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Teachers' and students' perceptions of oral error correction in the EFL classroom

This thesis is submitted as the final part of the Doctorate in Education at the University of Sussex.

Helen Gibb
September 2020

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Glossary of terms

CELTA - Certificate in English Language Teaching. A certification awarded by Cambridge as an initial teacher training qualification

CertTESOL - Certificate in Teaching English to speakers of other languages. A certification awarded by Trinity as an initial teacher training qualification

CF - corrective feedback

CPD - continuing professional development

DELTA - Diploma in English Language Teaching. A certification awarded by Cambridge as a further teaching qualification

EAP - English for academic purposes

EFL - English as a foreign language

ELF - English as a Lingua Franca

ELT - English language teaching

IELTS - International English Languages Testing System

IL - interlanguage or language produced by interlocutors during conversation

L1 - first language or mother tongue

L2 - second language

OEC - oral error correction

PGCE - post graduate certificate in education

SLA - second language acquisition

TEFL - teaching English as a foreign language

TESOL - teaching English to speakers of other languages

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University of Sussex

Helen Gibb

Doctor of Education

Teachers' and students' perceptions of oral error correction in the EFL classroom

Thesis summary

This doctoral research paper focuses on one of the many pedagogical debates in modern language teaching. Teaching and learning occur in a variety of different ways and there are many theories on how these transpire. This thesis focuses on the oral error correction (OEC) offered by teachers and the teacher and student perceptions of OEC. It is presented within the field of English language teaching, utilising discussions from other modern language research. Different schools of thought exist regarding the importance of correctness in light of English as a Lingua Franca (Crystal, 2003), and the need for standardised accepted norms (Cameron, 1995). For teachers this provides a quandary of what constitutes an error, and how (if at all) these could be corrected. Whilst there has been much research into the causes of linguistic errors and the ways in which teachers respond to them, there has been comparatively little research into perceptions regarding OEC. The aim of this study is to provide a teacher and student narrative on OEC in a UK context using qualitative data collection.

The thesis focuses on three key questions for the initial data collection:

- How do teachers respond to errors in spoken language in the ESL classroom?
- How do teachers perceive oral error correction in the ESL classroom?
- How do students perceive oral error correction in the ESL classroom?

Having collated this data, the analysis will review the following principal question:

> To what extent are there tensions and commonalities between the perceptions of oral error correction (OEC) of teachers and students, and how does this impact ELT?

This study focuses on understanding the nature of OEC through the lens of the participants. Using a participatory and interpretive research design, the study

employed student questionnaires (n = 13) and semi-structured interviews with teachers (n = 6) to gain an individual perspective on giving and receiving correction. This was followed by a focus group with 5 teachers to discuss the points raised in the previous dataset and explore these further.

Teachers were asked to consider:

- the extent to which OEC benefited students' interlanguage development,
- which methods they perceived to be better received by students and why, and
- what considerations teachers had when correcting (or not) students' spoken errors?

Students were asked:

- what errors they felt were important for the teachers to correct,
- which correction method(s) they preferred, and
- how they felt when they were corrected.

The focus group questions were designed around the findings of the interviews and questionnaires to explore some of the similarities and differences in perceptions of OEC and how teachers feel about the students' responses.

The research presented here shows that students are largely more receptive to explicit correction; however, much of the current research has found that implicit correction is more widely used. The students expressed a desire to be corrected and felt it has a positive developmental influence overall; nevertheless, the teachers mostly believed intelligibility and communication were more important than linguistic correctness. Many of the teachers stated OEC was not something they consciously devoted time to, but it occurred ad hoc often in response to communication breakdown. Although the teachers did not entirely agree with each other regarding the impact of OEC, they all considered the student before responding. The findings of this research demonstrate not only the complexity of providing correction during interactions, but also the lack of consensus in how and when to provide it. If these differences are acknowledged, teachers and students can negotiate their understanding and perceptions of OEC so teaching and learning can occur to the satisfaction of both parties.

Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis has not been, and will not be, submitted in whole or in part to another university for the award of any other degree.

Signed .....

Helen Gibb

1. Introduction - what is OEC and how does it occur?

Language is the tool we use to share our narrative, express identity, create and maintain relationships as well as learn and develop. English has long been used as a lingua franca, a means of communication across borders and between peoples. In 2006, David Crystal estimated there were 400 million people using English as a second language and a further 600-700 million using English as a foreign language (ibid, p.424). Current estimates suggest around 1.1 billion non-native speakers (Lustig, 2018). This thesis considers the teaching and learning of English and in particular the role of error correction in oral communication. It will bring together some of the key theories of second language acquisition, pedagogical considerations and in particular the role of oral error correction (hereafter OEC) in language learning. More specifically it will focus on the perceptions of teachers and students of OEC in order to review the current research and propose a new perspective.

1.1 Research field and aims

There are several strands of discussion relating to English language teaching (ELT) that make it a complex and difficult subject. The ownership of English, given the global nature of the use of English for business, education, politics and research, has been regularly debated (Widdowson, 1994). Crystal (2006) considered the subject of multilingualism, stating his belief in the value of a common language, a lingua franca, for mutual understanding, which in the 21st century is undoubtedly English. Crystal (2006) also discussed the importance of multilingual and multi-competent users of the language, known as 'non-native speakers' who outnumber 'natives' in today's globalised world. These natives and non-natives arguably all contribute to the evolution of the language. It is here that discussions on the 'correct' use of English begin, raising many questions about a 'standard' English, against which learners and users are judged. This is often attributed to Kachru's (1992) inner circle of native speakers, but even within that circle there is variation in language. Cameron (1995) discussed the concepts of 'correct' English in depth, debating the key issues of standardisation and divergence of language when utilised by so many users. The concept of the 'target language' that teachers and learners are often working towards becomes problematic and as such error correction becomes a point of contention. Questions are raised about what is acceptable language use and the impact of ELF

and global issues of English undoubtedly influence how learners and teachers view correctness and errors. Discussion on the definition of correct English has been extensively covered by others, most notably Crystal (2003), Widdowson (2003) and Kachru (1992) and is therefore acknowledged and briefly debated here but remains beyond the central focus of this thesis.

