This dissertation titled
Arab Male Students’ Preferences for Oral Corrective Feedback: A Case Study

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Abstract

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Arab Male Students’ Preferences for Oral Corrective Feedback: A Case Study
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This case study investigated a sample of Arab male students’ preferences for oral error correction while they studied in an advanced ESL program at a Midwestern university. Twenty students and ten teachers were purposively selected to take part in this study. The major goal of the study was to identify students’ preferences regarding error types and corrective feedback strategies. The study used information gathered by means of qualitative research methods utilizing interviews, observations and the use of a focus group interview for students.

The findings show that both students and teachers have positive attitudes towards error correction indicating that corrective feedback can have a positive influence on L2 learning. Most of the students reported that errors relating to grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary should receive more attention than any other error types. As for errors which relate to discourse organization, social interaction, pragmatics and communication, some students believe that they are less important than grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary.

In contrast, the results of teachers’ interviews revealed different patterns of error types’ preferences from those of students’. The majority of teachers believed that semantic and grammatical errors should receive more attention than other types of errors. Teachers’ views also differed from students’ preferences in terms of correcting errors
pertaining to discourse organization and pragmatics. The teachers indicated that these errors are important to correct because meaning is embedded in discourse organization, and thus different skills need to be learned across cultures.

The students’ preferences in terms of corrective feedback strategies reveal the following order: metalinguistic, explicit feedback, elicitation, recasts and clarification requests. The most preferred correction methods selected by teachers for correcting students’ oral errors were recasts and prompts in the form of clarification requests, repetition and elicitation. In sum, the study showed that there is a mismatch between teachers’ and students’ viewpoints regarding the appropriateness and usefulness of corrective feedback strategies and demonstrated a clear need for further studies about corrective feedback.

Approved: _____________________________________________________________

John E. Henning

Professor of Teacher Education
Dedication

I dedicate this work to my wife, Neda and my children Saja, Ahmed, Ebba, Wiaam and my little daughter Zeinah. I love you all.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

The role of corrective feedback (CF) in learning a foreign language continues to be a primary focus of many second language (L2) researchers. They have thoroughly explained the meaning of CF and discussed the pertinent types and their potential effects on L2 learning. However, the value ascribed to CF and its role in instructional settings varies depending on the employed methods and approaches (Ellis, 2009). Generally speaking, the importance of CF is influenced by the way teachers and educators perceive the language learning process, particularly the various types of input to which learners are exposed (Doughty & Williams, 1998).

The followers of the nativist and behaviorist schools claim that error correction in the form of CF is not important for second language learning. They believe that learners’ errors should be corrected immediately by teachers and it is important to provide learners with examples that make the input easier to understand (Brown, 2007; Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Similarly, Krashen (1985) argues that language learning is a subconscious process and learners should only be exposed to perceptible input which includes linguistic structures beyond their proficiency. According to this view, CF does not significantly affect language learning.

The advocates of interactionist theories including, Long (1996), Schmidt (1995, 2001), and Swain (1985) confirmed theoretically and empirically the importance of interactional CF in language learning. They argue that providing learners with only one type of input is not enough to help them learn the target language. For this reason, learners should be exposed to a variety of input types so that they can notice their errors.
Today, most of the debate surrounding CF centers on issues involving the contribution of CF to second language (L2), types of CF, best timing for correction, types of errors to be corrected and CF providers (Ellis, 2009; Kim, 2004; Ma & Zhang, 2010). This debate has spawned a considerable number of empirical and theoretical works about the potential effects of CF in L2 and the role it plays in the actual classroom setting (Basturkmen, Loewen, & Ellis, 2004; Bitchener, Young, & Cameron, 2005; Ellis, 2009; Ellis, Loewen, & Erlam, 2006; Ellis, Sheen, Murakami, & Takashima, 2008; Hyland & Hyland, 2006; Sheen, 2007a).

Although the findings of most recent empirical studies (Li, 2010; Lyster & Saito, 2010; Mackey & Goo, 2007; Russell & Spada, 2006) suggest that CF can facilitate learning a second language, still much work remains in order to better understand how second language learners perceive, use and react to CF in order to develop their interlanguage (IL) system (Li, 2010). Fundamentally, it is essential to determine the types of feedback and the strategies that would better impact language learning. In order to reach this end, it is necessary to examine the various issues that are evolving around this phenomenon.

Second language researchers reported that the effectiveness of CF hinges upon various internal and external variables. Internal factors include individual differences such as: proficiency level, age, level of developmental readiness, aptitude, anxiety, learners’ noticing and interpretation of feedback, and working memory (Erlam, 2005; Havranek, 2002; Mackey, Al-Khalil, Atanassova, Hama, Logan-Terry, & Nakatsuksa, 2007; Mackey, Oliver, & Leeman, 2003; Philp, 2003; Sheen, 2006). External factors
include: types of feedback (implicit or explicit), amount of feedback, length of intervention, feedback target, context and mode of feedback provision, and the provider of feedback (Ammar, 2008; Ellis, 2007; Long, 2007; Lyster & Saito, 2010; Russell & Spada, 2006; Sheen, 2010). Although all of the aforementioned factors affect the effectiveness of CF, the focus in the next sections will be on some selected external factors to help justify the purpose of this study. The following sections describe a number of core issues related to CF including its meaning and types as well as the differences between these types. The remainder of the chapter will be devoted to definition of terms that will be employed in this and the next chapters.

**Background of the Study**

Broadly, Lewis (2002) defined feedback as informing learners about their overall performance and their progress in L2. He stated that showing learners their errors has a significant effect on their learning and helps them improve in the different areas of L2 such as comprehension, pronunciation and vocabulary. More specifically, Ellis (2006) defined CF as the reaction of CF providers (i.e., teachers, interlocutors) towards learners’ incorrect and deviant utterances. This reaction generally takes one or more forms from the following: 1) indicating the position or location of the error; 2) supplying the learners with the correct linguistic forms for their erroneous utterances; and 3) providing metalinguistic information describing the nature of the error.

**Mode of CF**

A number of second language researchers identified three modes of CF: written (Ashwell, 2000), computer-delivered (Rosa & Leow, 2004; Sanz & Morgan-Short, 2004),
and oral (Ellis, 2006). Although both oral and written CF can play a critical role in L2 learning, written CF has been given more attention than oral CF in L2 learning. In oral CF, learners often receive implicit feedback to their errors almost immediately, whereas in written feedback, learners receive explicit and delayed feedback (Sheen, 2010). In addition, students are usually exposed to a large number of corrections while those who receive written CF are generally provided with few corrections (Ellis, 2009). Finally, computer CF most often takes an online form that is similar to oral CF. Learners are usually supplied immediately with feedback through task-based activities accompanied by some instructions, while the instructor’s role is limited and, at times, almost absent.

Computer-delivered CF is still new and has not received sufficient attention from researchers as compared to written and oral corrective feedback. Only a limited number of studies examined its effectiveness in instructional settings. With the rapid development of technology, it is now possible for learners to receive more immediate CF via a variety of computer-mediated communication (CMC) tools, such as synchronous and asynchronous technologies. Recently, a few researchers studied the types of CF, the errors to be corrected and feedback providers by using a variety of computer-mediated communication (CMC) tools such as synchronous and asynchronous technologies. They focused either on studying implicit CF in text-based synchronous CMC (Lee, 2006; Morris, 2005; Sotillo, 2005) or on studying explicit CF in asynchronous CMC (Ware & O’Dowd, 2008; Zourou, 2008).

Mainly, there are two differing positions taken by investigators regarding the role of these modes in L2 learning. In the first position, second language researchers focused
on the efficacy of oral feedback and its impact on interlanguage development. As a result, they studied the effects it has on the learning processes and their outcomes (Ellis et al., 2006; Lyster, 2004; Sheen, 2007a). In the second, researchers who were interested in second language writing examined the effectiveness of written CF on fostering second language (L2) writing skills (Bitchener & Knoch, 2008; Chandler, 2003; Ellis et al., 2008; Ferris, 2006 & 2010; Sheen, 2007a).

**Types of Corrective Feedback**

Harmer (2001) classified feedback into three types, namely: corrective, evaluative, and strategic. According to Harmer, CF aims primarily at helping L2 learners identify and correct their errors. This type of CF focuses mainly on accuracy not fluency. The second, evaluative feedback, provides learners with a judgment on their performance. Teachers often use this type to measure second language learners’ performance. Finally, strategic feedback offers guidelines to learners and advice on how to improve their performance and succeed in learning the target language.

In a separate classification, Long (1996) posits that second language learners generally encounter two types of input when learning a second/foreign language: positive evidence and negative evidence. The former helps learners recognize the extent to which their utterances are acceptable or similar to native speakers’, whereas the latter provides learners with information about what is unacceptable in L2. Negative evidence, negative feedback and corrective feedback are used interchangeably by second language researchers to indicate non target-like utterances or ill-formed utterances produced by L2 learners.
Although these terms are frequently used interchangeably by second language researchers, there are some subtle differences that distinguish them from one another. Negative evidence, whether preemptive or reactive, refers to the direct correction of learners’ errors and usually the given information is based on the learners’ points of view. Negative feedback and corrective feedback refer to information supplied to learners by a feedback provider with or without regard to learners’ points of view (Ellis, 2007, 2009).

In pedagogy, positive feedback is considered important because it promotes both self-learning and motivation (Ellis, 2009). Findings of research studies based on classroom interaction indicate that positive feedback does not receive sufficient attention because a teacher’s positive feedback is often ambiguous and does not always inform the learners when they produce correct utterances. Negative feedback, on the other hand, indicates either directly or indirectly that the learner’s utterance is unacceptable or linguistically inappropriate (Ellis, 2009).

Whether feedback is positive or negative, it can be provided by teachers either implicitly or explicitly in classroom settings. In this context, explicit CF refers to metalinguistic explanations or overt error correction (Ellis et al., 2006; Ellis & Sheen, 2006). By contrast, implicit CF informs L2 learners indirectly about their off-target use of certain linguistic features. Recasts, confirmation checks, clarification requests, repetitions, and paralinguistics are considered components of implicit CF (Ellis & Sheen, 2006; Long, 1996, 2006). Ellis and Sheen (2006) state that CF is a three stage process: trigger, feedback move and a response from a learner or uptake. The teacher’s role
through these stages is to facilitate clarification of learners’ unacceptable utterances and provide meaningful correction through the feedback process.

**Timing of CF**

To date, there has been little to no agreement between second language researchers regarding the best time for the use of CF (Ellis, 2009). Thus, the choice of delayed or immediate feedback is left completely to teachers. However, in some activities that need written CF, teachers have no other choice but to provide delayed CF. Unlike written CF, oral CF provides teachers with the freedom to correct either immediately or delay the correction to another time (Ellis, 2009). While both have merit and since learners preferred immediate feedback, delayed correction can take a number of formats. Interestingly, Hedge (2000) suggested a number of techniques that can be used in delayed CF such as recording an activity and then asking students to identify and correct their own errors.

**Types of Errors**

Two important issues arise in L2 learning that teachers need to take into account regarding their choice between feedback strategies. The first relates to the type of error to be corrected while the second refers to whether the feedback is focused or unfocused (specific vs. unspecific). Focused feedback usually refers to specific errors made by learners, whereas unfocused feedback deals with all types of errors made by the learner (Ellis, 2009).

L2 researchers also stress the importance of a focused approach because they believe that this approach is most beneficial and helps teachers identify the errors they
need to correct in advance. Similarly, a number of findings of research on oral feedback supported focused correction because it was found consistently more effective than unfocused correction (Bitchener et al., 2005; Ellis et al., 2006; Lyster, 2004).

In support of this approach, Ellis et al. (2008) argue that focused CF can promote learners’ noticing more than unfocused CF. In addition, it increases learners’ accuracy. Similarly, recent researchers claim that unfocused CF negatively affects the process of CF because learners have a limited processing capacity and it is difficult to focus on a wide range of linguistic forms (Bitchener & Knock, 2008; Sheen, 2007a).

In this regard, second language researchers have offered different suggestions for error correction. Burt (1975), for instance, suggested that teachers should focus on global errors that affect sentence organization more than local errors which affect limited parts of a sentence. According to Burt, global errors are those which affect the overall organization of a sentence. They normally include wrong sentence structure and word choice involving mainly syntactic errors. Local errors basically affect single parts of the sentence such as morphological and grammatical forms.

Krashen (1982, 1985) contends that CF should focus on aspects of language that are easy to reproduce. Ellis (2009) suggested that feedback should focus on errors that occur in certain types of discourse which are extremely problematic for learners. Ferris (2002) made a distinction between two types of errors: treatable and untreatable. According to Ferris, untreatable errors include lexical or syntactical errors while treatable errors are categorized as those involving specific grammatical rules.
The previous discussion demonstrates that over time there is no general agreement among researchers on the key types of errors for correction. Ellis (2009) attributed this disagreement to the lack of any theoretical evidence in the field of second language acquisition that determines the best choice of errors to be corrected. He explains that the severity of errors depends to a great extent on personal perspectives. Some researchers advise teachers to focus on only a few types of errors and avoid addressing all errors made by learners (Ur, 1996).

Despite the central role CF can play in facilitating learning a second language (Li, 2010; Lyster & Saito, 2010; Russell & Spada, 2006), classroom research has shown that the actual procedures used by teachers in terms of provision of correction can be arbitrary, idiosyncratic, ambiguous, and unsystematic. These problems are attributed to many factors including teachers’ sparse knowledge about the nature of CF in general and of what, when, and how to correct in particular. Moreover, the foci of most research studies on CF were primarily on teachers’ perspectives while few have given attention to learners’ perspectives.

**The Rationale for the Study**

The rationale for this study is derived from research of certain instructional practices regarding CF that are likely problematic. In language learning instruction, many teachers often fail to properly use error correction and usually provide students with arbitrary correction. Frequently, foreign language instruction places more emphasis on reading and writing skills, and neglects the importance of oral CF and conversational skills. Such practices can lead to impaired language learning and students’ negativity
towards learning the target language. The majority of these teachers view errors as a sign of ignorance, carelessness, inattention, failure or inability to learn, rather than a sign of progress in learning the target language (Schulz, 2001).

Another concern is that teachers’ reactions to error correction can be inconsistent and unsystematic (Lee, 2008; Li, 2010). This inconsistency in turn causes confusion and anxiety for most students, and leaves them in doubt about the corrected words in their utterances. In fact, teachers’ negativity about CF can be attributed to both their own limited information about the complex nature of this phenomenon and their lack of awareness about the psychological, social, and cognitive factors that affect its effectiveness (Ellis, 2009; Han, 2001, 2002; Schulz, 2001).

In this sense, recent research studies which investigated second language instructors’ education (Bayliss & Vignola, 2007; Borg, 2005b; Johnson, 2009; McDonough, 2006; Urmston, 2003; Yates & Muchisky, 2003) found that teachers’ training courses including second language acquisition (SLA) education affect teachers’ opinions, beliefs and knowledge about teaching practices. These beliefs consequently have an impact on instructors’ approach to different types of feedback and their employment in the classroom. Therefore, it is essential to gain more information about both teachers’ and students’ perspectives on error correction and to examine different learning strategies that use interactional feedback in order to develop the best practices in L2 learning.
Problem Statement

As discussed, oral CF can play a critical role in learning a second language. However, only a limited number of studies investigated international students’ attitudes and preferences regarding interactional CF strategies and the types of errors to be corrected. Previous research examining L2 learners’ perceptions of oral CF showed that there is a mismatch between teachers’ practices and learners’ preferences (Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2005; Lee, 2008; Schulz, 2001).

Schulz (2001) argues that such mismatch between students’ perceptions and teachers’ views leads to ineffective learning and has a negative impact on both the process of acquiring L2 and on students’ preferences for CF in learning the target language. Therefore, it would be beneficial to conduct further research in English as second language (ESL) settings to investigate international students’ preferences and attitudes towards oral CF in order to identify their preferred CF strategies. Such information helps teachers to bridge the academic gap for students of non English background by ensuring that both their teaching methods and their students’ learning styles are complementary. In addition, it helps teachers to fine-tune their teaching methods to specifically suit their students’ needs.

Research Question

The main purpose of this study is to gain further insight into Arabic male students’ preferences for error correction while learning advanced English. It examines the most preferred CF strategies that second language learners prefer their teachers to use while correcting their errors. In addition, it attempts to investigate both students’
perceptions including attitudes and reactions towards CF as well as the types of errors commonly corrected. To achieve this goal, this research aims at finding the answer to the following question as applied to the study of ESL in an intensive English program:

What are Arab male students’ preferences for correcting their oral errors?

**Significance of the Study**

This research is the first study in the field which entirely addresses Arab male students’ preferences for oral CF and examines their reactions while learning in the advanced level of an intensive English program at a Midwestern American university. It attempts to explain students’ perception of and reaction to different types of CF. Additionally, it aims at describing learners’ preferences for classroom error corrections of different linguistical aspects of language such as grammar, phonology, vocabulary, and pragmatics.

Identifying the most effective strategies that foster or hinder language learning will undoubtedly help curriculum designers to incorporate those that improve the learners’ performance in instructional situations. Moreover, this study will serve as a basis for more researchers in the future who want to resolve any remaining doubts about the importance of CF in this domain. This study will also provide L2 teachers with new perspectives and insights regarding when, how and what to correct.

**Limitation of the Study**

The generalizability of the results is limited to the sample features of the study. Only male Arab students were recruited to participate in the study. This limitation should be taken into consideration when transferring the results of this study to new contexts.
Some limitations are also inherent in the research method. The participants may not report their true opinions and beliefs about CF in this study. Although individual differences are important factors and can affect the choice of CF, the aspect of the error and the attitudes were not considered in this study. Finally, the focus of this study is on oral CF; however, some of the results might be applicable for other modes of CF.

**Delimitations of the Study**

The research was originally designed as a mixed-gender study because both males and females are participants in the intensive English program. However, only male students agreed to participate in this study. Even though female students were interested in contributing, they refrained from expressing their views, perhaps due to cultural backgrounds that sometimes discourage their participation in public activities. Thus, this study is delimited to include only male Arab students between the ages of 23-25 who are in advanced ESL classes and native English speaking teachers with 3 or more years ESL/EFL experience in a Midwestern university. The term *Arab* refers in this study to any one of the 22 countries which are members of the Arab Association League.

**Definition of Terms**

*Attitudes:* refers to both the negative/positive evaluations and beliefs people hold towards particular situations and phenomenon which ultimately affect their life choices. Nairne (2003) differentiated between three types of attitudes: cognitive, affective and behavioral. The first type relates to information while the second one refers to feelings. The third one refers to individual tendencies to react toward certain situations.
Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC): refers to the technological tools that allow communication to occur with the use of computers, including synchronous and asynchronous technologies. In asynchronous communication, there is a delay when the message is sent, received and answered, whereas synchronous communication occurs in real time. These computer-mediated tools include E-mail, mailing lists, and bulletin boards. On the other hand, synchronous communication tools include chatrooms, classroom discussion, and computer conferencing (Levy & Stockwell, 2006).

Corrective feedback and error correction: negative evidence or feedback and interactive feedback are interchangeably used in different fields including psychology and pedagogy to indicate that the learners produced unacceptable or erroneous utterances (Schachter, 1991).

Developmental readiness: refers to a specific point of time or appropriate stage in which learners are able to learn certain linguistic forms in the target language.

EFL: is an abbreviation for English as a foreign language in countries where English is taught at schools as a subject matter without the everyday availability of English native speakers.

Errors/Mistakes: Errors relate to absence of knowledge while mistakes concern the misuse of knowledge. In other words, errors are an indication of lack of knowledge, whereas mistakes indicate learners have correct knowledge that is not properly utilized. Generally, errors are systematic but mistakes are not and resemble the colloquial slip of the tongue (Coder, 1981).
**ESL**: is an abbreviation for English as a second language. It is used normally to refer to programs for learners who study English in an English speaking country.

*Explicit feedback*: refers to corrective feedback that provides the learner with the correct form while simultaneously indicating that an error occurred (Ellis, 2008).

*Implicit feedback*: indicates a type of feedback that informs learners indirectly that their utterances are partially incorrect or off-target.

*Input*: refers to the body of language including linguistic features that learners are exposed to in order to help them develop their interlanguage system (IL).

*Intake*: refers to the subset of linguistic input that helps learners acquire the language. It is fundamental to language acquisition because it indicates from where language acquisition comes.

*Interlanguage*: refers to the type of language which a second language learner tries to produce while he is learning another language. This language sometimes exists in between the native language of the learner and the target language.

*Interlocutor*: refers to the person who takes part in conversational activities or interactive activities where usually emphasis is on oral production.

*Learning styles*: refers to individuals’ preferred ways of learning and understanding new knowledge.

*Noticing*: refers to the conscious process that learners can use to control and manipulate the information provided to them during the input process (Kim, 2004). Since noticing combines the learners’ selective attention with input and output, it is considered an essential part of the attentional system (Schmidt, 2001).
oral corrective feedback: refers to the information learners receive either implicitly or explicitly following an off-target utterance. Gass and Selinker (2008) defined oral feedback as “the learner-oriented provision of information about the success (or, more likely, lack of success) of their utterances ... [that] gives additional opportunities to focus on production and comprehension” (p. 329-330).

perception: refers to the process through which people translate their sensory impressions into views about the surrounding world.

preemptive corrective feedback: refers to corrective feedback used by teachers to prevent the occurrence of errors by providing them with clear instructions and explanations (Ellis et al., 2001a).

preferences: refer to individuals’ attitudes towards a particular set of objects reflected through an explicit decision-making process (Lichtenstein & Slovic, 2006). Scherer (2005) defines preferences as an evaluative judgment in the sense of liking or disliking.

reactive corrective feedback: refers to corrective feedback used by instructors after the occurrence of errors. Feedback providers can provide learners with either implicit or explicit correction (Ellis et al., 2001a).

uptake: Lyster and Ranta (1997) define uptake as “a student’s utterance that immediately follows the teacher’s feedback and that constitutes a reaction in some way to the teacher's intention to draw attention to some aspect of the student's initial utterance (this overall intention is clear to the student although the teacher's specific linguistic focus may not be)” (p. 49).
Organized of the Study

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter One introduced the topic of CF focusing on issues that a new reader needs in order to gain a comprehensive view about this phenomenon. It raises and discusses fundamental points pertaining to the nature of CF including its efficacy in pedagogy. Chapter Two provides the reader with theoretical perspectives on CF. It looks especially at the most current empirical studies about CF by analyzing, synthesizing and providing summary. Chapter Three deals with the study design and accounts for the variables that contribute to understanding of the topic, answering the research question and ensuring the trustworthiness of the study. Chapter Four displays the findings of the study based on the suggested research question. Finally, Chapter Five discusses and analyzes the findings of the study providing a conclusion, and a concise, informative summary with recommendations for future researchers.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter focuses on both the theoretical and empirical issues related to corrective feedback (CF). It is divided into two sections. The first section addresses theoretical perspectives of CF including historical perspectives and schools of thought. This section displays differing perspectives of theories, hypotheses, and approaches that have informed CF in L2 learning. The second section presents and elaborates on several significant empirical studies followed by a concluding reflection. The foci of empirical studies in this section are: 1) students’ perceptions and attitudes about CF; 2) preferences for error types; and 3) preferences for CF strategies. In addition, it includes a section about the intended targets of CF to clarify the purpose of the study.

Theoretical and Historical Perspectives

This section traces back the concept of error correction presenting differing perspectives of schools and approaches toward corrective feedback. During the 1950s and 1960s, the Audio-Lingual (AL) approach dominated the teaching of English as a second language (ESL). In this period of time, learners were directed to memorize, manipulate, and learn a variety of grammatical structures. Advocates of this approach argue that the main goal of this teaching method should be practice makes perfect. Essentially, the more students practice using the grammatical structures of the target language, the more proficient they become in this language. Thus, the AL approach emphasized practice through using various language activities and providing learners with native-like models to imitate. This approach viewed language as a habit formation because AL’s roots were derived from behaviorism and Skinner’s theory (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).
Some of the AL approach advocates at that time had no tolerance for students’ errors and considered making errors a negative indicator of language learning. They considered the relationship between errors and language learning as a reflection of linguistic competence. To help learners avoid making mistakes and errors, specific guidelines were suggested by practitioners for error corrections. According to these guidelines, it is neither necessary for students to notice their errors nor to correct them. Instead, it is the responsibility of teachers to correct such errors immediately after their occurrence (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

In the second half of the 20th century, Structural Linguistics emerged as an approach for teaching language. As a result, emphasis shifted to studying the relationship between language elements. This approach adopted a mechanism called *contrastive analysis* to help teachers deal with students’ errors. According to this paradigm, interference between L1 and L2 is the main cause for errors in the target language (Brown, 2007; James, 1980).

In the early 1970’s, the communicative approach was developed as a reaction to audio-lingual and grammar translation approaches. In the process, language teaching shifted to focus on communicative activities where learners engage in the use of the target language in real life situations. Teachers began to take into account students’ learning styles, learners’ preferences, and the use of language for communicative purposes. Teachers became less sensitive to learners’ errors and began to view learning as a human activity where mistakes are seen as part of the learning process. Accordingly, the focus turned toward real use or authentic communication to help students negotiate,

As discussed in Chapter One, there are differing perspectives regarding the role of CF in the process of second language learning. The followers of the nativist theory do not acknowledge the presence of CF in the form of negative evidence as an important factor for learning L2 when provided by interlocutors. They claim that only positive evidence creates the required changes in learners’ interlanguages. According to nativists, adults focus only on correcting meaning in children’s utterances not linguistic forms. According to this view, the correction of syntactic, grammatical, and phonological errors has little effect on the language development of the learners.

The nativists argue that all individuals have a biologically inborn capacity that makes them naturally ready to learn any language. Chomsky (1985) refers to this ability as a language acquisition device (LAD). He proposes that the LAD includes a variety of grammatical knowledge that is suitably related to all languages. This approach supports the belief that language development does not rely on particular ways of teaching including negative corrective feedback. Because the LAD is an innate part of the brain, it is simultaneously activated the moment learners are exposed to a language regardless of any instructional methods.

Similarly in his Input Hypothesis, Krashen (1985) proposes that language acquisition occurs only when learners are exposed to language that is comprehensible and contains "I"+ "l". The "I" is used by Krashen to represent the level of language which is already acquired, whereas the "l" is used metaphorically to represent words, grammar and
pronunciation that is beyond the level of learners. According to this hypothesis, comprehensible input is the only element that leads to second language acquisition. In this vein, Krashen assumes that L2 learning is a subconscious process. This process is similar to that in L1 and works side by side with the comprehensible input. He asserts that any consciously learned knowledge through explicit instruction including negative evidence has little or no effect on L2 learning. In short, Krashen claims that direct and systematic instructions are not necessary conditions for language learning to occur.

Oppositely, the proponents of both cognitive and social learning theories view CF as a necessary condition for learning a language because such a process of learning facilitates the learning of a variety of linguistic forms. It would be beneficial, in this context, to next address the following: The Interaction Hypothesis, The Output Hypothesis, and The Noticing Hypothesis, along with social learning theories.

In The Interaction Hypothesis, Long (1996) proposed that explicit CF plays a pivotal role in language learning because through negotiation of meaning, learners can adjust and make modifications which arise from this interaction. In short, instructional feedback helps learners be aware of their errors while they are engaging in meaning-based activities in classroom settings. Interactional CF assists learners to test hypotheses about the target language as well as adjust their output (Long, 2006).

In the Output Hypothesis, Swain (1985, 2005) argues that language learning processes are central to language learning because they are not only the means through which learners produce the target language, but because they also help learners modify their output production. She maintains that even though the comprehensible input has a
crucial role in language learning, it is not quite enough for L2 development. Output can also be an important component of second language learning. For instance, it enhances fluency and enables L2 learners to notice their linguistic problems. Besides, it directs learners’ attention to the most accurately used and relevant constructs in the target language. In this case, output consolidates learners’ existing knowledge about the target language. Thus, output can act as a tool for testing hypotheses by providing learners with well constructed linguistic forms through CF.

In short, Swain contends that learners’ output is necessary because it enables them to take control over their linguistic knowledge and in turn helps in developing the necessary metalinguistic knowledge about the target language. Swain believes that CF is important for learning L2 because it provides learners with different opportunities to practice their linguistic knowledge. According to her, most of L2 learners’ underperformance in learning the target language can be attributed to the limited amount of feedback they receive in interactional settings.

