

An Investigation of the Impact of Teachers' Corrective Feedback on Students' Spoken Errors: The Case of Moroccan High School Teachers

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Abstract

The pursuit of the best practices and the promotion of excellence and effective performance in the teaching process are the ultimate goals of the educational endeavour. Throughout this process, teachers' corrective feedback is crucial and helps to improve students' performance. The current study attempts to look at the topic of feedback in the learning of second languages. The main goals of this study were to find out how well-informed teachers were about the value of feedback in second language acquisition, to investigate the types of feedback teachers use to correct their students' oral errors, and finally to assess teachers' knowledge of the various types of feedback that can be used in SLA classrooms to foster learning. A survey was administered to 20 English instructors from Moroccan high schools as a sample because of the quantitative nature of the study. 'SPSS' was used to analyse the data obtained from the survey. The results showed that English teachers in Moroccan high schools have a sufficient level of knowledge about feedback because they employ various feedback strategies, using them in accordance with the requirements of the learning context and, most importantly, considering the psychology of learners before responding to their incorrect statements. Numerous pertinent pedagogical implications were raised by these findings.

1. INTRODUCTION

Corrective feedback is a fundamental part of teaching and learning in various L2 classrooms (Ha et al., 2021; Lyster et al., 2013). Error correction has always been a topic on which professionals and specialists have never agreed due to its dubious nature (Chaudron, 1988; DeKeyser, 1993). The core of this debate, which confounds researchers and educators alike, centres on whether error correction should ever take place. Two basic points of view that relate to this conundrum can be found by closely examining the literature. First, Hendrickson (1978) and his supporters contend that teachers should focus on global errors as opposed to local ones. This point of view emphasizes that only errors that make the overall meaning of students'

statements murky or challenging to grasp should be the focus of error correction. In a similar vein, Lee (1990) as well as Bailey and Celce-Murcia (1979) hold the opinion that error correction is an integral element of language learning and that teachers shouldn't ignore their students' spoken errors because doing so could cause these errors to become fossilized.

On the other hand, Krashen (1981) and his supporters contend that error correction should be abandoned since it may hinder rather than aid the learning process. In summary, there is ongoing discussion about error correction, and the number of studies that have looked at this topic is growing.

In the realm of language teaching, error correction assumes a critical part in advancing learners' capability in the language. In the learning process, students are urged to practice their speaking skills, as they are given opportunities to practice and have oral contributions. Along the line of reasoning, students are inevitably exposed to making errors. Errors, then, can be defined as “deviations from the norms of the target language” (Ellis, 1997, p. 17, as cited in Ferreira, Moore & Mellish, 2007).

Therefore, this necessitates teachers' interference to guide students to correct their ill-formed utterances, by providing them with corrective feedback. Lightbown and Spada (1999) defined corrective feedback as “an indication to a learner that his or her use of the target language is incorrect” (Lightbown and Spada, 1999, p23, as cited in El Tatawy, 2002).

However, the issue of feedback is not as easy as it appears to be, but rather it is very problematic. In particular, providing students with feedback that guarantees positive results is not a matter of insignificant chance, instead, teachers are required to be endowed with certain knowledge that pertains to the types of feedback and their convenient use during classroom practices. It takes after, then, that abuse of feedback can hinder the learning process, and remain an obstacle that impedes learners from improving their language proficiency. A ton of studies have confirmed this. For instance, Rydahl (2005) alongside others demonstrated that over-correction often ends up with learners feeling discouraged and depressed and this will detract their enthusiasm from learning. All these considerations provided a good rationale for the exploration of this issue of feedback in the Moroccan context. The following segment will cast more light on the main reasons that motivated this research project.

The concern of this study originates from the researcher's observation of the Moroccan EFL classroom practices. For, it is undeniable that instructors of English in such a context are clearly not all around equipped with enough awareness concerning their responses and the effects that might have on students' spoken errors. It is irrefutably true that error correction can be a source of disturbance to learners, particularly when it happens in a non-advantageous way or timing. Learners, then, may feel humiliated if instructors correct them over and over again or overtly. Given the fact that error correction is a sensitive process, the researcher accepted that exploring it within the Moroccan context would lead to spotting the potential gaps in instructors' knowledge about this issue, and thus draw their attention to the vital significance feedback has. Likewise, the researcher realized that the practices of teachers of English in such a context revealed that teachers are not familiarized with different types of feedback, as they often depend on quick direct responses whenever a student produces an ill-formed utterance. This component, alongside the previously expressed ones, inspired the researchers to set out to

explore this issue with a specific end goal to have a clear picture of instructors' perceptions and use of feedback.

The present study plans to examine the degree to which educators are aware of the significance of feedback in Second Language Acquisition. It additionally endeavours to investigate the sorts of feedback that instructors use with a specific end goal to react to their students' spoken errors. Moreover, the study inspects educators' knowledge about the diverse sorts of input that can be utilized as a part of EFL classrooms to advance learning.

The study attempts to answer the following research questions:

- To what extent are high school teachers aware of the importance of oral feedback and its effect on students?
- What type of feedback do high school teachers use?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The review of literature related to feedback. It is used to handle the hypothetical foundation of the issue being discussed or researched, feedback in second language acquisition, and sums up a portion of the observational inquiries that have been directed concerning this matter. Throughout history, the subject of feedback in second language acquisition has been an appealing issue that engaged scientists as they considered it to be worth studying. As it was believed that errors are an integral part of the learning process, researchers have become eager to find out and test the most effective approaches to treat them. Based on distinctive theoretical backgrounds, researchers have been wavering around whether or not students' errors should be corrected and also what, when, and how to correct these mistakes during classroom interaction.

