

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEARNERS' ORAL ERRORS  
AND TEACHERS' CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK  
IN THREE EFL CLASSES

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND LETTERS  
AND THE INSTITUTE OF ECONOMICS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES  
OF BILKENT UNIVERSITY  
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS  
IN THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

BY

ISMAIL HAKKI ERTEN  
AUGUST 1993

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*İsmail Hakki Ertan*  
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## ABSTRACT

Title: The relationship between learners' oral errors and teachers' corrective feedback in three EFL classes  
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This study sought to provide a description of how EFL students' oral errors are treated by three EFL teachers. This study had four research questions. Three EFL teachers (from BUSEL, Bilkent University School of English) participated in this study. Two lessons of each teacher were recorded and analyzed using Chaudron's (1988) taxonomy of corrective feedback types and Chaudron's (1986) definitions of error types. Frequencies were tabulated for feedback types and error types.

The first research question was how frequently and which oral errors of learners are corrected. The data revealed that the three teachers corrected 57% of the total oral errors. Of these errors, 88% were content errors, 86% were discourse errors, 64% were lexical errors, 46% were linguistic errors, and 25% were phonological errors.

The second research question was what types of corrective feedback are used by EFL teachers. The data showed that the three teachers used eighteen types of feedback: 'ignore', 'acceptance', 'delay', 'provide', 'loop', 'interrupt', 'questions', 'attention', 'explanation', 'negation', 'repetition with change', 'complex explanation', 'prompt', 'transfer', 'repetition with no change', 'emphasis', 'repeat', and 'exit'.

The third research question investigated the relationship between error types and corrective feedback types. A simple calculation of frequencies of feedback types for corrected errors revealed that phonological errors were responded to mostly with the type 'provide' (71%). The teachers also tended to prefer using the type 'provide' for discourse errors (46%). Teachers used the feedback type 'delay' as most frequently for linguistic and lexical errors, 27% and 44% respectively. However, no dominant preference for any feedback type was found for treating content errors.

The fourth research question sought to find the differences between the three teachers in correcting errors. Three teachers tended to correct different amounts of errors, though two of the teachers corrected similar

amounts of errors. The teachers corrected 50%, 55%, and 66% of total oral errors. For feedback types teachers did not show great differences, they all used the feedback types 'ignore', 'acceptance', 'delay', 'provide', and 'loop' most frequently. Only teacher B used the type 'explanation' more frequently than the other teachers. There also appeared differences in the teachers' feedback type preferences for certain types of error. The three teachers used different feedback types for content errors; teacher A used the type 'negation' (27%), teacher B used the type 'questions' (25%), and teacher C used the types 'delay' (33%) and 'attention' (20%). For discourse errors, teacher A and B used the type 'provide' most frequently but teacher C used the types 'negation' and 'loop' most frequently. No major difference was found in three teachers' feedback preferences for other types of error.

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The examining committee appointed by the  
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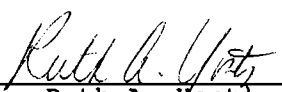
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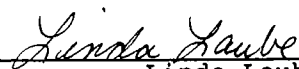
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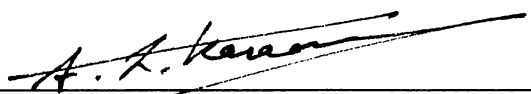
We certify that we have read this thesis and that in our combined opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.

  
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To my beloved wife.

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## CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

### Background of the problem

Learners' errors and teachers' corrective feedback have become one of the main foci of classroom-centered research in the last few decades, as the role of learners' errors gained importance with changes in language learning theories. Whether students' errors should be corrected, how, when, and which errors to correct are questions which are still being investigated. Researchers have examined classroom interaction between teachers and students and provided some models for treating students' oral errors.

However, much of what has been published on error treatment examines ESL contexts rather than EFL contexts. Assuming that some characteristics of error treatment in ESL contexts may be different from that in EFL contexts, this researcher decided to examine student-teacher interaction in EFL classes. Error treatment in EFL contexts may differ from that in ESL contexts for several reasons. First, the majority of teachers in EFL contexts are non-native speakers of English, who might be more or less attentive to different types of errors. Research shows that the proportion of correction in ESL contexts may be smaller than that in EFL contexts (Ellis, 1991). Courchene (1980) reports that approximately half of the errors are ignored in ESL contexts, and Lucas (1975) and Yoneyama (1982) have report that only 10% to 15% were ignored in EFL contexts. Second, the pedagogical philosophy of language teachers may differ, depending on training and institutional requirements. Third, the preferences of students for error correction may differ in EFL contexts, depending on such factors as their expectations and motivation for learning English. These are some of the possible reasons for investigating error treatment in EFL contexts.

### The purpose of the study

The main purpose of this study is to provide a detailed description of how students' oral errors are treated by teachers in EFL classes. This study investigates types of learners' oral errors, teachers' corrective feedback, and the relationship between them in EFL classes by focusing on the following research questions:

- 1) How are learners' oral errors corrected by EFL teachers?
  - a. How frequently are learners' oral errors corrected by teachers?
  - b. Which oral errors do teachers tend to correct?
- 2) What types of corrective feedback are used by EFL teachers?
- 3) Is there a relationship between learners' oral errors and teachers' corrective feedback? What types of learners' speech errors lead to what types of corrective feedback?
- 4) Do teachers show different feedback preferences in correcting students' oral errors?

Although the findings of this study cannot be generalized to every EFL classroom, the findings may be useful to those who conduct research on error treatment, to EFL teachers who are curious about how other EFL teachers treat their students' speech errors, to teachers who seek possible models for treating learners' errors, and to teacher trainers who may use the findings of this study as a source of information for their pre-service student teachers.

This study has been conducted in three different experienced EFL teachers' classrooms at BUSEL (Bilkent University School of English Language), a language preparatory school. The students study English at BUSEL for one year prior to taking courses in their own departments at Bilkent, an English-medium university. The participants of this study are three experienced non-native EFL teachers and their students, who have an intermediate level of language proficiency in English. The number of participant students varied from 13 to 19 in the sessions.

The study examines two one-half-hour sessions of each of the three teachers. Participants were selected using the criteria of at least three years of teaching experience for teachers and an intermediate level of language proficiency for students. In doing so, the researcher has aimed to control such factors as teachers' experience and students' language proficiency level, assuming that novice teachers and students from different language levels may affect the reliability of the data. Research has found that novice teachers might overcorrect and that students from different levels of language proficiency might receive different amounts of

corrective feedback from teachers (Ellis, 1991). Non-native teachers were also selected to control for nationality.

#### Conceptual Definitions

For the purpose of this research, the terms 'interaction', 'corrective feedback', and 'error' are defined as follows:

**Interaction:** Conversations and instructional exchanges between teachers and students (Chaudron, 1986).

**Corrective Feedback:** Any reaction by the teacher which transforms, disapprovingly refers to, or demands improvement of a students' language behavior or utterance (Chaudron, 1986).

**Error:** Any misuse of language and discourse constraints in students' oral production. Errors considered in this study are linguistic, phonological, lexical, content, and discourse errors.

#### Outline of the Thesis

This study has been divided into five main chapters: Chapter One Introduction, Chapter Two Methodology, Chapter Three Literature Review, Chapter Four Findings, and Chapter Five Conclusions. This study also has an Appendices section.

In Chapter Two, related literature, tracing back to the fifties, is reviewed. This chapter includes learning theories and their approach to learner errors, and relevant classroom-centered research on error correction in both ESL and EFL settings. Chapter Three discusses the methodology applied in this study, including data elicitation, analysis of the data, and statistical analysis of data. Chapter Four presents the results of the statistical analysis related to the research questions. Chapter Five summarizes the study, interprets major findings, suggests pedagogical implications, and makes suggestions for further research.

## CHAPTER TWO REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

### Introduction

In the first part of this chapter, the changes in learning theory and the concept of error in second language classrooms, tracing back to the fifties will be reviewed. In the second part, classroom-centered research on error correction will be reviewed.

The twentieth century witnessed dramatic changes in the field of language teaching. Especially after the 1950s, rapid changes took place in the field of ESL and EFL because of major shifts in learning theories--from behaviorism to cognitivism.