Swain based her perspectives on the data she collected from her study in French language immersion classrooms. The findings revealed that it is more beneficial if learners are exposed to both the meaning and the linguistic aspects of language (Swain, 2005). She found that learners who were exposed to L2 and only received adequate input failed to produce native-like utterances. Swain indicates that through meaningful interaction and negotiation, learners can make the necessary modification of their output. For this end, second language learners should be constantly encouraged and prompted to use their linguistic knowledge.
In the Noticing Hypothesis, Schmidt (1995, 2001) argues that noticing is a required condition for second language learning. He elucidates that learners must consciously notice input in order to learn L2. He states that since there is no subliminal perception, it is logical to assume that there is no subconscious learning.

Schmidt based his view on the findings of a study he conducted to examine the learning of 21 verbal constructions in Portuguese. The results of the study indicated that consciously noticed features of the learned verbal constructions were processed most effectively by learners leading ultimately to more accurate production and output.

Followers of the Noticing Hypothesis believe that CF can play a facilitative role in second language learning through drawing learners’ attention to different forms used in the target language. Gass and Mackey (2007) state that noticing acts as a mechanism for mediating between input and learning. In this case, CF promotes learners’ noticing and helps them recognize the gap between their interlanguage and the target language (Long, 2006; Swain, 2005). In other words, identifying such gaps draws learners’ attention to new grammatical structures as well as challenging lexical items.

Finally, the Social Learning theories highlight the importance of CF by using a number of instructional concepts. In Vygotsky’s theory, the terms scaffolding and apprenticeship refer to teachers’ ability to structure a challenging learning activity. Through these processes, learners can perform difficult tasks with the assistance of more knowledgeable adults.

The major assumption underpinning social learning theories is that interaction is the key factor for cognitive development. Advocates of these theories argue that learning
occurs as a result of the interaction between environmental and cognitive factors which finally affect human learning and behavior. To this end, proponents of these theories focused on collaborative learning, dialogic learning, shared learning, collective participatory learning and guided participation (Cole, 1996; Rogoff, 1990; Vygotsky, 1978, 1986). They argue that this type of learning enables learners to be actively engaged in the language learning process because it involves authentic activities.

**Previous Studies**

The concept of CF usually refers to oral, written, and computer-delivered CF. The extensive literature available on topics addressing CF is beyond the scope of this dissertation which attempts to explore only issues pertaining to students’ preferences for oral correction including CF strategies and error types. Adding to this bulk of research, only a few studies examined students’ preferences toward oral CF (Kagimoto & Rodgers, 2008). To the researcher’s knowledge, only one study (Mackey et al., 2007) included Arab students while investigating international students’ preferences for oral CF. Thus, this unique study is aimed to gain more in-depth insights into this domain. It will expand on current research about students’ perceptions of CF by exploring a sample of Arab male students’ preferences for CF strategies. The section below presents the findings of a number of studies concerning this issue.

**Students’ and Teachers’ Perceptions of CF**

One important point about error correction is the way in which teachers and students perceive oral CF. Since this area affects the overall efficacy of interactional corrective feedback, empirical research was specifically conducted on this topic.
According to Schulz (2001), it is important for students’ and teachers’ beliefs to be complementary for a positive learning outcome.

The literature showed that both students and teachers have positive attitudes toward CF, particularly focused error correction. However, most of the studies showed that there was a mismatch between teachers’ intentions and students’ interpretations regarding the amount of CF (Basturkan, 2004; Fukuda, 2004), best timing of correction (Basturkmen et al., 2004, Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2005), and employed techniques (Basturkan, 2004; Brown, 2009; Lee, 2008). In other words, teachers’ instructional practices in classroom settings often did not match with students’ needs.

In an earlier study, Ancker (2000) investigated the importance of CF and how teachers perceive its role in the classroom. The researcher surveyed a group of teacher students and teacher trainees from different countries. The findings of the study showed that the majority (75%) of students positively agreed that teachers should correct their errors. On the contrary, teachers and teacher trainees (25%) expressed different opinions from students. These teachers believe that correcting errors interrupts the flow of communication and prohibits students from speaking. In short, teachers and teacher trainees contend that CF causes confusion and obstructs interaction between students and teachers.

Another study by Fukuda (2004) exploring both teachers’ and students’ opinions about error correction reported similar results. The researcher found that there were significant differences between the teachers’ and students’ perspectives of error correction particularly in terms of the amount of CF. While students wanted more CF
depending on their actual needs, teachers believe that the amount of CF was sufficient to their level of exposure. The findings indicated that students are not satisfied with the amount of CF they receive from their teachers. The participants of the study were a group of Japanese high school teachers and students who enrolled in oral communication classes. The researcher used a survey to examine this issue. The study suggests that teachers need to take into account the students’ needs, preferences, developmental readiness, motivation, age, aptitude, and other factors which influence learners’ attitudes toward error correction.

In the same line of research, Basturkmen et al. (2004) conducted a case study to examine the relationship between teachers’ stated beliefs and their practices regarding focus on form instruction. The findings of the study indicated that the differences between teachers’ practices can be attributed to teachers’ preferred teaching styles and personal beliefs rather than contextual factors since all the teachers taught the same type and level of language class.

The participants of the study were three instructors who teach ESL at an intermediate level. The researchers collected data by using four observed audio-recorded lessons, an in-depth interview, cued response scenarios, and stimulated recall protocols. The findings of the study revealed that the first instructor supported self correction techniques, whereas the second instructor believed that there is no connection between teachers’ beliefs and practices and error correction. However, he reported that self-correction techniques are important if they are used along with other CF strategies such as recasts and other forms of CF. The study found that this instructor provided immediate
feedback and interrupted the flow of learners’ even though he mentioned that he usually
waits until the end of the lesson to correct errors. As for the third instructor, his practices
were similar to the second teacher’s. His actual practices contradicted his stated beliefs.
He stated that CF should not be obtrusive and thus he prefers not to interrupt learners to
correct them, while actually he frequently interrupted learners to provide correction. The
study suggests that future research should focus on instructors’ beliefs because they can
affect either positively or negatively the input and the type of interaction with learners.

In another study carried out by Lasagabaster and Sierra (2005), the researchers
found a mismatch between students’ and teachers’ perceptions regarding the amount of
oral error correction. The findings of the study revealed that students prefer their errors to
be corrected by their teachers. They maintain that teachers should be selective, strategic,
and use explicit strategies while correcting oral errors. In contrast, teachers believe that it
is not beneficial to correct all errors. The participants of this study were ten teachers and
eleven students in an EFL context. They were asked to watch a videotape which contains
12 error correction moves and identify the moves made by the teacher while correcting
these errors. Afterward, they were asked to classify and evaluate these moves in terms of
effectiveness and then record their opinion either individually or in groups.

The results of the research showed that students were only able to identify less
than a third of these moves, and teachers identified less than half. According to some
students, delayed correction is not helpful and prevents language production. The study
adds evidence to previous research regarding the gap between students’ and teachers’
views on error correction. This mismatch has a negative effect on learning the target
language. Accordingly, more research is needed to investigate the effects of such beliefs on oral corrective feedback.

A case study by Chavez (2006) examined a sample of teachers’ perceptions in a college classroom. Three instructors who teach German at an intermediate level in an American university participated in this study. The researchers used video recordings, interviews, final grades and course evaluations to investigate instructors’ classroom language use and behavior in relation to their self-perceived role. The study lasted for one semester. The results revealed that instructors were consistent in their beliefs and behavior about CF. For instance, one of the instructors focused mainly on form. This emphasis was apparent from her explicit error correction. In contrast, the second and the third instructors rarely provided correction for students’ errors. These instructors’ main focus was on fluency rather than accuracy. For this reason, they did not interrupt the flow of learners’ conversations to provide correction. Instead, they frequently used elaboration strategies more than explicit correction. This study poses an important question about the teachers’ self-perception and to what extent it can account for variation in classroom language use. Different from those previously discussed, the findings of this study demonstrate a match between teachers’ and students’ perceptions.

Several studies attempted to explain the role of teachers’ intentions in relation to teacher CF, but this role is still unclear and needs more clarification. In a study carried out by Mackey et al. (2007) to investigate a sample of Arabic and Japanese EFL learners concerning feedback, students were provided with CF in authentic lessons. The given feedback was varied according to linguistic targets, learners’ participation and the type of
corrective feedback (explicit vs. implicit). At the end of classes, teachers, students and some non-participating teachers were asked to watch a video and provide comments on observed episodes by using a stimulated recall technique.

The findings showed that there is an overlap between teachers’ intention and learners’ perception regarding the intended target of CF, particularly when explicit CF is used to address lexical items. The study also revealed that learners can better perceive CF if it focuses on the individual learners rather than the whole class. In short, this study is useful to future researchers because it is an extension of research studies that were conducted to investigate the effect of external factors on CF.

Zacharias (2007) investigated students’ attitudes toward teachers’ corrective feedback. The researcher used a triangulation method to collect information about students’ and teachers’ attitudes toward CF. For the quantitative part, the researcher used a questionnaire, while for the qualitative part, he used a semi-structured interviewing research method. One hundred and fifty one teachers and students participated in this study.

The findings of the study revealed that the majority of students and teachers overall favored CF and receiving specific and focused feedback from their teachers. In addition, the results showed that students like their teachers to focus on form rather than content while providing feedback. Generally, the findings revealed that teachers’ feedback on content most often was general and broad as opposed to feedback on form which was always more specific. The study concluded that individual differences such as
motivation, attitudes, aptitude, and beliefs towards learning the target language have a
direct influence on teachers’ corrective feedback.

In summary, the findings of this study are in accordance with previous studies
(Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2005; Lee, 2008; Schulz, 2001) which pointed out the effect of
internal variables such as beliefs and motivation on students’ attitudes towards CF.

Another advantage of this study is that it used a variety of research methods and this
approach helps the researcher to gain insight into different experiences. For instance, the
use of the interview method can be used as a cross-reference which further aids the
researcher to clarify data obtained by other research tools.

Another study conducted by Lee (2008) to investigate the reactions of students to
their teachers’ feedback in two Hong Kong secondary classrooms showed that students
have positive attitudes towards teachers’ feedback. In this study, the researcher focused
particularly on the factors that might influence learners’ reactions. The researcher
collected data from students by using questionnaires, checklists and protocols, whereas
teachers’ data was collected by interviews, classroom observations and feedback analysis.
The results showed that students, regardless of their level of proficiency, expected more
feedback from their teachers. In addition, the findings revealed that low proficiency
students were less interested in error feedback as compared to those with a high level of
proficiency. Also, it was found that both high and low level proficiency groups preferred
teachers to provide them with more explicit CF.

Lee’s study (2008) showed similar results to Lasagabaster and Sierra’s (2005) and
Schulz’s (2001) studies regarding the mismatch between students’ expectation and
teachers’ interpretation. The study suggests that teachers should make use of different CF strategies such as peer-correction and self-repair. The findings indicate that teachers should explain to students the CF strategies and familiarize them with the strategies that will be used in the class. Otherwise, the misuse of CF in classroom settings can have a negative effect on learning a target language.

In the same vein of research, Brown (2009) conducted a study to identify and compare teachers’ and students’ preferences for CF. The findings of this study are in accordance with the findings of Schulz’s (2001) study, which showed that students liked learning grammar explicitly more than through using communicative-based activities. The researcher used a 24-item survey which consists of different areas related to foreign language instruction. The participants of the study were 49 teachers and their students involving nine different languages at the University of Arizona. Data analyses revealed that the majority of the students expressed preference for a grammar-based approach, whereas teachers preferred communicative instruction or task-based interaction activities. In contrast to students’ preferences, the findings reported that teachers prefer teaching grammar implicitly through communicative or meaningful activities.

Brown (2009) indicated that the discrepancy between learners’ and teachers’ views can be attributed to the different beliefs they hold about the best approach to teaching the target language. While students believe that grammar constitutes a fundamental part of language learning, teachers contend that language is not a set of rules to be memorized. Furthermore, students’ believe that it is more beneficial to receive explicit correction to their errors. The results of Brown’s study support the findings that
teachers should always consider their students’ perspectives and beliefs and explain the importance of employing certain instructional strategies.

**Types of Errors**

For many educators, errors are considered a natural part of language learning (Han, 2002) involving a considerable length of time for L2 learners to internalize the rules that govern the target language. Errors are defined as learners’ production of undesirable or off-target utterances that are difficult for native speakers to understand. Corder (1971, 1981) differentiated between two types of errors namely: systematic and unsystematic (mistakes). The former is usually made by learners while they are learning L2, whereas the latter mainly occurs in L1. Ellis (1997, 2008) states that errors occur as a result of learners’ inability to recognize the correct utterances from the wrong ones due to limited knowledge or information about the target language. In this case, errors are closely related to learners’ linguistic competence. For this reason, they repeatedly occur without being noticed by learners because those learners have difficulty in certain areas of the new language. Therefore, learners fail to treat these errors independently. Unlike errors, mistakes are unsystematic and can be attributed to performance. They can be viewed as slips of the tongue or lapses of the mind. They occur in a particular situation or instance, when learners are unable to employ prior knowledge due to factors such as fatigue or memory failure. Thus, teachers should be able not only to identify them but also to treat them appropriately.

Second language researchers have proposed many classifications of the types of errors. Burt (1975) identified two groups of errors: global and local. He proposes that
global errors impede communication and affect whole sentence organization. In contrast, local errors influence individual parts of the sentence, but they do not necessarily obstruct communication. Burt emphasizes that teachers should pay due attention to the types of errors which frequently occur in instructional settings. Chaudron (1977) categorized errors into linguistic and lexical error. Linguistic errors include: morphological, phonological, and syntactic errors and lexical errors refer to vocabulary and pronunciation.

Taylor (1986) cited in Ellis (2008) attributed the cause of errors to four sources: discourse (i.e., organization, coherence), psycholinguistic (i.e., L2 system, difficulty of production), epistemic (i.e., shortage or lack of information about universal issues), and sociolinguistic (i.e., inability of learners to adapt to social situations). In the same vein, Mackey et al. (2000) pointed out four groups of errors including: phonological, morphosyntactic, lexical, and semantic errors.

Similarly, Brown (2007) classified the errors into four different categories: interlingual and intralingual transfer, language learning context, and communication strategies. Interlingual errors occur as a result of interference between L1 and L2. They include the following types: morphological, semantic, phonological, lexical and stylistic errors (Keshavarz, 1994). Intralingual errors refer to incorrect generalization of the learned rules, incomplete or incorrect application of rules, and the failure to apply them in appropriate situations. As for learning strategies, they include overgeneralization and simplification. Second language learners usually have a tendency to simplify, reduce, or over generalize the target language rules (Keshavarz, 1994). Finally, communication
strategies refer to the following strategies: avoidance (i.e., topic avoidance, message abandonment), paraphrasing (i.e., approximation, coinage), borrowing (i.e., literal translation, language switch), asking for help (i.e., assistance solicitation), and miming (i.e., non verbal conveyance of meaning).

Understanding the various types of errors can be of great importance for students, teachers, and researchers. Errors are significant for students in the process of second language learning, providing opportunities for discovering their errors and learning from them. In fact, errors can be used to inform teachers about students’ progress in the different language areas up to that point in time. Moreover, errors can provide both teachers and researchers with information about how a language is learned or acquired and what strategies or procedures the learner is employing in his discovery and acquisition of the new language.

**Preferences for Error Types to be Corrected**

To understand Arab male students’ preferences for correcting certain types of errors, this section provides a review for a number of current studies in this area. As mentioned earlier, there is a deficit of research about learners’ preferences for correcting specific error types at least from learners’ perspectives. Most of the research in oral correction either focused on investigating students’ and teachers’ beliefs and perceptions of corrective feedback or the effectiveness of CF strategies in various educational settings. However, some researchers focused on the above issues and investigated them together.
This section reviewed a number of studies that investigated students’ and teachers’ preferences for error types to be corrected. The studied literature revealed a significant gap between learners’ and teachers’ perceptions regarding the amount of attention that teachers place on specific types of errors and the best timing for correction. Most of the reviewed studies indicated that students’ preferences for correction types of errors can be attributed to the learners’ educational background, age and level of proficiency. In addition, the literature review revealed that teachers’ preparation programs and their professional experiences contribute to this mismatch.

In her study, Schulz (2001) investigated a sample of American and Columbian students’ and teachers’ perceptions about grammar and oral error correction. The results of the study showed that Colombian students more than American favor grammar instruction and they prefer their teachers to mainly focus on grammar. The study further found that the majority of American and Columbian students preferred oral and written error corrections during class. The participants were 122 Colombian foreign language instructors and 607 Colombian foreign language students. Ninety-two of the participants were U.S. foreign language instructors and 824 were American students.

With respect to teachers’ perceptions, the researcher found that Columbian teachers emphasized the importance of grammar instruction more than American teachers. Those teachers were in agreement regarding the importance of written error correction. Concerning oral errors, half of the surveyed teachers reported that oral errors should be corrected in class. The findings of the study indicated that there is a mismatch between teachers’ and students’ expectations in terms of oral feedback. According to
Schulz, this mismatch can be attributed to teachers’ belief about error correction which is influenced by three main sources: teacher preparation programs, teachers’ experience in language learning and teachers’ professional experience.

Loewen (2003) carried out a study to examine the efficacy of CF strategies. The findings of the study showed that learners pay particular attention to linguistic items within real life language lessons. These studies also found that the production of successful uptake is most beneficial for learners (Ellis, Basturkmen, & Loewen, 2001a, 2001b).

The research focused on the frequency and the characteristics of incidental focus on form episodes in 12 ESL classes in New Zealand. These characteristics included: complexity, response, attempted and successful uptake. The participants of the study were 12 native speakers of English and 118 students from 13 different countries including: Japan, Hong Kong, and France. The researcher observed and recorded a total of 32 hours of meaning focused interaction. The results of the study showed that vocabulary (75%) was the most important concern of students followed by grammar (13%). Data analyses revealed that most of the focused on form episodes (60%) were unclear. In addition, the findings showed that nearly all (96%) of the responses involved the provision of information. Although students produced 74% uptake, only 58% of this uptake was successful.

In the same context of research, Katayama (2007) investigated a sample of Japanese students' attitudes and preferences regarding error correction strategies. Generally, the students held positive attitudes toward teachers’ correction of errors.
Students indicated preference for correction of pragmatic errors over all other kinds of errors. The most favored correction method for the teacher was to give the student a hint enabling them to notice errors and to self-correct. In short, the results of the study showed the following pattern in order of priority for types of errors: pragmatics (61%), phonology (46%), vocabulary (30%), grammar (19.8%), and discourse (18%).

The participants were 588 students enrolled in English language classes at six different universities in Japan. The researcher developed a questionnaire based on previous literature. The questionnaire consisted of four sections designed to gain information from the participants about demographic information, students' general views on oral error correction, and students’ preferences for classroom error correction.

The importance of this study lies in the fact that it provides information about learners’ perspectives regarding feedback from a diverse social, cultural and instructional setting. For instance, the students’ preference for pragmatics demonstrates the influence of the Japanese education system which focuses on teaching English through grammar-oriented instruction. Consequently, students are able to produce grammatical sentences but they are unsure if their utterances are acceptable in all contexts. The researchers explained students’ preferences for phonological errors in light of the difference between the Japanese language and English. The findings of this study are in line with Lasagabaster and Sierra’s (2005) and Schulz’s (2001) results regarding students’ attitudes towards feedback which found that students generally have positive attitudes towards CF and expect their teachers to provide them with more interactive corrections.
Zhang et al. (2010) carried out a study to investigate students’ and teachers’ attitudes towards oral errors during classroom interaction. The results showed that both teachers and students hold positive attitudes towards corrective feedback. The findings revealed that there was a mismatch between students’ expectations and teachers’ interpretation regarding the amount of correction, types of error to be corrected, timing of correction and type of corrective feedback strategy. Generally, students believe that all errors should be corrected, while teachers believe that continuous error correction causes frustration and is time-consuming. Basically, students expected more CF from their teachers than teachers typically gave.

Although learners and teachers were in agreement regarding the types of errors that should be corrected, they had differing opinions regarding the amount of attention to be placed on each error. Most students in the study contend that lexical errors should receive more attention than grammatical and phonological errors while teachers generally believe that lexical errors should receive more attention than phonological and grammatical errors. The study also found that students’ and teachers’ attitudes towards the best timing for corrections were different. Most students expressed preference for immediate correction to their phonological errors and delayed correction to their lexical and grammatical errors indicating a delayed process of meaning.

A study by Suzuki (2004) analyzing the relationship between CF and learner uptake in adult ESL classrooms based on Lyster and Ranta’s (1997) study, the researcher found that teachers provided more CF on phonological errors followed by grammatical and lexical errors. The participants were 31 students enrolled in an intermediate ESL
program. The database consists of 21 hours of audio taped interaction between three ESL teachers and thirty-one adult ESL students.

The findings of this study contradict the results of an earlier study by Lyster (1998a) which indicated that teachers provided most of the CF for grammatical errors. The difference in the findings of the two studies can be mainly attributed to age. In Lyster’s earlier study, the participants were young children, whereas in the present study the participants were adult learners.

**CF Strategies**

Recently, some methodologists and second language researchers developed and identified a number of taxonomies and strategies for correcting errors. For written feedback, they made a distinction between direct, indirect, and metalinguistic forms of correction (Ellis, 2009). As for oral CF, they differentiated between explicit feedback as opposed to implicit feedback and between input-providing vs. output-prompting corrective feedback (Ellis, 2006; Lyster, 2004). Although this classification is helpful for recognizing the degree of implicitness and explicitness of each strategy, there are drawbacks because it fails to account for variation within each strategy (Sheen, 2006). Second language researchers tend to classify types of CF according to their explicitness and implicitness. They contend that effective CF should promote learners’ noticing (Trofimovich, Ammar, & Gatbonton, 2007). Lyster and Ranta (1997) identified six categories: explicit correction, recast, metalinguistic feedback, elicitation, repetition, and clarification request. According to Ellis (2008), explicit types include: overt corrections, metalinguistic information, and elicitations.
Panova and Lyster (2002) identified eight different feedback strategies, namely: (1) recasts; (2) prompts; (3) clarification requests; (4) metalinguistic information; (5) elicitation; (6) repetition; and (7) translation. This section elaborates on these strategies and presents a summary and illustration in Appendix A. In addition, it provides an overview of previous studies that targeted students’ and teachers’ preferences regarding oral correction types.

1. Recasts

Recast is considered to be the most common type among CF strategies. Lyster and Ranta (1997) defined recast as “teacher’s reformulation of all or part of a student’s utterance, minus the error” (p. 46). Long and Robinson (1998) classified recasts into simple and complex forms. In the simple type, learners receive partial reformulation or minimal changes to their incorrect utterances, whereas in the complex type, learners receive substantial changes and sometimes their utterances are wholly reformulated (Ellis & Sheen, 2006; Long & Robinson, 1998).

There are two different arguments regarding the facilitative role which recasts can play in L2 learning. Some researchers (Doughty, 2001; Long, 2006) argue that recast is an effective CF strategy, while other researchers (Lyster, 1998a; Panova & Lyster, 2002) claim that recast is ambiguous and its role in developing L2 learners’ interlanguage is limited.

Many researchers believe that the main reason behind this ambiguity is that L2 learners sometimes fail to receive the corrective function of recasts or notice it (Long, 2006; Nicholas et al., 2001; Oliver & Mackey, 2003). Despite these limitations, findings
of many studies (Han, 2002; Havranek, 2002; Iwashita, 2003; Leeman, 2003; Philip, 2003) indicated that recasts definitely have a positive impact on learning L2. Supporting this strategy, numerous studies examined the efficacy of recasts in classroom settings including elementary, high school, university level and ESL classrooms.

2. *Prompts*

In second language acquisition (SLA) literature, the prompt strategy is used interchangeably with negotiation of form and form-focused negotiation (Lyster, 2002; Lyster & Ranta, 1997). According to Lyster and Mori (2006) prompts can be viewed as a range of feedback types including: metalinguistics, elicitation, repetition, and clarification requests. This variety of CF types supplies learners with sufficient information to reproduce acceptable utterances.

3. *Explicit Feedback*

Ellis et al. (2006) reported that explicit feedback includes two forms: explicit correction and metalinguistic feedback. In the first type, the teacher directly informs the learner about his/her erroneous utterances. In the second type, teachers use different information, suggestions, and ideas to help learners produce well-formed utterances. The limitation of this strategy is that it supplies learners with both positive and negative evidence. Essentially, explicit feedback provides learners opportunity to notice the gap between their interlanguage and the target language but discourages them at the same time from producing acceptable output (Lyster & Ranta, 1997).
4. **Clarification Requests**

This strategy provides learners with feedback in the form of questions. Through this inquiry, the feedback provider informs learners that their utterances are either unacceptable and ill-formed or difficult to understand and in need of reformulation. This strategy is effective and encourages learners to produce modified output. In this strategy, learners are not provided with any information or clues that help them identify either the type of error or its location.

5. **Metalinguistic Feedback**

Metalinguistic feedback is similar to explicit feedback in that it uses conversations to help learners understand different grammatical rules and linguistic features of the target language. Lyster and Ranta (1997) classified metalinguistic feedback into three categories: metalinguistic comments, metalinguistic information and metalinguistic questions. Metalinguistic comments are considered the least informative strategy because they only indicate the occurrence of the error. The metalinguistic information strategy indicates both the occurrence and location of the error. Finally, metalinguistic questions direct learners to the nature of the error. Importantly, metalinguistic feedback explains, clarifies, and directs learners to the error but does not supply them with the correct utterance.

6. **Elicitation**

Elicitation is considered a helpful technique for learning languages because it promotes self-correction strategies. According to Panova and Lyster (2002), this strategy can be employed in three different ways: request for reformulations of a deviant
utterance, the use of questions, and the use of strategic pauses to allow a learner to complete an utterance. These ways can be varied in their degree of explicitness or implicitness. Therefore, elicitation falls in the middle of the explicit-implicit spectrum of corrective feedback. Additionally, this type of CF is used individually and does not often coexist with other feedback types or strategies. In short, the instructor’s role in this interactional face-to-face corrective feedback is to elicit from learners the correct form/forms of their off-target utterances.

7. **Repetition**

In the repetition strategy of CF, the teacher uses voice intonation to indicate that a part of the utterance or the entire utterance is unacceptable. The provider of CF usually repeats the wrong part of learners’ utterances or the whole utterance focusing on the error. This strategy is considered to be completely implicit (Panova & Lyster, 2002).

8. **Translation**

As discussed by Lyster and Ranta (1997), the translation strategy can be viewed as another category belonging to recasts. They both implicitly indicate the occurrence of the error and supply learners with acceptable utterances. In other words, learners focus on producing target-like utterances. The only difference is that in the case of recasts, learners reproduce acceptable utterances in place of their erroneous ones, whereas in translation, learners translate (reproduce) utterances into another language rather than the target language. Appendix A summarizes these strategies with examples.
Preferences for CF Strategies

As noted in Chapter One, there is no consensus among second language researchers about the role of interactional CF in learning L2 or about the most effective types of CF strategies in the classroom. Many experimental and observational studies compared these types in classroom as well as laboratory settings (Ammar & Spada, 2006; Loewen & Nabei, 2007; Lyster, 2004; Lyster & Izquierdo, 2009; Lyster & Mori, 2006; McDonough, 2007; Panova & Lyster, 2002). The above are a few examples from a growing number of studies targeting this research area. Although there is a difference between preferences and perceptions, the word perception is operationalized to have the same meaning as preference because many studies in the literature of second language used them interchangeably.

This section displays the findings of some previous studies that examined students’ and teachers’ preferences of oral correction type. The literature showed that recast strategies and explicit correction were the most frequently used types in instructional settings. Most of the studies showed that students preferred explicit correction such as metalinguistics and explicit CF because these two types provide opportunity to repeat the correct model provided by the teacher. It was found that metalinguistic feedback and elicitation were the most effective CF types for eliciting learners’ uptake, resulting in a near perfect rate (98%) for each type. In addition, the reviewed studies revealed that teachers prefer the use of recasts for correcting learners’ errors. Furthermore, the results reported that recasts were most effective during group
interaction although they did not have an immediate effect on learning. The results of the study revealed that teachers prefer the use of recasts for correcting learners.

The review of literature indicates that individual differences such as language aptitude, anxiety, and level of proficiency have an influence on learners’ preferences for CF strategies. In conclusion, the results indicate that CF strategies are context-specific. That is to say, what works effectively in a certain situation does not necessarily prove to be effective in another instructional setting.