2.1. Error vs Mistake

Errors and mistakes may seem interchangeable terms that refer to students' inaccurate utterances or responses, either in writing or in speaking. Nevertheless, considering researchers' views on second language acquisition these two concepts are differentiated. For instance, Brown defined errors: as "...a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of a native speaker, reflecting the interlanguage competence of the learner". Moreover, he referred to mistakes as "performance error that is either a random guess or a 'slip', in that it is a failure to utilize a known system correctly". (Brown 1980, p. 165. As cited in Xiao & Huaxin, 2001). In this regard, errors are the systematic deviations of rules students make in the sense they are not aware of the native speakers' rules as referred to by lack of competence. Whereas mistakes refer to lack of performance, that is students are aware of the target rules, but they misuse them mainly due to fatigue, anxiety or slips of the tongue. Mistakes then can be considered as slips that can be corrected by the students. However, errors cannot be self-corrected since they refer to a lack of mastery of the target structure.

2.2. Error Correction

It is completely clear that error treatment has been a noteworthy concern of researchers in SLA as many debates and arguments were and still are ongoing (Chaudron, 1988; DeKeyser, 1993). According to Lennon (1991), an error is "a linguistic form or combination of forms

which in the same context and under similar conditions of production would, in all likelihood, not be produced by the speakers' native speakers' counterparts" (cited in Maicusi & Lopez, 1999, p1). Therefore, errors are a normal outcome or result of the learning process. Yet what frustrates researchers and teachers alike is to find answers to the following questions: what type of errors should be corrected? Which ones can be overcome and neglected? When and how these errors should be corrected?

Teachers view and believe in different theoretical assumptions; therefore, the correction adopted by them depends on these various views. Consequently, error correction is carried out according to the principles that shape the theoretical influences, be it behaviourism, cognitivism or else, which the teacher believes in.

During the 1950's behaviourism was the dominating school of thought. Its proponents held the view that, in the learning process, errors are inevitable. However, they view them as "bad habits" that hinder language learning and teaching, and therefore they argued that the teacher through an immediate response should eradicate errors on the spot.

In the same process, Brooks (1960) wrote "like sin, error is to be avoided and its influence overcome... the principal way of overcoming it is to shorten the time lapse between the incorrect response and a presentation once more of the correct model" (p. 56).

Nonetheless, as the behavioristic convictions began dropping out of support, it unfolded upon a few researchers that error correction can be hurtful to SLA and can hinder the learning process. One of these figures is Krashen, whose Monitor Model (1981; 1982) incorporates five theories about language learning. The Affective Filter Hypothesis, one of these speculations, expresses that nervousness, which error correction causes, can raise a learner's emotional and affective filter, and thus influence the learning process (cited in Russell, 2009, p1).

With the development of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), error correction experienced a radical movement. Supporters of CLT perceived errors from an alternative point of view than that of their ancestors. In fact, they believe that 'errors must be viewed as evidence of learners' linguistic development not as sins to be avoided. CLT advocates recognized the need for fluency, and this allows teachers to leave some errors uncorrected' (Rezaei, Mozaffari, & Hatef, 2011, p. 21).

Correcting learners' spoken errors remains an issue debated among researchers as well as teachers. The concern is on the importance of correcting learners' spoken errors. In other words, should spoken error correction take place in the learning process and to what extent?

It is believed that error correction is of paramount importance in the learning process. It prevents errors from being fossilized and ensures accurate learning. On the other hand error' correction can hinder learners' learning, especially if it is directed in an inappropriate manner or circumstance. According to Edge (1989) errors should not be corrected randomly instead correction should be done based on certain objectives which are summarized as follows:

Correction is a way of reminding students of the forms of Standard English it should not be a kind of criticism or punishment.

Think of correction as a way of giving information, or feedback to your students just when it will support their learning. Correction should not mean insisting on everything being absolutely correct, correction means helping students to become more accurate in their use of language. (Cited in Krushna, 2005). In this regard, error correction is a means not an end in itself. Errors correction should not be given more weight at the expense of learning. It must occur but rationally in a way that may not affect the learners' motivation. Teachers are supposed to correct students' oral errors especially when the errors are repeated, but not to overcorrect because this may hinder students' willingness to learn and demotivate them. In addition, to determine the goal behind correcting errors it is either fluency or accuracy targeted.

Before digging into the explanation of correcting accuracy and fluency, it is needed first to delineate the difference between accuracy and fluency. These two aspects are complementary in learning the English language but each of them has a targeted focus. While accuracy is non-communicative and structure-oriented, fluency is communicatively oriented. In other words, the former is concerned with language correctness in the level of form or structures i.e. grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary. On the contrary, the latter targets learners' ability to communicate and to get their messages across without giving much importance to language form.

2.3. Correcting Accuracy

While correcting accuracy, teachers' focus is mainly targeted towards language structures and rules. Harmer stated that "when students are involved in accuracy work it is part of the teacher's function to point out the mistakes the students are making" (Harmer, 2007). According to Harmer's view, teachers' correction is mandatory when students are engaged in an accuracy activity. He also mentioned that "correction is usually made up of two distinct stages. In the first, teachers show students that a mistake has been made and the second if necessary, they help the student to do something about it" (Harmer, 2007). Pointing out mistakes according to him can be realized throughout six different strategies which are:

- **Repeating:** the teacher asks the student who made the mistake to repeat his or her ill-formulated utterance or she/he simply says for example "again".
- **Echoing:** when the teacher himself or herself repeats the student's mistake using a questioning intonation.
- **Statement and question:** to show that a student made a mistake, the teacher may ask that student if he or she is sure about the correctness of the word or expression uttered. Otherwise, the teacher states that the attempt was quite good, but not correct.
- **Expression:** it implies the use of gestures or facial expressions to point out the incorrectness of an utterance. The teacher can use this technique only when students are familiar with the expressions' meanings.
- **Hinting:** it indicates the use of hints to point out mistakes. For example, 'tense' to shed light on the mistake done on the level of verbs' tenses.
- **Reformulation:** the last technique the teacher may resort to for pointing out incorrectness is reformulating students' ill-formulated utterances that is repeating back the correct version of the student's mistake. (Harmer, 2007)

Most of the techniques suggested for correcting students' oral errors during accuracy activities or tasks are mainly learner-centred, except the last technique in which the teacher

provides an explicit correction to the student. The former-mentioned techniques prioritise learners' self-correction over the teacher's correction this will enhance students' self-monitoring a strengthen learners' self-learning.

