which methods and activities aimed at changing teachers' and students' negative attitudes toward oral errors into more positive ones are the most effective.
- What the effectiveness of self and peer correction is.
- Whether students' preference for or rejection of peer correction is of a universal, cultural, or individual nature.
- What the short- and long-term cognitive and affective impacts of oral error correction on students are.
- What the various factors affecting teachers' and students' perceptions of and attitudes toward oral errors and their correction are.
- Which types of oral errors students prefer to have corrected.



## SUMMARY

This final chapter draws several important conclusions and provides some recommendations regarding attitudes toward oral errors and their correction. In order to achieve maximal benefit from teaching and learning English in Palestinian schools, it becomes the responsibility of all parties involved to create the best conditions conducive to constructive and effective learning through using the best available resources and teaching-learning strategies. Chief among these are the strategies used for correcting students' oral errors. The current study results emphasize the importance of teachers being familiar with a variety of oral correction strategies so as to cater for students' individual factors such as learning styles, personalities, preferences, perceptions, and attitudes. Moreover, teachers should be able to create a classroom environment which is unthreatening and conducive to effective learning. Further, students' voices should be encouraged and students' perceptions and feelings should be taken seriously because error correction is provided for their sake, and thus they should have a say in the 'who,' 'when,' 'how,' and 'what' of their error correction.

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# APPENDICES

## Appendix A

### Observation sheet: Oral Error Correction

Teacher \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Learner's Oral Error	Teacher's Correction Strategy	Learner's Reaction	What happened Next
G <input type="checkbox"/> P <input type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> *	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ • Other:		
G <input type="checkbox"/> P <input type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/>	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ Other:		
G <input type="checkbox"/> P <input type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/>	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ Other:		
G <input type="checkbox"/> P <input type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/>	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ Other:		
G <input type="checkbox"/> P <input type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/>	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ Other:		
G <input type="checkbox"/> P <input type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/>	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ Other:		
G <input type="checkbox"/> P <input type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/>	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ Other:		
G <input type="checkbox"/> P <input type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/>	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ Other:		
G <input type="checkbox"/> P <input type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/>	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ Other:		
G <input type="checkbox"/> P <input type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/>	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ Other:		
G <input type="checkbox"/> P <input type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/>	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ Other:		
G <input type="checkbox"/> P <input type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/>	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ Other:		
G <input type="checkbox"/> P <input type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/>	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ Other:		
G <input type="checkbox"/> P <input type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/>	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ Other:		
G <input type="checkbox"/> P <input type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/>	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ Other:		
G <input type="checkbox"/> P <input type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/>	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ Other:		
G <input type="checkbox"/> P <input type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/>	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ Other:		
G <input type="checkbox"/> P <input type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/>	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ Other:		
G <input type="checkbox"/> P <input type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/>	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ Other:		
G <input type="checkbox"/> P <input type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/>	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ Other:		
G <input type="checkbox"/> P <input type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/>	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ Other:		
G <input type="checkbox"/> P <input type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/>	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ Other:		

\* **G** = Grammar      **P** = Pronunciation      **L** = Lexis      **F** = Function      **T** = Teacher      **S** = Student

• ① T ignores error    ② T asks S to repeat    ③ T corrects in his/her voice    ④ T corrects using nonverbal behavior  
 ⑤ T lets S self-correct    ⑥ T asks other Ss to correct    ⑦ T echoes up to error    ⑧ T echoes using question intonation

## Appendix B

### PRE-OBSERVATION TEACHERS' INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

#### Basic Information

1. How long have you been teaching English as a foreign language?
2. Tell me about your preparation to become a teacher of English?
3. Evaluate your preparation toward a career as a language teacher.
  - a. What were some of the merits of the program?
  - b. What were some of the drawbacks of the program?
4. How do you generally feel when you teach English?
5. What level or levels do you teach?
6. Please describe your students in general.

#### Attitudes toward and reaction to students' oral errors

7. What is your opinion of the belief that 'errors are inevitable when one learns a foreign language'?
8. How do you feel when your students make oral errors?
9. What do you do when you recognize that an oral error has been made?
10. How do your students generally feel and react when their oral errors are corrected?
11. Do you correct all, some, or none of your students' oral errors? Why?
12. When you decide that an oral error should be corrected,
  - a. Who corrects it?
  - b. When is it corrected?
  - c. How is it corrected?

#### Reflections and Suggestions

13. Do you feel that your teacher preparation program has prepared you well to deal with students' oral errors?
  - a. If 'yes,' how?
  - b. If 'no,' why?