Along with these dramatic changes in the language teaching field, language teachers have developed different attitudes towards learner errors, attitudes that have changed according to the learning and language theory they are based on. These changes have entailed new roles for teachers and students in the classroom setting--from teacher to facilitator for teachers and from being passive learner to active participant in the process of learning for the students. Learner errors have gained crucial importance and their value in learning has begun to be discussed and examined by language specialists from different perspectives: the source of errors, the classification of errors, and the treatment of errors (Krankle and Christian, 1988).

### Learning Theories and the Concept of Error

Learning theories have always had a great influence on language teaching methods because methodologists utilize the principles of learning theories to justify the prescriptions of the methods they develop. In this section, learning theories and the place of error in these particular learning theories will be reviewed.

#### Behaviorist Learning Theory and Its Approach to Errors

Behaviorists view language learning as a product of habit formation. Habits are constructed through the repeated association between some stimuli and some responses (Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991). Learning comes as a result of the mechanical process of memorizing and practicing the rules of the target language.

In order to learn a language, learners should be given as many



stimuli as possible because language learning is overlearning (Bloomfield, 1942). Those learned structures must be repeated frequently so that learners form language habits through repetition and practice.

Behaviorist learning theory began to influence the field of language learning and teaching after the fifties and gave rise to the audiolingual method, a language teaching method which aims at teaching language through habit formation. Brooks and Lado, originators of the audiolingual method, drew extensively on behaviorist learning theory as a means of justifying the prescriptions of the audiolingual method. They hold that learning can be directed by manipulating the behavior of the learner (Ellis, 1991).

In behaviorist learning theory, the accuracy of the learners' language product is crucially important and drills, as the basis for practice, are designed to keep students from making mistakes. Since grammatical accuracy is emphasized, some of the supporters of audiolingualism regarded second language errors from a puritanical perspective (Hendrickson, 1978). For example, Brooks (1960) sees learners' errors as a sin; he claims that errors must be avoided and their influence overcome. The avoidance of error is one of the central goals of the audiolingual method (Ellis, 1991; Larsen-Freeman, 1986).

Since, in behaviorist learning theory, errors made by learners are regarded as signals of starting a bad habit, audiolingual methodologists recommend that teachers correct the mistakes whenever they are made for the benefit of the entire class. One of the recommended methods is immediate correction by the teacher (Ellis, 1991).

The idea of preventing learners from making errors led some researchers to investigate the reason for making mistakes. It is thought that errors could be prevented if they were anticipated (Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991). Differences between language systems are thought to be one of the sources of learners' difficulties in learning the target language (Weinreich, 1953). It is also believed that those elements in the target language that are similar to the learners' native language will be relatively simple for learners to learn in comparison to those elements that are different (Lado, 1957).

Researchers have conducted contrastive analyses systematically

comparing two languages from the 1940s. They have believed that being able to identify points of similarity and difference between particular native languages and target languages will lead them to a more effective pedagogy (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991). Fries (as cited in Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991:52) states, "The most efficient materials are those that are based upon a scientific description of the language to be learned, carefully compared with a parallel description of the native language of the learners."

The popularity of behaviorism, the audiolingual approach, and contrastive analysis began to decrease with the rise of cognitive learning theory. The downfall began after 1959, with Chomsky's classical review of Skinner's Verbal Behavior, in which Chomsky seriously challenges the behaviorist view of language learning. Chomsky (1966) states that language is not learned through a continuous association between stimulus and response that is strengthened by reinforcement, but rather is a rule-governed phenomenon.

#### Cognitive Learning Theory and Its Approach to Errors

With Chomsky, cognitive psychology and transformational generative grammar have influenced the trends of second language teaching and entailed new methods in the field of language teaching and learning. Unlike behaviorist learning theory, which claims that language is best learned through a mechanical memorization and repetition process, cognitivist learning theory claims that human beings are born with an innate aptitude for language learning and that they possess an innate universal grammar that controls their grammatical language development.

All learners, on their path towards native-like proficiency in the target language, pass through an interlanguage which consists of developmental sequences that are characterized by typical correct or incorrect use of target language structures (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991). These rules and the language they produce are, in essence, a series of hypotheses (Chastain, 1980). Language learners actively construct a creative system which uses the rules to make utterances and to test hypotheses about the target language (Dulay, Burt, & Krashen, 1982; Klassen, 1991; Rivers, 1986). If their hypotheses are wrong, they reformulate their hypotheses

about target language structures until their language system conforms more and more to the rules of the target language they are learning (Chomsky, 1966). In this alteration process, as Chastain (1980) points out, the errors play a crucial role. Therefore, errors that are made by the learners are regarded as concomitant with the learning process and thus are inevitable (Ellis, 1991).

Errors that are made by the learners are viewed as clues to understanding what is happening in learners' minds and are evidence that learning is taking place. Errors are regarded as a natural phenomenon because first and second language acquisition processes are similar (Walz, 1982). Just as native speakers make mistakes in the process of first language acquisition, second language learners make errors (Klassen, 1991).

Rapid changes that took place in the field have led to new concepts of language learning which made language learning more humanistic. In this way, natural language learning theory began to be discussed.

#### Natural Language Learning and Its Approach to Errors

Along the way to making language learning more humanistic and less mechanical, Krashen introduced new concepts regarding the learning device: comprehensible input and affective filter (Krashen, 1982). He maintains that a second language is acquired through processing input, i.e., language that is heard or read and understood. To him, language that is not understood does not help. While insisting on comprehensibility of input, he also claims that not all comprehensible input helps either. Progress along the 'natural order' is achieved when a learner is in some stage of second language development, which he calls *i*, and when the learner at this stage receives comprehensible input that contains structures one step beyond learner's *i* level. He labels this structure *i+1* (Krashen, 1982).

Krashen's second notion is affective filter. To him, when the filter is "up", comprehensible input cannot reach the language acquisition device; when it is "low" it easily passes through the filter (Krashen, 1982). Lack of motivation, low self-esteem, anxiety and so on, can combine to raise the filter, to form a mental block which prevents comprehensible input from reaching the language acquisition device. Krashen (1982) states:

People acquire second languages only if they obtain comprehensible input and if their affective filters are low enough to allow the input 'in'. When the filter is down and appropriate comprehensible input is presented (and comprehended), acquisition is inevitable. It is, in fact, unavoidable and cannot be prevented--the language 'mental organ' will function just as automatically as any other organ (p. 4).

Krashen (1982) claims that error correction, especially in spoken language, has the immediate effect of putting the students on the defensive and therefore raises the affective filter. He goes on to say that language lessons inspire fear even among professional language teachers as learners, and the reasons for this are our insistence on early speaking and our attitude towards errors.

Krashen (1982) labels error correction by the teacher as a serious mistake. Error correction is not a basic mechanism for improving second language performance; rather, learners learn via input. Krashen (1982) states that since overuse of correction has such negative effects on acquisition, and since error correction is not of direct benefit to language acquisition, a safe procedure is to eliminate error correction entirely in communicative-type activities because improvement will come without error correction.

The development and changes in the field of language learning and teaching inspired researchers to investigate new factors in language acquisition and learning. Thus, especially after the fifties, researchers began to conduct classroom-centered research. The next section reviews relevant classroom-centered research on error correction.

#### Classroom-Centered Research

Classroom-centered research is, as Long (1983) describes, "research on second language learning and teaching, all or part of whose data are derived from the observation or measurement of the classroom performance of teachers and students" (p. 4).

As for the aim of classroom-centered research, Seliger and Long (1983) state that the main goal of classroom-centered research is to understand what is involved in the process of second language acquisition.

In other words, classroom-centered research seeks to inform our understanding of how teachers and learners accomplish classroom lessons.

Classroom-centered research can take any problematic area or area of interest as a focus of inquiry. Error correction became one of the foci of classroom-centered research after the 1960s. Numerous studies have been conducted to investigate learners' errors and teachers' strategies in correcting learners' errors (Allwright, 1975; Beretta, 1989; Cathcart and Olsen, 1976; Chaudron, 1977; Chaudron, 1986; Fanselow, 1977; Gok, 1991; Kul, 1992; Leki, 1991; Long, 1977; Hendrickson, 1978; Nystrom, 1983; Walz, 1982).

#### Feedback

The interaction between teacher and student is generally referred to as feedback. As Chaudron (1988) states, "in any communicative exchange, speakers derive from their listeners information on the reception and comprehension of their message" (p. 132). This information may be in many forms. If the message of the speaker is understood, it may be approval of the message, but when the message is not understood or accepted it may be in various forms to indicate an uncomprehended or unaccepted message, such as comprehension checks, questioning looks, or prompts (Chaudron, 1988).