2.4. Correcting Fluency

Correcting fluency as it implies focuses on student's errors done on the level of communication basis. When the teacher corrects fluency, he or she has to focus more on content and communication strategies rather than language form. This tendency is based on the conception that correcting students' grammatical, pronunciation or lexical errors during fluency activities (for instance discussions, role-plays or conversations) may inhibit students' willingness and wellness to peruse the communicative task intended, especially if correction took place at the mid flow of the task. Harmer pointed out that teachers may intervene during fluency activities, but he emphasizes the necessity of doing it gently. He went on saying that:

...our correction will be more 'gentle': in other words, we will not stop the whole activity and insist on everyone saying the item correctly before being allowed to continue with their discussion. Gentle correction can be done in several ways. We might simply reformulate what the student has said in the expectation that they will pick up our reformulation even though it hardly interrupts their speech. (Harmer, 2007)

However, it is preferable not to interrupt learners while they are carrying on a communicative task to correct their oral errors in order not to hinder the spontaneous flow of spoken production. In this regard, Harmer (2007) suggested alternative techniques teachers can use while dealing with oral errors during fluency activities and tasks. First recording mistakes, can be done through a chart in which the teacher writes down the errors made by learners classify them according to categories including grammar, pronunciation and lexis for instance. The second technique occurs after the event. When learners accomplish their intended communicative task, the teacher may write the incorrect words or utterances on the board and ask learners to reflect upon them in an attempt to identify errors and their corrections. Besides, ensuring learners' self-correction is a main principle of independent autonomous learning.

2.5. Schmidt's Noticing Hypothesis

Recent years have seen a developing conviction among SLA practitioners about the significance of conscious awareness in the process of second language acquisition. Essentially, this stems from what has been labelled Schmidt's Noticing Hypothesis. Schmidt constructs his theory concerning two contextual investigations that he himself directed. In rough terms, the hypothesis claims that unlike L1 acquisition, second language acquisition is a conscious process. Put in another way, learners' attention is a major factor in the learning process; that is to say, what learners acquire is that to which they pay their attention. This has been attested by Schmidt (1995) who stated that "The noticing hypothesis claims that awareness at the point of learning is required for all learning" (As cited in Carroll, 2006, p. 17).

The theory rotates around a twofold point. First, it endeavours to answer what language acquisition that is what is the reason why a few properties of the L2 are seen while others are not. Second, it seeks to clarify the time course of acquisition, as it were, the reason why some learners see certain parts of language before they see others.

This brings attention to the fact that one way to encourage the learning process is through tapping on learners' attention, which means attracting their attention to the properties of the language that is being taught. In effect, this reality highlights the role of feedback in SLA since it acts "as a stimulus, triggering learners to identify the gap between their erroneous utterance and the target form. Thus, in perceiving different types of feedback and enhancing their benefits for language learners, noticing and awareness is vital" (Rezaei, Mozaffari & Hatf, 2011. p. 21).

Schmidt's Noticing Hypothesis emphasises the role of attracting students' awareness in the learning process. In solid terms, teachers should furnish their students with feedback that makes them mindful about the accuracy or inaccuracy of their utterances; for the hypothesis asserts that noticing is a necessary condition for learning. The speculation expanded the significance of the conviction that interaction between innate and environmental components is crucial to language acquisition. Hence, this leads the researcher to shed light on Long's interaction hypothesis.

2.6. Long's Interaction Hypothesis

Long's Interaction Hypothesis (1996, 1998) came as a reaction to Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1982, 1985) which stated that supplying a language learner with 'comprehensible input', that is understandable spoken or written language will facilitate the acquisition of the language. Furthermore, Long's Interaction Hypothesis also came as a reaction to Swain's Output Hypothesis (1985) which stresses the importance of practicing and speaking to retain and remember the language.

In this manner, Long, in his Interaction Hypothesis, struck out a bargain between the Input and Output Hypotheses, as he backs that interaction is not only a way through which learners ponder the language but also a way for them to put into practice what they have learned into practice. The Interaction Hypothesis places that amid discussions, either between students and their peers or between students and their instructors, communication breakdowns that are prone to happen, are advantageous to learning.

As speakers, when confronted with a problem of comprehension of the passed-on message, they turn to a few conversational strategies looking to unravel these correspondence challenges and help the interaction progress, which improves the acquisition procedure. As the Hypothesis recommends, learners, amid interaction, do not just find out about the language, but also learn the nuances and other non-verbal prompts that accompany it.

Long calls this give-and-take in meaning 'negotiation', and uncovers that there are, when negotiating meaning, many strategies and techniques, which interlocutors use to overcome communication breakdowns. Some of these strategies are repair of speech, requests for clarification, paraphrases and modification checks. These strategies are in fact different forms of what is called feedback. The following section will be an attempt to shed more light on the issue of feedback by examining its different types.

2.7. Feedback

2.7.1. Definition

To begin with, it is of paramount importance to point out that while reviewing the literature one is faced with an obscure image related to the terminology of feedback, and that is due to the fact that researchers in the field of SLA have not settled on a single concept to refer to it. Thus, to avoid any possible confusion, an attempt to unveil this controversy will be made by highlighting the most common terms that researchers resort to when dealing with it.