14. Describe an effective strategy that you use or know about to correct students' oral errors?
15. How do you know that the strategies you use for treating students' oral errors are effective?
16. Do you actively seek new strategies that may help you treat your students' oral errors more effectively?
  - a. If 'yes,' where do you find these strategies?
  - b. If 'no,' why?
17. When you learned English as a foreign language, how did you feel when you made an oral error?
  18. Do you try to make use of your students' oral errors in your instruction?
    - a. If 'yes,' how?
    - b. If 'no,' why?
19. What advice would you offer EFL teachers about how they treat their students' oral errors?

**Conclusion**

20. Is there anything else you would like to share about oral error correction?

*Thank you very much for talking with me.*

## Appendix C

### POST OBSERVATION TEACHERS' INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

*Thank you very much for allowing me to observe your classroom for a second time. I would like to ask several questions about your class, and specifically about oral error correction. You may choose not to answer a question, if you wish. Your comments are strictly confidential and will not be associated with you in any way.*

*In your consent form, you indicated your permission to allow me to tape-record this interview. If this is still agreeable to you, I would like to turn on the recorder and begin our interview. Do you have any questions before we begin?*

#### **A. Being an EFL Teacher**

1. What motivated you to become an EFL teacher?
2. What were the most useful or influential courses or experiences in your teacher preparation program that have impacted your teaching? How and why were these especially useful/influential?
3. How did your school and/or university instructors correct your or your colleagues' oral errors?
4. How did you feel when your own errors were corrected?
5. Given what you now know about teaching, how would you evaluate your instructors' error correction strategies?

#### **B. Lessons Observed**

6. What was the objective of today's lesson?
7. I saw you use [*recast, repetition, metalinguistic, etc.*] to correct students' oral errors. Could you tell me more about why you used those specific strategies during the two classes I observed?
  - How are those correction strategies related to your lessons' objectives?
  - Are the strategies you used in those lessons the only ones you generally use to correct students' oral errors?
    - If 'yes', why do you use those strategies in particular? What do you like most about them?

- How have you come to know them?
- If 'no,' what are the other error correction strategies you usually use? What factors prevented you from using those strategies during today's lesson?

### **C. Personal Reflections on Oral Errors**

8. How do you usually feel when your students make oral errors?
  - How would you usually respond to such errors?
  - What do these errors imply to you about the students and their learning ?
  - What factors make you decide to correct or ignore oral errors?
9. When you correct students' errors, how do you decide on the correction strategies you use?
10. Do you take individual student's learning styles/personalities/proficiencies in English into consideration when you correct students' oral errors? Why/Why not?
11. Would you like your students to speak fluent and/or flawless English? Why?
12. Do you usually ask your students about how they prefer their oral errors to be corrected?
  - If 'yes,' which are their preferred error correction strategies?
  - If 'no,' why don't you ask them about their preferences?
13. Do your students typically respond to the correction of their errors in the same way as they did during the observed lessons?
  - If 'yes,' why, in your opinion, do they respond in this way?
  - If 'no,' how do they usually respond when their errors are corrected?
14. When their errors are corrected, do your students learn the correct language forms quickly and never make the same error(s) again?
  - If 'yes,' does error correction always lead to better and lasting learning?
  - If 'no,' what is the significance of error correction?
15. What, in your opinion, helps your students learn most effectively from the correction of their errors?



16. What challenges do your students encounter when they speak English in class? How can they be encouraged to overcome such challenges?
17. How might you change the correction strategies you used in the observed lessons in order to make them more responsive to individual students' needs/learning styles/ etc.?
18. How would you describe the relationship between you and your students? Is this relationship ever affected by the error correction strategies you use?
  - If 'yes,' how?
  - If 'no,' how do you know?
19. What have you found to be the greatest challenges and the most satisfying rewards of oral error correction for both you and your students?
20. What strategies have you found to be particularly effective/ineffective for oral error correction?

#### **D. Conclusion**

21. Is there anything else you would like to tell about the observed lessons and/or oral error correction?

*Thank you very much for talking with me and letting me observe your class today. I hope that you had as positive an experience as I had.*

**Appendix D**  
**Teachers' Questionnaire**

*Dear Colleagues,*

*The purpose of this questionnaire is to gather information about students' attitudes toward correcting their oral errors. You are kindly invited to answer all questions. Data collected will remain confidential and used by the researcher only. Please, check (✓) 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 but fewer than 10 years     More than 10 years

**Section Two: Students' General Evaluation**

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

Good

Average

Poor

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

---

---

3. Would you consider students' errors as:

a. Teacher's 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?

---

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5. How can a teacher encourage his/her students to view errors positively?

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6. Do you consider error correction an essential part of your role as a teacher?

Yes  No

Please explain why.