Another area of debate is the different methods of error correction and their relative efficacy. Whilst previous studies review and discuss different methods in order to determine whether one method results in more learning than another, the means by which these are tested and assessed are problematic and raise further questions about the way in which the correction methods are researched and also the nature of the conclusions being drawn. According to Lyster and Ranta (1997), teachers use a range of methods and therefore it would seem uncharacteristic to limit teachers to one style for the purposes of a study as this may influence the findings. This study will discuss the various techniques outlined by Lyster and Ranta (1997) and researchers that chose to test and debate their efficacy, however, this study will not add to these dialogues as the existing literature has covered the key principles extensively.

This study does not aim to further debate the nature of 'correct' English or the efficacy of correction techniques, but will focus on the teacher and student perceptions of OEC. The perceptions, which include thoughts, feelings, beliefs and emotions, are the point of interest because much of the literature surrounding OEC cites the differences in perception as a reason for the failed learning outcomes. With many of the studies researching perceptions relating to OEC, discussed below in Chapter 2 and 3, they are often focused on one of the parties and hence speculate on the views of the other. For those that did collate data relating to the teachers' and the students' perceptions of OEC, they are limited to an often monolingual context of research. This study aims to explore the perceptions of OEC of teachers and students in a UK, multilingual setting to provide findings to add to the debate.

1.2 Research focus

The study presented here builds on the current literature in OEC, which explores ideas on the different methods used, the efficacy of correction offered by teachers and the importance of OEC for both students and teachers. Much of the current literature reviews perceptions as a static concept, where I view it as a continuum and in perpetual change. Perceptions are generally defined throughout the literature as the thoughts, feelings and understandings of the persons involved in a given situation or of

a given subject. I have taken this term and used it as such to ensure continuity within the research and clarity in my contribution to the field. By reviewing the current literature in relation to the discussion on perceptions of OEC from both teachers and students, this study hopes to add to that research by examining an alternative context and cohort. By considering the views of teachers working with multilingual student groups in private education institutions and students studying intensive English courses in the UK, a new perspective may be found on the subject.

This study aims to bring the perceptions of the participants together with the help of a focus group with teachers to further interpret the dataset. It was important to me to have both sides represented and even more valuable for the data to be reviewed by the participant teachers, rather than solely by a researcher. With such a strong focus on the perceptions of OEC, this study aims to review the key issues relating to OEC, but highlight the opinions of the teachers and students who live this reality every day. To manage the data and maintain a detailed focus, eight participant teachers working in a single international education institution participated. All participants are qualified, practicing English language teachers with significant experience in teaching international students. Although the contexts of ELT are varied, many of the current studies are based on monolingual student groups often with non-native speaker teachers. Here, the native speaker teachers are working with mixed classes of students, from a range of educational cultures, and varying needs and expectations. It is this diversity that I am interested in and how that may contribute to the teachers' perceptions of OEC.

The exploration of the issues relating to error correction, including those relating to the efficacy of the different methods is also not the focus of this study. These debates have been presented by multiple researchers (see Chapters 2 and 3 for discussions), and although they also have a bearing on the understanding of the subject, it was important not to attempt to 'prove' that one particular method was more effective than another, but rather the conversation should be on which the teachers and students perceive to be more beneficial and why. The teachers' perception is what ultimately drives their decision to use a particular strategy, and thus for me this is more interesting than research into what is 'best'. I have doubts there is a 'best method' or that it is possible to conclude what that method might be, and as such I am focused on the assumptions and assertions as to what the teachers feel is 'best'. Furthermore, I am interested in what the students believe to be good methods and how they respond to correction more generally. From this data, I am particularly interested in any differences in opinion and the range of opinions from the participants.

1.3 Key questions

It is important at this point to outline some of the key concepts and arguments presented in relation to OEC. This includes the definition of OEC, brief overviews of the arguments relating to 'correct' English and discussions on what constitutes an 'error'. The following questions provide some initial detail into these key concepts.

Where do errors come from?

Despite numerous studies into this aspect of language learning, there is still no definitive answer as to why and how students make errors. Whilst it is generally argued that an 'error' is a lack of knowledge, some literature uses 'mistake' interchangeably with this term, despite the definition generally being considered a misapplication of knowledge or over-generalisation of a rule (Lasagabaster and Sierra, 2005, p.125). Much of the literature refers to both errors and mistakes, and indeed the teachers in this study also use these terms interchangeably to mean the same. However, there is a need for a distinction between them, as the literature suggests an ignorance leading to an inaccuracy can be dealt with differently to a misunderstanding where there is some degree of rudimentary knowledge. This is debated by the teachers in this study in Chapter 5, where discussions in the focus group and interviews demonstrate the consideration of whether the students have previously been exposed to the target language.

Corder's seminal paper *'The significance of learners' errors'* of 1967 (cited in James, 1998, p.12) outlined some key aspects of learner error:

i) Acquisition is almost certainly determined by their metalinguistic knowledge of their L1, despite being governed by the same underlying mechanisms, strategies and procedures;
ii) Errors are evidence of intake (gained linguistic knowledge), and not necessarily an indication of input (teacher or text provided language examples);
iii) Errors and mistakes are different;
iv) Errors are the result of testing the students' hypotheses of the language and show how learning progresses so teachers can establish gaps in knowledge.

Despite the age of Corder's paper, the above points are still pertinent today. Swan and Smith's (2001) *Learner English* outlined the most likely errors of students based on their L1. Nevertheless, there is some evidence to suggest that the L1 is not the core issue, as learners with different L1s make the same or similar errors, and according to James (1998) errors vary at different stages of learning. Littlewood (1998) believed errors can be attributed to various influences such as over-generalisations of rules and

over-simplifications through exclusion of grammatical morphemes. In this study teachers' understanding of the causes of errors was explored through interviews to gain an insight into whether this may inform their treatment of errors.

In order to understand errors, there are three main categories of analysis that are discussed in leading literature, such as James (1998, 2001) and Richards (1974, 1980), which are summarised as follows:

1. *Contrastive analysis* – a comparison of the L1 and the target language, looking at areas of language transfer (particularly grammar, lexis and pronunciation) between languages. Errors are therefore idealistically ‘predictable’ and learners display much more complex relationships between the first and target language that do not account for many of the errors.
2. *Error analysis* – a comparison of the interlanguage of students and the target language. This does not suppose the first language is the reason for any error, but rather the target language complexities are the source of the issue.
3. *Transfer analysis* – a comparison of the interlanguage with the first language and is used as a diagnosis for error analysis.