Generally, empirical studies yielded mismatched results regarding learners’ and teachers’ preferences for particular types of oral CF strategies. Mackey et al. (2000) investigated interactional CF and learners’ perceptions about error correction in an adult ESL context and in an Italian as a foreign language context. The main objective of the study was to find whether learners can recognize CF moves and the target of the feedback. The research revealed that students prefer different CF strategies depending upon the types of errors. The total number of the participants was ten ESL students and seven students learning Italian as foreign language. The participant observed a recorded video of feedback situations they experienced during the lessons. Then, the researcher used a stimulated recall technique through which the participants demonstrated retention of ideas or information. The results showed that learners were able to perceive lexical and phonological feedback most efficiently whereas morphosyntactic feedback was not as successfully perceived. Furthermore, the researcher found that recasts were the most favored type given in response to morphosyntactic errors (75%).
Lochtman (2002) examined the role of different types of oral CF in a foreign language classroom in Belgium where the target language was German. The study’s main objective was to examine the way CF functions in analytic foreign language classroom interaction. The results revealed varying preferences for CF strategies depending on the error types. The researcher focused on both the frequency and distribution of CF types and the learners’ uptake types. The database included ten recorded hours of 12 lessons in Dutch secondary schools. Three teachers participated in this study. The researcher identified 349 uses of CF. The most common were recasts (30.5%) followed by elicitation (30.2%). The study indicated that the majority (55.8%) of all feedback types were initiations to self-correct where the flow of communication was interrupted to give learners an opportunity to correct themselves. The study showed that the lowest rates of learner uptake occurred after recasts (52.6%) and explicit correction (52%). Metalinguistic feedback and elicitation were the most effective CF types for eliciting learners’ uptake resulting in a near perfect rate (98%) for each type. One of the many significances of this study is that it pointed out which CF strategies can be used to serve different purposes.

Another study in Japan by Nabei and Swain (2002) investigated adult learners’ perceptions of recast moves. The researchers used videotaped lessons and interviews with students to explore learners’ attitudes towards CF. The researchers found that students were generally able to recognize recast moves in teachers’ corrective feedback. In addition, the results reported that recasts were most effective during group interaction although not having an immediate effect on learning. The findings indicated that students
had more time to interpret recasts, and they reacted to recasts differently than strict repetition.

Panova and Lyster (2002) examined the relationship between different types of feedback and learners’ uptake and immediate repair of errors. The database consisted of 10 hour-long transcribed interactions. A total of 3,357 students’ and learners’ turns were coded according to Lyster and Ranta’s (1997) taxonomy. The results of the study showed that both teachers and students expressed preferences for implicit types of CF, especially recasts and translation. Basically, strategies that encourage learners to generate repair were less preferred by students and teachers. Accordingly, the rates of learners’ uptake and immediate repair of error were found low in this classroom. Interestingly, these results were analyzed and interpreted in light of output production rather than input.

A study by Tsang (2004) analyzed CF and uptake in 18 different lessons including: speaking, reading, and writing. The participants of the study were grades 7-11 students in a Hong Kong secondary school. The database was 945 minutes of recorded lessons. The researcher found that recast strategies and explicit correction were the most frequently used types. In addition, the results showed that neither recasts nor explicit correction caused student-generated uptake. Most student-generated repair generally followed repetition. Finally, most of the students’ grammatical repairs resulted and followed negotiation for meaning, whereas students’ phonological repairs followed recast and explicit correction. The findings of this study were consistent with Lochtman’s (2002) findings.
Carpenter et al. (2006) examined learners’ interpretations of recast strategies in instructional interaction. The research results indicated that in order for learners to identify recasts, they need to be provided with ample context surrounding the erroneous utterance. The researchers showed students videotapes of task-based interactions including recasts and repetitions. The participants consisted of 34 students in an advanced ESL program. They were divided into two groups. Both groups were asked to watch the teacher’s corrective feedback including recasts, repetition and other types. Students were asked to identify the types of CF and provide a verbal report as an evaluation of the clip. The findings revealed that only 14 of the participants who did not hear the initial non-target utterances were able to distinguish recasts from repetition. Students in the second group, who saw the initial students’ utterances and recasts, were able to distinguish more of the recasts from repetition. The analyses of students’ verbal reports imply that learners did not look for nonverbal signs from the speakers” (p.209). In addition, they indicate that phonological and lexical recasts can be more accurately recognized by learners than morphosyntactic recasts” (p. 210). Finally, the findings conclude that the contrast between a problematic utterance and a recast contributes to learners' interpretations of recasts as corrective” (p. 210).

In the study conducted by Mackey et al. (2007) to investigate students’ and teachers’ perception of oral correction, the researchers found that teachers prefer delayed correction for both phonological and grammatical errors. In terms of mode of correction, the results revealed that there were significant differences between students and teachers. Many students preferred explicit correction with only a small amount of metalinguistic
clues. In contrast, the findings showed that teachers employed a variety of feedback types based on the error types. For instance, teachers favored using explicit and metalinguistic strategies for correcting phonological errors. For lexical errors, they favored explicit CF strategies and metalinguistic corrective feedback for grammatical errors. The findings did not indicate any significant differences between students’ and teachers’ attitudes towards CF providers. Overall, most students and teachers hold that the teacher’s corrective feedback is more effective than self-correction or peer correction in addressing phonological, lexical and grammatical errors.

Amador (2008) conducted a study to investigate a sample of college students’ preferences for error correction strategies. The findings indicated that students were in favor of feedback from the teacher rather than through peer-correction. The students also showed preference for the techniques which gave them the opportunity to repeat the correct model provided by the teacher. A total of 23 college students participated in this study. The researcher used a dialogue to present these types of instruction to students in the classroom and found that students preferred explicit techniques which directly informed them about their errors. The study suggests that techniques which encourage learners to reformulate and repair their utterances are potentially beneficial for language learning. These strategies help learners to interact and correct their spoken errors, further indicating a negotiation of meaning. In addition, they provide learners with the type/types of corrective feedback that encourage them to participate in the correction process.

In a study by Kagimoto and Rodgers (2008) investigating university students’ perceptions of oral correction, the researchers found that metalinguistic feedback and
explicit correction were the most preferred types of CF. The participants of the study totaled 139, selected from two Japanese universities. The researcher designed a 25-item survey to investigate students’ preferences for oral correction. Students identified them to be the most useful strategies for correcting their oral errors. The results of the study revealed that students considered clarification requests and repetition the least preferred types of feedback. They perceived these strategies the least useful CF strategies for correcting their oral English errors.

The findings suggest that students’ perception of the usefulness of corrective feedback strategies influenced their preferences for certain strategies. The results also show a preference for explicit correction that contradicts the focus on task based activities and the inductive teaching of linguistics forms preferred by most teachers in other studies.

Yoshida (2008) investigated teachers’ and learners’ preferences for CF types in Japanese classrooms. The researchers used audio recording and stimulated recall interviews for this purpose. The results of the study revealed that teachers prefer the use of recasts for correcting learners’ errors more than other strategies including: metalinguistic and elicitation strategies. By contrast, learners favored the way their teachers gave them a chance to provide a correct response before he/she provided them with the correct response.

Finally, Lyster and Mori (2006) examined the effects of CF moves on learners’ uptake in two settings. The research revealed that CF strategies such as elicitation can be more successful than recasts. The first setting was French immersion for English-
speaking learners in Canada, whereas the second setting was Japanese immersion for English speaking children in the USA. The participants of the study were elementary school students in the 4th and 5th grade. In the first setting, feedback was provided to students 655 times. In contrast, feedback was provided to students 269 times in the second setting. The findings of the study revealed that recast strategies were used 345 of the 655 times (54%) in the French immersion classrooms and 169 of 269 times (65%) in Japanese immersion classrooms. Moreover, the finding revealed that most uptake in the two settings, (62%) and (30%) respectively, resulted from the teachers’ use of elicitation. As for recast strategies, the results showed that 32% of recast moves led to uptake, whereas 65% in the second setting led to uptake.

**Intended Targets of CF**

A number of hypotheses about second language learning have emphasized the role of interaction in learning the second language including: the Interaction Hypothesis (Gass & Mackey, 2007), the Noticing Hypothesis (Schmidt, 1990), and the Output Hypothesis (Swain, 1985). According to all these hypotheses, CF which results from negotiation for meaning prompts learners to produce either a modified output or input.

Drawing on the importance of interactional corrective feedback, SLA researchers found that oral communication holds a key role in L2 development because negotiation of meaning provides learners with opportunities to focus on certain grammatical forms and use them effectively in their communication (Gass & Mackey, 2007). Through focus on form instruction, teachers mainly concentrate on the linguistic features which result in comprehension or production problems for learners while using the target language. Long
(1998) defined focus on form as interactional moves employed by interlocutors to increase learners’ awareness of forms, or to draw students’ attention to incidental linguistic features as they appear during meaningful activities. Based on this definition, focus on form in meaningful activities enables learners to use newly learned linguistic forms effectively while interacting in the target language (Ellis, Basturkmen, & Loewen, 2001a).

Meaningful communication in the target language requires that learners have the ability to use the language appropriately in various social and cultural contexts, negotiate meaning and repair breakdowns in communication, and produce a variety of coherent spoken and written messages. These issues are emphasized by many researchers who argue that the classroom setting can be viewed as a sociolinguistic environment. Hall and Verplaetse (2000) state that interaction is an important part of language development. For this reason, it is difficult to separate classroom interaction from language learning because they are interrelated and considered complementary processes.

Following the importance of interaction, advocates of social learning theories view interaction as a means through which learners obtain data for learning a language (Bruner, 1971; Vygotsky, 1986). The major assumption underpinning social learning theories is that interaction is the key factor for cognitive development. Learning occurs as a result of the interaction between environmental and cognitive factors which finally affect human learning and behaviors. In this context, Ellis (2009) further proposes that learning a language lies inside interaction, not as a result of interaction. Based on this perspective, language learning can be viewed as a shared process between individuals.
One of the most important constructs proposed by social learning theorists which is relevant to CF is the zone of proximal development (ZPD). The ZPD refers to the range of learning between what a child can do with assistance and what he/she cannot accomplish without assistance.

Similarly, Cole (1996) states that learning is a social process emphasizing context and interaction. In his theory, Cole proposes that people can solve problems through negotiation and co-operation. This type of learning produces a shared understanding of the situation. Lave and Wenger (1991) state that learning is situated and unintentional and exists within a variety of activities, context and culture. Calling this process participation, they claim that social interaction and collaboration have an important role in situated learning. The more the learners are engaged in social activities, the better they can learn the social values, traditions and beliefs of that community. For this end, it is essential for learners to be immersed in authentic situations and settings.

Rogoff (1993) describes learning as a process of guided participation that is shared between others in contexts of participation. Guided participation involves the bridging of different perspectives among participants with varied experiences, and the way each participant's involvement in the activity is structured. This involvement includes not only face-to-face interaction but also side-by-side participation. The upcoming section provides a brief review of some studies that addressed the importance of interactional corrective feedback for oral communication.

Realizing the importance of interaction and negotiation for meaning for L2 development especially communication skills, a considerable number of experimental
and observational studies have investigated the role of interactional CF in promoting the necessary processes for L2 learning (Carpenter et al., 2006; Ellis, 2007; Jeon, 2007; Long, 2007). Other researchers focused either on the role of CF in developing specific linguistic features (Mackey et al., 2007) or in drawing learners’ attention to particular error types such as: grammatical, phonological, morphosyntactic and lexical errors (Carpenter et al., 2006; Han, 2008; Sheen, 2006). One recent study by Mackey and Goo (2007) reported that CF targeted at certain lexical items has immediate effects, whereas CF targeted morphosyntax has a delayed effect.

This section presents the findings of a number of studies that examined the effectiveness of interaction on promoting learners’ oral accuracy and noticing. The findings of the reviewed studies reported that interactional CF can increase learners’ oral proficiency and promote learners’ noticing of their linguistic errors. The review of literature indicated that negotiated interaction helps learners to modify their output by producing well formed and linguistically acceptable utterances in the target language. In short, interactional CF can increase learners’ communicative competence and help them produce meaningful and successful communication.

In a study by Mackey and Silver (2005) investigating the influence of interactional feedback on language development in a linguistically diverse setting in Singapore, the researchers found that school children who received interactional feedback during the task from adult native speakers learned the target structure (question formation) better than those who did not engage in such communicative exchanges. In a similar vein, Adam (2006) examined the impact of a type of task-based activity
(modality) on language development. The researchers reported that interaction between learners can improve the comprehensibility of input and draws learners’ attention to specific linguistic forms and thus leads learners to produce a modified output.

In an earlier study carried out by Mackey and Oliver (2002) to investigate the effect of interactional feedback in forms of negotiation for meaning and recasts on children’s L2 development, the researchers found that children benefited more from immediate CF. Twenty-two ESL children took part in this study and interacted in dyads with adult native speakers. The learners engaged in communicative activities that were supposed to facilitate the occurrence of targeted forms with CF. The researchers found that interactional CF was helpful for learning linguistic structure, particularly involving question formation. The findings of the study concluded that individual differences significantly affect the efficacy of CF.

Likewise, Mackey (2006) examined the relationships between CF and the noticing of L2 forms, and the impact on L2 development. The participants of the study totaled 28 ESL learners enrolled in a university-level intensive English program. The researcher examined the students’ noticing using questionnaires, students’ journals, and viewing classroom videotapes. The findings of the study showed that there was a positive relationship between noticing and interactional feedback and noticing and L2 development. This study suggests that noticing as an explicit instruction can be of great importance for learning different aspects of the target language. Moreover, it can be an efficient mediator in the feedback-learning relationship.
The previously discussed studies are just few examples of numerous studies that targeted interaction between native and non-native speakers and confirmed the key role of interactional CF in facilitating and developing L2 learning. Recently, some researchers began to interpret and address the efficacy of interactional CF in the computer-mediated communication (CMC) environment in light of Long’s interaction hypothesis (1996). Lai and Zhao (2006) conducted a study to examine the efficacy of text-based online chat in helping L2 learners notice both their linguistic errors and CF they received from native speaker interlocutors. The findings of the study showed that interaction through text-based online chat has a facilitative role in promoting learners’ noticing of their linguistic mistakes. Moreover, it was found that online chat can foster the noticing of errors through negotiation of meaning.

In a similar study, Morris (2005) examined learners’ repair following interaction during computer conversations. Another purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between error types, feedback types, and immediate learner repair. The findings revealed that the majority of lexical and syntactic errors were corrected using negotiation. Apparently, negotiation is more likely to promote repairs because learners notice the gap between their utterances and target-like utterances.

Bower (2011) made a comparison between two types of CF given during interaction with university students in Japan and Australia who were learning each other’s language via an e-Tandem interaction. The two types of CF were: text-based Synchronous Computer Mediated Communication (SCMC) and post-chat utilization of logs of the chat interaction. The researcher found that negotiation of meaning most of the
time served to solve communication problems during chat and had little relevance to the errors made by chatters. The researcher claims that this explicit feedback is an essential factor because it allows learners to notice the gap between their utterances and others’. The study showed that explicit CF provided to learners either by means of conversation logs or exchanged emails resulted in increased rates of error correction in both English and Japanese interactions. In summary, the study suggests that using synchronous text-based CMC and post-chat corrective feedback together in interactions is an effective strategy for promoting learners’ communicative competence and accuracy, and offers learners a new strategy which integrates implicit and explicit CF.

In closing, most of the studies that targeted interactional CF in CMC environment showed that this type of CF can promote learners’ noticing and accuracy and increase their oral production. In terms of preferences for specific CF, the findings of these studies reported that learners gave more attention to vocabulary items rather than linguistic features through negotiation of meaning.

**Summary**

The reviewed literature shows a contradiction between students’ and teachers’ perceptions in terms of beliefs, mode of correction, types of errors and the effectiveness of corrective feedback (Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2005; Schulz, 2001). Most of the studies reported that students expect more correction from their teachers with more focus on explicit instruction. Teachers contend that continuously correcting students interrupts the natural flow of students’ conversations. While most students are in favor of explicit correction, Panova and Lyster (2002) found that some students prefer implicit strategies
such as recasts. The studies demonstrated that strategies which encourage learners to generate repair were less preferred by both students and teachers.

Although learners and teachers were in general agreement regarding the types of errors that should be corrected, the studied literature revealed a gap between learners’ and teachers’ perceptions regarding the amount of attention that teachers should place on specific types of errors. In addition, the literature indicated that students’ and teachers’ attitudes towards the best timing for corrections were also different. For example, students expressed preference for immediate correction of their phonological errors and for delayed correction of their lexical and grammatical errors; whereas teachers prefer delayed correction for both phonological and grammatical errors.

Overall, the literature showed that the convergence and divergence between students’ and teachers’ perceptions depends largely on certain factors that include: level of proficiency (Lee, 2008), teachers’ beliefs about oral CF (Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2005; Schulz, 2001), individual differences (Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2005; Lee, 2008; Schulz, 2001; Zacharias, 2007), purpose of the feedback, and the learner’s participation (Mackey et al., 2007). These factors fundamentally affect the efficacy of CF. Based on the studied literature, there is a limited amount of research on students’ perceptions of their teachers’ selection of CF strategies. While the foci of most studies were on teachers’ perceptions, only sparse research focused on students’ attitudes, beliefs and perceptions about oral CF. In addition, few of the reviewed studies investigated the effects of the previously mentioned mediating factors on oral CF. Therefore, there is an obvious need for studying the influence of these moderators on the efficacy of oral CF.
Finally, the review of literature indicates that there is no inclusion criteria available on whether, which, when or how students’ errors should be corrected or who should correct them. It can be clearly seen from the studied literature that much of the research on this topic so far is inconclusive and in need of extensive reexamination of how different moderating variables affect the employment of successful CF such as the students’ preferences for particular types of CF.
Chapter 3: Methodology

The overarching goal of this case study was to investigate a sample of Arab male students’ preferences for oral corrective feedback (CF) at a large Midwestern university. The study attempted to determine the CF strategy/strategies that students preferred. The data was collected from 10 teachers’ and 20 students’ interviews, 10 observed classroom lessons and a focus group interview for participating students. Five students participated in the focus group, and were selected from the sample of the students participating in the study. This chapter provides a detailed description of the overall methodology employed in this study including: the study design, the selection of site and participants, the researcher’s role, timeline and procedures for collecting and analyzing data.

The Study Design

One tenet underpinning this study is that interactional CF plays a crucial role in L2 learning. Long (1996, 2007) proposes that the process of interaction facilitates language learning because it integrates learners’ input, selective attention and output together. The theoretical works of many researchers (Gass & Mackey, 2007; Mackey, 2007) as well as recent empirical works (Iwashita, 2003; Leeman, 2003; Mackey, Oliver, & Leeman, 2003; Mackey & Goo, 2007; McDonough, 2006) support this claim.

Long’s Interaction Hypothesis suggests that understanding interactional CF requires addressing various factors and perspectives. Ellis (2010) argues that interactional CF is a complex process because it encapsulates multiple dimensions including: cognitive (i.e., input, output, internal factors), social (i.e., background of the learners) and psychological (i.e., learners’ beliefs, personality traits) factors. These variables
sometimes can cause a mismatch between learners’ expectations and teachers’ interpretations which can often make the teacher’s efforts in the classroom unsuccessful.

Another relevant point to this discussion is that most EFL classroom practices in foreign countries neglect teaching through social activities and do not focus on the interpersonal dimension of the target language. In this regard, Vygotsky (1986) states that *interpersonal* refers to a social behavior that occurs as a result of face to face activities in social contexts, whereas, *intrapersonal* refers to what takes place inside a person as inner speech. In this form of interaction, various modules in the mind interact together to construct a response or meaning to a phenomenon. As a result, most of the students who study abroad in English-speaking countries find a mismatch between their prior experiences and the educational practices in the new community (Sawir, 2005).

To better understand these moderators and other significant factors, this study used information gathered by means of qualitative research methods utilizing interviews, observations and the use of a focus group interview. The next sections provide detailed information about the benefits and applications of these methods as well as the employed procedures.

A qualitative approach was more appropriate for this study because it offers a variety of effective and valuable research tools that help the researcher investigate a phenomenon in its natural context. Qualitative methods are especially designed to facilitate writing reports and reflections on the corresponding phenomenon. Not only do they help researchers record all the accounts and observations as field notes, but they also serve to suggest hypotheses for future studies (Glesne, 2006).
Qualitative methods can also help researchers investigate participants' opinions, behaviors and experiences. By using qualitative inquiry, researchers focus on how individuals and groups view and understand the world. Using such tools, researchers can construct meaning out of participants’ experiences (Glesne, 2006; Patton, 2002).

Since the main goal of the current study was to explore some insights about students’ attitudes, perception and preferences for the particular phenomenon (Corrective Feedback), a qualitative case study was the most appropriate design for this purpose. The rationale behind choosing this approach is that a qualitative case study facilitates the process of exploring, describing and explaining the phenomenon in its actual context by using a variety of data collection strategies. In this sense, Gall, Borg, and Gall (1996) explain that these methods are employed to provide rich description, explanation, or an evaluation of a particular phenomenon.

According to Creswell (1998), researchers can use qualitative case study method to examine the broad system of a case or multiple cases in detail over a specific period of time. This approach ensures that the issue under investigation is thoroughly explored allowing different facts about the phenomenon to emerge and be better understood (Creswell, 1994). The second reason for choosing a qualitative case study is that this design is recommended and preferred when qualitative researchers include relevant contextual conditions (Yin, 2003).

After determining the suitable study design, the case and its limitations, qualitative researchers have to carefully select the type of case study that best suits the topic of the study and facilitates answering specific research questions. The case is
defined by Miles and Huberman (1994) as a phenomenon which occurs in a bounded context. According to them, it is the unit of analysis. The scope of the current study was the preferences and attitudes of Arab male students toward oral CF. Simply stated, attitudes and preferences of those students who met the criteria for participation in the research were considered units of analyses.

In this study, I used an intrinsic case study approach. This approach enables the researcher to explore differences and make comparisons between cases. Qualitative researchers have proposed a number of approaches for case study to ensure that the topic of interest is well explored and that the essence of the phenomenon is revealed. Stake (1995) identified case studies as intrinsic, instrumental, or collective. As Stake proposes, the intrinsic case study is usually conducted when the researcher has special interest in a particular phenomenon and he/she wants to gain further information about the uniqueness of this case. Therefore, the researcher has to point out the distinctive features as well as other similarities between the phenomenon and other ones. In the instrumental case study, the researcher attempts to go further, beyond understanding the phenomenon. In other words, through instrumental study the researcher’s main focus is not the case itself but on how to use the case to gain in depth-insight about specific issues related to the case under study, for example by advancing a theory (Stake, 1995).

Similarly, Yin (2003) identifies three types of case studies: explanatory, exploratory, and descriptive. According to Yin, the explanatory case study is used by researchers to examine whether there is a causal relationship between two variables or a number of variables and which one/ones affect the findings. In contrast, exploratory case
study is used to investigate those situations in which the conditions imposed by the researcher will not necessarily yield clear results or findings (Yin, 2003). As the name indicates, the descriptive case study is employed to describe a phenomenon as it occurs in its natural context.

Finally, concerning data analysis, the researcher used the interpretive approach to analyze the results. Using this approach helps the researcher to identify patterns or themes within the data to explain a phenomenon (Gall et al., 1996). For the construction of case studies, Patton (2002) suggests that qualitative researchers should follow three typical steps: 1) collecting raw data for their cases; 2) creating a case record in which data is organized, classified and edited in accessible documents; and 3) writing clear, complete and descriptive narratives that report the participants’ attitudes and perceptions about the phenomenon.

**Case Selection**

The current study took place on a campus of one of the oldest and largest public educational institutions in the United States. It is located in the Midwestern United States where a large number of students from different parts of the world come yearly to pursue their graduate and undergraduate studies. When arriving to this university, all foreign students including Arab students are classified as international students. Most students are normally assigned to different levels of English proficiency in an intensive English program based on their TOEFL score. They are not allowed to take academic classes until they complete the requirements of each level or pass the TOEFL test.
This program offers many courses in English to develop learners’ ability in all language skills. These courses are taught by native speakers or native-like speakers with an average class size of 15 students. More than 300 students are enrolled in this program. The majority of the students are Chinese and Arab. Prior to this study, the researcher visited this site many times to observe different levels of classes. The researcher chose the advanced ESL classes for this study because at the advanced level, students have had more exposure to English than students in lower levels and have become more familiar with ESL classes.

Interestingly, such diversity of student population represents an array of different cultural and educational practices where a person can observe different habits, traditions and learning styles and listen and observe different customs and languages. In fact, this multicultural setting provides any researcher with a suitable background to conduct research to investigate the effects of a variety of variables on learning a second language as well as other phenomena. Another important point relevant to site selection is that a large number of contextual variables that affect the amount and the type of CF as well as learners’ perceptions are embedded in this cultural and linguistic diversity.

With reference to these variables, second language researchers have found that interactional CF in EFL classroom settings is more effective than CF in ESL classrooms (Li, 2010). Moreover, it was found that EFL learners had positive attitudes towards interactional CF, especially recast strategies because much of the teaching in EFL classrooms is devoted only to teaching the grammar and basic rules of the new language.
(Loewen et al., 2009). However, very little attention in EFL is given to the interpersonal dimensions (Sawri, 2005) with reference to communicative activities.

**Participants Selection**

The researcher used the purposive sampling technique in this study. The technique is helpful because it provides a researcher with the opportunity to choose certain participants from the target populations who have characteristics he/she intends to study (Patton, 2002). Although there are different types of purposeful sampling techniques, the ones employed in this study are: the homogeneous and criterion techniques (Patton, 1990). The first helps the researcher to focus on specific characteristics and reduces the variation within the participants. This approach facilitates group interviewing and the use of focus groups. The second assists the researcher in selecting participants who meet the criterion he/she has proposed in advance (Patton, 2002).

Participants in this study were Arab, male, who were over 23 years old, studying in a graduate program and enrolled in an advanced level ESL class. The primary reasons for selecting the participants according to these criteria were to ensure that all participants were exposed to adequate cultural and linguistic experience in the target language; and to include participants who had similar cultural and linguistic backgrounds in order to facilitate both the researcher’s role and the research process. Finally, English is considered a major difficulty for many international students due to the difference between the two languages.
Teachers met the following criterion: native speakers of English, experience in teaching ESL at least three years and have a degree in English, have a certificate in teaching English as a foreign or second language or enrolled in some teacher education programs in this domain. The main purpose for using the above criteria for selecting teachers was to make sure that teachers were both well prepared and received sufficient education and experience in teaching English as a second language.

The total number of the participants was 30 (20 students and 10 teachers) selected according to the above mentioned criterion from the intensive English program which is administered by this American university.

**The Researcher**

According to Janesick (2004), a person learning to become a qualitative researcher has to ―train the mind, the eye, and the soul together‖ (p. 2). New researchers need to learn how to carefully and methodologically observe social contexts and the variables within them. They have to learn to see from other people’s perspectives, and avoid imposing their own preconceptions, values and beliefs on the observations. They should be able to flexibly and openly negotiate any ethical issues possibly encountered during the research as prescribed by scientific methodology. Finally, they should be able to explore patterns and constructs in the collected data so that they can conduct analyses and remain reflexive and objective. All of these points relate to the concept of reflexivity proposed by Janesick (2004).

Reflexivity is considered one of the most important issues that contributes to credibility, dependability and transferability of qualitative inquiry. Rennie (2004) defines
reflexivity as “self awareness and agency within that self awareness” (p.18). Through reflexivity, researchers can reflect about themselves and subsequently modify their actions, ideas, and behaviors. It is reflexivity that helps qualitative researchers learn how to treat themselves as an inseparable part of the qualitative inquiry. Researchers have to consider their position in relation to the study under investigation as well as the research subjects. They should think about and consider different issues including gender, social class, age and ethics. These issues influence and shape the process of constructing knowledge. In this regard, Patton mentioned that reflexivity is essential for a qualitative researcher because it focuses on “the importance of self-awareness, political/cultural consciousness and ownership of one’s perspective” (Patton, 2002, p. 299).

According to Patton, reflexivity must be viewed as an important part of any qualitative research method. It helps researchers to develop the ability to reflect on one’s beliefs, values and views which ultimately influence the findings of the study. Thus, I attempted to be objective and aware of my innate personal biases and put them aside while doing this research. The assumptions section below outlines these biases in detail. Continually, I assessed my role during the fieldwork, especially while I was interacting with the participants. For instance, I examined my initial assumptions and potential bias at the beginning of the study and reexamined them at the end in light of the study findings and conclusions. In addition, I kept a journal which includes my reflections on particular opinions and perspectives.