Feedback as a regular term can be defined as a method used openly, and with responsibility, to express one's views to facilitate/promote more appropriate actions in the future, in relation to a goal and a vision (Nilsson, 2004). Feedback in a teacher-student learning environment is observed as "information given to learners which they can use to revise their interlanguage" (Ellis, 1999). Negative feedback in school is most often used when a teacher gives a student some kind of information about something being incorrect in an utterance and sometimes instructions about how to correct the mistake. Another type of feedback used in school is peer response, where students give feedback to each other.

According to Schachter (1991), corrective feedback, negative evidence, and negative feedback are three terms used respectively in the fields of language teaching, language acquisition, and cognitive psychology. Different researchers often use these terms interchangeably (as cited in Mounira El Tatawy, 2002). On his part, Chaudron (1988) revealed that the term corrective feedback is constituted from different layers of meaning. In Chaudron's view, the term 'treatment of error' may simply refer to "any teacher behaviour following an error that minimally attempts to inform the learner of the fact of error" (ibid). Lightbown and Spada (1999) defined corrective feedback as:

Any indication to the learners that their use of the target language is incorrect. This includes various responses that the learners receive. When a language learner says, 'He go to school every day', corrective feedback can be explicit, for example, 'no, you should say goes, not go' or implicit 'yes he goes to school every day', and may or may not include metalinguistic information, for example, 'Don't forget to make the verb agree with the subject. (Lightbown & Spada, 1999 as cited in El Tatawy, 2002, p. 1).

Long (1996) conceptualized feedback through a large lens. He pointed out that the environmental input, given to learners, can be broken into two categories: Positive evidence and negative evidence. Long defines positive evidence as providing learners with models of what is grammatical and acceptable in the target language; and negative evidence as providing learners with direct or indirect information about what is unacceptable (ibid). This information may be explicit as it comes as grammatical explanation or overt error correction. It can also be implicit as when the teacher uses some confirmation checks (e.g is this what you mean?) in order to implicitly inform the learner that there is an error in his or her utterance that resulted in lack of comprehension. Having tackled the controversy that is related to the terminology of Feedback, some of the major and mostly used types of Feedback will be presented.

2.7.2. Types of feedback

It is worth mentioning that the types of Feedback presented below are in an explicit-implicit continuum. Four major types of corrective feedback are presented in Lightbown & Spada (1999).

- ✓ **Clarification requests** is “where the teacher indicates to the learner that an utterance has been misunderstood or that there is an error in it and that a repetition or a reformulation is needed”. A clarification request includes phrases such as ‘Pardon me...’. It may also include a repetition of the error as ‘What do you mean by...?’
- ✓ **Recasts** is “where the teacher repeats a student’s utterance, using correct forms where the student has made an error, but does not draw attention to the error and maintains a central focus on meaning”.
- ✓ **Elicitation** is “where the teacher uses questions to elicit completion of students’ utterances, asks questions to elicit correct forms, or asks students to reformulate their utterances”.
- ✓ **Metalinguistic feedback** is “where the teacher points to the nature of the error by commenting on, or providing information about, the well-formedness of a student’s utterance”. Metalinguistic feedback also includes metalanguage, which could be ‘It’s singular, not plural’.

In addition to the four types stated above other researchers added other ones:

- ✓ **Explicit Feedback:** This type of feedback is situated at explicit end of the corrective feedback spectrum. Error correction is done explicitly, as the teacher overtly points at the error and provides the correct form (Ellis, Loewen, & Erlam, 2006 as cited in Rezaei, Mozaffari, & Hatef).
- ✓ **Repetition:** This type of corrective feedback falls at the implicit extreme on the continuum of corrective feedback. It consists of teacher’s repetition of the incorrect part of the student’s utterance; this repetition is usually carried out with a change in the teacher’s intonation.

2.7.3. Effects of Feedback

If the person receiving the feedback is motivated, and the feedback is given in a correct way, there are reasons to believe that feedback can be an effective way for students to draw conclusions on how to achieve a better knowledge of a second language. There are several components that can have an effect on the student’s uptake. For example, uptake refers to a learner’s immediate response to corrective feedback on his/her utterances (Lightbown & Spada, 1999). While corrective feedback is used as “an indication to a learner that his or her use of the target language is incorrect” (Lightbown & Spada, 1999). The approach chosen by the teacher, the atmosphere, and the type of situation in which the speaking performance is taking place will influence the effectiveness of feedback.

It is necessary to be aware that feedback is not appropriate in all situations. For example, when a learner is making a speech, there is no use interrupting and giving feedback since the learner is focusing on his/her speech, and therefore not able to concentrate on any feedback given (Hedge, 2000). The teacher must also be sensitive and not correct the learner too much, as this can take the attention away from aspects of content and distract more than help.

A teacher trying to correct all mistakes might also end up with learners feeling discouraged and depressed and this will take the interest away from learning (Ur, 1996).

2.7.4. The Role and Effectiveness of Feedback in SLA

In the domain of SLA, a growing body of research reveals that feedback types that require reformulation from the part of students, such as clarification requests and comprehension checks, have been found more effective than those which do not involve reformulation, namely recasts (Lyster & Ranta, 1997). Moreover, it has been argued that there are several factors that play a pivotal role, either positively or negatively, in the effectiveness of feedback. These include the particular features of language being corrected, the appropriateness of the student's stage in his/her language learning process to benefit from the correction, and finally the ability of learners to notice a gap between what they want to say and what they can say (Schmidt & Frota, 1986). The disagreements regarding the relative efficacy of different feedback types have motivated several experimental studies. The following section provides a sketchy view of some of the empirical research conducted in the same area of research.

2.7.5. Review of Previous Empirical Research

Feedback in SLA, being a fertile area of research, has taken the interest of researchers and many empirical studies have been conducted to investigate it. Carroll and Swain (1993) conducted a study to investigate the effects of different types of negative feedback, namely explicit and implicit feedback, on the acquisition of the English dative alternation. The researchers took a sample composed of 100 students. They divided them into different groups according to the type of feedback they would be supplied as a response to their errors. The data analysis showed that the performance of all treatment groups was significantly better than the control group. Among the different types of Feedback that were provided to the subjects, both Implicit and explicit Feedback were found to be beneficial to the learning process.