Contrastive analysis and error analysis may be considered major approaches to studying learner errors. Whilst contrastive analysis allows for the review of the L1 and L2 for differences, it was unable to accurately guide the teachers to the likely errors of their students, and therefore it must be concluded that L1 may not be the only contributing factor to the errors in the L2. In Error analysis the teacher becomes a researcher in order to establish which aspects of the L2 are causing confusion, and thus provide the student with the necessary scaffolding to produce a reformulated and accepted utterance. These errors may include overgeneralisations of grammatical rules (e.g. for irregular past tenses), inappropriate collocations or specific expressions with grammatical restrictions (e.g. the use of 'make' or 'do' in certain phrases) or perhaps omissions of particular aspects of the grammar (e.g. a missing auxiliary verb). Error analysis can create a more comprehensive review the utterances of the students, and it takes into account the complexity of the language being learnt, rather than focusing on the student's knowledge of their own language or their ability to make comparisons between the L1 and L2 structures and lexis. Although the L1 may be an influence on the utterance produced in the L2, this was established through error analysis not to be the only cause of error.

Error analysis, as Heydari and Bagheri (2012) discuss, compares the target language and the students' utterances and further categorises the errors as those which are

formed as a result of misunderstanding or misuse of language rules (intralingual errors), those which come about through a need to approximate or from circumlocution for communication, to those which are brought about by incorrect or ineffective teaching (induced errors). These errors were found to be relating to the use of articles, adjective order, subject-verb agreement, use of present perfect and the use of the passive voice (Sattayatham and Honsa, 2007). These errors were attributed to the complex and often contextualised use of the linguistic elements rather than from L1 transfer as there was no correlation between the error and the L1 in studies reviewed by Heydari and Bagheri (2012). Error analysis shows the differences between the L2 and the students' production, thus highlighting the issues across all languages therefore challenging the theory that L1 transfer is the primary cause of errors. Conclusions drawn by Heydari and Bagheri (2012) also suggest that these errors change as the student progresses through language proficiency levels also demonstrating that L1 is therefore not the only contributing factor.

Another form of analysis emerging in the 1970s focused more holistically on the students' linguistic capabilities was called *performance analysis* (Færch and Kasper, 1987). This considers both the erroneous and correct utterances to understand the nature of the interlanguage and the learning that is occurring. Rather than focusing on the error as it occurred, the analysis looks at self-correction, reformulation, slips and the manner in which it is spoken to provide a more rounded view of the students' production. The performance is less about the utterance and more about interlanguage development. It is perhaps this that teachers should be using in order to enable a better understanding of language development, however it is error analysis and contrastive analysis that seem to define the research into OEC (Færch and Kasper, 1987), with an axiom that errors are explicable (Taylor, 1986). This study takes the stance that OEC is delivered based on the error analysis approach, where errors are identified through comparison between the target language form and the utterance, and is used to highlight the desired L2 output. This raises questions regarding what is considered 'correct' in the target language, and how the OEC is provided, but is ultimately the decision of the teacher at the moment of the utterance.

What is 'correct' English?

Many authors have reviewed the importance of correctness (Heffer and Kamm, 2015; Rundell, 2014; Widdowson, 1994) and much debate about what is correct has been generated (Cameron, 1995; Heffer, 2010; Pinker, 2014). This provides some dilemmas as to what should be corrected. To demonstrate, according to James (1998, p.235-6):

> [OEC is] a reactive second move... by someone who has made the judgement that all or part of that utterance is linguistically or factually wrong.

The use of ‘judgement’ here implies conflicting assessments are made by teachers about what is ‘correct’. There have been numerous discussions about English as a Lingua Franca and Global English (for example, Crystal, 2003. Graddol, 2006, and Jenkins, 2006, Seidlhofer, 2005) which have blurred the parameters employed by many grammarians making clarity on correctness problematic. As de Bot (2007) further added, the global nature of English make the need for language school somewhat different as there are multiple sources of learning materials available through various media sources. However, according to Richardson (1997, 2003), meaning can only be constructed in social contexts through the use of language, which can be ensured in a classroom. If it is the language that is the knowledge, intelligibility becomes the defining factor in both the meaning (formal knowledge) and the means by which it is created. Language is interpretive and is based on the individual and cultural meanings of its content and therefore it is less binary in terms of being 'right' or 'wrong', although some expressions may be deemed more appropriate than others. For this reason, teachers may struggle to assist students in understanding where there are accepted norms and rules, and where there is room for flexibility, and there are further issues of subjectivity in these boundaries.

With ever more people using English globally, it is inevitable that changes and 'deviations' to the native speaker standards will permeate, creating debates on whether these variations should be accepted and even taught. There has even been some discussion as to whether learners should be allowed to deviate from the idealised norms if they are not yet proficient in English, where native speakers are freely using these 'mistakes' in standard interactions (Kachru, 1992, p.62). Kachru further posed the question of what is considered a deviation and what therefore is a mistake, as this appears to be subjectively defined by the teacher and is dependent on their understanding of the target language and desire for a singular language model. This study assumes the student's utterance is judged by the teacher based on their own boundaries of acceptable language use. Thus, correction may be contradictory and confusing for students, who may be expecting a consistent stance. However, whilst there are some generally accepted norms, that is not to say that all deviations are tolerated, or that the teachers are willing to allow them. Teachers may choose some deviations over others as examples of tolerated localised variations in social interactions but not in classroom activities. This was explored with the teachers in both the interviews and focus group and discussed in Chapter 5.

How is OEC defined?

The definition of error correction has varied, but ultimately Hattie and Timperley (2007, p.102) explained correction more generally as 'information provided by the agent' (in most learning contexts it is the teacher) which 'seeks to provide knowledge and skills or to develop particular attitudes' to their language performance. The available research uses a range of terms alluding to the treatment of spoken errors, including feedback, corrective feedback, error correction, negative evidence and negative feedback, however, throughout this study the term oral error correction (OEC) will be used, and understood as defined by Lightbown and Spada (2006, p.197) as 'any indication to a learner that his or her use of the target language is incorrect'.