Features of feedback in the language classroom are quite different from those of natural communicative exchanges. When teachers do not comprehend or accept what students produce, the feedback about the utterance may easily turn out to be error correction, whereas it is not usual in natural communicative exchanges. The primary role of language teachers is often considered to be giving both negative feedback in the form of error correction or positive feedback to show acceptance of the utterance. Feedback in the form of error correction is therefore a natural part of classroom interaction (Chaudron, 1988).

Feedback in language classrooms may be useful in two ways. From the teacher's perspective, it may be used to inform a student of the correction of their language production. From the learners' point of view, feedback may constitute a potential source of improvement (Chaudron, 1988). In the next section, the literature on feedback in the form of error correction will be reviewed.

### Teachers' Feedback as Error Correction

Error correction in the language classroom has a long history. Teachers' belief that learners can derive information from their feedback has always led them to correct learners' language errors. However, trust in the use of correction in language classrooms has begun to disappear, and practice is shifting from overcorrection to minimum correction. As Chaudron (1988) states:

The multiple functions of feedback and the pressure to be accepting of learners' errors lead to the paradoxical circumstance that teachers must either interrupt communication for the sake of formal TL correction or let errors pass "untreated" in order to further the communicative goals of the classroom (p. 134).

Some researchers point out that many teachers are inconsistent in correcting learners' errors, and that their correction strategies are ambiguous and misleading (Allwright, 1975; Chaudron, 1977; Leki, 1991; Long, 1977). Besides the inconsistency of teachers in error correction, questioning the value of error correction has led a number of researchers to investigate the effectiveness or general characteristics of error correction. Some language specialists propose correction (Vigil and Oller, 1976; Corder, 1967; George, 1972) whereas others do not believe error correction is of any use for language development (Krashen, 1982; Krashen and Terrell, 1983; Cattegno, 1972).

The research on error correction has focussed on the following questions (Chaudron, 1988; Hendrickson, 1978):

- Should learner errors be corrected?
- If so, when should learner errors be corrected?
- Which learner errors should be corrected?
- How should learner errors be corrected?
- Who should correct learner errors?

Research related to these questions will be reviewed in the following section.

#### Should learner errors be corrected?

As in any other field of learning, errors are inevitable in language learning. Students may need the assistance of someone who is at a further

point in language development than they are when they are not able to recognize their errors (Allwright, 1975; Corder, 1967; George, 1972). But, should learner errors be corrected?

Research on students' attitudes towards error correction reveals that students not only wish to be corrected but want to be corrected more than teachers think they should be (Cathcart and Olsen, 1976; Kul, 1991; Leki, 1991; Walz, 1982). A study of non-native speakers' preference for error correction in their conversations with native speakers revealed that non-native speakers wish to be corrected by their native speaker friends (Chun, Day, Chenoweth, & Lubsescu, 1982). On the other hand, in Walker (1973) students stated that being corrected all the time caused them to lose confidence.

Along the same line with students' preferences, some researchers who fear that errors will fossilize if they do not receive any feedback are in favor of correcting errors (Vigil and Oller, 1976; Lambardo, 1985). They point out the danger of fossilization--that once fossilization occurs, language development stops and further efforts in teaching will not change the fossilized interlanguage system (Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991).

Nevertheless, some researchers are not in favor of correcting errors. Krashen (1982), focusing the affective filter of students in language learning, claims that correcting errors will raise the filter and stop or hinder learning since error correction has the immediate effect of putting students on the defensive. Hendrickson (1977) found that correcting errors makes no significant change in students' language proficiency. Gattegno (1972) claims that learners should recognize and correct their errors on their own. Finally, George (1972) states that the best method for eliminating errors is to tolerate them. Alvarez (1982) sees error correction as killing learners.

#### When should errors be corrected?

To decide when to correct and when to ignore errors is very challenging for teachers (Gorbet, 1974). Teachers who practice the audiolingual method hold that the teacher should correct errors immediately after they occur, believing that they may become bad habits. They correct errors regardless of whether the focus is on form or meaning.

Some researchers do not recommend immediate correction (Chastain, 1980; Dulay, Burt and Krashen, 1982). Chastain (1980) suggests that errors should not be corrected when the learners' attention is on communication since this will destroy communication. Krashen (1982) proposes correcting errors only when the goal is learning because, as Krashen and Terrell (1983) states, error correction is not of use for acquisition.

As for when teachers correct errors, Cathcart and Olsen (1976) found that teachers have a tendency to correct errors in drills but not often in communication. Pedagogical focus is observed to be a significant factor in deciding when to correct errors. Chaudron (1986) found that grammatical errors are corrected when the focus is on form in language classes and they are generally ignored when the focus is on content. Beretta (1989) recommends teachers correct only content errors. Similarly, Courchene (1980) states that pedagogical focus is a principal criterion in deciding when to correct. Courchene also found that when the error is global, it receives more and immediate correction than local errors.

Lucas (1975), Yoneyama (1982), Salica (1981), and Courchene (1980) found contrasting results regarding the amount of errors that received correction. Lucas (1975) and Yoneyama (1982), whose research were conducted in EFL settings, found that only 10 to 15 percent of learner errors were ignored, reflecting high priority for error correction in such grammar-based instruction. On the other hand, Salica (1981) and Courchene (1980) found that approximately half of the errors (42 to 49 percent) are ignored in ESL settings. The explanation for this difference may be that ESL contexts emphasize freer communication and EFL contexts emphasize formal correctness.

#### Which errors should be corrected?

There appears to be a consensus among language teachers that correcting three types of errors can be quite useful to second language learners: errors that impair communication significantly; errors that have a highly stigmatizing effect on the listener or reader; and errors that occur frequently in students' speech and writing (Hendrickson, 1978).

With the shift from behaviorist learning theory to cognitive learning theory, an increasing number of educators suggest that errors that hinder



communication should be given top priority in correction (Hendrickson, 1978), and rather than systematic correction, more selective feedback may be more effective (Dulay and Burt, 1974).

Burt and Kiparsky (1974) state that 'global errors', which affect overall sentence organization, significantly irritate native speakers and therefore impede communication more than 'local errors', which affect single elements in a sentence. Klassen (1991) claims that because 'global errors' are more important in communication, they should be corrected more than 'local errors'.

Hanzeli (1975) recommends that errors that destroy the meaning of a message should be corrected. Beretta (1988) emphasizes the importance of content and proposes correcting content errors rather than errors related to form. Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982) suggest that correcting vocabulary may be helpful.

Another criterion for deciding which errors to correct is the frequency of errors. Some researchers suggest that high frequency errors should be corrected by the teacher (Allwright, 1975; George, 1972). But research indicates that when the errors are frequent, the frequency of correction decreases (Courchene, 1980; Nystrom, 1983.).

#### Who should correct errors?

Traditionally the teacher is responsible for correcting errors (Leki, 1991). Cathcart and Olsen (1976) and Leki (1991) found that students prefer to be corrected by their teacher. Corder (1973) believes that the teacher, as corrector of errors, is the source of explanations and descriptions and, more importantly, verifies the learner's hypothesis about the target language.

One alternative way to correct learners' errors is 'peer correction'. Cohen (1975) points out that peer correction is more useful than teacher correction, because it gives students opportunities to cooperate with their peers. However, in some cultures students may consider peer corrections criticism (Edge, 1989).

Another means of error correction may be 'self correction'. Several language specialists propose that once students are made aware of their errors, they may learn more from correcting their own mistakes than from

being corrected by their teachers (Corder, 1973). Cattedano (1972) believes that self-correction will cause errors to disappear more rapidly. It has been suggested that self-correction would probably be effective with grammatical errors and relatively ineffective with lexical errors (Wingfield, 1975).

#### How should errors be corrected?

Recently learners' errors are accepted as signals that learning is taking place. Teachers or environmental factors should not raise the affective filters of learners so that learners can receive comprehensible input (Krashen, 1982; Dulay, Burt, & Krashen, 1982; Krashen and Terrell, 1983). Therefore, teachers need to be aware of how they correct learner errors and to avoid using correction strategies that might embarrass or frustrate students (Alvarez, 1982; Holley and King, 1971).