One of the interesting results that the study concluded with is that giving explicit metalinguistic information is more helpful to the learner than simply telling him or her that he or she has made a mistake, or even giving him or her the desired response (cited in Mounira El Tatawy, 2006). Lyster and Ranta (1997) explored the ways in which students, in a primary French immersion classroom, react to different types of corrective feedback through examining learner uptake. The latter is, as Lyster and Ranta defined it, "a student's utterance that immediately follows the teachers' feedback and that constitutes a reaction in some way to the teachers' intention to draw attention to some aspect of the student's initial utterance" (Lyster & Ranta, 1997, p. 49 as cited in Ferreira, Moore & Mellish, 2007). Four teachers took part in this study. They provided corrective feedback on learner errors in speech production in 14 subject-matter lessons and 13 French language art lessons. The study included six types of Feedback: explicit correction, recasts, clarification requests, metalinguistic feedback, elicitation, and repetition. Whereas learner uptake was categorized into two types: repair and need-repair, or in other words, successful and unsuccessful responses. The results showed that the most frequent type of feedback was the recast. Moreover, this strategy, as the results revealed, never led to student self-correction and then it was considered to be the least likely to lead to learner uptake, since learners were merely repeating what the teachers had told them and not able to spot the error by themselves and correct it.

In contrast, elicitation and metalinguistic feedback were found to be less frequent; however, the results showed that they are more effective as they encouraged learners to generate repair and self-correct (Lyster and Ranta (1997) as cited in Ajideh & Aghdam, 2012).

In the same respect, a study conducted by Ayoun (2001) confirmed Lyster and Ranta's (1997) findings that recasts are the most common form of error correction employed by language teachers. In this study, Ayoun examined the effectiveness of written recasts versus models in the acquisition of the aspectual distinction between two past tenses in French, the *passé composé* and the *imparfait*. The study underwent three phases, a pretest, repeated exposure, and posttest design. The subjects were randomly assigned to a single condition from the three following ones: Recasting embodied in implicit negative feedback, Modeling through pre-emptive positive evidence, and lastly explicit positive evidence and negative feedback. These three conditions are referred to as R, M, G respectively. The M and R groups were exposed to reading a different story with illustrations each week, whereas, in the M condition, the subjects were shown a sentence corresponding to the illustration timed three seconds.

Afterwards, they were asked to answer a related question. As for the R condition, participants were asked to make use of some given elements based on the illustration and then form a sentence; after doing so, they were exposed to the correct answer for three seconds. The results showed that the R group performed significantly better than the G group but not the M group; a fact that confirms the hypothesis that claims that recasts are the most effective forms of feedback. Hyun-Souk Kang (2009) investigated the generalizability of the role of interactional feedback in second language acquisition and its contributions at the post-secondary level. The study was carried out in the context of learning Korean as a less-commonly-taught foreign language. The study started with the premise that explicitness of feedback promotes foreign language learning. To examine this issue, Thirty-four English-speaking learners of Korean were randomly assigned to the following groups: (1) explicit feedback; (2) implicit feedback; and (3) no feedback (control). The study employed a pre-test, post-test and a delayed post-test design with two experimental groups and one control group. The pretest was composed of grammaticality judgment and picture description tests administered individually to measure the participants' proficiency as a starting point. Each participant took approximately fifteen minutes, after that the subjects were randomly assigned to the experimental and control groups. During the treatment session, immediate feedback with varying degrees of explicitness was given to the subjects upon any deviant past tense during the completion of communication tasks.

The analysis of the results showed that the experimental groups outperformed the control group that received no feedback. The conclusion that the researchers drew is that feedback has certainly a beneficial role in the context of learning Korean as a foreign language. It facilitated the learning of a target form for the Korean foreign language learners and that there were little or no statistically significant differences between explicit and implicit feedback as far as learner's performance is concerned. On his part, Rydahl (2005) carried out a study to investigate teachers' perceptions and use of oral feedback. The sample of this study consisted of twenty teachers of English practicing at two different upper secondary schools. To gather data for this research, the researcher made use of two research instruments; a self-constructed questionnaire composed of fourteen questions, and classroom observation. Firstly, the researcher observed the behaviours and practices of teachers concerning their use of feedback and then administered the questionnaire to them. The findings revealed that the majority of teachers find oral feedback to be an important tool for helping students achieve higher proficiency in English. Also, the results demonstrated that most of the respondents were aware of the necessity of applying different feedback approaches to different errors made by the

students and that teachers hold the belief that error correction must be carried out sensitively. Lastly, the findings showed that most teachers tend to generate feedback from their students rather than overtly provide them with corrective feedback.

In a quantitative cross-sectional research, Maksud (2010) explored the ways in which Bangladeshi ELT practitioners view their students' errors, and how they correct them. To investigate this issue, a questionnaire was administered to TESOL practitioners in Bangladesh teaching at different levels of the educational system. The study addressed three research questions:

1. How important is it to correct ESL learners' linguistic errors?
2. How do the TESOL practitioners in Bangladesh react to the learners' errors?
3. What are the strategies the Bangladeshi TESOL practitioners use in correcting ESL learners' errors?

The findings showed that there is a great awareness among Bangladeshi ELT practitioners of the importance of error correction and that they are tolerant of their students' errors, a fact that can be explained by their conviction that errors are part of the learning process. It is self-evident that one common remark on the studies carried out to investigate feedback in SLA is that most of them used only one instrument in the data collection, either questionnaire or a test. Whereas, opting for more than one instrument could give more effective and reliable findings. Another remark that could be levelled against these studies is that they all focused on error correction in general. As they required the participants to rate such broad construct 'error correction' in terms of the extent to which they perceived it can contribute to language learning without distinguishing between different types of error correction 'feedback' and the contexts in which it occurs.