Finding a significant study, which was widely cited and formed the basis of many of the research papers on correction methods and efficacy, was essential to establishing the key terms to explain and describe the correction methods of the classroom. In their seminal paper, *'Corrective Feedback and Learner Uptake'*, Lyster and Ranta (1997) were the first to clearly identify the methods used by teachers in the classroom and the corresponding uptake by students, distinguishing and defining six techniques for oral error correction, which enabled a multitude of other studies to materialise. The techniques were categorised as follows (ibid, p.46-49):

- *Explicit correction* (an obvious indication to the student there is an error in their speech);
- *Recasts* (a reformulation or expansion of an ill-formed or incomplete utterances);
- *Clarification requests* (a questioning technique to elicit reformulation or repetition from the student);
- *Metalinguistic feedback* (information, explanation or exploration related to the grammar or lexis of the utterance without explicitly correcting);
- *Elicitation* (using pausing, open questions, or request for reformulation to prompt self-correction);
- *Repetition of error* (echoing of the error, modifying tone or intonation to signal error).

Careful, reasoned interpretation enables extrapolation of the pedagogical importance of OEC and therefore current research and this thesis has employed the terms and methods outlined in this pivotal research paper. Whilst much of the research into efficacy (outlined in Chapter 2) and perceptions of OEC (outlined in Chapter 3) discuss many of the OEC forms listed above, studies have focused on the differences between

recasting and elicitation (also referred to as prompting) as these have been respectively cited as the most common form of correction (Lyster and Ranta. 1997) and the most effective (Ammar and Spada, 2006).

By understanding where errors derive from, perhaps teachers adjust their responses to these errors to assist in the saliency or clarity of the correction. By understanding what is considered 'correct', teachers may assist students in achieving the desired target language for examinations. By understanding how OEC is defined, discussions on OEC may progress to develop methods that are accepted and constructive. This thesis will explore these issues with the participant teachers through interviews and focus group discussions.

1.4 Professional and personal research outcomes

Lyster and Ranta's study (1997) raised many questions regarding my own practice and prompted a review of that of other teachers. I reflected on the methods I used and tried to establish possible rationales for my decisions. From here I was interested in teacher cognition, which led to writings by Simon Borg. In particular, Borg's (2003) paper provoked a change in focus towards perceptions, looking at the influences of previous practice, context, pedagogical knowledge and training, as well as information from others on what the teachers decide to do in their lesson and how that impacts learning. I felt this was an intriguing and appropriate direction to research, which I hope will improve my professional practice.

The different cultural, linguistic and age related factors that teachers encounter are significant in building a picture of the classroom, helping to predict and understand the possible learning difficulties of future student groups. As teachers and students experience the education system, they continuously assess the information they are presented with:

> Each of us makes sense of our world by synthesizing new experiences into what we have previously come to understand. (…) When confronted with such initially discrepant data or perceptions, we either interpret what we see to conform to our present set of rules for explaining and ordering the world or we generate a new set of rules that better accounts for what we perceive to be occurring. Either way, our perceptions and rules are constantly engaged in a grand dance that shapes our understandings. (Brooks and Brooks, 1993, p.4)

That is not to say that the assumptions are correct, merely that they are a starting point, perhaps a stereotype, that the teachers use to develop their teaching style and classroom manner. I am certain my own experiences of teaching abroad and the many

nationalities I have had in my classes have provided a subconscious stereotype of my students, a 'tried and tested' understanding of activities and a presumption on learning English. This research was an opportunity to reflect on my practice, and discuss this with other teachers.

As MacDonald *et al*. (2001) detailed, the beliefs, assumptions and knowledge of teachers are inextricably linked with what happens in the classroom, and many teachers contest theoretical and research claims due to their lack of practical application to their own context. With much of the research not being carried out in authentic language classroom contexts (ibid, p.949), it is not unsurprising teachers have a feeling of mistrust of the claims being made. Woods (1996) claimed teachers construct their own theory of teaching and learning based on their own beliefs, assumptions and knowledge from routine classroom practice. I am mindful here of not being overly theoretical, but remaining clear on the contextual truths and individualised realities that are present for the participants to provide practical, applicable research findings. This study has been designed to provide an exploration of teachers' and students' perceptions of OEC in a particular context, which is not only specific to my own working environment, but to thousands of other teachers in UK-based multilingual classes. The research has also been carried out in a manner in which the perceptions of teachers and students can be explored in depth through the use of a participatory approach in the form of a focus group, where the teachers are able to further analyse the perceptions of peers and students alike. The context and design of this study, therefore, makes the contribution to the field of ELT, in particular the understanding of OEC, of specific importance.

1.5 Structure of thesis paper and research questions

The thesis aims to investigate some of the key aspects of language learning as outlined above and through the following research questions:

- How do teachers respond to errors in spoken language in the ESL classroom?
- How do teachers perceive oral error correction in the ESL classroom?
- How do students perceive oral error correction in the ESL classroom?

Having collated this data, the research project will review the following principal question:

> To what extent are there tensions and commonalities between the perceptions of oral error correction (OEC) of teachers and students, and how does this impact ELT?

This thesis is presented in several key chapters, following the current literature and research findings. Chapter 2, *Language learning and OEC,* and Chapter 3, *OEC - beliefs, attitudes and actions,* examine some of the key debates relating to the acquisition of another language, and the theories relating to those, as well as looking into the discussions on OEC as part of the learning process. The research methods and methodology are discussed in Chapter 4, including research design, ethical considerations, researcher position and data analysis. Chapter 5 contains a detailed exploration of the findings from the students and teachers, presenting the key themes in relation to the research questions. The final chapter, *Conclusions - perceptions of OEC and the impact on ELT,* consolidates the literature and research findings and provides a final discussion on the research questions above. This chapter also includes a reflective account on my experiences as a researcher-practitioner.

2. Language learning and OEC

Error correction is so deeply ingrained in language education and so much a fact of life for teachers and learners, that the prospect of abandoning it altogether is neither realistic nor feasible. (Pawlak, 2014, p.85)

The literature on language learning and error correction is extensive, ranging from pedagogical deliberations to laboratory style experiments into specific methods. The topic of OEC covers a multitude of pedagogical areas, which would be beyond the scope of this study to fully explore all the aspects. As such, this chapter will present some of the main areas relating directly to OEC and language learning and explore them here to a depth that enables some understanding of the points raised by the teachers and students in this study, in particular those that underpin some of the core beliefs. Following the key concepts from Chapter 1, this chapter discusses some of the debates surrounding OEC and presents some of the literature relating to the link between OEC and student's acquisition of the target language. Further to this, studies into the efficacy of OEC, in particular the use of recasts and elicitation (as defined by Lyster and Ranta, 1997, in the previous chapter) are presented below. Discussions relating to the pedagogical aspects of learning a language are also presented in this chapter. Whilst OEC may come from the teacher, there are other persons involved in a communicative classroom and therefore a brief review of peer correction and the type of correction that may be offered in the classroom is included. Although OEC may appear a reactive move to an error, the concepts surrounding it, including the error, the methods used and the efficacy (or perception there of) of the methods, as well as arguments around the need for correctness, make this a complex and multi-faceted topic. More detailed discussions were presented as part of the Critical Analytical Study (CAS), and have been summarised here.