Traditionally errors have negative connotations for even professional language teachers in learning a new language, so they may naturally inspire fear in students. Thus, correcting students without considering their feelings may destroy their confidence and motivation (Alvarez, 1982). Therefore, unless students' feelings are taken into account while correcting their errors, any kind of correction strategy will fail to help students repair their deviant language productions.

A second point that teachers need to take into consideration is students' proficiency level. Chastain (1980) suggests correcting only those errors that impede communication at the beginning stages of language learning; thus, elementary level students need more correction than intermediate level students (Chastain, 1980). Walz (1982) states that adult learners profit more from grammatical error correction than children do. Hendrickson (1978) proposes that leaving room for students for further communication without error correction enhances learning.

Teachers' error correction strategies constitute an important factor in the effectiveness of correction. Some researchers have discovered that teachers are inconsistent in correcting errors and that ambiguous correction strategies mislead students (Allwright, 1975; Chaudron, 1977; Fanselow, 1977; Leki, 1991; Long, 1977). Allwright (1975) points out that the teachers' inconsistency in correction may create confusion in students'

minds. For instance, a teacher might ignore the second or third instance of same error although the teacher emphasizes the formal correction in the first instance (Long, 1977; Chaudron, 1977; & Leki, 1991). Teachers may also give ambiguous feedback that learners do not understand. The following example from Stokes (cited in Chaudron, 1988:135) illustrates the inconsistency in error correction. In the first instance, the teacher recognizes the error of omitting the definite article; in the second instance, the teacher fails to recognize that the student does not correct the error after corrective feedback:

Teacher: When was he born?

Eulyces: Twenty-first of January nineteen sixty-three.

Teacher: Come on Eulyces, you missed something here. Just say it over again.

Eulyces: Twenty...

Teacher: The twenty-first.

Eulyces: Twenty-first of February nineteen sixty-three.

Teacher: Good.

Several researchers have provided a set of alternative ways of giving feedback (Allwright, 1975; Chaudron, 1988). Allwright lists a number of feedback types:

Lack of error indicated

Blame indicated

Location indicated

Model provided

Error type indicated

Remedy indicated

Improvement indicated

Praise indicated

Opportunity indicated

Other categories proposed are simple descriptive sets of categories, such as "explicit" and "implicit", "correcting" and "helping" (Chaudron, 1988). One of the most detailed taxonomies of corrective feedback has been provided by Chaudron (1977), who identifies thirty feedback types. While other types might require high-level inferences (e.g., inferences about

'praise' and 'blame'), the types in Chaudron's taxonomy are a low inference set of structural types and stand independently. Chaudron's taxonomy is used for the purpose of this study and the description of these types with their examples appear in Appendix C.

#### Conclusion

The shift from teacher-centered to learner-centered methodologies has changed the roles of teachers and learners from teacher to facilitator and from passive learner to active participant in the learning process (Larsen-Freeman, 1986). Students' errors have begun to be accepted as windows to learning. Nowadays it is a common belief that teachers may learn from learners' errors what their students have mastered and what they need to learn.

Students need assistance when they make mistakes, but while correcting errors a number of decisions need to be made by the teacher about whether errors should be corrected, when errors should be corrected, which errors should be corrected, and who should correct errors and how. Although many researchers (such as Allwright, 1977; Cathcart and Olsen, 1976; Chaudron, 1977; 1986; 1988; Courchene, 1980; Fanselow, 1977; Kul, 1992; Long; 1977, and Nystrom, 1983) conducted research investigating the features and effects of error correction in ESL settings, more needs to be known about these aspects of error treatment. Also, it is not known if there is a relationship between specific types of error and specific types of corrective feedback, that is, do certain types of errors lead to certain types of corrective feedback?

It is also hard to generalize the findings of research on error treatment conducted in ESL contexts to EFL contexts because research conducted in EFL contexts provides different findings. Lucas (1975) and Yoneyama (1982) state that EFL teachers correct more than their ESL colleagues do. The attitude of the ESL and EFL teachers to learner errors might be different from each other in that EFL teachers may be more attentive to learner errors than ESL teachers. It may also differ in that educational policies of EFL institutions may emphasize on formal correctness of learners' language.

## CHAPTER THREE METHODOLOGY

### Introduction

The main purpose of this study is to provide a description of how students' oral language errors are treated by teachers in EFL classes. This study investigates types of learners' oral errors and teachers' corrective feedback, and the relationship between them in the EFL classes under consideration.

### Data Elicitation

#### Source of Data

This study was carried out at Bilkent University School of English Language (BUSEL), Ankara, Turkey. The students admitted to Bilkent University need to take at least a one-year course of English before they begin taking classes in their chosen department. The students study English in mixed groups of students from many different departments. The teachers are generally non-native speakers.

#### Participants

The director of BUSEL was asked to help the researcher get in touch with three teachers who have at least three years of teaching experience and who teach English to intermediate level students. The rationale for choosing three experienced teachers was the belief that novice teachers might overcorrect students' errors (Ellis, 1991). Intermediate students were chosen because different levels of language proficiency level might influence teachers' corrective feedback (Chastain, 1980). The director of BUSEL selected three teachers and informed them that this researcher would like to carry out classroom-centered research in their classes. All three teachers were non-native speakers of English. On their acceptance, the director informed this researcher about these teachers' classes and weekly schedule. Appointments with participant teachers were made. In the first meeting, the general purpose of the research was explained to them without revealing the main focus of the study. Teachers were told that the focus of this research was general classroom interaction. Teachers were also told how much time they would need to devote to this study and what they would need to do. After receiving each teacher's consent individually, previously prepared consent forms (See appendix A) were given to them.

They were also asked to give consent forms to their students to receive their consent to participate. This researcher himself explained the purpose of the study to students. The students seemed eager to participate this study.

#### Materials

A video camera was used instead of a tape recorder to provide the researcher with higher quality recordings of classroom interaction. The video camera was used with its lens closed, acting as a tape recorder, because some students did not want to be filmed.

#### Teachers' Sessions

Two sessions of each teacher were recorded to enable the researcher to have data from different sessions. Six sessions in total were recorded. These six sessions were discussion type lessons in which the focus was a discussion topic which students would be eager to speak about. Teachers were asked to encourage their students to speak in the sessions.

#### Recording

A pilot study, in which some segments of the sessions were recorded using a tape recorder, was carried out. This pilot study had two main purposes: (1) to enable the students and the teachers to become comfortable with the researcher as an observer in the classroom, and (2) to check the sound quality of the recordings. It was observed that neither students nor teachers were negatively affected by being recorded or by the presence of the researcher. The sound quality of the recordings was insufficient for the purpose of the research. Thus, the researcher asked participants if he could use a video camera with its lens closed. Students accepted this arrangement. While recording the lessons, the video camera was placed on a table where it would not disturb students.

### Data Analysis

#### Description of Data

The raw data for this study consisted of six hours of recorded classroom interaction. A 30-minute period in the middle of each session was selected for analysis in order to sample that part of the session focused on class discussion.

### Analysis of the data

Although there are different definitions of error in the language teaching field, descriptions of the errors used in the analysis of data in this particular study were taken from Chaudron (1986). The definitions of errors used in the analysis of this study are as follows:

**Linguistic Errors:** Morphological and syntactic errors were combined under the name of linguistic errors. This category includes word order, tense, suffix and verb conjugation errors.

**Phonological Errors:** Only outstanding pronunciation errors were included in this category for this study, although Chaudron (1986) also included intonation errors.

**Content Errors:** Incorrect expressions of the concepts relevant to the subject were categorized as content errors.

**Discourse Errors:** Errors beyond sentence level--inappropriate openings and closings, refusals, topic nomination or switches, and pauses in conversation.

**Lexical Errors:** Incorrect vocabulary choices.

These definitions of types of error also appear in Appendix B.

Chaudron's taxonomy of types of feedback (1988) was also used in the analysis of data. Chaudron, in his taxonomy of thirty feedback types, identifies various strategies to be applied in response to students' deviant language productions in the flow of classroom interaction. The definitions of these strategies and examples of them appear in Appendix C. For the purpose of this study, this taxonomy was modified, collapsing some very similar strategies into one single strategy (i.e., 'Original question', 'Altered questions', and 'Questions' were collapsed into the type 'Questions').