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*B) If you strongly disagree with a statement, tick (√) “1.” If you strongly agree, tick (√) “5.”*

No.	Item	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Do Not Know 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
9.	When learners are allowed to interact freely in groups or pairs, etc., they learn each other's errors.					
10.	Learners' errors should be corrected as soon as they are made in order to prevent the formation of bad habits.					
11.	The teacher should use materials that expose students only to language they have already been taught in order to minimize their errors.					
12.	When EFL students make oral errors, it helps to correct them and later teach a short lesson explaining why they made that error.					
13.	When EFL students make oral errors, it usually helps to provide them with lots of oral practice with the language patterns that seem to cause them difficulty.					
14.	Since errors are a normal part of learning, much correction wastes time.					
15.	If students are permitted to make errors in English, it will be difficult for them to speak correctly later on.					
16.	I think students are to blame for making oral errors in English.					
17.	Students learn and understand more if they correct each other.					
18.	EFL teachers should encourage students to express themselves rather than continually correct their errors.					

19.	Students differ in their reaction to oral error correction.					
20.	Students learn more through error correction.					
21.	Errors are a natural part of learning any language.					
22.	EFL teachers should use different strategies for oral error correction.					
23.	Teachers' corrections of students' oral errors help students learn and improve their English.					
24.	Students should avoid making errors when learning English.					
25.	Students do not make the same error again after the teacher corrects it.					
26.	Teachers should correct all the oral errors students make because ignored errors result in imperfect learning.					
27.	In general, it is important that my students make as few errors as possible in their oral English.					

C) *If you consider the correction strategy useless tick (√) box "1. If you consider it very useful, tick (√) box "5."*

	Correction Strategy	No Good				Very Good
		1	2	3	4	5
28.	The teacher provides a clue or example rather than immediate correction.					
29.	The teacher points out the error and provides the correct form.					
30.	The teacher immediately corrects the error, rather than taking time to discuss it.					
31.	The teacher repeats student's oral language up to the error and waits for the student to self-correct.					
32.	The teacher identifies the error when it occurs using nonverbal behavior, such as facial expressions.					
33.	The teacher corrects only the errors that interfere with communication.					
34.	The teacher interrupts students amid stream to correct their oral errors.					
35.	The teacher uses delayed error correction (i.e. provides correction at the end of the task).					
36.	The teacher uses postponed error correction (i.e. provides correction the following day or week).					
37.	The teacher completely ignores students' oral errors.					

*Thank You*

## Appendix E

### Students' Questionnaire Impact of Oral Error Treatment Strategies on Students' Attitudes Toward Learning English as a Foreign Language

*Dear Student,*

The purpose of this questionnaire is to investigate your attitudes toward the correction strategies your English teacher uses to correct your errors in oral language. It also aims to provide you with the chance to articulate your perceptions of and preferences for the various oral error treatment strategies you have experienced during English language instruction. It is hoped that ultimately the results of this research will help teachers use more effective strategies in their teaching and help you improve your oral proficiency and general achievement in English.

**Important Notes:**

1. *The information that you provide will never be revealed to a third party without your written consent. Your personal information (name and age) will remain confidential, however.*
2. *If you have any questions please feel free to ask me at any time.*

**Section One: General Questions**

*This section asks you to answer some general questions regarding your educational and language background. The purpose of this section is to learn more about you. **Remember:** You may choose not to answer any of these questions if you believe they are irritating or intrusive.*

**Please check the appropriate answers or write an answer in the space provided.**

- Name \_\_\_\_\_ (optional)
- School: \_\_\_\_\_
- Gender: Male  Female  (Please check (√) the appropriate box)
- Grade: \_\_\_\_\_
- How many years have you been studying English at school? ( ) years.
- Have you taken any special Spoken English courses outside of school? Yes  No
- If 'yes', in total, how many of these courses have you taken? ( ) course(s)

**Section Two: Questionnaire**

A) *The following questions address the correction of oral errors. Respond to each question based on your English language learning experiences up until now. Check (√) the box that reflects your best answer.*

B) Do you prefer your oral errors be corrected?

Yes  No

*Please, explain why.* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

1. Does being corrected in the presence of your peers negatively influence your classroom participation?

Yes  No

Please explain. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Whom do you like more?

a. A teacher who corrects all oral errors.

b. A teacher who sometimes corrects oral errors.

c. A teacher who never corrects oral errors.

*If you prefer other types of teachers, please explain.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Are you happy when a classmate corrects you?

Yes  No

*Please, explain why.* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Do you think oral error correction hinders your learning?

Yes  No

*Please, explain why.* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Please list the different reactions you experience after being corrected among your classmates?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

6. In your opinion, what is the best way to correct students' oral errors? *Please specify.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

C) If you strongly disagree with a statement, tick (√) box "1." If you strongly agree, tick (√) box "5."