In qualitative research, the researcher’s role should be limited and directed toward facilitating data collection and the procedures of the study under investigation. Both my
background and past experience in conducting previous qualitative inquiries helped me focus on specific information in order to find relevant answers to my research questions. However, to minimize the possibility of any bias that might occur, I took into consideration possible political, legal and cultural issues that might cause misunderstandings between the researcher and the research subjects. Since the primary goal of any qualitative inquiry is to understand the meaning of human experiences from the participant’s perspectives, it is essential for researchers to establish a rapport and trust with the interviewees while examining these issues (Glesne, 2006; Seale, 1999).

Assumptions

Based on my experience as a teacher and student in the doctoral program in Curriculum & Instruction, I identified the below assumptions for this study, prior to the data collection and analyses. These assumptions will be revisited in Chapter Five.

1. Arab students consider error correction as a challenging opportunity for learning and not an indicator of failure. The related literature and my experience support this assumption. The participants of this study are adult and mature learners who are highly motivated. Despite the difficulties that they will confront, they made up their mind to further pursue their studies in an English speaking country. The literature shows that adults are generally intentional learners who are able to set specific goals and know the suitable means for achieving them. In other words, they already have a clear idea for what purposes they are learning English (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006; Scarcella & Higa, 1982).
2. Arab students will find it difficult to learn English especially verbal skills. This assumption is based on the commonly held perspective that practicing a language in real life situations is essential for SLA. In Arab countries, English is taught as an academic subject at schools with emphasis on grammar. Students, however, only use this language during a limited number of weekly lessons. Accordingly, they frequently have problems in verbal communication among other language skills (Fareh, 2010; Rababah, 2002). The literature supports the above view and showed that pronunciation is the most difficult language area for adults to learn (Celce-Murcia, Brinton, & Goodwin, 1996).

3. Arab students will prefer explicit instruction. This assumption is based on the premise that English is taught at schools by using explicit methods which depend entirely on scaffolding. This type of instruction is considered a systematic teaching method through which learning follows specific steps. Thus, learners are guided through the learning process with clear instructions for performing certain skills. For more information about this type of instruction see (Archer & Hughes, 2011).

4. Arab students will prefer implicit types of oral correction. This assumption is based on both the findings of literature and my experience as a teacher that have shown that implicit strategies are helpful for learning the target language because they do not interrupt the flow of learners’ conversation (Doughty, 2001; Long, 2006).
Data Collection

The process of collecting data proceeded through the following stages: first, the researcher obtained permission from the advisor to begin the study. Next, the researcher obtained the approval of the IRB office. Then, the researcher received permission from the director of the intensive English program. Lastly, the researcher prepared a timetable for conducting the interviews and contacted the selected participants to make the necessary arrangements. The process of data collection started near the beginning of October with teachers’ interviews followed by interviews for students. Afterwards, the researcher observed selected classes of the interviewed teachers. The entire process lasted for almost two months.

This study used information gathered by interviewing, observations and a focus group interview. The main reason behind choosing these methods for collecting data is that these methods are considered effective tools for obtaining, understanding and describing both the meaning of particular themes and the story of people’s experiences under investigation. Moreover, they help researchers obtain in-depth information on the topics in question. Robert Weiss states that, “Interviewing gives us a window on the past…we can also, by interviewing, learn about settings that would otherwise be closed to us: foreign societies, exclusive organizations, and the private lives of families…” (Weiss, 1994, p.1).

Two semi-structured, face-to-face oral interviews were conducted in this study with both students and teachers. These interviews were audio-taped using a Flip Camera. In this case study, the major goal of the interviews was to learn about the phenomenon
from learners’ and teachers’ perspectives. In this sense, Patton (2002) argues that, —the fundamental principle of qualitative interviewing is to provide a framework within which respondents can express their own understandings in their own terms” (p. 384).

The observation method helped the researcher to both fully understand the provision of corrective feedback in actual classroom settings and make a comparison between practice and theory. It enabled me to evaluate the accuracy of information gathered via interviews by comparing it with data obtained through observations. The third method, the use of focus groups, is also a helpful procedure for data collection. It can be used by researchers to collect additional data from different interviewees and compare it to responses from other research subjects. For detailed information about these methods, see the data section below.

**Sources of Data**

This section describes the sources of data used in the study. It highlights their importance and appropriateness to the study. Moreover, it addresses the precautionary steps taken to maintain jurisprudence in respect to any ethical issues.

**The Interview Method**

Interviewing is considered one of the most common methods for collecting data in qualitative research. It helps researchers obtain in-depth information about the topic (Kvale, 1996). According to Kvale, the main goal of a qualitative research interview is to uncover both the factual and the meaning levels, although it is often not easy for qualitative researchers to conduct interviews on the so-called *meaning level.*
With all of its advantages, the interview method brings some risks such as potentially being time consuming, and costly as well as involving the inability of interviewees to recall all the needed information. Therefore, it is important for researchers to recognize and pay attention to the distinctive features of exemplary interviews and the different types of this method. The failure to recognize these qualities may result in elicitation of poor, limited, insufficient, and/or misleading data from the interviewees. In this regard, Patton (2002) believes that a good generic qualitative interview should be flexible, open-ended in style and focus on people’s experiences rather than their beliefs or their personal opinions. It is necessary for researchers who are going to conduct qualitative interviews to be capable of establishing good relationships with the interviewees. Additionally, the interview approach depends largely upon respondents being able and willing to give accurate information (Patton, 2002).

Many researchers emphasize that good questions in interviews should be objective, open-ended, and clear to the participants. The questions should elicit answers that are based on personal experience, opinion or values. Ultimately, questions about demographic and/or background details must also be included (Patton, 2002). It is preferable for researchers to start with questions that are easier to be answered by the interviewees and then move ahead to ask more sensitive questions that address difficult topics (Bryman, 2001; Kyale, 1996).

Bryman (2001) recommends that researchers should look at interviews from different perspectives in the sense that interviews are completely different from daily conversations in which people normally engage. Taking into account that a qualitative
interview is an effective method for collecting data, researchers should prepare their questions in advance and be solely focused on the study. It is also argued that good interview skills require practice and reflection (Byrman, 2001). Interviewing as a qualitative method, according to research, is a philosophy of learning and interviewers are learners whose main goal is to learn from others’ experiences. This philosophy determines both the accuracy and the completeness of results.

Two semi-structured interviews were conducted in this study: one for students and another for teachers. The students’ interviews recorded answers to 23 questions, whereas the teachers’ used 19. These questions covered specific domains. With the use of open and closed questions, the researcher strove to elicit as much information as possible within the domain of specific topics from the interviewees. These domains included opinions about corrective feedback, preferred corrective feedback strategy/strategies and type of errors to be corrected (see Appendix B).

The first set of questions attempted to investigate both teachers’ and learners’ opinions about the correction of errors in the classroom. They were designed to address various perspectives regarding this issue such as whether or not learners’ errors should be corrected, how they should be corrected (selectively or constantly) and who should correct these errors. The second set contained items designed to find out learners’ as well as teachers’ preferences for classroom error corrections of different aspects of the language such as grammar, phonology, vocabulary and pragmatics. The last set included questions designed to elicit responses from learners about their favorite method of CF.
Focus Group Interview

Concerning the focus group interview, it included five students selected from the sample of the interviewees who participated in the initial student interviews. These interviewees were asked six open ended questions closely related to the concept of corrective feedback (see Appendix C). Since the main purpose of this interview was to evaluate the interviewees’ answers, the researcher elected to conduct it at the end. Another purpose for using this interview method as a tool for collecting data was that it helps the researcher to delve into new issues pertinent to the phenomenon under study. In this case, while not providing any additional findings, it provided opportunity to assess consensus and group think and promoted a richer discussion of the studied phenomena (Redmond & Curtis, 2009). For more information see Consensus Matrix in Appendix D.

During the focus group, my role as a researcher was limited to being a moderator and observer. To obtain more effective and relevant answers to the questions, I set the stage for the participants from the outset explaining the purpose of the study in order to help them consider and focus their comments on the relevant issues. Also, I found a convenient location and time for conducting the interview and established ground rules such as taking turns talking and refraining from using foul language. I took detailed notes on the dynamics and interactions between the interviewees. Finally, all the interviews were conducted in either English or Arabic depending on the participants’ preferences.

Observation Method

There are two types of observations: structured and unstructured. The structured type is largely used by post-positivistic researchers to study physical as well as verbal
behaviors of the research subjects. The unstructured observation is commonly used by researchers to understand and interpret cultural behaviors and social interactions (Glesne, 2006). This study employed the structured observation utilizing a checklist to confirm the responses’ of the participants from the initials interviews.

There are many assumptions underpinning this method as proposed by qualitative researchers. According to Glesne (2006), observers using the unstructured method usually start their research with no predetermined ideas about the behaviors that they might observe. Secondly, the researcher’s role can vary from active participant to passive observer. For instance, some researchers who are in favor of using unstructured observation believe that it is impossible to separate researchers from the subjects of the study. The review of related literature provided the most important considerations to take into account while making observations. It is necessary for future researchers as well as educators to learn and understand the fundamental elements of the qualitative approach in order to become proficient in using qualitative methods.

Glesne (2006) suggested two important specific strategies to guide researchers in their observations. These strategies include: making observations either by a broad sweep or making observations of nothing in particular. These two strategies provided helpful guidance during the times of observation. They helped me describe, observe and record details about the event including the place, participants and the activities. Also, they enabled me to filter and analyze the obtained data and reflect on its research applications.

By using the observation method, researchers can uncover many things interviewees did not either intentionally or unintentionally address in the interviews.
Thus, I first observed the 10 classes of the teachers who I recruited in the study. These observations enabled me to better understand the influence of context and physical setting on the phenomenon under research. Next, I attended classes in different language areas such as grammar, and conversations to observe any fundamental differences. During the observations, I sat in the back of the room and took notes without interrupting or participating in the classroom interaction. Finally, to confirm whether the teachers’ responses in the interviews contradicted or agreed with both their actual practices in the classroom and the students’ responses, I used a 15-item checklist (see Appendix E).

**Ethical Considerations**

In regard to ethical issues, I attempted to safeguard against any violation of human rights during this research. Accordingly, I instructed the participants from the beginning about the nature of the study and the procedures to be employed. The participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and that at any point in time, they had complete freedom to withdraw from taking part in the study. Additionally, the issue of confidentiality was considered equally important while collecting data.

To maintain the confidentiality of research participants and protect their identities, I developed the following procedure: first, I explained to the participants that the collected data would be destroyed immediately at the end of the study, and the researcher would replace the names of participants with codes and numbers for the record. Hereafter, the teacher participants are referred to as T1, T2…etc. Similarly, students’ names are superseded by S1, S2…etc. Second, I discussed issues raised from the data only with my advisor and those persons involved in the review of this research. Third, I
removed any information that might directly point to the participants or make them identifiable. Through this procedure I safeguarded against disclosing any information reported by the participants to other people. Collected data—the recorded interviews, transcripts, information related to the participants’ backgrounds—was stored on an external hard drive and kept in a secure place away from public access with encoded identifiers.

To avoid any ethical issues that may be derived from audio and video recordings, I was guided by Oliver’s (2008) suggestions: first, researchers should position the recorder in a place within the reach of the interviewees. Second, researchers should inform the participants that they can pause/stop whenever they choose. Finally, researchers should inform participants that they can listen to their recordings and delete the part or parts they do not want to appear in the data analysis.

**Trustworthiness and Credibility**

The major purpose of trustworthiness in qualitative research is to promote reliability and validity (i.e., trustworthiness). Seale (1999) states that the “trustworthiness of a research report lies at the heart of issues conventionally discussed as validity and reliability” (p. 266). Another goal of trustworthiness is to ensure that the findings of a particular study are worthy of more attention. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), it is beneficial for qualitative researchers who pursue a trustworthy study to consider four important issues related to trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability. The first, credibility, refers to the extent to which the findings of the study are congruent with reality. It is used by qualitative researchers to refer to internal validity
Lincoln and Guba (1985) propose some provisions to increase the credibility of research. They believe that the use of both the specific procedures and the methods of any study should be derived from studies where they have previously and successfully been used.

Five techniques were used in this study to address credibility issues. Three different qualitative research tools were employed for collecting data: individual oral interviews, observation and the use of a focus group. The use of multiple methods in interpretive research is considered essential because it helps the researcher to validate the findings and determine their consistency or inconsistency across the employed methods. Silverman (1993) parallels triangulation with navigation where “different bearings give the correct position of an object (p.156).” Silverman (2006) maintains that interpretive research consists of theories, methods and empirical works aimed at producing more accurate, holistic and objective explanation of the findings. By using the triangulation method, the researcher can understand the discrepancies, gain in-depth understanding about the phenomenon, and thus provide further explanations.

A number of researchers believe that this technique helps to obtain further supporting data about the participants under study and aids the researcher in explaining the participants’ attitudes and behaviors (Brewer & Hunter, 1989; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This study collected 150 pages of transcription including information about the students’ preferences and perceptions of oral error correction and other issues relating to this concept. This compilation of information helped me to examine CF from different perspectives before making any relevant conclusions.
Flick (2002) claims that interpretive research is a multi-focused technique in its essence, thus it is difficult to gain comprehensive and sufficient information about the phenomenon without using a variety of methods for collecting data. Based on this view, triangulation of data played a facilitative role during the data analyses and provided complementary means to properly understand and better interpret the participants’ perceptions about CF. Chapters Four and Five show how the triangulation technique served to promote the credibility of this study, produced new information and insights regarding participants’ perceptions of CF and informed the analyses and interpretation as well as the evolution of new thoughts and ideas in relation to the findings.

Second, several debriefing sessions were arranged with the advisor and director of this dissertation. These sessions enriched the researcher’s knowledge about the phenomenon under investigation and the study. They provided the researcher with a valuable opportunity to discuss various issues relating to methodology, research questions and ethical issues. Moreover, such meetings helped the researcher develop new ideas and interpretations of newly emerging issues while collecting data. These sessions provided me with a chance to learn from experienced and competent researchers and practitioners in the field. Finally, exchanging ideas helped to recognize any bias and preferences for certain issues. Meeting with knowledgeable and experienced persons such as my debriefer, who is a full professor in teacher education, holds a doctorate in psychology and is also a published researcher, was most beneficial and deeply enriched this study. His experience helped me to refine and develop a variety of methods, theories, and techniques to better interpret the collected data.
The third technique that was used to increase the credibility of this study was the *Member Check*. This technique helps the researcher check the accuracy of the gathered data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I chose some participants to read and rate any generated data or transcripts from their interviews. Those participants were provided with the translated draft of their interviews and the quotations together a day after the interview. Next, participants were asked to return these transcripts along with their comments. This process helped the researcher to ensure that all the interviewees’ words were correctly interpreted and translated. Through this technique, the researcher can seek suggestions or thoughts from the participants concerning the study. In addition, this technique helps the researcher to verify the emerging theories as well as any relevant information to the study (Brewer & Hunter, 1989; Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Realizing the importance of this technique, I conducted *member checking* during the data collection and at the end of the study. The purpose was to double check the accuracy of the data and to share the findings with the participants. When asked to revise and comment on his responses, one of the participants changed his mind and regretted his previous answers simply because he was in a bad mood at the time of the interview and asked me to re-conduct the interview. Another participant modified his responses when he asked to comment on his translated responses. At the end of the study, similar incidents happened when I shared the preliminary results with the participants. For instance, one student participant first interpreted the finding that “Arab students prefer explicit correction” as a negative evaluation and linked it to the idea that those students do not have high level of thinking skills.
The fourth technique, writing reflections, is considered beneficial to increase the credibility of a study. This technique was recommended by Brewer and Hunter (1989). It is important for a qualitative researcher to use ongoing assessment to evaluate the data collection process. This review can be done by researchers through writing repeated reflections. According to Guba and Lincoln (1989), examination of previous research can also be used to help researchers establish credibility. By using this technique, researchers can compare their research findings with previous similar research (Silverman, 2000). For this purpose, I created a table as a log of the interviews and anecdotal observations made during the question and answer sessions. Next, separate journal entries followed both teacher and student tables (see Appendix F). In the process, students’ answers were compared to their teachers’ and then to those in the literature.

Finally, the researcher’s background and experience are important factors that increase the credibility of this study. The researcher is familiar with using both qualitative research as well as conducting research studies using observation and interview methods. One of the research studies using the interviewing method in a forthcoming publication, titled “The Difficulties of Learning English as Perceived by International Students,” was recently approved for submission to a professional journal in this field.

Transferability, closely related to external validity, refers to the possibility of generalizing the results of the study to other settings and situations. Although some researchers consider the findings of qualitative studies context specific and limited to the population they represent, others argue that it is possible to generalize the findings of qualitative research. To achieve this goal, the researcher must provide all the necessary
information including a description of the research context so the reader can make
generalization (Lincoln & Guba, 1989; Merriam, 1998). For the purposes of
transferability in this study, the researcher described the data in sufficient details in order
to help other researchers determine if the findings are relevant to their contexts. This data
includes: the study design, the procedure and detailed description used to investigate the
phenomenon.

The concept of confirmability can be compared to objectivity. According to
Gasson (2004), “Findings should represent, as far as is (humanly) possible, the situation
being researched, rather than the beliefs, pet theories or biases of the researcher” (p. 93).
Researchers should take specific steps to ensure that the findings can be attributed to the
collected data which includes the experiences and ideas of the participants and not the
personality traits and preferences of the researcher. Triangulation can promote such
confirmability and presents a guard against any effects of investigator bias.

Another technique critical for confirming the findings of the study is the audit
trail. It enables researchers to analyze the decisions and procedures followed during the
study. The researcher utilized a competent peer to conduct an independent audit (Lincoln
& Guba, 1985; Patton, 1990). My auditor was a professional person in the field of
evaluation and research that has a solid background in qualitative research. The auditor
examined my audit trail through all the issues including the study design, methods, data
analysis, the confirmability, and the dependability of the study.

Finally, he provided me with an explanatory report indicating the strengths and
the weaknesses of the study in addition to some thoughtful ideas about analyzing the
data. My audit trial suggested that it would be better if I used the stimulated recall protocol technique with the other methods in the study.

I also used negative case analysis to find contrasting evidence and to achieve the confirmability of the study. I continued recruiting participants for interviewing to explore the different perspectives regarding feedback and finding any disconfirming evidence because the first fifteen interviews did not show evidence of disconfirming data. Not until the sixteenth interview was I able to find any disconfirmation. This technique helped me achieve a comprehensive understanding about the phenomenon and to critically analyze the data from different perspectives.

In summary, the previously discussed techniques are necessary for any qualitative inquiry because they inform the researcher about the analyses and the interpretations of the findings. Furthermore, they enable the researcher to determine the accuracy of the collected data and correct the wrong interpretations accordingly.

The last factor that influences the quality of qualitative research is dependability. This term corresponds with reliability in qualitative research (Lincoln & Cuba, 1985). It addresses issues such as the consistency of findings over time and the possibility of obtaining the same results using the same methodology. In order to achieve dependability, qualitative researchers need to provide a detailed description of the research design as well as the employed procedures for implementing it. It is essential to provide a reflective appraisal and proper audit on the process of the research. In short, the before mentioned aspects of trustworthiness can be established through specific means
recommended by qualitative researchers, especially, triangulation of data, member check and detailed descriptions (Creswell, 1998; Merriam, 1998).

**Data Analysis**

There are a considerable number of approaches suggested by qualitative researchers for analyzing qualitative inquiry. Maxwell (1996) suggests a 5-stage analytical process for analyzing data. It includes the organization of collected data, coding, clustering of themes into patterns, analysis of results, providing different explanations and finally, the written up report. However, the most common ones usually employed by second language researchers are the descriptive and the interpretive approaches (Duff, 2002; Merriam, 1998). Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) helps a researcher gain insight into how a particular group reacts and perceives a phenomenon under investigation. This approach focuses on people’s meaningful activities and their experiences. This technique adopts an inductive bottom-up process in which the researcher is involved in searching for codes rather than using preexisting theory to identify codes that might be applied to the data.

This study utilized IPA for analyzing the collected data which was obtained from both teachers’ and students’ interviews and a student focus group interview. For this purpose, I used the following steps: first, after transcribing the collected data from the interviews, I thoroughly and repeatedly read the transcripts while writing memos such as summaries, explanations, and new ideas, etc. According to Eatough and Smith (2006), the more the researcher reads and rereads the transcribed data, the better he/she is capable of gaining in-depth insights from the transcripts and making meaning out of the
participants’ utterances. Second, the researcher began the process of coding the data by looking for repeated patterns in the participants’ practices and experiences. Coding is defined as an interpretive process through which qualitative researchers can organize data to gain further understanding of the phenomenon under study. Coding requires that researchers thoroughly read the transcribed data to find themes that are commonly and interchangeably referred to as categories, meaning units, segments, or patterns. After clustering the data, researchers label each category with a code. In this study, the term *categories* is specifically used to refer to closely related ideas, patterns, and themes. These categories or units of meaning are represented by specific codes. This section about coding shows the process used in categorizing the major data themes. To achieve this end, I created a number of codes to represent the listed categories in the margin of the transcripts. These codes are used throughout the transcripts and given numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4 reflecting the four major themes of the data. The coding process yielded the following main categories:

1. *Perception of CF*

   This category used the code number 1. It refers to the different ways that students and teachers expressed their feelings in the interviews about the phenomenon under question. It included all of the patterns and key words related to this concept. Category 1 contained words such as attitudes, beliefs, negative/positive evaluation, judgments, sensory impressions and anxiety. Both students and teachers in this research study expressed positive perceptions towards CF.
2. Preferences for Error Types

This category used the code number 2. It refers to the information that students provided during the interviews about their likes and dislikes of specific error types. Category 2 included all the pertinent meaning units relating to linguistic features such as grammar, phonology, lexical items and pragmatics. It contained words such as liking, disliking, judgment and decision-making. In this study, participants’ preferences for error types favored correction for grammar and pronunciation over all others.

3. Preference for Correction Types

The code number 3 represented this category. It refers to the information provided by students in the interviews about their favorite types of correction. It includes key words such as choice, selection, preference and priority. Category 3 encompassed a range of CF strategies from simple prompts and repetition to more complex metalinguistics and recasts. In this study, participants’ preferences for specific CF strategies favored explicit CF over all others.

4. Importance of CF for Meaningful Communication

The code number 4 represented this category. It involves references made in the interviews to the importance of CF for communication. It includes relevant words including: interaction, communication, spoken language and immersion. In this study, emphasis on communication reflected students’ greater need for social interaction.

As a final step in data analyses, I completed the write up, the process of outlining the meanings inherent in the participants’ experiences based on the final list of themes. These themes were converted into a narrative account interspersed with verbatim extracts
from the transcripts to provide additional explanation. I attempted to be accurate and professional in my interpretation to the participants’ responses and did not rely on any allegorical or underlying meaning. Figure 1 diagrammatically displays the entire process of the data analyses.

Figure 1: Diagrammatic Illustration for Data Analysis

Source: Generated Data

Summary

A qualitative case study method was selected for this study to investigate a sample of Arab male students’ preferences about oral corrective feedback. The number of the participants was 30 (20 students and 10 teachers). This design was the most appropriate for this study because this type of research is interrogative, interpretive and inductive. Generally, case studies are used to understand complex topics and
phenomenon in context. For this reason, it was used in this study to understand and explore important themes, constructs and patterns relating to a complex phenomenon like CF. Three qualitative tools were used in this study: interviewing, observation, and a focus group interview for students.

A number of strategies were used to increase the credibility and dependability of the study. These include: triangulation, member check, peer debriefer, and writing reflections. The study used IPA for analyzing the data. The study design as well as the data collection methods yielded valuable information that helped gain a thorough understanding about the pertinent issues of this phenomenon. In light of the findings of the study, several recommendations were made for educational practices and future research in the field of second language acquisition.
Chapter 4: The Findings

Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study in light of the main research question: What are Arab male students’ preferences for correcting their oral errors? The reported results utilized the data collected from teachers’ and students’ interviews, observed classroom lessons and the focus group interview for participating students. The major findings of the study were categorized, presented, and individually discussed under broad categories called themes.

According to the research project’s protocols, all the recruited participants met the criteria adopted for the participation in this study (see Chapter Three). The students were cooperative when answering questions. Although the teachers were busy with their schedules, they were supportive when providing data for this research. The transcription went smoothly with little difficulty in translating some of the students’ utterances in the interviews from their native language (Arabic) into English. During the translation process, the focus was more on meaning rather than word by word or literal translation (see Appendix G).

The focus group was successful and achieved its goal of reaffirming the previous answers of the initial students’ interviews. It showed that there was a consensus among the student participants on the various issues that the study attempted to explore (see Appendix D). Overall, the students were spontaneous and candid in their viewpoints and opinions. Finally, the observations were helpful in noting the learning processes in an academic setting. They served to better understand the setting and context in which the
participants interact and to obtain confirmation of the results of the study question. Furthermore, they complemented the relevance of participants’ responses in the individual interviews.

The focus of the observations was on the following main areas: classroom setting, students’ and teachers’ familiarity with CF strategies, types of errors being corrected and teachers’ and students’ perceptions of oral CF. To achieve this goal, a 15-item checklist was prepared (see Appendix E). In short, both the observations and the focus group interview were useful as cross-references and served to clarify the responses obtained from the initial interviews. This approach in turn increases the confidence in the study. The results of this study were first corroborated across the used methods and then compared with the theories and the literature to ensure their validity. While permitting corroboration of the data, this procedure also allowed more critical analyses and interpretation. For instance, the triangulation technique revealed instances of participants’ conflicting views regarding certain issues about corrective feedback. In this case, the researcher can provide further explanations by consulting theories and approaches in the field. These issues will be presented in Chapter Five in a more detailed discussion.

**Students’ Background**

In order to appropriately interpret and analyze the participants’ responses, it is necessary to understand their backgrounds (Creswell, 2003; Patton, 2002). Generally speaking, the term *Arab* is used to refer to all of the 22 Arab countries which constitute the Arab League. Culturally and linguistically, the term *Arab* is normally used to address those people who are native speakers of Arabic language, live in an Arab-speaking
country, and share both the history and the culture (Baumann, 2008). In this study, the term *Arab* is used to indicate the countries in which Arabic is the official and native language. The following sections shed light on Arab male students’ educational background and Arab oral tradition.

**Students Educational Background**

In most Arab countries, students begin studying English either in the first grade as in countries such as Jordan, Qatar, and United Arab Emirates or in the fifth grade as in Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Oman until they finish their high school. At the university level, students who enroll in subjects like science, medicine, business and engineering continue to study English in their course of study.

The recruited participants of this study are Arab male students who were raised and received their school education in Arab countries. Most of them were working as professors or assistant professors before they decided to take a leave of absence and travel to the United States to further pursue their studies. Their ages range from 23-25. Most of the participants have scholarships from their governments to continue their graduate studies in a variety of programs including sciences, engineering, humanities and education in a Midwestern American university. Upon their arrival, they were assigned to different levels in the intensive English program. Approximately, 90 percent of the participants have been studying English for more than 3 quarters. Now, they are taking courses at advanced and/or part-time levels. The advanced level is referred to as a pre-academic level in which students are considered full time students, whereas part-time
students are allowed to take one or two academic classes outside of the intensive English program. However, the advanced level hereafter is used to indicate both levels.

To fully understand the participants’ background, it is necessary to provide general information about both the challenges and the goals of learning and teaching English in Arab countries as a school subject. The rationale for studying the English language as a core subject at the secondary level and higher levels of education in various Arab countries can be summarized as follows: first, English is considered an international language and a medium of instruction in many countries. People worldwide use this language to gain access to various subject areas. Second, the English language provides enrichment and increases learners’ cultural awareness. This approach helps them to understand a variety of worldwide views and universal issues such as globalization and mass media. Third, English is the main language of international business, trade and communication (Zughoul, 2003). Accordingly, English has been given special attention at all levels of education in Arab countries, especially in Saudi Arabia and Jordan due to their potential importance in the Middle East.