In the analysis section each instance of language deviancy which conforms to the definitions of error types used for the purpose of this study was counted to be an error. When the errors that received corrective feedback either by the teacher or peers recurred, they were counted as separate errors. If learners' utterances provided more than one type of error, these errors were counted separately. The feedback types used by the teacher were also counted in the analysis. Feedback provided by peers

was ignored. The researcher tried to catch all the instances of feedback by the teachers although some instances may have been missed.

An evaluation and recording form (See Appendix D) was created to be used in the analysis of the data. On this form, teachers and their sessions were coded. Teachers were coded as A, B, and C. The sessions of teachers were coded as  $S_{1A}$  (Session 1, teacher A),  $S_{2A}$ ,  $S_{TA}$  (Two sessions of teacher A),  $S_{1B}$ ,  $S_{2B}$ ,  $S_{TB}$ ,  $S_{1C}$ ,  $S_{2C}$ , and  $S_{TC}$ . These codes were used in the simple calculation of frequencies of feedback types and error types.

To check the reliability of the researcher's analysis, three raters were asked to analyze a thirty-minute sample of data. The raters were trained to use the taxonomy of error types and feedback types used in the analysis. The coding of the raters and the researcher were compared and correlated, and the correlation coefficient number for errors was found to be  $r=0.97$ . The correlation coefficient number for feedback types was  $r=0.93$ .

#### Statistical Analysis of Data

First, frequencies of errors and feedback types were tabulated. Then, their frequencies were calculated to find their distribution in each teacher's sessions. The findings of this procedure were used to determine individual teachers' preferences about feedback selection in treating learner errors. After finding the frequencies of error types and feedback types in each session of the teachers, the frequencies of feedback types were calculated in each session for separate error types. The findings of this calculation were used to find out how frequently teachers tend to give corrective feedback in response to learners' oral errors. In this procedure, the frequencies of the feedback types 'ignore' and 'acceptance' were used to find the number of the errors that were allowed to go by without correction in total, each and two sessions of each teachers.

Later on, in order to find out if there was a relationship between error types and feedback types, the distribution of the feedback types (excluding 'ignore' and 'acceptance') was made for corrected error types in each session, two sessions of each teacher, and in total. The frequencies of feedback types for separate error types led the researcher to understand the relationship between error types and corrective feedback types.



## CHAPTER FOUR FINDING

## Introduction

This study seeks to identify specific characteristics of EFL classrooms at BUSEL, a preparatory school of English at Bilkent University. The focus of this study is learners' speech errors, teachers' corrective feedback, and the relationship between them. This chapter presents the findings of this study, which are presented in the order of the following research questions:

1. How are learners' oral errors corrected by EFL teachers?
  - a) How frequently are learners' oral errors corrected by EFL teachers?
  - b) Which types of oral errors do the teachers tend to correct most?
2. What types of corrective feedback are used by EFL teachers?
3. Is there a relationship between learners' oral errors and teachers' corrective feedback? What types of errors lead to what types of corrective feedback?
4. Do teachers show different feedback preferences in correcting students oral errors?

## Analysis of the Data

Three hours of recorded data from segments of lessons showed 293 oral errors made by students. In order to answer the first research question, these errors were categorized into linguistic errors, phonological errors, content errors, discourse errors, and lexical errors. The most frequent type of error was found to be linguistic errors. The other types were found to be, in order of frequency, lexical errors, content errors, discourse errors, and phonological errors. Table 1 displays the frequencies of these error types.

Table 1

Frequencies of Error Types

<u>Error Type</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Linguistic	141	48.1%
Lexical	53	18.1%
Content	43	14.7%
Discourse	28	9.6%
Phonological	28	9.6%
<hr/>		
Total	293	100%

In the three hours of recorded data, 18 types of corrective feedback were counted. Table 2 displays the frequencies of these error feedback types. The three most frequent types were 'ignore' (24.6%), 'acceptance' (18.1%), and 'delay' (13.3%). The other types of corrective feedback were, in order of frequency, 'provide', 'loop', 'interrupt', 'questions', 'attention', 'explanation', 'negation', 'repetition with change', 'complex explanation', 'prompt', 'transfer', 'repetition with no change', 'emphasis', 'repeat', and 'exit'.

Table 2

Frequency of the Corrective Feedback Types

<u>Type of feedback</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Ignore	72	24.6
Acceptance	53	18.1
Delay	39	13.3
Provide	24	8.2
Loop	19	6.5
Interrupt	13	4.4
Questions	11	3.8
Attention	10	3.4
Explanation	10	3.4
Negation	9	3.1
Repetition with change	9	3.1
Complex explanation	8	2.7
Prompt	6	2
Transfer	4	1.4
Repetition with no change	2	0.7
Emphasis	2	0.7
Repeat	1	0.3
Exit	1	0.3
<hr/>		
Total	293	100

## Amount of Correction

Simple calculation of the frequencies of errors and corrective feedback types shows that the participating teachers corrected 57% of students' total oral errors. Table 3 displays the distribution of errors and the frequency of correction for the two sessions of class of each teacher. Of these oral errors given corrective feedback, 88% were content errors, 86% were discourse errors, 64% were lexical errors, 46% were linguistic errors, and 25% were phonological errors.

Table 3

Distribution of errors and the frequency of correction

	<u>S<sub>1A</sub></u>	<u>S<sub>2A</sub></u>	<u>S<sub>TA</sub></u>	<u>S<sub>1B</sub></u>	<u>S<sub>2B</sub></u>	<u>S<sub>TB</sub></u>	<u>S<sub>1C</sub></u>	<u>S<sub>2C</sub></u>	<u>S<sub>TC</sub></u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>Error Type</u>										
Linguistic	21	18	39	32	21	53	23	26	49	141
% of total	43	42	39	57	46	53	52	47	49	48.1
% treated	24	56	38	44	38	42	74	42	57	46
Lexical	17	7	24	8	12	20	4	5	9	53
% of total	35	16	24	14	26	20	9	9	9	18.1
% treated	59	86	66	50	58	55	75	80	77	64
Content	4	9	13	10	2	12	8	10	18	43
% of total	8	21	13	18	4	12	18	18	18	14.7
% treated	75	89	84	100	100	100	87.5	80	83	88
Phonological	3	3	6	1	8	9	9	4	13	28
% of total	6	7	6	2	17	9	20	7	13	9.6
% treated	-	-	-	100	-	11	78	-	53	25
Discourse	4	6	10	5	3	8	-	10	10	28
% of total	8	14	10	9	7	8	-	18	10	9.6
% treated	75	100	90	80	100	88	-	80	80	86
<hr/>										
Total	49	43	102	56	46	102	44	55	99	293
% of total	17	15	100	19	16	100	15	19	100	100
% treated	43	70	55	59	48	50	75	56	66	57

The analysis of the data shows that all the teachers who participated in this study corrected content errors and discourse errors more than the other types of error. Lexical errors was the third most frequent error type to receive corrective feedback by all the teachers. The teachers tended to correct approximately half of the linguistic errors. However, except for teacher C, the teachers ignored almost all phonological errors. Teacher C gave corrective feedback for about 53% of the total phonological errors which occurred in S<sub>1C</sub> and S<sub>2C</sub>.

An analysis of types of errors corrected will be presented for teacher, session by session.

As seen in Table 3, 43% of 49 oral errors, in session 1 of teacher A ( $S_{1A}$ ), were given corrective feedback by the teacher. While none of the phonological errors was given corrective feedback, 75% of content, 75% of discourse, 59% of lexical, and 24% of linguistic errors were given corrective feedback by teacher A.

In teacher A's second session ( $S_{2A}$ ), 70% of total oral errors were given corrective feedback. As in the first session, none of the phonological errors was given corrective feedback. However, 100% of discourse, 89% of content, 86% of lexical, and 56% of linguistic errors were given corrective feedback.

The analysis of this teacher's two sessions ( $S_{1A}$  and  $S_{2A}$ ) shows that this teacher corrected 55% of learners' total oral errors. In this teacher's two sessions, 90% of discourse errors, 84% of content errors, 66% of lexical errors, and 38% of linguistic errors were given corrective feedback. On the other hand, none of the phonological errors was given corrective feedback.

In teacher B's first session ( $S_{1B}$ ), 59% of total oral errors were given corrective feedback. In this session, 100% of phonological errors, 100% of content errors, 80% of discourse errors, 50% of lexical errors, and 44% of linguistic errors were given corrective feedback.