No.	Item	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Do Not Know 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
9.	I think it is OK that the teacher interrupts me to correct my oral errors.					
10.	I think the teacher is right when he/she blames me for making oral errors in English.					
11.	Students learn and understand more if they correct each other.					
12.	I think it is better if the teacher calls speaks to me privately at the end of class and corrects my errors.					
13.	The teacher should encourage students to express themselves without correcting oral errors.					
14.	When my teacher corrects my oral errors, it makes me feel inadequate and not smart..					
15.	I think my classmates think that I am not smart or competent when the teacher corrects my errors.					
16.	I don not worry about making errors in my English classes.					
17.	Learners differ in their reaction to oral error correction.					
18.	Students learn more when their errors are corrected.					
19.	I encourage myself to speak English in class even when I am afraid of making errors.					
20.	Errors are a natural part of language learning.					
21.	The teacher should correct all oral errors I make because if they are ignored, I will not learn to speak correctly.					
22.	When the teacher corrects my oral errors, it helps me learn and improves my English.					
23.	I do not make the same error again, once the teacher corrects it.					
24.	I believe it is important to avoid making errors in the process of learning English.					
25.	It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in our English class because I am afraid of making errors.					
26.	I want to understand the reasons for my language errors.					

27.	I am afraid other students will laugh at me when I make errors while speaking English.					
28.	I learn more when the teacher corrects the errors that my fellow students make in class.					
29.	I feel cheated if the teacher does not correct the oral errors I make.					
30.	I think the teacher should have different strategies for correcting students' oral errors.					

*D) If you consider the correction strategy useless tick (✓) box "1." If you consider it very useful, tick (✓) box "5."*

	Oral Correction Strategy	No Good 1	2	3	4	Very Good 5
31.	The teacher gives some clue or example rather than immediate correction.					
32.	The teacher explains why the utterance is incorrect.					
33.	The teacher points out the error and provides the correct form.					
34.	The teacher immediately corrects the error rather than taking time to discuss it.					
35.	The teacher repeats the student's utterance up to the error and waits for self-correction.					
36.	The teacher indicates the occurrence of errors by nonverbal behavior, such as gestures or facial expressions.					
37.	The teacher corrects only the errors that interfere with communication.					
38.	The teacher interrupts me to correct my oral errors.					
39.	The teacher uses delayed error correction (i.e. provides correction at the end of the task).					
40.	The teacher uses postponed error correction (i.e. provides correction the following day or week).					

**Thank You**

**Researcher: Sadek S. Firwana**



## **Appendix F**

### **Focus Group Protocol**

***Script:** Thank you for taking the time to join our discussion of oral error correction. I want to hear your beliefs about oral errors and their correction. Please share your thoughts and ideas and feel free to share your points of view even when differ from what others have said. I'm tape-recording the session because I don't want to miss any of your comments. None of your names will be attached to comments. Your responses will remain anonymous and confidential.*

*My role is to ask questions and listen. I will not be participating in the conversation, but I want you to feel free to talk with one another. I will ask 7 questions during the two focus groups sessions, each of which will last for about 90 minutes. I'll be moving the discussion from one question into the next. It is important for me to hear different opinions. I have placed name cards on the table in front of you to help us learn each other's names. Let's begin this first session and try to find more about each other by going around the table. Please tell us how you feel when you speak English in class, when you make oral errors, and when these errors are corrected. Ahmad, let's begin with you.*

#### **First Session List of Questions**

1. What do you think about oral errors?
2. In what ways has your teacher's oral error correction contributed to your experience of learning English? Have your experiences with error correction in class broadened or restricted your potential as an English language learner? Please explain.
3. Does your teacher mark you down on each and every oral error you make? What would you prefer your teacher to do?
4. Who usually corrects your oral errors? Who would you like to correct your errors?
5. What oral error correction strategies do you find most valuable? What oral error correction strategies do you find least valuable? Which correction strategies enhanced or detracted from either your learning or your enjoyment?

6. When your or your colleagues' errors are corrected, do you learn the correction and never make the same error again?
7. Does correction send mixed messages to you about errors? What are the merits and demerits of error correction? Is oral error correction more of a problem or a solution for you? Why?

### **Second Session List of Questions**

1. How do the oral correction strategies used by your teachers allow you to demonstrate your level of mastery of English? Please explain.
2. Do you think your role and/or your teachers' role in correcting errors is more or less beneficial for your learning?
3. What kinds of activities/strategies would you prefer in order to help you minimize your errors? Which activities/strategies would help you make the most effective use of corrected errors?
4. What are your suggestions for making oral error correction more effective/less threatening?
5. What one piece of advice would you offer to students who are afraid of making oral errors in class?
6. What one piece of advice would you offer to teachers who correct all students' oral errors/who never correct oral errors?
7. Is there anything else you would like to say about oral error correction?

*Thank you very much for sharing your ideas and insights with me today.*