2.1 Attitudes to OEC in Second Language Acquisition

As Pawlak (2014) indicated, for many years there have been clear fluctuations in the opinions towards OEC which correlate with the perspectives on form focused pedagogical methods and instruction. Within a changeable teaching and learning environment it is understandable the treatment of spoken errors is still being debated for its effectiveness and facilitation in learning a language. Theorists, researchers and

practitioners still argue about the methods and outcomes of error correction dating back to discussions by Krashen (1982) and Chaudron (1988). Krashen (1982) claimed learners rarely internalise the corrections in the way that teachers would hope. Truscott (1999, p.453) later concurred, stating OEC should be abandoned due to its lack of effectiveness and its inherent problematic delivery for teachers, as timing and method of correction, complexity of the error, and individual personalities should be considered. Conversely, Chaudron (1988) supported OEC, claiming that it is an imperative part of the learning process and without it students will fail to learn the language effectively. More recently, Larson-Freeman (2012) supported the use of OEC for learners' language improvement, stating that errors offer vital opportunities for feedback. This was further supported in a review by Sheen and Ellis (2011) who stated, 'there is now clear evidence that oral CF [corrective feedback] – in one form or another – can benefit acquisition' (ibid, p.605).

Krashen (2003) later conceded that error correction does impact SLA but its scope is limited. Researchers such as Schwartz (1993), and Towell and Hawkins (1994) were also sceptical of OEC's contribution in language learning, claiming the effects are temporary as they do not develop the learner's deeper understanding of the language, despite the correction invoking immediate production of the target language. The contribution of OEC, therefore, has to be viewed as marginal, merely drawing students' attention to the 'rules' absent or varied from their L1 (Pawlak, 2014). Conversely, Hattie and Timperley (2007, p.81) stated feedback is generally viewed as 'one of the most powerful influences on learning and achievement', and feedback seems to be embedded in teaching generally, including language learning. As a move towards more communicative teaching techniques has emerged following the sociolinguistic era of the 1980s (see McKay and Hornberger, 1996), OEC has become an increasingly prominent theme in language learning and pedagogical research. Daelemans and van den Bosch (2005, p.5) stated that learning is essentially 'storage' or memory, and 'solving a new problem is achieved by reusing solutions from similar previously solved problems', further arguing repeated exposure to language helps foster memory and an ability to find similarities. Students are therefore able to use the target language in different contexts and as Gass (2003) claimed, the exposure to and engagement with the target language and related opportunities for experimentation are key to SLA. However, this supposes that OEC is part of that input and the opportunities for language analysis.

2.2 Recasts and realising

As discussed in Chapter 1, when offering OEC the teacher must decide on the nature of the error (e.g. grammatical, lexical, or phonological) and decide on the most appropriate way to respond. With recasts cited by Lyster and Ranta (1997) as the most used form of correction, which was corroborated by later studies, it is pertinent to start with a review of this specific form of correction. Through error analysis, the teacher may determine what is 'incorrect' in comparison to the target language and provide the student with the appropriate form by repeating the student's statement with the corrections embedded within. Error analysis does not require the teacher to have an intimate linguistic knowledge of the student's L1, rather an ability to identify deviations from the accepted norms of the target language. The judgment of what is acceptable or not ultimately lies with the teacher, who will offer correction or not according to their judgment. However, there are questions on the efficacy of recasting regarding the ability of students to identify the difference between their utterance and that of the teacher's in order to determine the error. If OEC is defined as an indication to the learner that an element of their statement is 'incorrect', this raises questions as to whether recasting is truly OEC if the student is unable to recognise it as correction.

According to Skehan (1998), in order for input to become 'intake' (acquired knowledge) leading to correct future use, the correction needs to facilitate the learner's observation of the discrepancy. Long (1996) acknowledged teachers' input is perceived as correction only when it is noticed. Skehan further claimed students will only accept correction if they are aware of the erroneous utterance *and* the correction offered. With more than half of teachers' feedback on errors categorised as recasts (a reformulation of the incorrect utterance) by Lyster and Ranta (1997), it is pertinent to review this first. According to Lyster and Ranta's (1997, p.56) research, recasts formed 55% of the feedback. Recasts are often seen as unobtrusive (Han and Kim, 2008) and brief (Sepehrinia and Mehdizadeh, 2016). Classroom interaction has been cited as the reason for using recasts, with some of the research outlined by Hawkes and Nassaji (2016) suggesting the interactive classroom is the reason recasting is effective. Recasts are generally considered, as 'positive evidence'; a form of authentic input, a model, which students can use to develop their own language skills, but are arguably used as implicit correction in the classroom (Leeman, 2003).

Lyster and Mori (2006) argued recasting provides a natural way of reacting whilst providing scaffolding and support. Mackey (2007) further suggested recasts are an

immediate way of providing input to the student with seemingly little detraction from the task, adding:

> A recast is semantically contingent upon a learner's utterance and usually temporarily juxtaposed with it. This juxtaposition, and the salience it might create, (…) [contributes] to the psycholinguistic rationale for the effectiveness of recasts (...) while negotiation for meaning requires learner involvement, recasts themselves do not always make such participatory demands. (ibid, p.15)

Nonetheless, with an activity in progress and the focus on communicative achievement, any correction may not have the desired effect. Several studies have found problems with the saliency of recasts. Research by Loewen and Philp (2006) indicated students often misinterpret recasts, resulting in missed corrective input. Similarly, studies examined by Han and Kim (2008) suggested teachers' use of recasts to assist the fluency of the dialogue and as a corrective method is confusing for students, who are unclear as to the function of the intervention. Learners may consider recasts as confirmation of meaning, not correction (Lightbown and Spada, 2006). If the learner is uncertain, and is not expected or encouraged to respond, recasts may well be ineffective (Al-Surmi, 2012; Braidi, 2002; Egi, 2010; and Sheen, 2004). Considering these studies and findings, it is interesting that Lyster and Mori (2006) identified recasts as the most preferred method of correction by teachers. Teachers may therefore still perceive recasts as having pedagogical value.