In teacher B's second session ( $S_{2B}$ ), 48% of total oral errors were given corrective feedback by the teacher. 100% of content errors, 100% of discourse errors, 58% of lexical errors, and 38% of linguistic errors received corrective feedback. Unlike this teacher's first session, no phonological error was given corrective feedback.

In total, 50% of total oral errors received corrective feedback in teacher B's two sessions ( $S_{1B}$  and  $S_{2B}$ ). As for particular types, 100% of content errors, 88% of discourse errors, 55% of lexical errors, and 42% of total linguistic errors, and 11% of phonological errors were given corrective feedback.

The analysis of teacher C's first session ( $S_{1C}$ ) showed that this teacher corrected 87.5% of content errors, 78% of phonological errors, 75% of lexical errors, and 74% of learners' linguistic errors. No discourse

error was counted in this session. In total, 75% of learners' oral errors received corrective feedback in this session.

In teacher C's second session ( $S_{2C}$ ), 80% of content errors, discourse errors, and lexical errors received corrective feedback, and 42% of linguistic errors. In this session, teacher C did not give corrective feedback about phonological errors. In this session 56% of total errors were given corrective feedback.

In teacher C's two sessions ( $S_{1C}$  and  $S_{2C}$ ), 66% of total errors were given corrective feedback. This teacher corrected 83% of content errors, 80% of discourse errors, 77% of lexical errors, 57% of linguistic errors, and 53% of phonological errors.

#### Types of Corrective Feedback Used by the Teachers

Eighteen types of corrective feedback were counted in the analysis of data. Table 4 presents the distribution of corrective feedback types for teachers. Eighteen types of corrective feedback were counted in the analysis of the data. As shown in Table 4, all three teachers use the types 'ignore', 'acceptance', and 'delay' most frequently. Besides these types, the teachers tend to use types where the correct form of deviant language is provided. These types, in order of frequency, were 'provide', 'loop', 'interrupt', 'questions', 'attention', 'explanation', 'negation', 'repetition with change', 'complex explanation', 'prompt', 'transfer', 'repetition with no change', 'emphasis', 'repeat' and 'exit'. The results of data analysis for feedback types will now be presented for each teacher, session by session.

Teacher A, in  $S_{1A}$  and  $S_{2A}$ , used twelve types of corrective feedback. This teacher preferred using the types 'ignore', 'acceptance', and 'delay' most frequently. Other types used by Teacher A, in order of frequency, were 'provide', 'loop', 'interrupt', 'negation', 'complex explanation', 'explanation', 'emphasis', 'repetition with change', and 'prompt'.

Teacher B, in  $S_{1B}$  and  $S_{2B}$ , used fourteen types of corrective feedback. The most frequent type in these two lessons was, as in the lessons of Teacher B, the types 'ignore', 'acceptance', and 'delay'. Other types used by Teacher B, in order of frequency, were 'questions', 'provide', 'explanation', 'loop', 'attention', 'repetition with change', 'prompt',

'interrupt', 'transfer', 'repetition with no change', and 'negation'.

Teacher C, in S<sub>1C</sub> and S<sub>2C</sub>, used sixteen types of corrective feedback in treating learners' oral errors. Teacher C tended to use the types 'ignore', 'acceptance', and 'delay', like the other teachers, as the most frequent types. Other types used by this teacher, in the order of frequency, were found to be 'provide', 'loop', 'explanation', 'attention', 'complex explanation', 'interrupt', 'negation', 'questions', 'prompt', 'transfer' 'repetition with no change', 'exit', and 'repeat'. Table 4 displays the distribution of feedback types for teachers.

Table 4

Distribution of Corrective Feedback Types for Teachers

Feedback Types	Teacher A		Teacher B		Teacher C		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Ignore	29	31.5	24	23.5	19	19	72	25
Interrupt	6	6.5	3	3	4	4	13	4.4
Delay	14	15.2	10	10	15	15	39	13.3
Acceptance	12	13	25	24.5	16	16	53	18
Attention	-	-	5	5	5	5	10	3.4
Negation	4	4.3	1	1	4	4	9	3
Provide	10	11	6	6	8	8	24	8.2
Emphasis	2	2	-	-	-	-	2	0.7
Rep. with no change	-	-	1	1	1	1	2	0.7
Rep. with change	1	1	4	4	4	4	9	3
Explanation	2	2	5	5	3	3	10	3.4
Complex Explanation	3	3.3	-	-	5	5	8	2.7
Repeat	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	0.3
Loop	8	8.6	5	5	6	6	19	6.5
Prompt	1	1	3	3	2	2	6	2
Questions	-	-	8	8	3	3	11	3.8
Transfer	-	-	2	2	2	2	4	1.4
Exit	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	0.3

Relationship Between Teachers' Corrective Feedback  
and Students' Oral Errors

The analysis of frequencies of teachers' corrective feedback directed to learners' oral errors shows that some types of oral errors lead to certain types of corrective feedback from the teachers. The types 'ignore' and 'acceptance' were eliminated from the analysis since they are types where no correction is intended by the teacher. Table 5 displays the distribution of teachers' corrective feedback according to types of error in total. As shown in Table 5, the teachers tended to use the type 'provide' (71% of the time) more often than any other type in giving corrective feedback about phonological errors. Similarly, teachers also preferred using 'provide' (46% of the time) for discourse errors. Teachers also tended to use most frequently the type 'delay' for lexical errors and linguistic errors. There was no striking preference for particular feedback types for content errors.



Table 5

Distribution of the feedback types according to error types

Feedback Types	Error Types									
	Ling.		Phono.		Cont.		Dis.		Lex.	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Interrupt	5	7	-	-	1	3	1	4	6	18
Delay	16	27	1	14	7	18	-	-	15	44
Attention	2	3	-	-	5	13	3	13	-	-
Negation	3	5	-	-	4	11	2	8	-	-
Provide	-	-	5	71	4	11	11	46	4	12
Emphasis	-	-	-	-	2	5	-	-	-	-
Rep. No Ch.	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	3
Rep. W. Ch.	9	14	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Explanation	5	8	1	14	4	11	-	-	-	-
Com. Exp.	4	6	-	-	2	5	2	8	-	-
Repeat	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Loop	8	12	-	-	5	13	3	13	3	9
Prompt	3	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	9
Questions	5	7	-	-	3	8	2	8	1	3
Transfer	2	3	-	-	1	3	-	-	1	3
Exit	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Teacher A's Preferences

Table 6 presents Teacher A's preference in giving corrective feedback in response to learners' oral errors.

Teacher A used the types 'delay' and 'loop' outstandingly more than other types in giving corrective feedback about linguistic errors and lexical errors. Teacher A also preferred the type 'negation' more than other types with content errors. Discourse errors, in this teacher's classes, seemed to lead to the type 'provide' more than other types. However, no phonological errors received corrective feedback.

Table 6

Distribution of the corrective feedback types for oral errors in Teacher A's sessions (S<sub>1A</sub> and S<sub>2A</sub>)

Feedback Types	Error Types									
	Ling.		Phono.		Cont.		Dis.		Lex.	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Interrupt	2	13	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	24
Delay	5	33	-	-	2	18	-	-	7	41
Negation	1	7	-	-	3	27	-	-	-	-
Provide	-	-	-	-	1	9	7	78	2	12
Emphasis	-	-	-	-	2	18	-	-	-	-
Rep. W. Ch.	1	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Explanation	2	13	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Comp. Exp.	-	-	-	-	1	9	2	22	-	-
Loop	4	27	-	-	2	18	-	-	2	12
Prompt	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	12

Teacher B's Preferences

Table 7 presents the preferences of Teacher B in correcting learners' oral errors in S<sub>1B</sub> and S<sub>1B</sub>. Teacher B did not prefer a specific type(s) of corrective feedback for linguistic errors. However, this teacher used the types 'provide' and 'attention' most frequently for discourse errors and the type 'delay' for lexical errors.