A number of researchers stated that English language plays a key role in empowering learners with current information and knowledge in all fields (Crystal, 1997). To promote English skills, the educational systems in the Arab world need to take into account the students’ vision and learning preferences as well as the society’s vision while designing their curriculum (Zughoul, 2003). Similar to the mission of American education, they should place special attention on a variety of skills and techniques that will help students be both lifelong and independent learners. For this reason, English
language curricula utilize a variety of methods for teaching English and developing an eclectic approach with a primary focus on the interpersonal dynamics of social communication. Nowadays, most English curricula include activities involving skills such as critical thinking, creative problem solving and conflict resolution skills to enable learners to effectively cope with the dramatic changes in the world.

Despite the ongoing development and assessment of ESL/EFL programs in the Arab world, these curricula often fail to equip learners with the necessary skills that would help them better deal with the academic and non academic needs while they study abroad in English speaking countries. This failure can be attributed to many factors including: lack of motivation on the part of students, lack of information that students have about the target language as well as its culture, and the inappropriate techniques and strategies that teachers use in classroom settings along with the inability of current teacher education programs to provide teachers with the appropriate training for teaching this language (Fareh, 2010).

**Oral Tradition**

Arabic culture includes an extensive amount of oral tradition involving historical events, folktales, epics, ballads, sung poetry, famous sayings and a huge amount of information related to different fields. These aspects of oral tradition were transmitted verbally from one generation to another and considered in the past the only means of communication and a method for preserving the history, literature and the heritage of those people in the absence of an established writing system. For example, *Sirat Antar*
Bin Shadad and Sirat Alzir Salim are epics about legendary Arab Bedouin heroes that have been passed down for centuries (Boullata, 1989; Slyomovics, 1998).

Generally, these epics are based on actual historical events. For instance, Sirat Bni Hilal describes the migration of the Bni Hilial tribes while escaping from famine to North Africa. The oldest version of this epic was written by a well known historian called Ibn Khaldun, who collected Bni Hilial tales from the Bedouin tribes in North Africa around the 15th century. However, the most popular one among these stories is Sirat Bni Hilal. It is regularly performed by many poets and singers in different parts of the Arab world. A Thousand and One Nights which is known in English as Arabian Nights is another example of a popular collection of folktales which represents the oral traditions in Arabic culture (Slyomovics, 1998).

According to Boullata (1989), orallity in Arabic culture refers to individuals’ reliance on memory while reciting poetry, stories, epics, ballads, wisdom and tribal history. It also refers to people’s ability to improvise verse in social settings and during poetic competitions. The use of oral communication extends even after the advent of writing due to the nature of Arabic writing orthography which employs a consonant-based alphabet system denoting the use of short vowels by diacritics or breathing marks (Scheerer, 1986). These diacritics are used by speakers to orally clarify the meaning of certain words.

In the past, people primarily relied on the oral transmission of culture; however, presently the education approaches of most Arab countries place more emphasis on reading and writing skills. While learning English, conversational skills are often
neglected even though as this research establishes, they are important for language acquisition and needed by the modern Arab student.

**Teachers’ Background**

The participants’ teachers in this study are full time teachers in the intensive English program. All the teachers are native English speakers. Their ages range from 25-41. They consisted of three female teachers and seven male teachers. They have a variety of experiences ranging from 3-11 years of teaching English as a second language. All teachers have an M.A in Applied Linguistics and have taken part in various teachers’ development programs. All have received additional training in teaching English to non-native speakers involving studying and teaching abroad in some form of international internship and attendance at educational conferences, both overseas and stateside. Most of the teachers also have past experience in the United States providing instruction to international students in the TOEFL program, and some are specialized in core areas such as reading, writing, and speaking in English.

**Major Findings**

As stated in previous chapters, the main goal of this study was to explore the preferences of Arab graduate male students for CF who were enrolled in an advanced ESL program at a Midwestern American university. With this intent, these attitudes and preferences were compared with some of the ESL teachers’ opinions and preferences who teach these students. The analyses of collected data revealed the following results for the study question.
**Research Question: Arab Male Students’ Preferences for Correcting their Oral Errors**

To answer this question, a total of 23 prompts were asked of the recruited students and 19 for teachers. The participants were asked to express their opinions on a variety of perspectives about CF including oral correction in the classroom, types of errors for correction and correction type (see Appendix B). The data from the interviews revealed the following seven findings:

1. The large majority of the participants (93.3%) have positive attitudes towards CF.
2. Most of the teachers (60%) reported that CF raises learners’ anxiety whereas 16 of 20 (80%) of the students indicated that anxiety has no influence.
3. Students’ preferences for error type correction showed the following pattern in order of importance: grammar, pronunciation, semantics, and vocabulary; whereas teachers’ preferences revealed a different order: semantics, grammar, pronunciation, and syntax.
4. All the interviewees (100%) support the idea of selectivity in error correction.
5. Students’ preferences for CF strategies revealed the following order: metalinguistic (90%), explicit (80%), elicitation (65%), and recasts (60%). Teachers’ preferences were: recasts (80%), and elicitation (70%).
6. The majority of students (65%) and teachers (80%) supported self-correction techniques for error correction.
7. Most students (80%) and teachers (90%) reported that error correction is important for meaningful communication.
The above findings are displayed and discussed under the following themes: attitudes towards CF, preferred error types to be corrected and preferred CF strategies, and importance of CF for meaningful communication (see Figure 2). The following sections provide a comprehensive discussion of these thematic patterns.

![Diagrammatic Representation of Themes](image)

**Figure 2**: Diagrammatic Representation of Themes.

**Source**: Generated from the data

**Theme One: Positive Attitudes towards Corrective Feedback**

This section presents the findings of both teachers’ and students’ perceptions and attitudes about CF. The data analyses are based on students and teachers who specifically offered responses to the related questions used in the interviews. The interviews unanimously showed that both students and teachers have positive attitudes towards error correction indicating that CF can have a positive influence on L2 learning.
As noted above, the majority of interviewed students and teachers (28 of 30) expressed that CF is a crucial strategy that can facilitate L2 learning. According to them, CF increases learners’ awareness, promotes both accuracy and fluency in the target language, and provides learners with guidelines to prevent making errors. One of the interviewee students stated that:

I personally believe that error correction is an effective teaching process. I can benefit a lot from this process because it helps me avoid making errors and minimize the occurrence of errors to some extent. In addition, it informs me directly or indirectly about the area or areas I have to work on while learning the target language (S1, personal communication, October, 2011).

Another student explained how CF promotes the learning of the target language. He said, “I’m with errors correction because if teachers do not correct learners’ errors, a learner will not make noticeable progress in learning the language” (S2, personal communication, October, 2011). A number of the students considered error correction as a proactive and preemptive strategy which guards against making repeated errors. The following student’s response represented this sentiment:

In my opinion, error correction helps learners overcome many challenges they face while learning the language. For instance, it informs students about the system of the language and its underlying mechanisms and the rules that govern the language. This makes them aware of what is suitable or unsuitable. I think the weaknesses of most Arab students in English can be due to the failure of most instructional programs in Arab countries to help learners notice their errors. I think this is because teachers are not well prepared to teach this foreign language. We came here with many fossilized errors that accompanied us from one class to another during our study at school or at the university (S6, personal communication, October, 2011).

One more student added:

I like my teachers to correct my errors because correcting errors is important and helps learners develop different linguistic aspects of the language. I think I’m for
it just because it helps the student understand the errors that he made and prevent them from happening in the future (S2, personal communication, October, 2011).

Similarly, all of the 10 teachers indicated that error correction is necessary and essential especially if it is given in a timely and appropriate manner and if teachers do not rely on overcorrection. In this context, one of the teachers said:

…I believe corrective feedback is very necessary, but I think it is this dangerous road teachers should be aware of and try not to overuse. There should be a good balance when teachers are providing any sort of feedback; they should be very careful how much feedback they provide, and they should let the students go and explore and learn from the experience as well (T2, personal communication, October, 2011).

The teachers mentioned many reasons for supporting the use of CF classrooms. This emphasis can clearly be seen from teachers’ responses during the interviews while answering questions related to this issue. One of the teachers explained that:

…I think you should correct learners’ errors because in learning L2, learners need to know what is not possible …when using the language it is not like L1 acquisition, it is a bit different. So in order for them to know what is not possible, it is the teacher’s responsibility to give them that error correction, explain to them why they can’t do or why they can do this so yes…You should correct learners’ errors (T1, personal communication, October, 2011).

Another teacher added:

Absolutely [corrective feedback is important] because the teacher …effectively should represent the standards of proper English, spoken English. Without feedback from the teacher, the student will feel lost and doesn’t really have a compass to direct and guide [and] correct themselves…we should always recognize and consider students’ errors…maybe we won’t comment on it at that moment maybe later…we have to put, especially on those classes of nine students, to put it on file under a student’s name and notice if it comes up again and again….I keep track (T5, personal communication, November, 2011).

This view was shared by most of the teachers as illustrated by the following comments cited from other teachers’ responses during the interviews:
Yes, it does [help]. I guess in a way I’m with people who are for correcting learners’ errors. I guess I’m more on that side as opposed to teachers who just give the students all the freedom. I think the students actually want to be corrected…I believe the question again is not to overdo … (T8, personal communication, November, 2011).

It helps them get their point across and helps their fluency …it helps them to know what they are getting right and what they are getting wrong. Their fluency will develop…I always try to make my classroom environment more comfortable so that students can speak freely. So that they know that there are certain grounds I usually try to correct them in different ways, subtle ways. I usually try different methods… (T9, personal communication, November, 2011).

The majority of the interviewed students agreed with the view that teachers are their main source of knowledge, particularly for oral language skills. One of the student participants expressed this view in the following response:

…I’m against neglecting students’ errors. On the contrary, teachers should provide students with more corrections to make them familiar with the errors that they may encounter while learning the target language…Yes I believe correcting errors is very important because it makes me more conscious of what I’m saying or doing … (S2, personal communication, October, 2011).

Two of the participants expressed different views from the above. They believe that CF discourages learners from speaking and taking part in the classroom activities and is not beneficial for L2 learning. These views are reflected by S11 and teacher 9 in the following responses:

…I do think that as a teacher you try to be as least intrusive I think it is important for students to be willing to take a risk with the language and so to correct every error would maybe cause a student to not want to try it in your presence..., (T6, personal communication, November, 2011).

I don’t think if teachers correct students’ errors one time or two times a day will help them to learn the language. Students need to practice the language. I feel that the teacher correction discourages me from speaking. Sometimes, I learn from my conversation partner more than I learned from teacher in the class. You know, in the class the student is afraid of making incorrect sentences because this makes
some teachers upset. But when I speak with my conversation partner I don’t have this feeling I don’t know why (S16, personal communication, November, 2011).

The findings of the study showed that a combination of factors including the current class size and setting, the teachers’ personality and techniques, curriculum, and learners’ age and motivation contribute to students’ positive attitudes and their expectations about CF. All these issues were mentioned by students while they were describing their classes. One of the students elaborated:

"It is a small class in terms of the number of students. There is a computer, internet access and overhead projector. We are only 10 students. I like it because every student has to take part in the discussion. The teacher always encourages us to speak. She is very friendly and supportive. Students have a good relationship with the teacher and between each other. The teacher treats us as one family (S1, personal communication, October, 2011)."

According to the interviewee students, this combination of factors can affect the success of oral corrective feedback in classroom settings. One of the students maintained —.I mentioned in the first question that we have a good relationship with each others. So I didn’t feel embarrassed or shy when the teacher corrects my errors” (S1, personal communication, October, 2011). In short, there was a consensus between the students in the focus group interview on the aforementioned perceptions of CF and their overall responses revealed very positive attitudes (see Appendix D).

Although the interviewed students had positive attitudes towards oral CF, they expressed a need for more error correction than they usually receive from their teachers. They reported that teachers do not correct their errors on a regular basis or according to a clear and systematic plan. They mentioned that they expected more of oral correction
from their teachers. This declaration is articulated by one of the interviewed students. He stated:

In my opinion, teachers’ correction is important and necessary if teachers focus on the errors which are important to correct… I have been learning English for many months. During these months I recall that my teachers corrected me one time or twice. This means that they don’t care so much about the errors we make. Do you think that if we don’t get our errors corrected we’ll succeed in learning this language?!... (S13, personal communication, November, 2011).

A number of students shared the above dissatisfaction, student 8 said:

I personally feel that they [teachers] should provide more correction. I noticed that providing corrections depends on the teacher’s mode and his philosophy, and there is no clear way adopted by the teachers to correct the errors. For example, teachers sometimes repeat correcting the same error each lesson. I’m referring here to teachers who taught me some courses so far (S8, personal communication, 2011).

This discontent was also echoed by students 3 and 5 who reported:

My teacher corrected only grammatical errors in writing. I don’t remember him correcting my oral errors or my classmates’. Most of the classroom activities are done either in pair work or group work without follow up from the teacher. I wonder how we can know if we are making progress in learning the language or not. I’m also not sure how the teacher will know about our errors (S3, personal communication, December, 2011).

At the beginning, I was glad because I came here to learn English. I thought at the beginning that I’ll learn English quickly, but later I found the opposite. Teachers have different agendas and different goals. Each teacher has a syllabus and some text books. They choose topics and activities in a haphazard way from here and there just to fill in their syllabuses and cover the class time, and they don’t pay much attention to our demands. They only correct written mistakes they encounter in our assignments. I can say they rarely correct our oral errors (S5, personal communication, December, 2011).

The above discussion clearly shows that the majority of the participants, including the teachers support the key role of CF in L2 learning. However, some students and teachers provided mixed responses when asked whether CF raises their anxiety or not.
The following section presents the differing perspectives as expressed by the interviewed teachers and students in their responses to the question about anxiety.

**The Relationship between CF and Anxiety**

Concerning the relationship between anxiety and CF, the analyses of data showed disagreement among learners regarding this issue. For instance, the majority of students (16 of 20 [80%]) mentioned that anxiety mainly depends on learners’ beliefs, values and attitudes toward learning the language. According to most of the students, CF does not necessarily raise anxiety. One of the students said, “I personally do not have such feelings because I’m a student and being a student means you are learning every day something new and you need time to do it properly” (S6, personal communication, October, 2011).

In this vein, another student stated:

> As a former teacher and a current student, I think students come to classrooms to learn. Following this widely accepted view, they will make errors and learn, and this in turn doesn’t make them feel inferior to their peers or at least doesn’t embarrass them (S13, personal communication, November, 2011).

Some students shared views and experiences different from those mentioned above. These differences are best illustrated by the following student’s response. He said, “Yes, sometimes learners feel embarrassed and nervous when the teacher keeps correcting them and may lose face if corrected constantly” (S3, personal communication, October, 2011). Another student agreed on this point by saying:

> I think, yes it does if the teacher is not qualified to teach different students who came from different ethnicities and cultures. [I’ll] tell you something, there is a type of teacher who makes you nervous and anxious even if they don’t correct errors because this is how they are. Their personalities and their behaviors discourage students (S6, personal communication, October, 2011).
Teachers also provided mixed responses. Some of them (6 of 10 [60%]) stated that oral CF raises learners’ anxiety, whereas others (4 of 10 [40%]) contended it has no influence. While each group of teachers provided reasonable evidence to support their positions, the question about anxiety and CF remained unanswered and outside the scope of this study. Some of the interviewed teachers believe that teachers are responsible for such anxiety if it occurs in the classroom because they did not establish a friendly environment for learning. The following are some examples of teachers’ responses expressed during the interviews in support of the above view:

…I think the environment of a classroom should be considered a learning place; so if the students are in there and you’re helping them with what errors they make and then [when they] go out to the real world they produce [the language] then better. I don’t know how that can produce anxiety. If your students feel that they’re anxious, then it is the teacher’s responsibility to explain their feedback process: what [it] is used for and how it [is] supposed to help them. That can alleviate anxiety that takes place… (T1, personal communication, October, 2011).

…I had some students tell me after class – please correct me more often… because I’m used to that”…some students have more of a habit or they [are] used to correcting themselves and being more aware….With the Arab students in particular I would say less than other nationalities. I had many Arab students come to me in private and tell me please correct me more…..don’t be shy about correcting me…..most Arab students have no problem with anxiety(T5, personal communication, November, 2011).

In contrast, some teachers reported that both teachers’ and students’ attitudes and beliefs might be considered the main reasons for such anxiety. T4 and T2 explained:

Yes I think error correction can raise learners’ anxiety. In my opinion, it has to do with how the correction is done: what’s the teacher’s attitude, is the correction punitive or is it specifically targeted in a timely way, and that the students understand that the feedback is given in a positive light (T4, personal interview, November, 2011).
… I would say that it probably raises it [students’ anxiety]. Of course it depends on the personality of the student …I think it might be some differences between individual students, but I’d say overall it does increase their anxiety because I noticed, you know as a student myself, when a teacher corrected me in class I might get a little bit nervous or embarrassed, and that might raise my anxiety… I know I have seen students before when they make a mistake in class, even if I was about to skip not correct errors, another student in the class might try to correct their errors and then I’ve seen that students get red in [the] face (T2, personal communication, November, 2011).

**Theme Two: Preferred Types of Errors to be Corrected**

The present study also sought to explore students’ preferences for different types of error correction. To achieve this goal, the students and teachers were asked seven specific questions about this issue. These questions included prompts written to elicit information about learners’ preferences for various error types relating to different aspects of language. Students were asked to choose among two main categories of errors. The first category included errors such as grammar, phonology, pronunciation, vocabulary, semantics and syntax. The second category contained errors related to pragmatics, social interaction, discourse and organization. This section presents and elaborates on the most preferred and less preferred error types for correction from students’ and teachers’ perspectives and examines issues relating to focused versus unfocused CF.

1. **Students’ Preferences**

The preference of most of the interviewed students (15 of 20 [75%]) showed the following pattern for error correction: grammar, pronunciation, and semantics. The majority of the students reported that errors relating to grammar should receive more attention than any other error type. Pronunciation errors were ranked next in order of
preference for correction, with the majority of interviewed students indicating that this type deserves due attention. Next, errors related to semantics with vocabulary followed in order of priority. These last two types were considered the least concern for correction. Only a few students preferred their teachers to focus on these error types. Students’ preferences for correcting the above errors were illustrated in students’ 1 and 6 responses:

I think correcting all of these errors is important, but I prefer my teachers to focus on both grammatical and pronunciation errors at this time because they are difficult and affect our performance in language. As you know, most of students’ problems are in writing are related to grammar. Since I have problems with English grammar and the American accent, I like my teachers to focus on grammar and pronunciation. Without mastering these language areas, learners will not be able to produce correct English (S1, personal communication, October, 2011).

For me, semantic errors are important. As you know semantics gives attention to meaning; if we make meaningless utterances I don’t think that learning a language is useful. I like my teachers to focus on errors relating to this area then help [the] student get rid of other errors such as grammar and pronunciation. I don’t mean that grammar and pronunciation are not important but they should come next after semantics. This is my opinion. I’m not sure (S6, personal communication, October, 2011).

Interestingly, the second most preferred error type for Arab students was pronunciation. Although pronunciation is considered the least favored language area for adult learners and teachers (Celce-Murcia, Brinton, & Godwin, 1996). The findings of the study showed that most of the interviewed students expressed positive attitudes towards correcting this type of error. Second language researchers argue that many factors may influence pronunciation. These factors include age, learners’ prior experience, attitudes, aptitudes and first language interference (Celce-Murcia, Brinton, & Godwin, 1996). The students’ responses reflect how these factors or a combination of them influenced their preferences.
The responsiveness of Arab students and their positive attitudes towards correcting pronunciation errors gave indication that they are highly motivated and have positive attitudes toward the target language and its culture. One interviewee student answered that:

Pronunciation is very important for communication. It causes misunderstandings if we pronounce words in a wrong way. In my opinion, we need to practice pronouncing words many times because pronunciation affects the meaning. I think pronunciation learning is an important aspect of L2 acquisition (S9, personal communication, October, 2011).

Although producing a native like utterance is not considered one of the students’ stated goals for L2 learning, their concern reflects an attempt to avoid any misunderstandings due to mispronunciation. Some second language researchers’ claim that age has an impact on language acquisition in general and pronunciation in particular. Researchers argue that after puberty, it is often difficult for adults to produce native like utterances. As a result, adults find pronunciation more difficult than children. Most of the interviewed students admitted that they discovered a difference between the way they used to pronounce certain words and the way native speakers do. This point leads one of the interviewees to criticize bitterly some teachers of the English language who taught him and his classmates in high school. He recalled:

Unfortunately, our prior teacher didn’t focus on pronunciation. I think pronunciation is very important because native speakers judge you by your pronunciation. I can’t blame them because the way you pronounce words gives people an impression if you are competent or not. I think improper pronunciation makes students not able to produce comprehensible language (S7, personal communication, October, 2011).

While the participants of this study have exhibited a considerable number of systematic errors, they are eager to work on them during their study in the United States.
Arab male students in this study frequently expressed a need for additional assistance with the various pronunciation features including stress, intonation, aspiration, rhythm, sound production and reduction. The majority of the students reported that they have difficulty with the above segmental and supersegmental features. This difficulty is illustrated through students’ responses when asked about correcting phonological errors.

Although stress and intonation are important, it is not easy for second language learners to acquire them. As a native speaker of Arabic, I find a difference between Arabic and English in terms of sounds and other aspects of phonology. We don’t have in Arabic two different sounds for the /b/ as is the case in English. I think it would be more essential for teachers to focus on pronunciation (S4, personal communication, October, 2011).

In fact, stress and intonation are so difficult for us to learn in a few courses. You know the Arabic language uses different alphabets from those used in English and French. This makes the sounds of English difficult to produce. We have stress in Arabic, but it is not like the stress used in English. Some stress is put at the beginning or the middle or the end of the word. I think teachers should focus on errors that prevent us from writing and speaking, for example good English. Afterwards, they can focus on these [group 2] errors (S11 Personal communication, November, 2011).

When asked to give examples about the feedback they receive from teachers, students reported that they often have confusion about the way stress is employed in English, either in the beginning, middle, or at the end of words. Furthermore, they have difficulties distinguishing between short and long vowels, and vowel and consonant diphthongs such as /ʃ/ and /tʃ/, since the English language poses some confusion with the use of 44 sounds and only 24 letters in the alphabet.

As for errors which relate to discourse organization, social interaction, pragmatics and communication, some students (13 of 20) reported that they are less important than grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary. Students indicated that these errors should
only be corrected if they have a negative impact on the meaning of their utterances. One student mentioned:

> These errors are not important as far as they don’t change the meaning and affect the process of exchanging ideas with other students and friends. In the Cs2 level, I think correcting students’ grammar and pronunciation is more important than discourse errors (S3, personal communication, October, 2011).

On the contrary, a number of students contended that it would be better if teachers do not overwhelm students with correcting these errors, at least at their present level of learning, because it is difficult for them to identify the most important errors that pertain, for example, to pragmatics or discourse organization. They maintained that the more learners are exposed to the target language, the better they can develop the necessary skills that help them identify the most serious types of errors impeding the clarity of their discourse organization. In this regard, student 7 explained that:

> I don’t think that these types of [group 2] errors are so important in the sense that they will hinder the process of learning a language, especially for students who are taking ESL courses at both intermediate and advanced levels. In the future, students can organize their own ideas and their ways of talking to others after they acquire more advanced skills. Students need more practice with native speakers to understand these skills (S7, personal communication, November, 2011).

Surprisingly, the majority of the students reported that they had little information or knowledge about pragmatics, so it was clarified with examples for them. Still, most of the students did not provide sufficient and significant information about pragmatics that could enrich the findings of the present research study. In this context, one student stated:

> I don’t think that at this stage learners need their teachers to focus on these errors. In my opinion, students can learn and explore more about the linguistic system of the target language through interaction with other people. [Smiling] Honestly, this is the first time I have heard about something called pragmatics (S16, personal communication, November, 2011).
Only a few of the students provided brief answers which did not go beyond a simple yes or no response. One student, for example said, “Learners are not in need of correcting these errors while learning English in the part time level and other levels” (S4, personal communication, October, 2011). The students’ unfamiliarity with pragmatics leads to the conclusion that teachers rarely draw students’ attention to this area. Teachers’ unsystematic and infrequent correction of errors in pragmatics leaves students unaware of the significance of pragmatics for L2 learning. This conclusion invokes an important point regarding the necessity of conducting further research to explore the most common error types that are made by L2 learners in this area and the most appropriate strategies for correcting them.

2. *Teachers’ Preferences*

The results from the teachers’ interviews revealed preferences for error types nearly identical to those of students. The majority of teachers (8 of 10 [80%]) stated that semantic and grammatical errors should receive more attention than other types of errors. Also, the results showed the following order of preference: semantics, grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary. A number of the teachers believe that semantics are important, and based on their experiences in teaching international students in ESL settings, they encouraged students to focus on different areas, including lexis, prepositions, etc. to avoid any problem caused by the interference between L1 and L2. Such problems, according to teachers, result in erroneous utterances. One teacher reported:

I would say probably …first I would put semantics errors, probably that would [be] number one. They’re using a word or a phrase in a way that makes them, to
you know, get their meaning across… and that’s something you need to correct it right way, and that when you correct a student right away they can internalize and understand right away… and that’s usually an error that when you usually correct the students they will be able to internalize and understand right away (T2, personal communication, October, 2011).

Oppositely, teachers’ views were different from students’ preferences in terms of correcting errors pertaining to discourse organization and pragmatics. The interviewed teachers (9 of 10 [90%]) indicated that these errors are important to correct because meaning is embedded in discourse organization, and thus different skills need to be learned across cultures. Some of the teachers readily acknowledged the importance of pragmatics and discourse organization, stating:

Pragmatics is an important issue…one applied linguist claims that half of language acquisition is pragmatics, the socially appropriate use of language …but things like that could be complicated to teach… when you get to pragmatics you might focus on meaning not just the form of the language… well, pragmatics might come in a place when you talk about cross culture issues… so again it is not just the form of the language but you got to navigate different cultures that have different norms. You can look at things like interaction patterns. Some anthropologists say that is essentially what a culture is; that is one thing can observe or tell you about that culture…is cultural patterns (T4, personal communication, November, 2011).

In his response to questions about errors relating to discourse organization and pragmatics, Teacher 1 mentioned that text books do not provide learners with explicit information on how to organize their ideas and clearly present them. When learners learn a language, they are learning a way of thinking. It makes learning difficult when teachers neglect this cognitive aspect of the language. A language is not a mere static set of rules to be memorized by learners (Vygotsky, 1986). It consists of social dynamics. For these reasons, teachers are responsible for explaining these issues to learners when needed. He went on to say:
Yes they should, I think it is necessary…One reason is because it [is] not really well taught in text books, so it might not be explicitly stated in a text book, and so it is the teacher’s responsibility to give them that knowledge. It is also important when these people go out in the real world [that] they are successful in interacting with people. If they always have failure interacting with people, then that can [be] detrimental with what they are trying to do, if it is business or just to meet friends. But if they do things incorrectly in the language, they say things [unacceptably] in the language, then that can be very bad for them (T1, personal communication, October, 2011).

Despite their preferences for correcting particular classroom errors such as semantics, grammar and pronunciation, teachers agree that the above errors are important to correct, but are context specific and should not be at the expense of more frequent classroom errors. One teacher elaborated:

I wouldn’t say should always. I think sometimes …but if it occurs in the classroom setting. Sometimes it is a little hard to target and to correct those errors…I think with this case we should give the student a green light to go and learn, get that experience …by doing that, by experiencing that by communicating with others. In the classroom setting it is hard to do…(T7, personal communication, November, 2011).

While exploring this research inquiry, the findings of the present study revealed an additional pattern relating to Arab students preferences for oral error correction. This issue includes: focused vs. unfocused error correction. This sub-theme (pattern) will be discussed in detail in the following section.

**Focused Versus Unfocused CF**

Although nearly all of the interviewed students (19 of 20 [95%]) were in favor of comprehensive error correction, they showed preferences for correction of specific error types on which they preferred more emphasis. As many stated, they believe that it is difficult for teachers to accomplish this task and correct every single error that occurs in the classroom. The most common response by students was that correcting all errors is
frustrating and discouraging for some students and also that it is time consuming and impractical. Thus, they supported the idea of a focused technique for error correction where teachers select certain types of errors for correction. The students’ responses in interviews 1 and 4 represented this shared view:

In my opinion, correcting all the errors is time consuming. I prefer that teachers focus on certain types of errors in each lesson to familiarize learners with possibly occurring errors they may encounter in the future or through learning the target language (S1, personal communication, October, 2011).

No, I do not think so. They should focus on some errors because they cannot correct every error. I wish they could do so and correct every error. This would be fantastic. I think teachers should correct the errors that are difficult for students to correct without the teacher’s help and make the meaning difficult to understand (S4, personal communication, October, 2011).