In this section, the spotlight was put on the review of literature concerning the issue under investigation, Feedback in Second Language Acquisition. Initially, it revolved around some of the theoretical stances towards error correction in SLA, and then it presented some of the major types of feedback in SLA, and afterwards, it highlighted the role and effectiveness of feedback in SLA. Finally, a review of several studies conducted under the umbrella of the same vein of research was presented. The following chapter will be geared towards the methodological part of this research paper.

3. METHODOLOGY

This section is devoted to the description of the methodology followed in this research. Thus, it will start with a restatement of the objectives of the study and then the research questions this study attempts to answer. This will be followed by a description of the sample, which contributed to this study. Then, the instrument used to collect data for this research will be presented, and finally the last section will be devoted to data analysis.

Twenty high school teachers of English, practicing in different cities in Morocco took part in this study. Twelve of them were males and eight of them were females. Their ages ranged from 28 to 55 years old, and their professional qualifications were either B.A, M.A or PhD. Their teaching experience ranged from 5 to 35 years.

Describe Given the short period allotted to this research, only one method of data collection was opted for. Accordingly, a questionnaire was constructed to explore teachers' beliefs and perceptions about feedback. The questionnaire consisted of ten questions. Eight multiple-choice questions, each one of them had a four-point scale in the Likert format (e.g. Usually, sometimes, rarely, never). The participants were asked to mark their answers by circling only one of the four choices provided for each question.

The questionnaire is divided into three sets. The first set of questions includes five questions; the rationale behind them was to elicit data concerning teachers' use of feedback. They were meant to gather information about teachers' conceptualization of feedback as well as the variables that they take into consideration while providing their students with effective feedback. The second set of questions is composed of three questions and they were meant to check the extent to which teachers are aware of the effect of feedback on their students and on their learning; they also aim at revealing teachers' attitudes towards feedback. The last set of questions consisted of two open-ended questions that were meant to complement the quantitative data that was elicited through the eight multiple-choice questions. These questions aimed to elicit data concerning the types of feedback that teachers use, how often they use it, and how teachers regard these types of feedback in terms of their importance in the learning process.

The aim behind this combination of multiple-choice questions and open-ended questions emanates from the fact that open-ended questions enable teachers to express their beliefs and perceptions and also explain the reasons behind their choices in the multiple-choice sets. Moreover, the researcher believes that this is the best way to elicit data concerning the types of feedback that teachers use as the latter will not be influenced by any multiple-choice options that might bias their answers. In addition, including this type of questions was meant to assure more reliability by crosschecking teachers' answers to the multiple-choice questions.

The questionnaire was administered to teachers in a physical setting. They were all helpful and dealt with the questionnaire with great importance as they responded to all of the questions. The data obtained from the study combines both quantitative and qualitative data. Therefore, the analysis of the data will be done using the software 'Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The analysis of the quantitative data will be presented in terms of frequencies and percentages, whereas the analysis of the qualitative data will consist of presenting tendencies and categories.

4. RESULTS

The aim of this section is to present, analyze and discuss the results obtained from the questionnaire. Accordingly, it will be divided into two parts; the first part will deal with presentation and analysis of the results and the second part will be devoted to discussion of these results in relation to the review of the literature. The results obtained from the questionnaire were analyzed using SPSS software. Accordingly, the results related to each question will be presented and tendencies will be described.

The first question asked teachers about the frequency of providing oral feedback to students. The answers were as follows:

Table 1: *Frequencies and percentages of teachers' feedback on students' spoken errors*

		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Always	1	5
	Sometimes	15	75
	Rarely	3	15
	Never	1	5
	Total	20	100

Note: 75% in bold is the highest percentage obtained of teachers who sometimes give feedback to students.

As shown in Table 1, most of the teachers stated that they sometimes give feedback to their students' spoken errors, it is shown by the data obtained 75%. While 15% stated that they rarely give it. Whereas only 5% of them said that they always give it and 5% who never give it.

The second question asked teachers about the frequency of adapting the feedback strategy to suit the learning context. The answers were as follows:

Table 2: *Frequencies and percentages of feedback adaptation to the learning context*

		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Always	10	50
	Sometimes	8	40
	Rarely	2	10
	Total	20	100

Note: 50% in bold represents half of the respondents who adapt their strategies to the learning context.

Table 2 shows that half of the teachers (50%) always adapt their feedback strategy to suit the learning context. And 40% of them sometimes adapt their strategy to suit the context stated. While only 10% of the teachers who pointed out that they rarely do so. The results indicate that most teachers do not pay attention to the learning context when giving feedback.

The third question was about the frequency of giving feedback immediately after students' spoken errors. The answers were as follows:

Table 3: *Frequencies and percentages of teachers' immediate feedback on students' spoken errors*

		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Always	2	10
	Sometimes	9	45
	Rarely	7	35
	Never	2	10
	Total	20	100

Note: 45% is the highest percentage of the teachers who sometimes provide immediate feedback to students.

Table 3 indicates that 45% of the teachers responded that they sometimes give their feedback immediately after the students' spoken error. However, 35% of the teachers stated that they rarely provide immediate feedback. And 10 % of them stated that they never give it on the spot. Whereas just 10% of the teachers stated that they always tend to give it immediately.

The fourth question is concerned with the frequency of giving students the chance to self-correct their ill-formed utterances. The answers were as follows:

Table 4 reveals that most of the teachers (85%) stated that they allow their students to take the initiative to correct their spoken errors. Whereas only 15% of them sometimes do so.

Table 4: *Frequencies and percentages of students' self-correction*

		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Always	17	85
	Sometimes	3	15
	Total	20	100

Note: All the teachers allow their students to correct their errors.