Counter to these findings and despite SLA cognitive theory indicating otherwise, researchers (for example Goo and Mackey, 2013; Mackey and Goo, 2007; and Ortega and Long, 1997) have disputed that recasts are less inadequate than insinuated, and can actually be valuable when done well. Loewen and Philp (2006, p.536) found that 'the ambiguity of recasts is greatly reduced by the phrasal, prosodic, and discoursal cues that teachers provide'; for example adding emphasis, enabling form focus by producing a concise recast, or aiding noticing through additional verbal signals may help (see Loewen and Philp, 2006; Carpenter et al., 2006). Han and Kim (2008) argued any learners' confusion over recasts can be limited through minimising the supposed ambiguity by avoiding parroting or declarative statements in response to a student's discourse. If the teacher is simply reformulating the statement with little or no indication to the student that the utterance is incorrect, according to the definition of OEC provided by Lightbown and Spada (2006), it could be argued that this is not actually correction. Han and Kim claimed that a narrower focus and shorter recast increases the probability of the learner noticing the error and the correct form, whereas, in a review by Hawkes and Nassaji (2016) the pre- and post-test research papers are

unclear whether the findings were the result of the recast or the intensity of the feedback provided. In order for recasting to be effective, research suggests that a more tangible indication of what is 'wrong' through non-verbal cues or vocal emphasis and therefore without it, perhaps this should not be considered OEC.

Lyster and Ranta (2013) maintained that research shows recasts are effective in some defined and controlled environments, but the research overwhelmingly shows that recasts are not nearly as effective in classrooms as they are in laboratory conditions, raising questions regarding other studies. Russell (2009) argued recasts may go unnoticed because they do not require any learner participation. Kim (2004) also warned that students' abilities to notice the correction has both internal (age, language proficiency, L1 etc.) and external (tasks, contexts, target language point etc.) constraints. As Han and Kim (2008) later noted, the strategies deployed by teachers are still being researched and their study showed there are concerns over the usefulness of recasts in a meaning-orientated classroom, where communication rather than a focus on form are at the centre. Where recasts may enable students to continue their communication, there is little evidence of the learning potential, particularly long term. Therefore, recasts may be better labelled as communication facilitators rather than correction as students are not required to take action and there is no clarity as to whether the students have identified it.

Responses are often assumed to be uptake (Mitchell and Myles, 2004) and this is generally thought of as evidence of learning and understanding (Panova and Lyster, 2002). Nonetheless, Long (1996) maintained that the immediate uptake of recasts cannot be equated to L2 learning, which Mackey and Philp (1998) labelled response ‘red herrings’; it is a mistake to assume a response means learning is occurring (Mackey, 2007), or that a lack of response entails deficient learning. 'Successful uptake' was defined by Yoshida (2010, p.302) as a reformulation or repetition of the corrected form, but this accounted for only 46% of the total recorded responses to OEC. It would therefore seem that a majority of correction is unproductive, but as Yoshida discussed, it does not necessarily mean learning is not taking place if there is no response. Rather than the 'red-herrings' described by Mackey and Philp (1998), there is an overwhelming presumption that response means learning. Whilst this has been previously discussed relative to recasts, Yoshida assumes the same stance with all corrections. However, corrections are often forgotten after the repair and do not influence underlying interlanguage systems (Panova and Lyster, 2002), which often attributed to the lack of engagement and focus on the target language. There is little

research in clarification on exactly what is uptake and how it is measured (Rassaei, 2013; Russell, 2009). Therefore, it is difficult to assert whether recasts and any response to them have a significant impact on L2 learning, particularly in the long term, yet teachers use this as their primary source of correction. This was a particular point of interest and was added to the interview prompts for this study to explore and understand the teachers' perceptions of this in more detail.

2.3 Recasts or elicitation?

In reviewing the discussions regarding efficacy in target language acquisition, it became clear that many of these studies focus on comparing explicit and implicit methods. In particular the use of recasts (a reformulation of the student's utterance with the correction embedded within it) and elicitations (a prompting or a question to assist the learner to self-correct). Whilst both of the these methods were identified as being used in several of the studies presented below, the debate centres on to what extent these methods assist learners in developing their language knowledge and use and whether there is a greater benefit to one of these correction types, a 'best method'. Whilst cognitive theories may suggest that elicitation (also known as prompting) may be more beneficial due its increased requirements on the student to attend to the error and the correction provided, there is still considerable debate on the use of recasting to guide the students to a 'correct' form. In both cases there is a requirement by the student to perform error analysis by contrasting their utterance with that of the desired target form, whether provided by the teacher (recast) or self-produced (elicitation). There is no need for further analysis of the reason for the error at this stage, although arguably for both the teacher and student an understanding of the nature of the error may be useful. Whether the student has 'translated' from their mother tongue, often referred to as L1 transfer, or if the student has over-generalised grammar rules, at the point of correction the origin of the error may not be established.

Contrastive analysis requires extensive knowledge of the student's L1, which teachers such as those participating in this study may not have. Where classes are multi-lingual and the teacher a native English speaker, it may not be possible for the teacher to be able to offer an explanation (classed as metalinguistic feedback by Lyster and Ranta, 1997) for the error due to the variety of languages in the classroom. Therefore, error analysis (focusing on the utterance and the target) is therefore perhaps the most logical course of action. Error analysis enables the teacher and the student to review the

language together regardless of the L1, which recasting and elicitation help facilitate without the need for knowledge beyond the target language. However, I would argue there is still a need for the teacher to identify whether the student has perhaps misunderstood a rule presented during a lesson and therefore may need to be further explored or revisited, which would be done through performance analysis (Færch and Kasper, 1987). Whilst self-correction is generally considered evidence of knowledge of the target form, recasting presents no such confirmation and thus, as stated above, any realisation of the error is unclear and arguably not required.