Teachers also expressed support for the idea of being selective while correcting students’ errors. All of the teachers were against correcting every error because it has a negative impact on students’ fluency and can make them hesitant producers of the target language in the future. T3 and T5 expressed the above views in their responses to this question:

No…I think that can be quite discouraging …so I think the teachers have a big responsibility to try to determine at what level and at what frequency do you correct errors …so that the student is aware that they need to make changes but at the same time, you don’t discourage them from speaking and experimenting…so [they are] not afraid of making errors to speak and that depends on where they [are] from and in all depends on personality or individual personality…(T3, personal communication, October, 2011).

… My own personal believe is that it could be [a cause of] hesitancy for students in the future… I think that if we correct every error when we’re communicating orally with the students then that could inhibit their fluency….we have to focus on reoccurring mistakes and errors…(T5, personal communication, October, 2011).
In addition, the teachers believed that arbitrary error correction discourages learners from producing modified input. The interviewed teachers proposed that the main purpose of correcting errors is to increase the success rate in communication, not to inhibit learners from communication. Thus, the emphasis should be on errors that interfere with meaning. One of the teachers explained:

I don’t think so; it [correcting every error] is necessary to the fact that…students’ interlanguages are developing through time, so one error might happen one day not the next day. I think the teacher should focus on errors that may be in terms of pronunciation that they’re working on in the class… but every error is a bit extreme, and it takes away from students’ fluency and focusing on getting meaning across to the listener (Teacher 1, personal communication, September, 2011).

Theme Three: Preferred CF Strategies

Students’ preferences regarding oral CF strategies were the primary foci of this study. A set of seven questions was designed to gain information about students’ and teachers’ preferences of these strategies. Students were asked to choose among the following strategies: recasts, repetition, clarification requests, paralinguistic signs, explicit correction, elicitation and metalinguistics. This section presents and reflects on the most preferred CF strategies for both teachers and students. In addition, it displays the importance of self-correction as a significant sub-theme based on students’ perspectives and the literature.

1. Students’ Preferences

The most preferred strategy as suggested by learners was metalinguistics (18 of 20)90%]) closely followed by explicit strategy (16 of 20]80%) in which teachers use errors as class examples and show the errors without providing a clue. Generally, Arab
male students as adult second language learners showed a tendency towards preference for explicit instruction, in the form of repeated practice, for learning the new grammatical structures and vocabulary in the target language. According to students, this type of error correction is more helpful than other types because it facilitates learning the target language. This preference is represented in students’ 5 and 20 responses.

...Yes, for sure because when the teacher explains to me the wrong answer and shows me my error, this helps me identify the correct response and later not to repeat it. I like this method because it tells directly that my sentence is not correct, and I should say this instead of that (S5, personal communication, October, 2006).

You know advanced learners like us became familiar with the language’s grammatical rules to some extent and make few errors in comparison to students in other levels. These errors indicate that we have a difficulty in certain areas which we are not able to overcome ourselves, maybe because they are difficult. I think teachers should provide us with explanations along with examples to help us avoid making these errors and understand them (S20, personal communication, December, 2011).

In explicit correction, the teacher always provides learners with both positive and negative evidence by clearly saying that the learner’s utterance is erroneous while in metalinguistic feedback, the teachers only provide students with comments, information, or questions related to the production of well-formed utterances. Explicit feedback always focuses on what is unacceptable in the target language and provides learners with the rules that govern it. Although these strategies are not as common as compared to elicitation and recasts, they have proven to be effective both in teaching the forms of English and in teaching adult learners. Accordingly, Arab students found them to be good tools for eliminating their grammatical and phonological errors as well as learning the unique linguistic features of the language. Two of the students mentioned:
…Explaining helps me to understand the grammatical rules and make additional examples using particular language rules. In this case, in the future I can depend on myself in correcting these errors without the assistance of teachers. I noticed that teachers do not explain the errors to students because they do not have enough time to do so [because] there is usually a rule bound by rules and regulations and guidelines…( S16, personal communication, December, 2011).

Based on my study in psychology, I think for advanced learners they are at the point they need to be able to have those… meta-cognitive …skills where they can look at the language of the grammar objective then say that is what’s going on; this is why I need to change this to this tense, or to this tense; this is why a native speaker uses a passive here in this situation; but then if you just say oh they’re errors, maybe the student who really likes language starts to click, that’s why the teacher is there and why something is happening if the student has questions (S 18, personal communication, December, 2011).

… If the teacher doesn’t explain the errors to us, how can we know that our utterances are incorrect or inappropriate? This means we’ll not be able to correct the error or know about it. I think teachers should explain the error to us in order not to make it in the future. If I don’t know why my sentences are not acceptable, how can I correct them? (S16, personal communication December, 2011),

Explicit error correction supplies the learner with both positive and negative evidence. Although this type of corrective feedback facilitates the learners’ noticing between their interlanguage and the target language, it does not provide immediate examples for learners to produce more native like forms from their modified production.

One of the students said the following:

In my experience, it is important to explain to the student why you should do this instead of doing that to help them form a kind of understanding why this utterance might be acceptable in this situation and not necessarily in the other. In this way, they can depend on themselves and take control over their learning, but unfortunately some students over rely on the teacher, and this prevents them from thinking or using the rules of the language to produce native like utterances (S11, personal communication, November, 2011).

The next preferred strategy for error correction suggested by the learners was elicitation (16 of 20 [80%]). Through elicitation, teachers normally provide learners with
relevant comments and cues to help them correct their own errors. Students’ responses showed that many of the interviewee students preferred using this strategy for error correction. One student explained the reasons why he prefers this strategy:

I prefer my teachers to elicit the correct answers from other learners. This makes the classroom more active and encourages students to construct their learning and feel more confident. I think teachers should encourage learners to think and compare their answers and decide if their utterances are similar to those that native speakers produce during their interactions (S1, personal communication, October, 2011).

Other students stated that:

I liked the idea of eliciting the correct answer from other students for two reasons. The first, it makes students feel comfortable and not embarrassed if they make a mistake. The second, it gives students the opportunity to recall the rules of the language and correct his utterance according to these rules (S2, personal communication, October, 2011).

I am always in favor of techniques that enable the learners to discover the error and correct themselves. I like the teacher to elicit the answer from other students. But sometimes the way teachers have to elicit some information is not clear, at least for me. I think teachers should help students become accustomed to the methods or techniques used in the classroom (S7, personal communication, October, 2011).

Although the findings of the study showed that students favored metalinguistic and explicit strategies, they believe that elicitation is an efficient CF strategy because it encourages self-correction techniques. According to the students, self-correction techniques help in consolidating learning the language, promoting self-learning and noticing one’s errors. This view is expressed by students’ responses in interviews 1 and 7:

I think this is a good strategy teachers should adopt in correcting their students’ errors because it promotes the idea of self learning. Besides, learners do not easily forget the errors they have discovered and corrected themselves (S1, personal communication, October, 2011).
In my opinion, this technique facilitates language learning and provides learners with some opportunities to correct themselves without the teacher’s assistance, and in this case they can be responsible for their learning (S7, personal communication, October, 2011).

Finally, less than half of the students (9 of 20 [45%]) preferred teachers to correct their errors by recasts. According to the students, it is not easy to notice the teacher correction if they are not familiar with the rules of the language.

2. Teachers’ Preferences

The most favored correction methods selected by the teachers for correcting students oral errors were recasts (8 of 10 [80%]) and prompts in the form of clarification requests, repetition and elicitation (7 of 10 [70%]). Most the teachers believe that recasting the correct form by reformulating all or part of the student's utterance is beneficial especially in communicative or language-focused activities. According to the teachers, through recasting, learners can receive the required feedback without being interrupted or feeling uncomfortable. Similarly, prompts guide learners where to find the answer without damaging their confidence. This view is expressed by the majority of the teachers during the interviews. One teacher elaborated:

…In terms of providing the correct response or part of a response, I always try to provide part of the response. I like to give students time to come up with the answers themselves, and that’s part of self correction, allowing students to figure and… yeah guiding but [not] necessarily providing the correct response (T6, personal communication, November, 2011).

Most of the teachers believe that through recasts and elicitation, learners can negotiate meaning and engage in more communicatively based-tasks. As for recasts, one of the interviewee teachers mentioned that most students like to follow a model, so it is
necessary to provide them either with a correct response or a part of the response. She said:

If we’re focusing on something like vocabulary or it is a grammar structure then I would draw attention to this…I like to provide the correct response for the learners because they appreciate when you give them a model …that they can follow …[such] as you having a conversational or visual error, they finally want to hear ok what’s the final correct answer giving them a model they’ll appreciate…I believe you should provide the correct response …you can’t ignore, overall you don’t ignore errors (T9, personal communication, November, 2011).

Another teacher further explained that elicitation is an effective technique in the sense that it sometimes directs students where to find the error or the answer. He explained:

…Elicit, elicit, elicit, ask questions, get them thinking. Don’t just give them a fish, but teach them how to fish, and they can find that answer within themselves, how they can figure it out, how to come up with it next time…(T10, personal communication, November, 2011).

As noted above, both students and teachers spoke favorably about self-correction. The following section provides the most important points raised by the participants during the interviews while addressing this issue.

**Self-correction**

The interviews’ results revealed that most of the participants (21 of 30 [70%]) favored self-correction techniques. Generally, they believe that the ultimate goal of corrective feedback for students is to be self-correcting and minimize the need for teacher assistance. Most students strongly believe that such techniques are helpful and promote the idea of self-learning and self-discovery.

According to students, these techniques make learners less dependent on the teacher and more confident producers of the target language. One of the students mentioned, “I think this is a good strategy teachers should adopt in correcting their
students’ errors because it promotes the idea of self learning…it is not as easy for me to forget the errors I have discovered and corrected by myself” (S1, personal communication, October, 2011). Moreover, self-correction encourages learners to be more responsible for their learning and raises their awareness about the target language. However, the teacher’s role remains important. The most notable reasons for this preference appear to stem from the idea that teachers are more knowledgeable about the language. For example, two of the students t said:

Yes, self correction and peer correction are good techniques but it is difficult usually for learners to correct themselves if they make some errors. As you know some errors are difficult to correct. They should be corrected by teachers because students may spend a long time in a sentence or a part of sentence which doesn’t need any correction (S10, personal communication, November, 2011).

I think self-correction is a useful technique and encourages learners to understand the language and the related activities, and it helps me learn about the most common errors in the language. It gives me a chance to discover these errors and correct them. I’m not good at grammar, so sometimes I can’t identify the error to correct it (S7, personal communication, November, 2011).

Similarly, teachers believe that self-correction plays an essential role in language learning because it encourages learners to make the necessary corrections and understand the nature of their errors. One of the teachers said ”…So, I think if you encourage self correction the student is taking ownership of their English and of their learning” (T3, personal communication, October, 201). By using these techniques, students actively improve their linguistic competence. In short, the teachers believe that self-correcting increases learners’ autonomy and independence, makes learners more capable of fixing and noticing their own errors, and raises their awareness of the target language. The
above responses were echoed by many teachers as they provided answers to this question.

For instance, one of the teachers explained:

> I think you should encourage self correction techniques… due to the fact that I have learned languages as a learner and a producer you always want to try to be correct so naturally you… try to fix yourself and try to fix your own errors yourself after you hear them. So, I think teaching them techniques allows them to do it better and then learn from fixing their own errors … (T1, personal communication, October, 2011).

The above view is supported by teacher 10 who elaborated:

> Yes, I think they should encourage that. Again, it helps to know why you are making a mistake and what to look for. We don’t always know what we are doing wrong. It helps to know if we are doing something wrong…it helps them with their critical thinking and analysis skill and can apply to language and general thought …(T10, personal communication, November, 2011).

**Theme Four: Importance of CF for Meaningful Communication**

According to the interviewed students (17 of 20 [85%]), oral CF can help learners develop greater confidence and ability in the spoken language. This end can be accomplished through engagement in oral discussions and the sharing of ideas. For example, one of the interviewees while commenting on correcting errors related to communication mentioned:

> Yes, communication has a crucial role in learning a language. For this, teachers should focus on teaching learners how to engage in communicative situations. In my experience as an Arabic teacher, these errors make learners less confident and hinder the oral exchange and communication of thoughts and ideas. I think communication is not just a few words uttered by people. It is an effective way to influence others by our words (S4, personal communication, October, 2011).

Another student stated that the main purpose of a language is to facilitate communication. For some students, it is important that teachers focus on correcting learners’ errors, especially those related to this area. He emphasized that
Communication is very important, and for this reason, a language exists to facilitate communicating with others. Yes. It is very important that teachers give special attention to communication errors that affect interaction and improve communication skills. Communication is very important in our life; it helps us express our opinions and convince other people with our ideas. I think without communication, we fail to transmit and convey our ideas, thoughts and opinions to other people (S2, personal communication, November, 2011).

Finally, another of the interviewees added that, "error correction is essential because it motivates us as second language learners to produce native-like utterances. These utterances make us both understand and be understood by people we are interacting with in daily life situations" (S10, personal communication, November, 2011).

The teachers’ perspectives regarding the importance of CF for communication were similar to the students’. According to them, the main goal of communication is to reach understanding, so if some errors lead to misunderstanding, then they should be immediately corrected. The majority of the teachers (9 of 10 [90%]) believe that it is necessary and important to repair the breakdowns in communication by negotiating meaning. Correcting these errors helps learners understand what they did wrong and to better clarify themselves at the time of the error and later. Furthermore, the teachers contend that students should be exposed to different types of communications. These types are essential to the language learning process. Teacher 5 stated that oral communication should receive similar feedback equal to what is always given to writing and other skills, especially in instructional settings. In short, there was agreement between teachers and students in terms of importance of correcting errors related to communication. However, the teachers emphasized that the focus on these errors should
reflect the importance of meaningful communication. Regarding these points, one teacher expressed:

…I think the breakdown in communication should be always repaired … if there is no breakdown in communication, sometimes I will correct the errors or I’ll bring [them] up to the students but not always, it depends on the level of the class…if it interferes with communication we need to negotiate for meaning so I will correct or I will try to clarify what they mean so I understand, and I want them to also do that with their partner or through shopping at local stores and [if] they don’t understand the colloquial language at Walmart they need to negotiate meaning….excuse me, did you say this, could you speak slowly …. So they can function in the local culture where they live and learn English (T4, personal communication, October, 2011).

In a similar vein, the interviewed students considered communication a very important social activity through which people can understand how social issues are formed. Students generally believe that through the interpersonal dimension of the language which usually focuses on the interactions between people in a social context, learners can better learn the target language. Students mentioned that it is social interaction that makes their oral output more meaningful both in the classroom and with friends.

Learners can also make meaning from body language such as gestures and facial expressions and learn to understand pronunciation features (supersegmental) such as intonation, rhythm, juncture and stress. These common concerns are mentioned by learners as reasons for their positive attitudes towards correcting errors pertaining to social interaction.

I think this issue deserves focus because in our daily life we have to practice English, and if we have problems with social interaction, we will not be able to make friends with native speakers and learn more about the tradition and the habits of those people. Take me for example, I feel embarrassed and confused when I go to the coffee shop or the market because I’m afraid that people who
work there will not understand me well (S10, personal communication, November, 2011).

The teachers contend that it is necessary to expose students to cultural features of the target language because these issues are not stated explicitly in most textbooks. Accordingly, it is the teacher’s responsibility to help learners successfully interact with the modern world. Many teachers believe that if learners are often failing in their interactions with people, and without specific error correction, this can be detrimental to L2 learning. Some of the teachers mentioned that they do not correct learners’ errors on a regular basis, and only if students do or say something seriously embarrassing. They emphasized that it is essential to frequently introduce students to different aspects of American culture to help them better adjust. Overall, most of the teachers strongly support the idea of encouraging students to socially interact with the native population.

These views are summarized in the following response:

… I don’t correct errors on a regular basis dealing with several interactions, but I do try to introduce or mention parts of American culture that probably…[they don’t know] unless they have an American roommate, and a lot of students don’t have an American roommate, so they don’t get to have that…small talk interaction all the time where they might pick up little pieces of information…little cultural things…if something comes up in class and I think of it then I usually mention it just so if one or more of the students listen and remember then at least that kind of helps [them] maybe gain kind of a global thing…(T7, personal communication, November, 2011).

Findings of the Focus Group Interview

This section presents the main findings of the focus group interview as expressed by students. To validate the students’ responses in the initial interviews, a focus group interview was conducted with five students selected from participants in the study. The focus group interview lasted for one hour. During this time, students engaged in a
detailed discussion about oral error correction. The participants were asked six questions closely related to specific areas about oral corrective feedback. These areas include: learners’ perceptions and beliefs about CF, types of errors to be corrected and CF strategies.

The interviewed students’ responses were in accordance with the findings of the study. All the interviewed students expressed positive attitudes towards CF. The participants reported various reasons to support their positive attitudes. Student 1, for instance, mentioned:

…I believe teachers should correct our oral errors. As you know we can’t always be able to recognize these errors. If teachers do not help us with this, we’ll continue making the same errors, and we’ll not make any progress in learning English and communicating with other people (S1, personal communication, December, 2011).

This perspective was shared by student 2 who added, “I agree with student 1[...I think if teachers correct our errors and show us a model of how to make these correction, we not only avoid making these errors, but other students in the class who have similar problems will learn from this correction” (S2, personal communication, December, 2011). Students 3, 4 and 5 also indicated that CF is necessary if teachers use it effectively in the classroom. They believe that it would be beneficial for teachers to focus on correcting errors related to areas that students were working on in the class or on certain grammatical structures that were explained to them in previous lessons. According to them, this approach enables students to notice their errors and be more aware of the teacher’s feedback.
In terms of error types, the students’ responses in the focus group interview were similar to the findings of the study. The majority of the participants reported that grammatical and pronunciation errors should be given special attention. The most common reason mentioned by students for preferring grammatical errors was that grammar is important for producing acceptable utterances in the target language. One of the interviewees elaborated:

I agree with S3 that pronunciation errors are important, but I think grammatical errors are more important because if our sentences are not constructed well, other people will not interpret them correctly. After correcting these errors whatever the teacher corrects is ok (S2, personal communication, December, 2011).

Student 4 added, "I like my teachers to primarily correct grammatical errors; then they can work on our pronunciation because these errors prevent me from communicating easily with other people and cause misunderstanding” (S4, personal communication, December, 2011). Although students conveyed preference for correcting grammatical and pronunciation errors, they were not satisfied with the manner by which these errors were corrected. One student stated:

My teacher asks me to repeat the sentence many times and sometimes he writes the phonetic transcription on the board. As for grammar, she always asks me to justify why I used this tense instead of another tense or this part of speech not the other (S3, personal communication, December, 2011).

The majority of the students believe that teachers should be selective while correcting students’ errors and choose the ones that deserve immediate correction. Another of the students mentioned:

I have another funny story. While I was taking a reading course, I mispronounced a word in a wrong way. I remember, in this situation, I pronounced the sound "v" similar to "f". The teacher got mad and started explaining the difference between "v" and "f" angrily on the board. I felt so embarrassed. I think sometimes teachers
are fool finders, not patient, and they judge learners according to simple errors they make. I think teachers would be better if they focused on major errors rather than on slips of the tongue. (S3, personal communication, December, 2011).

The above view was shared by student 4 and student 5 as illustrated by their responses during the interview.

I don’t remember a specific situation at this moment, but I can say that I found most of my teachers either in high school or at the university or even here in this program have no clear plan for correcting students’ errors. They correct whatever they like to correct whenever they wish or ignore whatever they like despite its importance. It is confusing, isn’t it? (S4, personal communication, December, 2011).

I remember one of my teachers who spent the whole academic year just correcting errors related to English definite and indefinite articles and on making comparison and contrast (er/est). Aren’t there any grammatical forms in English to learn except those? I wonder (S5, personal communication, 2011).

However, student 3 expressed a different opinion from those above. He believes that errors related to pronunciation are more important to correct. He said:

I think pronunciation errors and semantic errors are very important. I personally prefer my teachers first to correct pronunciation errors, then semantic errors. If we pronounce words incorrectly, other people will not understand our utterances [even] if we keep repeating them hundreds of times. Also, semantic errors are important because they change the meaning of our utterances and make our teachers or friends unable to understand our intention (S3, personal communication, 2011).

Regarding CF strategies, the findings showed that all the participants preferred explicit correction such as metalinguistic and explicit CF strategies. The students indicated that these strategies help them to correctly use the grammatical rules and produce correct utterances and well written essays. In this context, student 1 said, “I like strategies that help me learn how to correct my errors and recognize the error as well as the cause of the error” (S1, personal communication, December, 2011). Student 2 shared
this view explaining, “I like my teacher to explain and clarify my errors to help me
correct myself” (S2, personal communication, December, 2011). Student 4 emphasized
that, “I like my teacher to tell me this is your error and this is the way to correct it. In
other words, he should provide me with the correct answer just to make sure that my
utterance is ok” (S4, personal communication, December, 2011).

In summary, the findings of the focus group interview were confirmatory and
consistent with the findings of the study in terms of students’ attitudes, error types,
selective versus unselective error correction, and the importance of CF for
communication (see the consensus form in Appendix D). The focus group was beneficial
because it helped to gain a broader understanding about CF. It revealed some relevant
issues related to CF such as the students’ dissatisfaction regarding the amount and the
manner of CF. The findings of the focus group reported some inconsistency in students’
responses. For instance, one of the students provided responses regarding anxiety and
selectivity of errors different from the ones mentioned in the individual interview.

**Findings from Observed Classes**

In this study, the observation method was used as a confirmatory tool to further
reaffirm the findings of the study. To achieve this end, the researcher designed a 15-item
checklist focusing on specific areas. These areas included classroom setting, attitudes
towards CF, types of CF and types of correction (see Appendix E). Most of the
observations lasted for 35-50 minutes. The classes were equipped with a wireless
network and all the necessary equipment that both teachers and students needed during
the lesson. In all of the observed classes, the number of students ranged from 8-12. The
observations showed that teachers mostly used interaction-based activities. They employed communicative approaches to teaching language skills with a focus on meaning. The findings of observed classes were in line with the findings of the study. They showed that the participants’ behaviors and practices regarding CF in academic settings are relevant to their responses in the initial interviews.

The observations of many of the classes supported the students' positive feedback and showed that teachers established both good communication with students and a friendly relationship with them. They showed that teachers depend heavily on recasts for correcting students’ oral errors, particularly in grammar, pronunciation and semantics. The findings of the observed classes indicated that teachers mostly teach linguistic forms inductively not deductively. In other words, they did not use explicit instruction. The use of multiple methods in this study contributed new information and insights regarding participants’ perceptions of CF. For instance, the observations of a few classes revealed that the students were not always able to recognize the interactional CF moves or exchanges used by teachers in their instructional strategies. However, in a few exceptions, the findings of the observations were not in agreement with the ones produced by individual interviews. In another example, the observation method revealed that one of the teacher’s actual practices in the classroom contradicted what was expressed earlier in the initial interviews.

**Summary**

This chapter presented and analyzed the findings of this study according to the research question. The collected data from teachers’ and students’ interviews, the
students’ focus group interview and the observations show the different preferences of the participants regarding error and correction types as well as the participants’ attitudes towards oral error correction. Selected quotes were used during the analyses to support and clarify certain points related to the discussion of findings. In addition, quotes were used to display differing perspectives regarding many issues related to CF.

The first finding of the study shows that the majority (93.3%) of teachers and students have positive attitudes towards oral classroom correction indicating that corrective feedback can play a key role in learning the target language. Most of the student participants indicate that teachers’ CF is essential and more important than CF that they may receive from other sources.

The second set of findings suggested by the study reveal the following order for students’ preferences regarding error types: grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, and semantics. Concerning errors relating to communication, discourse organization, pragmatics and social interaction, students suggested that these errors should be corrected only when they affect the meaning of their utterances. Furthermore, the third finding reported the following order of preference for students in terms of CF strategies: metalinguistic, explicit feedback, elicitation, recasts and clarification requests. The last finding suggests that students perceive CF to be an essential process for successful and meaningful communication.

In contrast, teachers’ preferences regarding error types were as follows: semantics, grammar, pronunciation and syntax. Teachers’ opinions were different from students’ regarding error correction pertaining to discourse organization and pragmatics.
Most of the teachers reported that these errors are important to correct because they can affect meaning either positively or negatively. As for oral correction types, teachers preferred recasts and elicitation over other types of strategies.

The findings of the focus group interview for students along with the observed classes confirm the responses expressed by students regarding their preferences for oral CF. All the participants expressed positive attitudes towards oral error correction. Mainly, they showed similar preferences for error types and CF strategies.
Chapter 5: Discussion of Findings

This case study in an intensive English program sought to investigate a sample of Arab male students’ preferences for oral error correction. Gaining further understanding about these students’ attitudes as well as their preferences for oral correction will help to develop strategies to overcome difficulty while learning English in ESL settings. The study utilized in-depth face-to-face oral interviews to collect data about the research in question. The participants of the study totaled 30, involving 10 teachers and 20 students. To analyze the data, the study used a stepwise procedure which includes: transcribing data, memoing, coding, finding and categorizing themes, making comparisons with literature and finally writing up the results.

This chapter discusses the major findings of the study in light of the research question: what are Arab male students’ preferences for oral error correction? It also revisits and reexamines the assumptions mentioned in Chapter Three. The findings of the study indicated that Arab students preferred explicit instruction in the form of metalinguistic and explicit CF over other types of instruction for learning linguistic forms such as grammar and pronunciation of the target language. In addition, they perceived CF as an instrumental and central part of L2 learning.

Revisiting the Assumptions in Chapter Three

The first assumption underlying the study was that Arab male students consider error correction as a challenging opportunity for learning and not an indicator of failure. Based on the first finding of the study, this assumption held true. The participants of the
study expressed positive attitudes toward CF and they anticipated more correction from their teachers.

The second assumption proposed by the researcher was that Arab male students find difficulty in learning English in an ESL program in all language skills. According to the findings 2 and 4, this assumption held true (see Chapter 4, theme 2 and 4). The interviewed students reported that they have difficulty in passing the TOEFL exam and stated that they have difficulty in pronunciation, grammar and communication skills.

The third assumption suggested by the researcher is that Arab male students prefer explicit instruction. With reference to finding 3, this assumption held true. The majority of students showed preference for direct and explicit instruction.

The fourth assumption was that Arab male students prefer implicit CF strategies such as recasts. This assumption did not hold true based on the third finding which revealed that Arab students prefer metalinguistic and explicit CF over recast strategies.

The discussion and the interpretation of the findings are mainly based on a comparison of the participants’ responses and the related literature in order to expand understanding about Arab male students’ preferences for CF. Greater comprehension of these issues allows for exploration of the implications of such preferences. The discussion of findings is organized under the following titles: positive attitudes towards CF, preferred error types to be corrected, preferred CF strategies and the importance of error correction for meaningful communication.
Positive Attitudes towards Corrective Feedback

The findings of the study showed that the large majority (93.3%) of students and teachers have positive attitudes towards correcting oral errors indicating that CF has a key role in L2 learning. The most often cited reasons offered by the interviewees in support of such positive attitudes were that oral CF is an effective teaching process for improving and learning the target language. According to students, oral correction increases learners’ awareness of errors and promotes both accuracy and fluency in the target language. Furthermore, it provides learners with guidelines to prevent making errors in the future.

In support of these views, Long (1996) proposes that CF in the form of positive and negative evidence is essential for L2 learning. According to Long, through positive evidence learners are supplied with a model of acceptable structure in the target language, whereas negative evidence advises them of unacceptable usage in the language. Similarly, Long (2006) and Swain (2005) state that CF promotes learners’ noticing and helps them recognize the difference between their interlanguage and the target language. In other words, identifying such gaps makes learners pay equal due attention to new grammatical structures as well as challenging lexical items.

Based on students’ responses in the interviews and the related literature, students’ positive attitudes can be attributed to a number of variables including students’ prior educational experiences, the amount of feedback, cultural background, motivation, academic setting, the teachers’ personality, class size, the curriculum, learners’ age, teachers’ beliefs about CF, and the instructional techniques used by teachers (Li, 2010).
The findings revealed that students perceived a teacher’s CF as a preferable instructional technique and did not consider it as a face threatening approach. They agreed with the view that teachers are their main source of knowledge, particularly for oral language skills. Such perspectives reveal that depending on their prior knowledge and background, students generally feel more comfortable with teachers’ correction if those teachers are native speakers.