The fifth question asked teachers about the frequency of asking their students about their preferences concerning the type of feedback they want to receive.

Table 5: *Frequencies and percentages of teachers' preferences for feedback types*

		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Sometimes	6	30
	Rarely	8	40
	Never	6	30
	Total	20	100

Note: 40% in bold is the highest percentage of teachers who sometimes ask their students about their preferences for feedback type.

Table 5 shows that 40% of the teachers responded that they rarely ask their students about the types of feedback they prefer. While 30% was shared between teachers who give sometimes students that opportunity and those who never give it.

The sixth question was about the frequency of inhibition of students' participation after feedback.

Table 6: *Frequencies and percentages of inhibition of students' participation after feedback*

		Frequency	Percentage %
Valid	Always	1	5
	Sometimes	18	90
	Never	1	5
	Total	20	100

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Note: 90% in bold is the highest percentage of teachers who believe that teachers' feedback can sometimes inhibit students' participation.

Table 6 reveals that the majority of teachers (90%) responded that giving feedback on students' spoken errors can sometimes inhibit their performance. However, 5% was shared by teachers who stated that spoken error' correction always affects students' performance and those who said it never affects them.

The seventh question asked teachers about their perceptions concerning the fossilization of errors due to neglecting these errors.

Table 7: *Frequencies and percentages of fossilization of errors due to teachers' neglecting these errors*

		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Strongly agree	6	30
	Agree	10	50
	Disagree	4	20
	Total	20	100

Note: Half of the teachers agree that neglecting errors can cause its fossilization.

Table 7 indicates half of the teachers (50%) agree that neglecting students' spoken errors can lead to the fossilization of these errors. 30% of them strongly agree. Whereas only 20% of the teachers disagree.

The last question in the multiple choice set asked teachers about the frequency of positive effect of feedback on students' spoken performance.

Table 8: *Frequencies and percentages of positive effect of feedback on students' spoken performance*

		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Always	7	35
	Sometimes	11	55
	Rarely	1	5
	Never	1	5
	Total	20	100

Note: 55% in bold represents most of the teachers who sometimes find their feedback to students as having a positive impact.

Table 8 indicates that more than half of the teachers (55%) think that sometimes feedback has positive effects on students' spoken performance. And 30 % of them believe that always feedback has positive effects. While only 5% was shared by teachers who believe that feedback can never have positive effects and those who responded that it rarely has.

As stated in the methodology two open-ended questions were constructed to complement the quantitative data that is obtained from the multiple-choice questions. The first question in the open-ended set of questions, investigated the types of feedback that teachers use. Responding

to this open-ended question teachers provide a variety of feedback types they tend to use while dealing with students' spoken errors.

Table 9: *different types of feedback*

Categories	Types
Explicit	Self- correction -Peer –correction - Teacher correction
	Verbal feedback - Written feedback - Direct correction
	Meta- linguistic feedback - Explicit correction - Elicitation
Implicit	Cues – recast - Clarification requests - Implicit correction
	Para linguistics (nonverbal feedback)
	Repetition

Note: Teachers use different types of feedback.

In relation to correcting students' spoken errors, Table 9 demonstrates that some teachers mentioned the necessity to distinguish between accuracy and fluency as well as taking into account students' differences .i.e. a teacher who said “the correction of errors depends on the activity whether it is fluency oriented or accuracy oriented. It also depends on the students themselves. There are ones who are cool and will accept the correction, but there are others who will feel embarrassed and won't participate any more”.

Table 10: *The most frequently used Types of feedback*

	Frequency	Percentage
Implicit correction	10	50
Self-correction	5	25
Peer correction	3	15
Teacher correction	2	10
Total	20	100

Note: 50% is the highest percentage of teachers who use implicit correction.

The last question asked teachers to state their opinions concerning the most important types of feedback. Table 10 shows that the majority of teachers responded that implicit feedback comes first place. They argued that implicit correction is of paramount importance since it is less likely to embarrass the learner and make him or her anxious. As well as giving priority first to students to correct themselves then peer-correction and delaying teacher feedback or correction as a last resort. A teacher pointed out that “feedback is a vital part of students' evaluation, [mainly] feedback that is limited to what the students need to know, the one that focuses on the positive as well as areas for development. In other words, focuses on what the student has done well and what the student has to do better. Feedback can motivate learners and help them to improve their performance.

5. DISCUSSION

The main focus of this section is to discuss and interpret the data obtained from the questionnaire administered to 20 Moroccan high school teachers. In other words, this chapter attempts to provide some possible answers to the research questions raised at the beginning of the study.

5.1. Teachers' Use and Conceptualization of Feedback

To answer the first research question, a set of questions was included in the questionnaire that was administered to teachers. The findings revealed that teachers do not hesitate to respond to their students' spoken errors; but rather they tend most of the time to provide their students with effective feedback whenever they produce an error. As it was statistically shown, 75% of teachers are always there to respond to their students' spoken errors. This indicates that teachers are aware of the crucial role oral corrective feedback plays in the language learning process and also conscious of the fact that making errors is the most natural thing in the world and it is evidently attached to the human being.

This finding supports the results achieved by the study that was carried out by Hyun-Souk Kang (2009) which revealed that most of the teachers believe that learners' linguistic error correction is an important issue and that it is necessary in the learning process. Also, it was found that teachers encourage their students to self-generate correction. This suggests that teachers tend to increase students' consciousness about the errors they make by helping them to produce the correct form of the target language. Probably, teachers encourage students' self-correction because they know that students who can self-correct understand the mistake, catch it, and make the necessary adjustments to their language production. Thus, if a student can make the necessary corrections to newly taught information, then it demonstrates he has absorbed the information.