Lyster and Ranta's (1997) findings showed teachers used recasts as the main correction method, despite being found to be largely unsuccessful in generating self-correction and with questionable long term impact on language learning. Gass (1990, p.136) argued this is largely due to the lack of clarity that it is OEC, because students need to consciously notice the target language for correction to occur. Recasts often fail as the utterance and the target language correction both need to be processed concurrently by the student in order to identify the deficiency of production in comparison to the corrected statement. In addition to this problem, according to Swain and Lapkin (1995) an adjustment to a student's output following a recast may not signal understanding of the error made. Using recasts assumes students are able to find the rules for themselves which could lead to misinterpretation or over-generalisation (Carpenter et al., 2006). Han (2001) recommended using recasts for correction of language points known to the student and within their developmental stage of learning as the lack of clarity will not enable acquisition of new forms from implicit correction. Kim (2004) further claimed recasts within these parameters mean the student can easily follow the teacher's response whilst allowing the student to absorb and process the information to add to their existing data stores. Lyster and Izquierdo (2009, p.454) suggested recasts benefit 'developmentally ready learners' and learners with higher existing accuracy in the target language, nevertheless this requires teachers to be able to identify this.

To evidence learning, many available studies evaluate the students' ability to modify their output as a result of the correction. This output, often referred to as uptake, whether in the form of repetition, reformulation or discussion, at least in part shows some engagement with the language and the communication being attempted. This further supports the cognitive theories of learning presented by Skehan (1998), and further corroborated by de Bot (1996) and Loewen and Philp (2006), providing evidence that processing of the input is necessary to the acquisition of a foreign

language. Yoshida's (2008) study found students were able to identify the benefits of deeper cognitive processing stating that most students 'mentioned that finding out correct answers on their own was more effective for their learning than being provided the answers by the teachers' (ibid, p.89). As Lyster and Mori (2006, p.273) claimed:

> Uptake that involves self-repair requires a deeper level of processing than uptake that involves repetition, and it is arguably more effective at destabilizing interlanguage forms as learners are pushed to reanalyze interlanguage representations and to attend to the retrieval of alternative forms.

Recasting requires little attention on form by the learner, where elicitation or clarification requests demand it. This engagement with the language input by the student requires substantial brain capacity, as they need to recall their own utterance, acknowledge the input, conduct a contrastive analysis of the two, locate the grammatical or lexical knowledge in their memory and apply it. Where prompting necessitates a reasonable working memory, Goo (2012) suggested recasts require minimal intellectual involvement, which Mitchell and Myles (2004) declared means the correction is likely to be immediately forgotten and therefore do not facilitate learning of the correct form. Kim (2004) argued research shows teachers should make targeted, clearly signalled correction and assist students in identifying the purpose of the correction. Although Goo (2012) found that implicit (recasting) and explicit (metalinguistic feedback) methods of correction were equally successful, this directly contradicts Ellis (2007) and Sheen (2006), and refutes the cognitive theory advocated by several theorists. Lee's (2013, p.229) student participants maintained that explicit corrections offered the 'best and most accurate' information and enabled straightforward learning where implicit methods were unclear in their purpose and focus. These issues are the focus of the student questionnaires and teacher interviews in this study.

In a comparative study, Ammar and Spada (2006) researched the effects of elicitation and recasts on 64 ESL learners and their results indicated that, overall, elicitations were more effective than recasts, although the difference in effectiveness was less obvious in higher level learner groups. In other studies, Lyster and Izquierdo's (2009) research with 25 undergraduate French students and Dilans' (2010) experimental results of 23 adult ESL learners failed to deduce any learning disparity between elicitation and recasts. Where Ammar and Spada refrained from isolating the feedback forms for testing, Dilans and Lyster and Izquierdo alleged to have provided exclusive correction techniques and found them to be comparatively constructive, and more

beneficial than no correction. It is difficult to determine whether the results of Dilans (2010) and Lyster and Izquierdo (2009) are attributable to an unusual OEC method or regular use of recasts. It is also difficult to determine from the research whether the teachers were able to provide exclusive and 'pure' forms of correction methods throughout, as this will influence the results and thus the claims being made. I am interested in exploring the teachers' and students' perceptions of these two methods in the interviews and questionnaires.

2.4 Further learning and teaching considerations

Lyster (1998, 2004) found the type of correction given was determined by the type of error: lexical errors were responded to with negotiation (questioning and clarification requests) while grammatical and phonological errors were corrected through recasts. Lyster hinted lexical issues result in misunderstanding, therefore leading to the need for negotiation to provide comprehension. Perhaps then, phonological errors are easily resolved with a model from the teacher (a recast) and grammar is more easily clarified via explicit correction. In a later study Lyster and Mori (2006) hypothesised the type of feedback given and its relative effectiveness is dependent on the type of activity being undertaken and the pedagogical stance; the 'Counterbalance Hypothesis'. OEC techniques in contrast to the activity will likely be more obvious to the student, thus more effective. If the teachers are able to correct in a tangible and encouraging way, uptake may be greater. Katayama (2007, p.76) stated:

> Error correction should be provided in an unambiguous and non-confusing manner to minimize wait time and to promote self-correction, and, more importantly, to facilitate the students' successful self-correction.

If success of the correction is based on the uptake of the corrected form, current research would suggest that many of the methods of OEC are ineffective. With few of the OEC methods outlined by Lyster and Ranta (1997) requiring a response, opportunities for learning are potentially diminished, thus leading to questions in relation to the need for and use of OEC. Behaviourist theory, supported by researchers such as Havranek (2002) and Hattie and Timperley (2007), suggests that uptake leads to increased memory recall in the future, creating routine access to the revised and corrected forms. Repetition of a recast would not suffice in correcting the knowledge of the student; however, where students are prompted to provide another

statement the teacher is providing opportunities for further exploration and experimentation of the language. Russell (2009) stated a teacher's tone and demeanour, other paralinguistic cues and the social dynamics of the classroom, all affect how the learners receive OEC. By encouraging students to make mistakes and explore the language, teachers may find the learning process more fruitful (Lightbown and Spada, 2006; Mackey 2007; Rassaei, 2015). This sociolinguistic theory and communicative pedagogy (see Ortega, 2009) is more prevalent in more recent teaching practices, moving away from the past teaching techniques of focus on form and controlled practice of discrete grammar, lexis or phonemes towards a focus on meaning and task achievement.