This view is supported by many researchers who found that learners usually value teacher’s CF more than other resources (Higgins et al., 2002; Lee, 2005; Leki, 2006; Weaver, 2006; Yang, Badger, & Yu, 2006). Many researchers addressed the issue of instructors being native English speaking and found that students perceive native speakers as more competent in teaching ESL regardless of their qualification and experience, and humorously, simply because of their accent (Lippi-Green, 1997).

Another relevant factor contributing to the students’ positive attitude toward CF related to the students’ background. The participants of this study received their education in Arab countries where students can rarely negotiate or suggest any educational practices conducted by teachers in classroom settings due to cultural constraints and instructional practices. Fareh (2010) investigated the major challenges of teaching English in Arab countries and found that most of the classes are teacher-centered and teachers rarely take into account individual differences or give students an opportunity to speak or take part in the classroom discussion. One of the teachers in this study emphasized this point in the following response:

...I think some of my students come from an environment where there is very little interaction with the teacher, where students don’t normally ask questions or
comment in class so… to elicit the correct answer, that might be something that students would have to get used to. So, it is something we gradually work on over time (T4, personal communication, November, 2011).

Furthermore, the students’ positive attitudes can be connected to the amount of CF which these students receive from their teachers. It appears from the participants’ responses that the interviewed students received little correction from their teachers in the past, and now they contend that this amount of CF is not enough to help them overcome the difficulties they encounter while learning English. A number of studies in the literature of students’ and teachers’ perceptions and preferences about oral CF revealed that students expect to receive more correction from their teachers (Katayama, 2007; Zhang et al., 2010). While teachers believe that providing students with too much correction discourages them from speaking and using the target language, students indicate that the only way to master the language is to have all of their errors corrected.

Another interpretation of this finding is that the participants of the study are adult learners who are guided by intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. As students, they have specific goals and plans to accomplish during their course of study in the United States. Researchers view adult learners as intentional learners who focus on particular areas while learning the target language. They usually try to make use of certain social activities to serve their learning goals. These goals in turn affect their current behaviors, beliefs, and attitudes toward CF. In other words, their goals affect their attitudes, noticing, acceptance and rejection of CF (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006).

Finally, students’ positive attitudes are influenced by other variables such as the academic setting, teachers’ beliefs and instructional techniques. All of these issues were
mentioned by students while they were describing their classes. Generally, all the
students indicated that the educational environment in which they receive their lessons is
supportive, friendly and comfortable and all the classes include the necessary equipment
that both teachers and students need during their lessons.

Similarly, the observations of many of the classes support the above positive
feedback and show that teachers established both good communication and a friendly
relationship with the students. In this study, teachers mostly used interaction-based
activities. Long (1996) proposes that interactional processes encourage learning L2
because through these processes, learners can effectively make a connection between the
received input, selective attention, and output. In other words, in this process, learners
become more responsible for their learning because such interactional feedback helps
them be aware of their errors while they are engaging in meaning-based activities in
classroom settings. Moreover, the interactional process assists learners to understand the
basic conventions about the target language as well as adjust their output through
negotiation of meaning (Long, 2006).

Regarding the impact of CF on students’ anxiety, the majority of the students
reported that they did not experience anxiety nor felt anxiety affected their overall
performance in the target language. Most of the students believe that anxiety is a personal
matter, and they do not feel anxious when they take part in the classroom activities or
when their teachers ask them to speak in front of the class. In support of this view,
Pappamilhie (2002) differentiated between two types of anxiety, namely: trait and state
anxiety. The first type refers to people who always feel anxious and behave nervously
regardless of the situation. The second type of anxiety, state anxiety, commonly called situational anxiety occurs as a reaction to a particular situation a learner is exposed to in the classroom. Although this type initially prevents learners from showing their potential abilities, it disappears over time when the learner becomes accustomed to the new environment.

Young (1991) attributed language anxiety to three main sources: the learner, the teacher and the instructional practices. As discussed in Chapter Four and above, Arab male students expressed positive attitudes towards CF. They also have positive beliefs about the target language and talked favorably about the classroom environment. Some students (20%) mentioned that they occasionally feel anxious and get embarrassed when teachers ask them to answer questions in a discussion. One possible explanation for these feelings is that those students have difficulty in understanding the classroom rules and teachers’ instructions or are afraid of negative evaluation. This view is supported by Gregersen and Horwitz (2002) who propose that some students avoid speaking in public because they are afraid that other students or people will negatively evaluate them. For this reason, those students prefer to be passive recipients and do not take part in most classroom activities.

Overall, there are mixed arguments regarding the role of anxiety in L2 learning. Ellis (2008) considers anxiety an important factor for success in second language learning. Horwitz (2001) argues that anxiety is one of the most important factors that influences the success of language learning, and it negatively affects learners’ performance on achievement tests. On the contrary, Dorneyei (2005) states that anxiety
has no effect on learners’ outcomes and language production. Krashen (1985) considers feedback a potential distraction for learners because it prevents learners from acquiring a second language even though they are exposed to a suitable input. Sheen (2008) investigated the relationship between anxiety and learners’ responses to recast strategies and the results showed that recasts were only effective for low anxiety learners and it helped them produce modified output and repair (uptake). The findings concluded that language anxiety influences interactional CF and language development. Similarly, Mackey (2006) found that anxiety prevents learners from both noticing recasts and producing a modified output.

In closing, the findings reported by the present study on both teachers’ and students’ attitudes towards corrective feedback are in agreement with previous studies conducted by Amador (2008), Katayama (2007), Lasagabaster and Sierra (2005), Lee (2008), Mackey et al. (2007), Schulz (2001), Zacharias (2007), and Zhang et al. (2010) who found that students preferred teacher’s CF for their oral errors.

**Preferred Error Types to be Corrected**

The participants in this study were asked to express their preferences for correction of various error types listed in two groups. The first group includes errors involving grammar, semantics, syntax, pronunciation, and vocabulary, whereas the second group includes error types relating to communication, discourse organization, pragmatics, and social interaction.

Students’ preferences for group one error types revealed the following pattern: grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, and semantics. As for the second category, most
students believe that errors relating to communication, discourse organization, pragmatics and social interaction should be corrected but not at the expense of the first group of classroom errors.

On the other hand, the results of teachers’ interviews revealed different patterns for error type preferences in group one from those of students. Most of the teachers believe that errors of semantics and pronunciation should receive more attention than other errors in this category. The findings showed the following order of preference: semantics, pronunciation, grammar, and syntax. For the second category, teachers preferred correcting errors pertaining to communication, discourse organization, pragmatics, and social interaction.

The fact that learners and teachers only slightly differ in their views on how much emphasis should be given to each error type also reflects the changing demands on learners at different levels of exposure to the target language. In the advanced ESL levels, both part and full time, Arab male students need to learn English to meet both academic and non academic needs. For the academic needs, they need to study English to complete the requirements of the program, specifically receiving a score of 550 in the TOEFL. The students have to pass the TOEFL test in order to be able to take additional academic courses. As a matter of fact, there are sections devoted entirely to grammar and vocabulary in this exam. As a result, Arab male students in this study contended that teachers should focus on learning grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary more than other language areas.
For the non academic needs, students in this ESL program demonstrated awareness of the importance of both form and meaning in learning L2. They find that these features help them to appropriately communicate, interact and negotiate with their new English-speaking community, including the educational culture of the institutions in which they are studying. Based on these benefits, such types of errors deserve equal attention because they frequently occur while learners are producing different aspects of the language such as writing and speaking. The reviewed literature showed that CF has a positive impact on improving students’ accuracy on certain targeted features, such as grammar, syntax and pronunciation (Zhang & Ma, 2010).

Logically, the emphasis of previous instructional practices influenced the students' perceptions. Concern for grammar and pronunciation was notable in most of the students’ responses. One of the students mentioned:

We have a limited time for studying English. Otherwise, our scholarships will be cancelled. For me, grammar and pronunciation are equally important. They help me communicate with my professors either orally or in a written way. I can’t imagine how a student in the future can do an assignment if he is not able to use the grammatical rules of the language correctly (S18, personal communication, November, 2011).

The students’ emphasis on correcting grammatical errors can also relate to personal factors including those learners’ beliefs about the manner of their instruction. These beliefs are normally based on previous educational background. This claim is supported by Lyster’s (2001) study which found that grammatical errors were the most frequent errors made by ESL learners. The findings of this study are also in agreement with the findings of Bang (1999) who found that ESL learners considered grammatical
and pronunciation errors to be the most important to correct. Similarly, Swain (2005) found that most of the instruction in EFL classes focuses on grammar.

Focused error correction was another important issue that emerged from the findings of the study. The interviewed participants in this study supported the idea of focused correction where teachers select the most serious errors that negatively affect communication and only correct them. This view is consistent with second language researchers who propose that correcting errors that hinder communication motivates learners to learn the target language (Burt, 1975). Ellis et al. (2008) mentioned that through focused correction, learners are more likely to attend to corrections directed at a single or a limited number of error type(s) and more likely to develop a clearer understanding of the error and the correction needed” (p. 356). Schmidt (2001) also emphasized that noticing and attention are necessary factors for L2 learning.

Thus, the focus on certain error types for correction can yield better results than unfocused CF as far as L2 learning is concerned. In addition, Sheen (2007) states that second language learners have limited processing abilities that prevent them from attending to a wide range of error correction. In short, a number of findings of research on oral feedback supported focused correction because it was consistently found to be more effective than unfocused correction (Bitchener et al., 2005; Ellis et al., 2006; Lyster, 2004).

Preferred CF Strategies

The findings of the study revealed in order of importance that metalinguistic, explicit feedback, and elicitation were the most preferred oral CF strategies for Arab male
students in the study setting. On the contrary, recasts were the most favored types of correction for teachers followed by elicitation strategies which include: repetition, clarification requests, and giving clues. In short, the findings indicated preference for explicit instruction more than implicit instruction.

Arab male students’ preference for explicit feedback in the form of metalinguistic and explicit correction can be partly attributed to the nature of each of these strategies and to the students’ perceptions of the usefulness and effectiveness of these strategies. In explicit correction, the teacher always provides learners with both positive and negative evidence by clearly indicating that the learner’s utterance is erroneous while in metalinguistic feedback the teachers only provide students with information that directs them to acceptable or well-formed utterances (Lyster & Ranta, 1997).

Explicit feedback always focuses on what is unacceptable in the target language. Thus, it provides learners with the rules that govern the target language. Although these strategies are not popular as compared to elicitation and recasts (Mackey, Oliver, & Leeman, 2003), they have proven to be effective both in teaching the forms of the language and in teaching adult learners. Both the examination of preferences and previous research indicated that explicit instruction can play a significant role in L2 learning (Hernández, 2008; Rosa & Leow, 2004).

Accordingly, Arab male students found that explicit correction is more appropriate and helpful for learning the linguistic features of the language than other types of correction. In addition, they found that this type of instruction encourages L2 learning and helps them gain more accuracy in specific areas of concern such as
pronunciation and grammar. One of the students explained the benefits of metalinguistic and explicit CF in the following way:

…Explaining helps me to understand the grammatical rules and makes additional examples using particular language rules. In this case, in the future I can depend on myself in correcting these errors without the assistance of teachers. I noticed that teachers do not explain the errors to students because they do not have enough time to do so there is usually a rule bound by rules and regulations and guidelines…( S16, personal communication, 2011).

Supporting the above perspectives, Schulz (2001) found that this type of CF is more useful for adult learners because it provides them with repeated practice in different language features. Similarly, Ellis, Basturkman and Loewen (2001b) claim that focus on form not only provides learners with opportunity to practice linguistic features of the language but also enables them to notice the actual functions of these features in authentic situations. They maintain that this form of instruction generally occurs while learners are attempting to create their interlanguage (IL) system.

The findings of the present study regarding oral CF strategies were similar to the findings of the study reported by Katayam (2007) which found that metalinguistics, recasts, elicitation and explicit correction were the most favored classroom correction types for university students in L2 learning. The main difference between Katayam’s study and the present study is that recast strategy in the former study was next to metalinguistic strategy in order of importance while in the present study, it ranked as the fourth favored correction type. In addition, the findings of this study support Kagimoto and Rodgers (2008) study which investigated a sample of university students’ perceptions of oral corrective feedback in English classes. Similarly, the findings showed that
metalinguistic feedback and explicit correction were the most commonly preferred and useful types of oral CF strategies.

Furthermore, the results of this study revealed that Arab male students perceived clarification and repetition as the least useful CF strategies. One explanation of this finding is that these strategies are implicit, and learners cannot easily notice them, and thus, students find it difficult to interpret the teacher’s correction. This view is supported by many researchers who found that students experience difficulty noticing implicit strategies. Finally, the findings of the present study support the findings of Kagimoto and Rodgers (2008), Katayam (2007), and Schulz (2001) which indicated that students’ and teachers’ preferences for oral CF strategies are significantly influenced by their perceptions of these strategies.

The difference between students’ and teachers’ preferences regarding CF strategies reflects the various needs of students at different levels while they are studying the target language. Students’ preferences for explicit instruction can be considered in relation to their current and future goals. Immediately, students were concerned about correcting their grammatical errors because they affect their academic performance. In response to this concern, Ellis (1996) suggested that advanced speaking and writing proficiency, necessary for achievement of students’ academic and professional goals, may require explicit form focused instruction.

Therefore, it is reasonable for Arab male students to search for the strategies that will help them reduce the occurrence of these errors in both their writing and speaking. The importance of these strategies relates to the students’ perceptions of their usefulness.
and to what extent they serve to aid in reaching short and long term objectives.

Accordingly, Katayam (2007) indicated that students’ and teachers’ preferences for oral CF strategies are usually influenced by their perceptions of the usefulness of these strategies.

One crucial point further related to this discussion is how both teachers and students stressed the importance of self-correction techniques for learning the target language. According to them, this technique increases learners’ awareness and autonomy. In addition, self-correction techniques help in consolidating L2 learning, promoting self-learning and noticing one’s errors. This view is expressed by the following student’s response:

I think this is a good strategy teachers should adopt in correcting their students’ errors because it promotes the idea of self learning. Besides, it is not easy for learners to forget the errors they have discovered and corrected themselves (S1, personal communication, October, 2011).

One interpretation of students’ and teachers’ preferences for self-correction techniques is that teachers want to help students become self-reliant and be able to independently correct their mistakes. This view is supported by the literature through the emphasis of many studies on the teachers’ responsibility to expose learners to a wide range of strategies to accommodate for different needs. Basturkmen et al. (2004) reported that self-correction techniques are important if they are used along with other corrective feedback strategies.

In closing, the previously discussed results were consistent across the methods used in this study. However, in a few exceptions, the findings of the observations and the focus group were not in agreement with the ones produced by individual interviews. For
example, the observation method revealed that one of the teacher’s actual practices in the classroom contradicted what was expressed earlier in the initial interviews. The participant teacher mentioned a preference for using recast strategies to correct learners’ errors while actually employing metalinguistic and explicit strategies in the classroom. The findings of the focus group reported a similar inconsistency. One of the students provided responses regarding anxiety and selectivity of errors different from the ones mentioned in the individual interview.

One interpretation of the above discrepancies is that human behaviours, reactions and practices toward a particular phenomenon are changeable and cannot be interpreted with absolute certainty. Thus, it is logical to expect that the interviewee participants may give different responses to the same phenomenon on two different occasions (Browne, 2011).

A possible interpretation of the teacher’s divergent practices is that the teacher is aware of the many complex issues relating to CF including the contextual factors that influence the feedback provision in the classroom. Accordingly, the teacher realized that recasts may not be the appropriate CF strategy to employ in this particular classroom. Since there is no one strategy that works all the time in all classes with all students, it might be more useful for students if the teacher employs a variety of correction types to meet different students’ preferences in the classroom. This logic leads to the conclusion that CF demands a thoughtful and considerate approach on the teacher’s part as well as interaction and cooperation from the student.
Furthermore, the observations of a few classes revealed that the students were not always able to recognize the interactional CF moves or exchanges used by teachers. Most of the reviewed studies showed that interactional CF should be explicit to trigger learners’ noticing, and this prompting should be the central role of any CF during the learning process. Implicit CF, in contrast, has been shown to be ineffective in many of these studies. In this case, the teacher usually indicates that a part of the utterance or the entire utterance is unacceptable by using intonation. Thus, they cannot be easily noticed by learners (Ellis et al., 2006).

The above examples showed that the use of data triangulation is an important research technique and provides the researcher with opportunity to look at the phenomenon from multiple perspectives and collect differing viewpoints while examining the consistency of the findings. Triangulation of data is critical to the credibility of qualitative research and researchers should always take into account that there is no fixed or objective truth which researchers can use as a criterion to compare and evaluate their findings. As suggested by a number of qualitative researchers, interpretive studies are closely connected with looking for and collecting multiple versions of reality (Flick, 2002; Silverman, 2006).

**Importance of CF for Meaningful Communication**

Arab male students’ preferences for correcting grammatical and pronunciation errors reflect these students’ need to produce accurate and well-formed sentences which they consider a prerequisite for achieving their academic goals as well as attaining social acceptance in the community they are living. In view of the preference for correcting
these errors, Arab male students perceive learning the target language not only as understanding a large number of grammatical rules but also as a tool for meaningful communication. They contend that it is necessary for second language learners to understand social interactions in the host culture to become familiar with pertinent cultural and linguistic aspects of that community.

This view is endorsed by Ellis (2008) who states that languages should be primarily viewed as tools for achieving communication, not as units which are subjected to various analyses. The students as well as the teachers in this study indicate that correcting errors is necessary because the primary goal of language is communication, and through communication, people can interact with each other, share new ideas and learn what is appropriate in the target language.

The students’ emphasis on correcting specific error types pertaining to communication demonstrates a greater need for immersion in social activities and learning about the culture and traditions of the native speakers to avoid any misconception likely to occur either through the students’ interaction with their teachers or with their new environment. All of these issues might be listed under the general term, the interpersonal dimension of the language (Vygotsky, 1986).

This social issue has a direct connection with the non academic goals of L2 learners. According to Bandura, learning occurs when one observes the behavior of others and follows their models (Bandura, 1986). In this regard, he states, “Fortunately, most human behavior is learned observationally through modeling: from observing
others, one forms an idea of how new behaviors are performed, and on later occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action" (Bandura, 1977, p. 22).

Thus, Bandura focuses on learning that occurs within a social context, where people learn from one another using observation, imitation and modeling. Bandura claims that modeling can provide a faster and a more efficient means for teaching a new behavior. Figure 3 represents the multidirectional relationship between students’ needs and demands and their preferences of oral correction based on the findings of this study.

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 3**: Diagrammatic Relationship between Students’ Needs and their Preferences

*Source*: Generated from the data

**Conclusions**

This section presents the major findings and the conclusions of the study. This study contributes to existing research on CF providing a major focus on understanding
and exploring Arab male students’ preferences for oral correction. The first finding revealed that the majority of Arab male students in advanced ESL have positive attitudes towards teacher’s oral feedback. One conclusion drawn from this finding is that Arab male students who study in the advanced ESL program consider oral CF to be a necessary part of the learning process and central for learning L2. Another related conclusion is that teachers’ understanding of students’ beliefs, attitudes, motivation and educational background should be viewed as equally important as the L2 curriculum for achieving effective learning.

The second finding was that the majority of students reported that errors relating to grammar should receive more attention than any other error type followed by pronunciation and vocabulary. In contrast, most of the teachers believe that errors of semantics and pronunciation should receive more attention than other errors. The findings showed that most of the students and teachers believe that errors pertaining to communication, discourse organization, pragmatics and social interaction should be corrected if they impede meaning. In other words, students prefer focusing on certain specific types of errors. The following can be drawn from this finding: first, there is a mismatch between students’ preferences and expectations and teachers’ interpretations. Another germane conclusion drawn from this finding is that oral error correction should be directed to serve learners’ actual needs in order to help them achieve their educational and social objectives. A further conclusion follows that Arab male students are concerned about both fluency and accuracy due to the priority of passing the TOEFL exam within
their academic schedules. Thus, international students have to focus on the pertinent parts of the exam.

The third finding was that the most preferable oral CF strategies in order of importance for students were: metalinguistic, explicit feedback, and elicitation. On the contrary, recasts, elicitation and explicit feedback were the most favored types of correction for teachers. These findings demonstrate the conclusion that there is a mismatch between teachers’ and students’ viewpoints regarding the appropriateness and usefulness of CF strategies. This mismatch indicates that each group has its own reasons and justification for favoring certain strategies.

The last major finding was that Arab male students perceived oral error correction as a means through which they can achieve meaningful communication. Therefore, they are eager to learn how they can better immerse themselves in the host culture. Another conclusion is that Arab male students prefer explicit instruction which merges meaning and form over other types of error correction. In this context, social norms usually provide models of socially acceptable behaviors which people learn through interaction with other people.

In summary, the study revealed that there was a difference between students’ preferences and expectations and teachers’ instructional practices and preferences in the classroom. While teachers support the approach that grammar should be taught communicatively by using task-based activities, students further add that there should be a focus on form in addition to meaning. The main cause for this discrepancy can be related to teachers’ beliefs that the communicative approach unquestioningly is the best
technique to develop learners’ fluency and thus, students should inductively learn grammatical rules. Another possible reason for the difference in preference is that teachers may not be aware of students’ actual needs and objectives in this advanced level of ESL instruction.

Research studies in the field of second language acquisition reveal that the mismatch between the teaching practices in instructional settings and students’ preferred teaching techniques or learning styles has a negative impact on both the process of acquiring L2 and on students’ attitudes towards learning the target language (Hawkey, 2006; Schulz, 2001). Essentially, in order for L2 education to be successful, teachers should consider students’ needs and preferences for particular instructional strategies.

To avoid such mismatch between teachers’ intentions and learners’ interpretations, Han (2002) suggests that teachers should understand and view students’ errors as a natural product of learning. This approach helps in creating positive attitudes towards making and correcting errors. Successful instruction needs to be not only effective, but also efficient and should provide students with a safe, comfortable and productive environment for acquiring the target language. Finally, teachers should not view CF as a panacea (cure-all) that will eliminate all of their students’ errors and thereby leading to error-free classroom activities.

Implications

Several implications for methodology and teacher education programs emerged from the findings and the conclusions. The discussion of findings in the previous section
turns attention to specific suggestions for ESL programs, ESL teachers and future L2 studies.

**Implications for Methodology**

Using multiple qualitative research methods, specifically interviews, observations and a focus group was not only helpful to compare and contrast the different views and beliefs of the participants about CF but also to observe the influence of these beliefs on the interviewees’ behaviors in a natural context.

The use of these methods in combination to comprehend a complex phenomenon like CF made it possible to understand the influence of psychological, cognitive and social factors on students’ and teachers’ perceptions. Since oral CF is a two way process between a giver and a receiver which is affected by social dynamics, interaction, personality traits and the surrounding environment, the above tools contributed to the observation and understanding of these social interactions and provided a basis for a detailed description about the students’ perceptions and reactions to oral CF. Using a back and forth technique during conversational interaction with participants helped the researcher to delve deeper into responses given by the interviewees.

These techniques helped to untangle complex topics which needed more clarification. The capability of these methods to produce higher response rates makes it possible to clarify the effect of specific variables on L2 learning. A 150-page transcription of students’ and teachers’ responses provided a better understanding of Arab male students’ perceptions of oral correction. This data contains information about various issues relating to oral correction which can be of importance in future studies. For
instance, the collected data can be used for future research investigating the impact of anxiety on students’ perceptions of CF.

In the present study, the clarification of any ambiguities related to interview answers helped to explore the topic deeper and provide thorough explanations and descriptions about the participants’ perceptions. For example, the learners’ lack of knowledge about pragmatics indicated that students are not exposed enough to speech or language functions in different contexts. Moreover, these methods helped to gain significant insights into international students’ perceptions and preferences for CF. These insights can be informative and instructive in other settings although this was not the main purpose of the study.

**Implications for ESL/EFL Teacher Education**

The current study has many implications for teacher education programs. First, both student teachers and experienced teachers should be provided with the most recent findings of oral CF research, particularly those examining students’ perceptions and beliefs about CF strategies and error types. It is essential that novice teachers receive adequate training on how to appropriately employ different CF strategies in the classroom. Moreover, teacher education preparation programs should include courses for new teachers with sufficient information about providing CF in the classroom.

Secondly, due to the limited time of exposure to the target language in most instructional setting, teachers can make use of CF to promote L2 learning and compensate for this missing aspect. Through interactional CF, learners can negotiate meaning and achieve better understanding. Thirdly, teachers’ preparation programs
should provide ESL teachers with sufficient experience for teaching international students because teaching those students requires culturally and linguistically responsive teachers (Zhao, 2010). Therefore, it is important that teacher education programs focus on providing pre-service teachers with cross-cultural experiences. By this means, teachers should be able to relate instruction to the cultural background, personal learning styles, and future needs of their students.

Finally, teachers should be trained on how to recognize and critically reflect on their own beliefs, attitudes, and practices. It is necessary for teachers to have a positive disposition toward examining their current teaching practices and choices of CF strategies. Teacher education programs should ultimately focus on promoting and developing teacher candidates’ intercultural competence by encouraging student teaching experiences overseas.

**Suggestions for ESL Programs**

It would be beneficial for students that ESL programs constantly evaluate the efficacy of currently used strategies and those proposed in current research. The main purpose behind this ongoing assessment is to prepare competent ESL/EFL teachers who are able to work with students from different ethnic and linguistic environments. This ongoing evaluation can be done by creating formative and summative assessments.

ESL programs should focus on setting specific objectives to be achieved throughout and by the end of each quarter. The goal of these objectives would be to accommodate students’ demands in phonology and overcome their difficulties in this area. This plan would be more effective by assigning students to tutors in pronunciation
labs who are familiar with students’ actual needs and who are able to track the weaknesses and progress in specific language areas.

It is important that ESL programs routinely survey international students’ perceptions and attitudes and provide reports to instructors about these attitudes prior to the beginning of any course work. As demonstrated by L2 research, neglecting students’ expectations may negatively affect their motivation towards learning the target language. The positive ESL classrooms should encourage international students, including Arab graduate students, to develop greater self-esteem and self-confidence for active oral participation in their academic courses and beyond.

**Suggestions for ESL/EFL Teachers**

The finding of the study provides specific implications and suggestions for ESL instruction for male Arab students.

1. Students’ beliefs are considered conducive and central to L2 learning and affect their motivation as well as their preferences for certain instructional strategies (McCargar, 1993). For this reason, teachers should take into account these beliefs and design classroom activities that match them.

2. It is recommended that ESL teachers survey and analyze their students’ actual demands, needs, and expectations in light of their levels of exposure to English and their cultural backgrounds. These variables affect the provision of oral correction in the classroom and the appropriateness and effectiveness of the decisions made by teachers regarding oral CF.
3. Both EFL and ESL teachers should modify their teaching practices to meet L2 learners’ needs and objectives.

4. Teachers should use various types of feedback to facilitate the effects of error correction and promote language learning.

5. Teachers’ choice of CF strategies should help students improve their speaking skills. Thus, it is essential that teachers focus on certain preferred types of CF and avoid constant error correction to encourage learners to actively engage in classroom activities in order to reduce the amount of anxiety that might result from oral correction.

6. Teachers should encourage learners to experience various types of spoken activities. To do so, learners should be provided with a comfortable and encouraging classroom environment.

7. Since the findings of the study revealed that students prefer self-correction techniques, teachers need to encourage these techniques among students.

8. Teachers should always remember that CF is a two way process between the teacher and a learner and its success depends largely on teachers’ understanding of learners’ needs and expectations (Han, 2001).

**Suggestions for Future Research**

While the current study focused on investigating students’ preference at advanced levels, there are a number of ways to expand the scope of similar research in the future. This continuation can be done either by using the already collected data of this study or using a new data set.
1. Since there are a limited number of studies investigated Arab students’ attitudes and preferences for oral error correction, more replicated studies are needed to reaffirm and further validate the findings of the current study as well the few previous studies.

2. It is recommended that future researchers focus on investigating Arab students’ preferences regarding error correction at different levels such as beginner and intermediate to determine those learners’ needs during their early exposure to the target language.

3. More research is needed to investigate the effect of cross-cultural differences on students’ attitudes and preferences. This global perspective can be achieved by conducting studies with students from different cultural background and making comparisons between their preferences and attitudes.

4. Future research should be directed to study the individual differences among ESL teachers such as age, gender, education, beliefs and their impact on teachers’ preferences for different CF strategies.

5. This study should be replicated with EFL students to examine whether students’ attitudes and preferences are influenced by contextual variables including teachers’ background.