Table 7

Distribution of the Corrective Feedback Types for Oral errors  
in Teacher B's Sessions (S<sub>1B</sub> and S<sub>2B</sub>)

Feedback Types	Error Types									
	Ling.		Phono.		Cont.		Dis.		Lex.	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Interrupt	1	5	-	-	-	-	1	14	1	9
Delay	5	23	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	46
Attention	1	5	-	-	2	17	2	29	-	-
Negation	-	-	-	-	1	8	-	-	-	-
Provide	-	-	-	-	2	17	3	43	1	9
Rep. No Ch.	1	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rep. W. Ch.	4	18	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Explanation	2	9	1	100	2	17	-	-	-	-
Loop	3	14	-	-	1	8	-	-	1	9
Prompt	2	9	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	9
Questions	3	14	-	-	3	25	1	14	1	9
Transfer	-	-	-	-	1	8	-	-	1	9
Total	22		1		12		7		11	

Teacher C's Preferences

Table 8 shows the preferences of Teacher C in using corrective feedback for certain types of oral errors of learners. Teacher C did not seem to prefer a specific type of corrective feedback for linguistic errors, but the most frequent type was 'delay'. This teacher used the type 'provide' for most phonological errors. This teacher also used the types 'delay' and 'attention' for content errors and the type 'delay' for lexical errors most frequently. Teacher C also used the type 'loop' with discourse errors more frequently than other feedback types.

Table 8

Distribution of Corrective Feedback Types for Oral Errors in  
Teacher C's Sessions (S<sub>1C</sub> and S<sub>2C</sub>)

Feedback Types	Error Types									
	Ling.		Phono.		Cont.		Dis.		Lex.	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Interrupt	2	7	-	-	1	7	-	-	1	14
Delay	6	22	1	17	5	33	-	-	3	43
Attention	1	3.5	-	-	3	20	1	12.5	-	-
Negation	2	7	-	-	-	-	2	25	-	-
Provide	-	-	5	83	1	7	1	12.5	1	14
Rep. No Ch.	1	3.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	14
Explanation	4	14	-	-	2	13	-	-	-	-
Comp. Exp.	4	14	-	-	1	7	-	-	-	-
Repeat	1	3.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Loop	1	3.5	-	-	2	13	3	37.5	-	-
Prompt	1	3.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	14
Questions	2	7	-	-	-	-	1	12.5	-	-
Transfer	2	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Exit	1	3.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

The differences between teachers in correcting learner errors

The analysis of the data shows that the teachers tended to correct different percentages of learners' oral errors although the first two teachers, A and B, tended to correct almost same amount of errors. While these two teachers corrected 55 percent and 50 percent of total errors, the third teacher corrected 66 percent of total errors.

Besides, the differences between percentages of correction in total, teachers also corrected different percentages of the same type error in their two lessons. As displayed in Table 3, teacher A corrected 24% of linguistic errors in S<sub>1A</sub> but the percentage of correction of this type error in S<sub>2A</sub> was 56%. Teacher A also corrected different percentages of

lexical errors in two sessions. This teacher corrected 59% of lexical errors in  $S_{1A}$  and 86% in  $S_{2A}$ . Another difference in the percentage of correction of the same type occurred in teacher C's sessions. This teacher corrected 74% of linguistic errors in  $S_{1C}$ . In the second session,  $S_{2C}$ , this teacher corrected 42% of the linguistic errors.

As for particular types of errors, teacher A did not correct any phonological errors, teacher B corrected only 11 percent, and teacher C corrected 50 percent of total phonological errors.

As for linguistic errors, teacher A (38%) and teacher B (42%) tended to correct fewer linguistic errors than teacher C (57%). Teacher C also corrected more lexical errors (77%) than teacher A (66%) and teacher B (55%). Teacher B corrected all the content errors and 80% of discourse errors. The percentage of these error types corrected in teacher A and teacher B's sessions were 84 percent (content errors) and 90 percent (discourse errors) in teacher A's sessions and 83 percent (content errors) and 80 percent (discourse errors) in teacher C's sessions.

For types of corrective feedback, all the teachers tended to prefer the same types as the most frequent types in their error correction. All three teachers used the types 'ignore', 'acceptance', 'delay', 'provide', and 'loop' most frequently. The only difference in these most frequent types was teacher B's preference for the type 'explanation' as one of the most frequent types. The other two teachers did not use this type as frequently.

For the relationship between the error and feedback types, the most striking difference occurred in correcting content errors. All the teachers tended to correct this type of error with different types of corrective feedback. Teacher A used the type 'negation' (27% of the time), teacher B used 'questions' (25% of the time), and teacher C seemed to prefer 'delay' (33% of the time) and 'attention' (20% of the time). Another difference between teachers occurred in correcting discourse errors. While teacher A and B used the type 'provide' most frequently, teacher C used the types 'negation' and 'loop' most frequently. On the other hand, all the teachers used the type 'delay' most frequently for both linguistic errors and lexical errors.

The results show that participating EFL teachers have different strategies for dealing with learners' language problems. Although they do not demonstrate major differences in using feedback types, they differ in the proportion of correction and feedback preferences for certain types of errors. The next chapter will summarize the study and discuss the findings.

## Chapter Five Conclusions

### Summary of the Study

The main objective of this study was to identify the error types of EFL learners and error feedback types of EFL teachers. Moreover, this study investigated the major features of learners' errors, teachers' corrective feedback, and the relationship between them in the three EFL classes under consideration. The study was conducted at BUSEL (Bilkent University School of English).

The data for this study were elicited from three teachers' six discussion-type lessons, in which discussion of topics was the focus of instruction. The number of learners in these recorded sessions varied from 13 to 19. These sessions were recorded using a video camera with its lens closed.

In the selection of participant teachers and learners, this researcher had three criteria: teachers' experience and nationality and learners' language proficiency level. The teachers had at least three years of teaching experience and they were all non-native speakers of English. The students were intermediate level students.

In the analysis of the three hours of recorded data, Chaudron's taxonomy of feedback types (1988) and Chaudron's definition of error types (1986) were used. The results were found through a simple calculation of frequencies. The next section discusses the findings.

### Major Findings

This study had four research questions. The first research question sought to find the proportion of correction that participant EFL teachers make in their classes and to identify the types of oral errors that are given priority in correction by the participating EFL teachers. It was found that teachers corrected 57% of students' total errors. Compared to the findings of related research, this proportion may seem small. The studies of Lucas (1975) and Yoneyama (1982) found that 85 to 90 percent of learners' errors were corrected in EFL contexts. In this study, teachers corrected different percentages of errors. They corrected 50 to 66 percent of total errors. Teacher A corrected 55 percent of total errors. Teacher B gave corrective feedback in response to 50 percent, the amount of

correction was found to be 66 percent of total errors for teacher C. These differences may be because of different attitudes of teachers toward the importance of correcting learners' errors.

As for error types given corrective feedback more frequently than other types, all the teachers seemed to give high priority to content and discourse errors. These error types covered 14.7% and 9.6% of counted errors in total. This finding suggests that the less frequent the error type is, the more frequently it is corrected. This contradicts Allwright's suggestion that frequent errors should be corrected (1975). On the other hand, other research corroborates the findings of this study-- that the more frequent the error type is, the less frequently it is corrected (Courchene, 1980; Nystrom, 1983).

The second research question of this study asked which types of corrective feedback EFL teachers tend to use to correct learners' errors. It was found that teachers used eighteen types of corrective feedback identified in Chaudron's taxonomy (1988). Of these types, 'ignore' and 'acceptance' were the types where no correction is intended. Other types applied by the teachers, in order of frequency, were found to be 'delay', 'provide', 'loop', 'interrupt', 'questions', 'attention', 'attention', 'explanation', 'negation', 'repetition with change', 'complex explanation', 'prompt', 'transfer', 'repetition with no change', 'emphasis', 'repeat', and 'exit'.

The third research question investigated the relationship between certain error types and certain feedback types; that is, do certain error types lead to certain feedback types? It was found that the types 'delay', 'explanation', and 'loop' were the three most frequent feedback types for correcting linguistic errors. They covered 53% of total correction. The type 'provide' was found to be a dominating preference to correct phonological errors; 71% of phonological errors were corrected by using the type 'provide'. The type 'provide' was also used for discourse errors most frequently; 46% of discourse errors received the type 'provide'. For lexical errors, teachers seemed to prefer the type 'delay' as the most dominant type; 44% of lexical errors were responded to using this type. No dominant type was found for content errors, but the most frequent type of



feedback was the type 'delay'.