Besides, self-correction will enable them to be more confident in using the language, and most importantly, endow them with the ability to correct not only their self-made errors but also those of their peers. This finding corroborates with those obtained from the study conducted by Rydahl (2005). The latter showed that most of the teachers, who took part in the study, primarily tend to generate feedback from their students rather than overtly providing them with corrective feedback. Moreover, the findings showed that teachers do not inquire about their students' preferences concerning feedback forms. They rarely take the initiative to question which feedback form is preferable for their students. An explanation for this might be attributed to the fact that each situation calls for a specific form of feedback; and therefore, teachers feel that they are the only ones able to provide feedback. Another important fact is that the results show that teachers choose to give feedback on different occasions, directly and more commonly, indirectly to a single student or later a full class. Most teachers also prefer a mix of feedback approaches depending on students and situations. This is attributed to the fact that before responding to their students' spoken errors, teachers take into consideration different variables, such as the atmosphere of the learning context and the psychology of the learners.

Finally, teachers were found to be highly sensitive towards error correction and its outcomes, as they stressed that leaving students' errors untouched might lead to the fossilization of ill-formed structures. This explains the finding that revealed that teachers do

provide their students with feedback whenever they produce an erroneous utterance. It can be said that teachers have this tendency to respond immediately to their students' spoken errors because they share the behaviouristic view that errors must be eradicated on the spot, otherwise they will be fossilized. In addition to this, the findings revealed also that teachers hold a sensitive stance towards error correction, as they assume that feedback may inhibit students from oral participation. This finding accentuates teachers' high awareness of the outcomes of their feedback. Therefore, teachers were not found to be tending to provide feedback at all costs; but rather the results showed that they try to draw their students' attention to the error that is made most suitably. One possible interpretation of this is that teachers believe that negative feedback could raise students' anxiety, and thus lead them to frustration, which in its turn, may result in the inhibition of students' oral participation. This carefulness is probably due to their belief that negative feedback can be counterproductive as it embarrasses the learner, and therefore, it might hamper the learning process. This implies that teachers are endowed with a variety of feedback strategies, which they employ in a variant way depending on the learning context, and which allow them to account for the inner state, that is 'psychology' of the learner to resume, as far as this finding can tell, it can be assumed that Moroccan high school teachers of English prefer to provide their students with constructive feedback rather than negative feedback. It was also concluded that teachers use a variety of strategies to react to their students' errors. The discussion of the following research question will shed more light on these strategies.

5.2.Types of Feedback

Finally, to answer the second research question about the types of strategies teachers use to give feedback on students' errors, a couple of two open-ended questions were constructed. The findings revealed that teachers depend on a vast repertory of feedback types to respond to their students' spoken errors. Although the answers provided by teachers were variously different; basically, four feedback types were evidently noticed. These feedback types relate to immediate positive feedback, peer feedback, implicit feedback and explicit feedback. Then, it follows, as the answers provided by teachers indicate, that teachers are well immersed in the issue of feedback, knowledgeable on it enough to handle each learning context on its own, and time their feedback to the convenient moment and situation.

The findings of this research are consistent with what is found in the literature, namely the study that was carried out by Lyster and Ranta (1997) which revealed that teachers resort to seven feedback types and depend heavily on the same feedback types that the current study came up to. Another finding concerns the frequency of use of feedback types; teachers' answers gave priority to, firstly, implicit feedback, secondly, immediate positive feedback, then peer correction and lastly self-correction. This hierarchy shows that teachers prefer three different feedback forms, two are generated on the part of the teacher, the other is based on students' collaborative work to correct each other, and the last one is centered around students' self-generated feedback.

As their stated beliefs reveal, teachers, firstly, initiate self-correction by encouraging students to correct themselves. If the student fails, then the teacher asks his or her peers to do that, and if the teacher realizes that the student will not be able to correct the non-target-like form, he or she then takes the initiative to provide the right form. In this way, it was noticed that teachers move from the least implicit form of feedback to the overtone. This may be due

to their belief that implicit correction is more likely to make the learner internalize the target form, since he or she does not feel embarrassed by the teacher's explicit correction. This puts more emphasis on the previously attained findings, which showed the great awareness and vast knowledge that teachers are imbued with as far as the issue of feedback is concerned. This finding matches with those that the study conducted by Ayoun (2001) came up with, and which confirmed that recasts, that is implicit correction, are the most common form of error correction employed by language teachers.

This piece of research has some pedagogical implications that might inform classroom practice. It is noteworthy that the findings of this study have drawn an optimistic picture about classroom practices in the Moroccan high school context. However, there is a need for a more informed judgment on when feedback should be utilized. This means that not all spoken errors should be corrected, nor neglected altogether. Thus, teachers need to strike out a balance between these two views that is by not conceiving of errors to be at the same degree of importance. Instead, teachers should be more tolerant of errors, especially those which do not affect the general meaning of utterances.

Given the short time allotted to this research, several limitations have given rise to mark it. Firstly, the sample that took part in this study is not sufficient to generalize the findings to the large population. Also, the researcher resorted to only one instrument to collect the data, which is the questionnaire, a fact that decreases the reliability of the findings. Basically, because questionnaires measure only the stated beliefs and attitudes, and these do not always reflect the real image of classroom practices. Moreover, the study was carried out from the perspective of teachers only, whereas a matching between the beliefs of teachers and those of students could have resulted in much more beneficial findings.

In order to overcome the limitations of this study, the researcher suggests that future research take larger samples, and most importantly, combine both classroom observation and questionnaire survey methods. This way, it will be possible to see the extent to which the beliefs that the participants express through the questionnaire match with their actual performances.

To conclude, the present section has revolved around the discussion of the findings obtained from this study. It tackled each research question separately in relation to the findings and the studies that support them, and which were reviewed in the review of the literature. The findings have given strong evidence that Moroccan high school teachers of English do, in fact, have a great amount of knowledge about feedback as they were found to be relying on different feedback strategies, and employing them according to the requisites of the learning context. Most importantly, they take into consideration the psychology of learners before responding to their erroneous utterances.

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