6. Further research should investigate students’ preferences regarding error types to examine the effect of the TOEFL exam on students’ preferences. In addition, researchers should conduct studies at universities in which TOEFL is not a requirement for academic admission.
7. Finally, since this study is limited to explore only male Arab students’
preference for oral CF, more research is needed to examine Arab female
preferences in this context or similar contexts.
References


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Explicitness &amp; Implicitness</th>
<th>CF Mode</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Implicit</td>
<td>1- Recast</td>
<td>T. indicates indirectly that the learner’s utterance is incorrect and needs either to reformulate the erroneous part or the whole utterance without changing the meaning.</td>
<td>S: He goes shopping last week. T: He went. Yes, he went shopping last week.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2- Repetition</td>
<td>T. repeats the learner’s erroneous utterance focusing on the error with emphasis.</td>
<td>S: She goes to bed early last night. T: GOES? S: She went.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3- Clarification request</td>
<td>T. notifies the learner’s explicitly that an utterance is not understood and needs correction or (rephrasing). T. supplies the learner with either the correct utterance or helps in identifying the error.</td>
<td>A car is needed by a man with a red color. T: What?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4- Paralinguistic signs</td>
<td>T. uses a body language or nonverbal language such as gestures, facial expression or pitch to inform the learners about an error</td>
<td>S: I visit London two years ago. T. uses gestures to tell the learners that this action took place in the past.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5- Translation</td>
<td>T. asks the learners to translate utterance into another language or translates learners L1 utterances into the target language.</td>
<td>Al Salam Alykom Peace be upon you.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix A: Corrective Feedback Strategies
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Explicit</th>
<th>6- Explicit Correction</th>
<th>7- Elicitation</th>
<th>8- Metalinguistic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T. directly indicates that the learner’s utterance is unacceptable and supplies the correct form.</td>
<td>S: She is afraid from dogs. T: No, we say afraid of dogs.</td>
<td>T: elicits the correct form from learners by asking questions, pausing or by using intonation. The instructor may repeat a part of learner’s utterance.</td>
<td>S: I have live in Athens since 1991. T: Is it correct to say “have live” T: clue (past participle) S: I have lived.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>S: My brother doesn’t like travelling on sea. T: my brother doesn’t like travelling S: On sea? T: we say …………..</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B: Interviews’ Questions in Arabic and English

1- Students’ Questions

The first set of questions contains prompts to investigate learners’ opinions about the correction of errors in the classroom. These questions are designed to address different perspectives regarding this issue such as whether or not learners’ errors should be corrected, how they should be corrected (selectively or constantly), and who should correct these errors.

1. Could you please describe your class?

2. How did you feel about speaking in your class?

3. Did you receive corrective feedback in your class? If yes can you give an example?

4. How did the feedback make you feel?

5. Do you agree/disagree that error corrections raise learners’ anxiety?

6. Should teachers focus on errors that pertain to communication? Why?

7. Some believe that “The correction of error helps teachers to know more about their students’ learning styles.” What do you think?

8. Is it necessary for teachers to correct every error? Why?

9. Are you for or against correcting learners’ errors at all? Why?

10. Should teachers encourage self-correction techniques? Why?

11. Does error correction help learners to improve their spoken English? Why?
The second set of questions contains prompts designed to point out learners’ preferences for classroom error corrections of different aspects of language such as grammar, phonology, vocabulary and pragmatics.

1. Should teacher correct errors that interfere with discourse organization? Why?

2. Should teachers correct all of these errors or some of them for example, grammatical errors, syntactic errors, semantic errors or pronunciation errors?

3. Can you give me an example about the corrective feedback you receive?

4. “Teachers should correct phonological errors only (stress, intonation, etc)” What is your opinion regarding this?

5. Should teachers concentrate on vocabulary choice errors? Why?

6. Could you please reflect on this statement —“Teachers should always correct errors related to pragmatics?”

7. Should teachers focus on errors that interfere with social interaction?

The last part of the questionnaire includes items that are designed to obtain get information from learners about their favorite methods of correction.

1. What is your opinion regarding these issues: the teacher should ignore students’ errors, the teacher should provide the correct response or a part of the response?

2. Do you think that teachers should point out the error and provide the correct response or elicit the correct answer from other students?

3. What do you prefer your teacher to do regarding your errors, to indicate the error by using gestures or facial expressions, or give a clue to help you notice the error?
4. What is more beneficial, in terms of error correction, the teacher asks students to repeat the utterance or the teacher explains why the response is incorrect?

5. Do you like your teacher to repeat your utterance up to the error and then wait for your self-correction? Why?

6. Do you think it is necessary for a teacher to explain why the response is incorrect?
Interview Questions in Arabic

1. هل تستطيع أن تصف لي غرفة صفك أو الغرفة التي تدرس فيها (your class)?
2. ما هو اتطباعك أو شعورك عن المحادثة في غرفة الصف?
3. هل يقوم المدرسون بتقديم أخطاء؟ هل تستطيع أن تعطي مثالا؟
4. كيف تشعر أو ما هو شعورك عندما يقوم المدرسون بتقديم أخطاء؟
5. هل تتفق مع أولاً أن تكون محادثة أخطاء الطالب يزيد من القلق عند المتعلمين؟
6. هل يجب على المدرسين التركيز على الأخطاء التي لها علاقة بالتواصل (Communication) مع الآخرين؟
7. البعض يعتقد أن تصحيح أخطاء الطلاب يساعد المدرسين على فهم أنماط التعلم (learning styles) المفضلة عند طلابهم؟ ما رأيك؟
8. هل من الضروري أن يتصحيح المدرسون كل الأخطاء؟ هل تتفق مع ضد تصحيح أخطاء الطلاب مطلقًا ولماذا؟
9. هل يجب على المدرسين أن يشعروا الطلاب على تصحيح أخطاءهم بنفسهم (self-correction) ولماذا؟
10. هل يصح تصحيح الأخطاء يساعد المدرسين على تحسين مهارة المحادثة (Speaking) لدى الطلاب؟
11. هل يجب على المدرسين تصحيح الأخطاء التي تؤثر على تنظيم الحوار والمحادثة (discourse organization)?

1. هل يجب على المدرسين تصحيح جميع هذه الأخطاء، أو فقط الأخطاء النحوية أو التي لها علاقة بتكليب الجملة أو باللفظ أو المعنى؟
2. هل يجب على المدرسين تصحيح الأخطاء التي لها علاقة باللفظ مثل ما هو رأيك؟
3. هل يجب على المدرسين التركيز على الأخطاء التي لها علاقة باختيار الكلمة المناسبة؟ ولماذا؟
4. هل من الممكن أن تعقب على هذه العبارة: يجب على المدرسين دائماً تصحيح الأخطاء التي تعرّض لطريقة الحوار (pragmatics) ونقل المعنى المقصود للآخرين أثناء النقاش (و خاصة وأن هذا الفرع من اللغويات بهتم بطريقة استخدام اللغة في التفاعلات الاجتماعية وبالطرق التي من خلالها يقومون بعمل جملهم وفهم المعنى من خلال استخدام اللغة). هل يجب على المدرسين التركيز على الأخطاء التي تؤثر على أو تداخل مع التفاعل الاجتماعي (social interaction)?

1. ما هو رأيك في هذه القضايا (issues): يجب على المدرسين أحم أخطاء الطلاب، يجب على المدرسین تزويد الطلاب بالإجابة الصحيحة أو جزء من الإجابة؟
2. هل تعتقد أن بحث المدرس يوجه إلى الخطأ وتزويد الطلاب بالإجابة الصحيحة أو فقط أخذ الإجابة الصحيحة من الطلاب؟
3. فيما يتعلق بالأخطاء، هل تفضل أن يقوم المدرسون بالإشارة إلى الأخطاء عن طريق ماذا تفضل أن يعمل المدرسون استخدام تعبير الوجه (facial expression) أو إعطاء الطلاب موثر لمساعدة ملاحظة الخطأ؟
4. ما هو أكثر فائدة بالنسبة لتصحيح الأخطاء أن يسأل المدرس الطلاب إعادة الجملة أو أن يقوم المدرس بشرح لماذا كانت الإجابة غير صحيحة؟

5. هل تحب أن يقوم المدرس بإعادة الجملة التي عملتها إلى عند الخطأ وينتظر بعدها لتقوم بتصحيح نفسك؟ ولماذا؟

6. هل تعتقد أنه من الضروري أن يقوم المدرس بشرح لماذا كانت الإجابة غير صحيحة؟ ولماذا؟
2- Teachers’ Questions

The first set of questions contains prompts to investigate teachers’ opinions about the correction of errors in the classroom. These questions are designed to address different perspectives regarding this issue, such as whether or not learners’ errors should be corrected, how they should be corrected (selectively or constantly), and who should correct these errors.

1. Should teachers focus on errors that pertain to communication?
2. Is it necessary for teachers to correct every error?
3. Does teacher feedback help learners improve their spoken English? Why?
4. Are you for or against correcting learners’ errors at all? Why?
5. Some believe that –The correction of error helps teachers to know more about their students’ learning styles.” What do you think?
7. Do you agree/disagree that error corrections raise learners’ anxiety?

The second set of questions contains prompts designed to point out teachers’ preferences for classroom error correction of different aspects of language, such as grammar, phonology, vocabulary and pragmatics.

8. Should teachers correct errors that interfere with discourse organization? Why?
9. Should teachers correct all of these errors or some of them: grammatical errors, syntactic errors, semantic errors or pronunciation errors?
10. “Teachers should correct phonological errors only (stress, intonation, etc)”

What is your opinion regarding this view?

11. Should teachers concentrate on vocabulary choice errors? Why?

12. Could you please reflect on this statement — “Teachers should always correct errors related to pragmatics?”

13. Should teachers focus on errors that interfere with social interaction?

The last set of questions includes items that are designed to get information from teachers about their favorite method of correction.

14. What is your opinion regarding these issues: the teacher should ignore students’ errors, the teacher should provide the correct response or a part of the response?

15. Do you think that teachers should point out the error and provide the correct response or elicit the correct answer from other students?

16. What do you prefer as a teacher to do regarding learners’ errors, to indicate the error by using gestures or facial expressions, or to give a clue to help you notice the error?

17. What is more beneficial, in terms of error correction, the teacher asks students to repeat the utterance or the teacher explains why the response is incorrect?

18. Do you like as a teacher to repeat the learner’s utterance up to the error and then wait for self-correction? Why?

19. Do you think it is necessary for a teacher to explain why the response is incorrect?
Appendix C: Focus Interview Questions and Protocols

My name is Qutaiba Abukhadrah. I am a doctoral student in the teacher education department in the curriculum and instruction. I am writing my dissertation on “Arab Male Students’ Preferences for Oral Corrective Feedback” in English as a second language programs. I appreciate your coming and agreement to take part in this study. In this session, you will discuss and talk about your experience, attitudes, and perceptions about corrective feedback. Please feel free to openly express your opinion. There will be no true/false answers. Your comments, ideas and thoughts on the questions will definitely enrich this study. This session will approximately last for 45-60 minutes and your answers will be recorded and later analyzed to get answers to the question of the study. Your names will not appear in the published analyses, instead they will be replaced by codes. Participation in the present study is completely voluntary. Again thank you for your time. Here are the questions you are going to answer. Please try to be focused and provide relevant comments and reflections on these questions.

1. What types of errors do you like your teachers to focus on and correct? Why?
2. How do your teachers usually correct each type of these errors?
3. What is your opinion regarding oral corrective feedback in the classroom?
4. Can you discuss a situation where you preferred teachers to differently correct you?
5. What are the most favorite strategy/strategies you prefer your teachers to use while correcting your errors?
6. Do you think that your teachers are consistent and provide sufficient correction?

If you understand and agree to taking part in this study, please sign below.

Name: ______________________
Signature: ______________________ Date: _________________________
Appendix D: Focus Group (Consensus Matrix)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>S1</th>
<th>S2</th>
<th>S3</th>
<th>S4</th>
<th>S5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-Types of errors teachers should focus on</td>
<td>A1</td>
<td>A1</td>
<td>A1</td>
<td>A2</td>
<td>A1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-Methods teachers use to correct oral errors</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3- Opinions regarding CF</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-Prior experience relevant to CF</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5- Preferable types of error correction</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6- Teachers’ consistency of providing oral correction</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A1: refers to grammatical and pronunciation errors
A2: refers to other types of errors

B: The most salient strategy is providing part of the response or the complete response.
C: Important and useful

D: Relevant stories for correcting errors related to different experiences at the university and high school mostly focused on errors related to grammar and pronunciation.
E: Showing and explaining the error.
F: No

*Source:* Adapted from Onwuegbuzie et al. (2010, p. 250).
Appendix E: Classrooms Observation Checklist

Teacher: --------------------------- Level: --------------------------- Date: ---------------
Time: --------------------------- Topic: --------------------------- Place: ---------------

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Classroom Setting**

1. The classroom setting is encouraging, supportive and comfortable.
2. Classrooms are well prepared for ESL students.
3. Teachers and students have a good relationship.

**Attitudes Towards CF**

1. Both students and teachers have positive attitudes towards CF.
2. Students only have positive attitudes towards CF.
3. Teachers only have positive attitudes towards CF.
4. Students can easily recognize teacher’s CF.
5. Students feel comfortable to T’s CF.
6. Teacher’s corrective feedback is formative
7. Teacher’s CF is summative.
8. Teachers CF help learners recognize and identify their errors.

**Types of Error Correction**

1. **Group(1)**
   1. Teachers focus on the following errors:
      - Grammar
      - Pronunciation
      - Syntax
      - Semantics
      - Vocabulary

2. **Group(2)**
   - Teachers focus mainly on the following:
     - Communication errors
     - Social interaction
     - Pragmatics
     - Organization
     - Phonological errors

**Types of Correction**

1. Teachers depend on using explicit strategies:
   - Metalinguistic
   - Explicit correction

2. Teacher rely on implicit strategies:
   - Recast
   - Elicitation
   - Repetition
   - Paralinguistic clues
Appendix F: A log of Journal

A sample of a log of the interviews and anecdotal observations made during the question and answer sessions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>Interview time</th>
<th>Observation time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td></td>
<td>25.57 minutes</td>
<td>45 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td></td>
<td>36:05 minutes</td>
<td>40 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td></td>
<td>28:54 minutes</td>
<td>55 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td></td>
<td>22:41 minutes</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td></td>
<td>1:03:04 minutes</td>
<td>42 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td></td>
<td>1:01:04 minutes</td>
<td>45 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td></td>
<td>30:49 minutes</td>
<td>40 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td></td>
<td>26:13 minutes</td>
<td>50 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td></td>
<td>25 minutes</td>
<td>50 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td></td>
<td>22 minutes</td>
<td>40 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Journal entry, Teacher 1**

**Date of Interview: 10.30 am – 030.09.2011**

Teacher 1 believes that corrective feedback is necessary in the classroom because it is a process that allows students to understand what is and what is not possible in a second language. According to him, it is the teacher’s responsibility to provide students with the necessary strategies to help them fix their errors. I learned from him that teachers should encourage self-correction techniques and correct errors that affect meaning. Teacher 1 was enthusiastic, kind, helpful and welcomed me to observe any one of his classes. Teacher 1 favored strategies such as elicitation, self-correction, and providing learners with a part of response or a clue. He preferred that the teachers focus on pronunciation and grammatical errors.
Journal entry, Teacher 2  
*Date of Interview: 2.30 pm – 30.09.2011*

T 2 believes that corrective feedback is an important technique because it helps learners be aware of the deficiencies in their interlanguage. He believes that helping learners to notice their errors is important because it encourages them to acquire the native grammar. He believes that teachers should focus on semantics errors then semantic and syntactic errors. He expressed favor for the elicitation strategy because it enables learners to negotiate the meaning among themselves. He also expressed preference for facial expression and gestures as techniques used by teachers to signal learners’ errors. According to him, teachers should explain the incorrect response to students because this helps in developing learners’ metacognitive skills.

Journal entry, Teacher 3  
*Date of Interview: 2.30 pm – 20.10.2011*

Teacher 3 supports the use of corrective feedback in instructional settings. He believes that it is essential for teachers to encourage learners to take ownership of their English and of their learning as well. According to him, teachers should repair communication breakdowns. A classroom should be a culture of learning in which learners work together. Teacher 3 believes that teachers should focus on pronunciation and semantic errors. In addition, teachers should correct errors relating to social interaction because learners should learn how to socially communicate with people in the host culture. Finally, teacher 3 preferred using clue, repetition and explanation strategies for error correction.

Journal entry, Teacher 4  
*Date of Interview: 10.00 pm – 30.10.2011*

Teacher 4 believes that teachers should focus on and correct all errors that get in the way of meaning despite their aspects and types. Teacher 4 was against excessive correction of errors because he claims that overuse of correction may get in the way of communication in the target language. According to him, corrective feedback might be helpful and effective if it is given in a timely way and targeted to develop oral interaction. Not only should corrective feedback be effective but also efficient. Teacher 4 believes strongly that learners need corrective feedback. For this, teachers should encourage learners to become familiar with various types of corrective feedback strategies such as elicitation, self correction, and providing learners with a part of the response. He believes that teachers should encourage learners to be risk takers and discover issues about the language themselves. Teachers should work out these strategies with their students. He believes that correcting errors related to pragmatics is essential because half of language acquisition is pragmatics. T4 stated that correcting semantic errors is very important. Finally, T4 believes that using body language as a corrective strategy is not helpful because they are often ambiguous and students are in need of something which is clear.
Journal entry, Teacher 5  
Date of Interview: 12.00 pm – 01.11.2011

Teacher 5 had a positive attitude toward corrective feedback. She believes that all modes of corrective feedback are necessary. It helps learners to notice their errors and correct them. In terms of corrective feedback strategies, teacher 5 was in favor of some corrective feedback strategies such as self correction, elicitation, giving a clue and repetition. These strategies encourage learners to correct themselves when the teacher is not available. In other words, it encourages students to be independent learners. Teacher 5 believes that L2 learners should be exposed to social activities to understand the culture of the target language. Providing corrective feedback is an important part of a teacher’s job. Teacher 5 asked me to provide her with the findings of this study because she was eager to know how students and teachers perceive this technique. In addition, she would like to know more about learners’ as well teachers’ preferences.
Appendix G: Sample of Transcription and Translation

1. **Could you please describe your class?**

   It is a small class in terms of the number of students. There is a computer, internet access and overhead projector. We are only 10 students. I like it because every student has to take part in the discussion. The teacher always encourages us to speak. She is very friendly and supportive. Students have a good relationship with the teacher and among themselves. The teacher treats us as one family.

2. **How did you feel about speaking in your class?**

   Speaking is very important. For this our teachers always try to help us to discuss activities in groups or pairs.

3. **Did you receive corrective feedback in your class? If yes, can you give an example?**

   Yes, our teacher always corrects us, especially when we produce some ungrammatical sentences or pronounce words in a wrong way. Last week I pronounced a word incorrectly. The teacher asked me to repeat the sentence, but when she realized that I’m not able to correct myself, she corrected my sentence.
3. How did the feedback make you feel?

I mentioned in the first question that we have a good relationship with each other, so I didn’t feel embarrassed or shy when the teacher corrects my errors.

4. Do you agree/disagree that error corrections raise learners’ anxiety?

As a former teacher and a current student, I think students come to classrooms to learn. Following this widely accepted view, they will make errors and learn, and this in turn doesn’t make them feel inferior to their peers or at least doesn’t embarrass them.

4. هل يقوم المدرسون بتصحيح أخطاءك؟ هل تستطيع أن تعطي مثالًا؟

3. كيف تشعرأ ما هو شعورك عندما يقوم المدرسون بتصحيح أخطاءك؟

كما ذكرت سابقاً، الشعور بالإرتياح داخل الصف وعلاقتنا جيدة بالمدرس فلذلك لا يشعر بالخجل أو بالإرحاح عندما يصحح المدرس أخطائنا. بالنسبة لي، تصبح أخطاء الطلاب ضروري ويساعدون على عدم تكرار الخطأ في المستقبل، وذلك معرفة السبب من وراء استخدام قواعد اللغة. أنا أعتقد ما أنني أتعلم لغة جديدة سوف أواجه صعوبات وذلك يجب على المدرس أن يساعدني ويصحح أخطائي. أعتقد إذا لم يصحح المدرس أخطائي لا أستطيع أن أعرف إذا كانت الإجابة التي أكتبها أو أتكلمها صحيحة أم لا. هذا رأي لاتنني كنت ادرس وأعرف أن النسبة العظمى من الطلاب فضلون أن يقوم المدرس بتصحيح أخطائهن.

4. هل تتفق أو لا تتفق مع بان تصحيح أخطاء الطلاب يزيد من الفلق عند المتعلمين؟

بالنسبة ليلا أشعر بالانزعاج أو متررت عندما يصحح المدرس أخطائي لأنني افترض أن شئ طبيعي أن أخطئ الطالب. بالواقع هذا الموضوع يعتمد على إشراك كثيرة من الطالب نفسه وحيلته وكذلك البيئة التي نشأ فيها وكذلك الطرق التي يتعامل فيها المدرس مع الطالب وقدرة هذا المدرس على أحداث بينة تعليمية مناسبة يشعر جميع الطلاب فيها بالارتياح. لقد عملت في التدريس والآن أنا طالب اعتقد أن الطلاب جاء لي هنا كي يتعلم ولذلك من المنطقي أن يخطئ هنالك معرفة عليه ذلك يجب على الطلاب أن لايشرو بأن مستواهم الأكاديمي أقل من زملائهم إذا أثرتب أخطاء أثناء تعلمهم لهذه اللغة. ربما يوجد بعض الطلاب الذين يشرون بالإرحاح عندما يخطئون لا أدرى.
5. Should teachers focus on errors that pertain to communication? Why?

I think such types of errors are important because most native speakers can better understand the utterances that are similar to theirs.

6. Some believe that “The correction of error helps teachers to know more about their students’ learning styles.” What do you think?

Not necessarily because in every classroom there are a number of students. Therefore, it is not easy for a teacher to remember every student’s learning/teaching style. Maybe, in time it is possible for teachers to recognize such styles and whether they suit their students or not.

7. Is it necessary for teachers to correct every error? Why?

In my opinion, correcting all the errors is time consuming. I prefer for teachers to focus on certain types of errors in each lesson to familiarize learners with possibly occurring errors they may encounter in the future or through learning the target language.
8. Are you for or against correcting learners’ errors at all? Why?

I personally believe that error correction is an effective teaching process. I can benefit a lot from this process because it helps me avoid making errors and minimizes the occurrence of errors to some extent. In addition, it informs me directly about the area or areas I have to work on while learning the target language.


I think this is a good strategy that teachers should adopt in correcting their students’ errors because it promotes the idea of self learning. Besides, learners are less likely to forget the errors they have discovered and corrected themselves.
10. Does error correction help learners to improve their spoken English? Why?

Absolutely, there is no doubt that teachers’ feedback contributes greatly to further understanding of the target language. In addition, correcting learners’ errors helps them engage in error free conversations in the future.

11. Should teachers correct errors that interfere with discourse organization?

Why?

I don’t think that these types of errors are so important in the sense that they will hinder the process of learning a language, especially for students who are taking ESL courses at both intermediate and advanced levels. In the future, students can adjust their own ways of talking to others after they acquire the most advanced skills and receive the adequate exposure to the target language.

12. Should teachers correct all of these errors or some of them for example, “grammatical errors, syntactic errors, semantic errors or pronunciation errors”?
Correcting all of these errors is important, but I prefer my teachers to focus on both grammatical and pronunciation errors at this time because they are difficult and affect our performance in language. As you know, most students’ problems in writing are related to grammar.

12. هل يجب على المدرسين تصحيح جميع هذه الأخطاء أو فقط الأخطاء التحويية أو التي لها علاقة بتركيب الجملة أو باللفظ أو بالمعنى؟

افضل أن يركز المدرس على تصحيح الأخطاء القراعية واللفظية لأنها تؤثر بشكل سلبي على الأداء في هذه اللغة. معظم الطلاب العرب هنا يوجد عندهم مشاكل في الكتابة وامت طالب عربي ومرت بهذة التجربة على ما اعتقد. أرجو أن لا تقوم من كلامي أن الأخطاء الأخرى ليست مهمة على العكس يجب أن تتعامل مع اللغة ككل وليس كجزء ولكن هذا الأوران وفي هذا المستوى على الأقل بالنسبة لي تصحيح هذه الأخطاء أفضل من التركيز على الأخطاء التي لها علاقة بالمعنى أو التركيب.

13. Can you give me an example of the corrective feedback you receive?

Yesterday, I used the past simple instead of present perfect, and the teacher corrected me and explained to the class the uses of both present perfect and the past simple.

14. “Teachers should correct phonological errors only (stress, intonation, etc)”

What is your opinion regarding this?

Although stress and intonation are important, it is not easy for second language learners to acquire them. As a native speaker of Arabic, I find a difference between Arabic and English in terms of sounds and other aspects of phonology. In Arabic, we don’t have two different sounds for the /b/ as is the case in English. I think it would be more essential for teachers to focus on errors related to grammar and pronunciation.

I think the use of suitable and appropriate vocabulary items helps the learners to be easily understood by others and makes them comfortable communicating with the surrounding environment. Yes, it is necessary that teachers focus on this type of error.

15. Could you please reflect on this statement “Teachers should always correct errors related to pragmatics?”

I don’t think that at this stage learners need their teachers to focus on these errors. In my opinion, students can learn and explore more about the linguistic system of the target language through interaction with other people. [Smiling] Honestly, this is the first time I have heard about something called pragmatics.
17- Should teachers focus on errors that interfere with social interaction?

I think it is important for learners to learn more about the social interaction processes because most of learners’ problems relate to their inability to interact with the new community.

social

18. What is your opinion regarding these issues: the teacher should ignore students’ errors, the teacher should provide the correct response or a part of the response?

As I mentioned before, teachers should correct learners’ errors and not ignore them at all. I prefer my teachers to provide me with a part of the response rather than the correct response. This helps me speculate the error and refresh my memory by remembering the rules I learned about the language.
I prefer my teachers to elicit the correct answers from other learners. This makes the classroom more active and encourages students to construct their learning and feel more confident. I think teachers should encourage learners to think and compare their answers and decide if their utterances are similar to those that native speakers produce during their interactions.

19. هل تعتقد بانه يجب على المدرسين الاشاره الى الخطأ وتزويد الطلاب بالاجابة الصحيحة او فقط اخذ الاجابة الصحيحة من الطلاب؟

اذن أفضل ان يقوم المدرس في حالة اذا اخطأ الطالب ان يسأل الطلاب الاخرين اذا كانو يعرفون الإجابة. في هذه الطريقة يضرب المدرس عصفورين بحجر واحد يعني يعطي فرصة للطلاب اخرين ان يتعلموا وكذلك يشجع الطلاب على معرفة لماذا كانت الإجابة غير صحيحة وهذا يزيد من تنقيتهم بنفسهم ويشجعهم على المشاركة بالنقاش داخل غرفة الصف.

20. What do you prefer your teacher to do regarding your errors, to indicate the error by using gestures or facial expressions, or give a clue to help you notice the error?

I personally believe that using gestures is not an effective technique because they might be misinterpreted by the learner. I would prefer the use of a clue.

21. What is more beneficial, in terms of error correction, the teacher asks students to repeat the utterance or the teacher explains why the response is incorrect?

I think teachers should explain to students the incorrect response. This strategy helps them understand the rules of the language and avoid making wrong sentences in the future.
21 ما هو أكثر فائدة بالنسبة للتصحيح الاخطاء إن يسأل المدرس الطلاب إعادة الجملة أو إن يقوم المدرس بشرح لماذا كانت الإجابة غير صحيحة؟

لم أقل أن شرح لماذا كانت الإجابة غير صحيحة يساعد الطلاب أكثر على فهم قواعد اللغة لأنه بهذه الحال يقوم المدرس بإعطاء الطلاب السبب وهذا يجعل الطلاب دائم التواصل مع قواعد اللغة وراجعتها بشكل مستمر.

22. Do you like your teacher to repeat your utterance up to the error and then wait for self-correction? Why?

Yes, this is an interesting technique. Repeating the utterance up to the error helps me as a learner reconsider my utterance and think of both the error I made and the correct answer I should supply.

23. Do you think it is necessary for a teacher to explain why the response is incorrect?

Yes, I think in most of the cases teachers should explain to the student why the response is incorrect to remind them of the language rules.