The last research question investigated the differences between individual teachers' error treatment. Although teacher A and B tended to correct approximately the same percentage of oral errors, teacher C showed a differences in the percentage of the correction. While teacher A corrected 55% of total errors and teacher B corrected 50%, teacher C corrected 66% of total errors. There also appeared to be a difference in teachers' correction of particular types of error. While teacher A corrected no phonological errors, teacher B corrected 11%, and teacher C corrected 53%. On the other hand, the correction of content and discourse errors was higher in teacher A and teacher B's sessions. The explanation for these differences may be that teacher A and B emphasize freer communication and teacher C emphasizes formal correction because the percentages of correction of linguistic, phonological, and lexical errors in teacher C's sessions were higher than those in other teachers' sessions. Besides the differences between teachers, teachers themselves showed differences between their two sessions. Teacher A corrected different percentages of linguistic and lexical errors in  $S_{1A}$  and  $S_{2A}$ . This teacher corrected 24% of linguistic errors in  $S_{1A}$  and 56% in  $S_{2A}$ . Teacher A also corrected 59% of lexical errors  $S_{1A}$ , but this percentage increased to 86% in  $S_{2A}$ . This rise in the percentage of correction in this teachers' two sessions may result from the fact that the discussion topic in  $S_{2A}$ , as the researcher observed, was unfamiliar to the students and required special vocabulary. Teacher C also corrected different percentages of linguistic errors in  $S_{1C}$  and  $S_{2C}$ , but this difference, unlike teacher A's sessions, was a decrease in the percentage of correction. Teacher C corrected 74% of lexical errors in  $S_{1C}$  and 42% in  $S_{2C}$ . The explanation for the decrease in the percentage of correction in this teacher's sessions may be the fact that same students made the similar mistakes, and the teacher may have seen no use of correcting these errors.

#### Pedagogical Implications

Although the findings of this study cannot be generalized to all EFL teachers, the findings may be useful for EFL teachers, for pre-service

teachers of English, novice EFL teachers, and for teacher trainers. The findings are useful because they may be a source of information about how other EFL teachers correct their students' errors. The findings may also be useful for researchers who conduct classroom-centered research.

#### Suggestions for Further Research

The findings of this study may constitute appropriate background for further classroom-centered research which investigates the feedback types teachers apply in their classrooms. Longitudinal research which investigates more teachers in more sessions through a long period of time may provide more detailed and various types of feedback types. Also, teachers' different types of lessons may be observed to find out teachers' attitudes towards learners' errors, as teachers' attitudes may vary in different types of lessons.

Other classroom-centered research may investigate the effectiveness of the feedback types used by the teachers. But it is quite hard to examine if the error correction is effective or not, because testing the effect of feedback is complicated and nobody can assure that teachers' correction is the only source of input for learners improvement.

Teachers themselves may conduct research to observe their classes, using audiotapes and may investigate how they correct learners' errors. This may give an opportunity to see learners' attitudes toward teachers' error treatment.

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APPENDIX A  
CONSENT FORM

Dear Participant,

You are being asked to participate in a research which will observe student-teacher interaction in classroom. The results of this study won't evaluate or judge you the only purpose of this study is to describe the classroom interaction between teacher and the students. You won't be required to do anything other than participating normal classroom activities.

The researcher guarantees that your identity and data which will be elicited through audiotaping will be **confidential**. You are also free to withdraw any time you feel uncomfortable with the study.

Your participation will improve our understanding of classroom interaction and will help the researcher plan his own classes accordingly. If you agree to participate this research please sign your name. I would like to thank for your help in advance.

İSMAİL HAKKI ERTEN  
MA TEFL PROGRAM  
BİLKENT UNIVERSITY

If you have any question about the research, you may have information from research advisor:

DR. RUTH YONTZ  
MA TEFL PROGRAM  
BILKENT UNIVERSITY

Tel: 266-43-90 (office)

I have read the instruction above and I understand that there is no risk to my privacy and I am free to withdraw from participating any time I feel uncomfortable with the study.

I agree to participate your research.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

School/class/group: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



## APPENDIX B

## Chaudron's (1986) Definition of Error Types

**Linguistic Errors:** Morphological and syntactic errors were combined under the name of linguistic errors. This category includes word order, tense, suffix and verb conjugation errors.

**Phonological Errors:** Only outstanding pronunciation errors were included in this category for this study, although Chaudron (1986) also included intonation errors.

**Content Errors:** Incorrect expressions of the concepts relevant to the subject were categorized as content errors.

**Discourse Errors:** Errors beyond sentence level--inappropriate openings and closings, refusals, topic nomination or switches, and pauses in conversation.

**Lexical Errors:** Incorrect vocabulary choices.

## APPENDIX C

## Chaudron's (1977) Taxonomy for Error Correction Strategies

Feature or type of "Act"

- Ignore: Teacher ignores student's error, goes on the topic or shows acceptance of the content.  
 S: I go to school yesterday.  
 T: What did you do then?
- Interrupt: Teacher interrupts student's utterance following the error, or before student has completed  
 S: Yesterday I go to the ...  
 T: I went to
- Delay: Teacher waits Student to complete utterance before correcting.  
 S: Yesterday I go to school.  
 T: I went.
- Acceptance: Simple approving or accepting word (Usually as a sign of reception of utterance), but teacher may immediately correct a linguistic error.  
 T: Good, fine.
- Attention: attention-getter; probably quickly learned by the student.  
 T: Pay attention
- Negation: Teacher shows rejection of part or all of student utterance.  
 S: I go to school yesterday.  
 T: No, not go.
- Provide: Teacher provides the correct form when student has been unable or when no response is offered.  
 S: Yesterday, when I go to the school, I uh.....  
 T: joined the lesson.
- Reduction: Teacher employs only a part of student's utterance.  
 S: I woctid eee...  
 T: Woct (spelling)
- Expansion: Teacher adds more linguistic material to student's utterance, possibly making more complete.  
 S: I get the bus yesterday.  
 T: I got on the bus yesterday.
- Emphasis: Teacher uses stress, iterative repetition, or question intonation, to mark area or fact of incorrectness.  
 S: I go to the school yesterday.  
 T: What is the second word?
- Repetition with no change: Teacher repeats student's utterance with no change of error, or omission of error.  
 S: I go to the school yesterday.  
 T: I go to the school yesterday.
- Repetition with change: Usually teacher simply adds correction and continues to other topics. Normally only when emphasis is added, correction change becomes clear, or the teacher attempts to make it clear.  
 S: I go to the school yesterday.  
 T: I went to the school yesterday.
- Explanation: Teacher provides information.  
 T: Don't say go, say went.

Complex explanation: Combination of negotiation, repetitions, and/or explanations.

T: GO is the present tense, you need past tense here.

Repeat: Teacher requests student to repeat utterance, intending to have student self-correct.

T: Again, where did you go?

Loop: Teacher honestly needs a replay of student utterance, due to lack of clarity or certainty of its form.

Prompt: Teacher uses a lead-in cue to get student to repeat utterance, possibly at point of error; possible rising intonation.

T: Yesterday I.....

Clue: Teacher reaction provides student with isolation of type of error or of the nature of its immediate correction, without providing correction.

T: go to?

Original question: Teacher repeats the original question that led to response.

T: Where did you go to yesterday?

Altered question: Teacher alters original question syntactically, but not semantically.

S: Yesterday morning where did you go?

Questions: Numerous ways of asking for new response, often with clues.

T: When you went to the school yesterday what did you do?

Transfer: Teacher asks the student or several, or class to provide correction.

T: Students? (Class gives the answer)

Verification: Teacher attempts to assure understanding of correction; a new elicitation is implicit or made more explicit.

Exit: At any stage in the exchange teacher may drop correction of the error, though usually not after explicit negation, emphasis, etc.

APPENDIX D  
Evaluation and Record Form of Errors and Feedback

Class No:  
Record No:

LINGUISTIC

PHONOLOGICAL

CONTENT

DISCOURSE

LEXICAL

IGNORE  
INTERRUPT  
DELAY  
ACCEPTANCE  
ATTENTION  
NEGATION  
PROVIDE  
REDUCTION  
EXPANSION  
EMPHASIS  
REPETITION NO CH.  
REP WITH CH.  
EXPLANATION  
COMPLEX EXP.  
REPEAT  
LOOP  
PROMPT  
CLUE  
QUESTIONs  
TRANSFER  
VERIFICATION  
EXIT