Whilst OEC is generally assumed to come exclusively from the teacher, peers can be a useful source of feedback. Pawlak (2014, p.42) explained that 'active participation in conversational exchanges with more proficient interlocutors inevitably results in increased exposure to well-formed utterances in the target language' as students listen, query and reply. This is also argued in VanPatten's (2015) Input Processing Theory; allowing students to focus on the exposure to the language to internalise and comprehend the target language and where production is deemphasised. Whilst the need for input of the target language would not be contested by theorists and teachers alike, input of this kind is not the only option. Previously, VanPatten (1990) claimed that OEC had a negligible impact on language learners' output in the long term, but later agreed that negotiation of meaning, where clarification and rephrasing is evident, form a more important part of the learning. However, explanations, particularly for grammatical complexities, must be considered as a necessary part of the input. Chaudron (1988, p.134) agreed feedback's function is 'not only to provide reinforcement, but to provide information which learners can use actively in modifying their behaviour' which is why metalinguistic feedback should be most effective. Nevertheless, grammatical structures are generally believed to require highlighting, contrasting and parameter setting which is chiefly the responsibility of the teacher (Pawlak, 2014).

In communicative tasks, corrections can be directed at a range of linguistic issues, allowing revision of previous lessons or an introduction to new language. Errors for correction are determined by the interlocutor, which may be driven by a lack of understanding and a need for clarification. Where the correction is offered by a third party (for example a teacher monitoring a conversation between students) the correction may not be focused on a breakdown of communication, but on a selected

structure or expression which they deem incorrect. Therefore, the correction may have a different level of significance to the learner based on the context and content of the correction. The negotiation of meaning (see Ortega, 2009) is at the core of OEC in communication, where interlocutors question, reformulate and question to achieve understanding. This is arguably true for any conversation where one participant is less familiar with the topic or terminology than the other. Nevertheless, Havranek (2002) and Ellis (1991) explained there still needs to be some instructional intervention in order to draw attention to the error in order for correction to be made. Although negotiation of meaning is an important feedback method, it targets mainly lexical and syntactical issues, not morphological, pragmatic or semantic errors. Furthermore, Ortega's negotiation of meaning hypothesis assumes that incorrect utterances are not understood, which I would argue is a limited view of language use. Finally, I would question whether negotiation of meaning is a form of correction. Returning to the methods outlined by Lyster and Ranta (1997), negotiation of meaning may be categorised as a clarification request, but it may not actually result in a corrected output and therefore could it or would it be categorised thus? The focus could actually be on conveyance of content rather than language focused, thus negating the need for 'correct' syntax or lexis, providing both parties comprehend.

Several studies have argued OEC can have little impact if it is beyond the student's current stage of language development. According to Ortega (2009), and supported by reviews by Lightbown and Spada (2006), Ellis (2009), and Li (2010), the stages of learning a language are clear and systematic, regardless of individual learner differences (see Brooks, and Kempe, 2013), and follow predictable outcomes. Form focused instruction is an important factor in assisting this development, but there are still several questions about the exact contribution of OEC to this process. Although the possibility of immediately acquiring the target language from one incidence of correction is highly unlikely, perhaps the attempts to offer correction, at least of the explicit kind (particularly that of metalinguistic feedback), are beneficial through the repeated exposure to the point being addressed. Long (1996) explained teachers need to offer explicit and noticeable correction during meaningful interactions in order to provide structured focus on specific language features. Lightbown and Spada (2006) believed repetition and/or recurring exposure through teaching is needed for true adoption of the correct form and therefore reactive OEC is ineffective in long term language change. Whilst various researchers, including Sheen (2004), Panova and Lyster (2002), Long (2006), Leeman (2003) and the well cited study of Lyster and Ranta (1997), found some forms of correction prompt repair, there is little evidence of

long term target language acquisition as many of these studies fail to provide longitudinal data which may help teachers decide which methods of OEC to use.

Despite different theories on SLA and research into the effectiveness of correction, there is still no definitive answer about how students learn from OEC or whether correction can help students refine utterances in the long term. Output may be an important factor in the students' retention of correct forms, a view clearly supported by coursebooks and teacher training materials which typically contain controlled practice of a specific language point followed by productive tasks requiring the target language for successful completion. Sociolinguists and behaviourists confirm the communicative aspect is beneficial in developing the connections and memory of the students relating to the target language as students actively seek to include the vocabulary or grammar of the session. Cognitivists believe the information supports students to gain the ability to self-analyse their utterances and linguistically examine the target language through contrastive analysis. This, however, requires the students to engage and actively notice the language input that is being provided. Rubin (1975) defined students with these attributes as 'good' language learners, but progression in the language is not dependent entirely on OEC. Cook (2008) claimed training learners to improve their strategies and raising teachers' awareness of learning styles may result in improved acquisition through maximised input.

Although there seems to be a general consensus that OEC is part of the pedagogy of language learning, evidenced by the teacher training, CPD and coursebook guidance, not to mention the amount of research into the efficacy of OEC, it is controversial then that Mitchell and Myles (2004, p.22) stated that OEC is 'largely irrelevant', claiming:

> Correction often seems ineffective... It seems that learners often cannot benefit from correction, but continue to make the same mistakes however much feedback is offered.

Despite this pessimistic view, much of the research has a generally positive perspective on OEC, claiming that something is better than nothing and learning is enhanced as a result of it, however, there is still a difficulty in making it sufficiently conspicuous. Goo and Mackey (2013) made the strong case for review of more varied types of OEC and more detailed studies into long-term efficacy. However, to identify these lesser used methods, or even to isolate them, in a research project may prove insurmountable. To get a broad and comprehensive view of the efficacy of OEC, more research into these methods should be completed. Reviewing elicitations and recasts exclusively may be dismissive of the other OEC methods discussed in Lyster and

Ranta's (1997) study. Further research is needed to explore how these techniques are used in relation to the different error types, how or when they are used in conjunction, and to discuss with teachers the rationale for the OEC used in order to understand OEC more thoroughly.

2.5 Debating OEC efficacy

Despite the evidence from Lyster and Ranta (1997) of multiple OEC methods in use, the prominence of recasting used by teachers and the focus of recasting and elicitation in the research, it is suggested that OEC is considered an important aspect of language learning and teaching. Despite the debate surrounding recasting and its potential for developing a student's interlanguage, there is still sufficient belief in OEC to continue using it and researching its impact. Ellis (2009, p.11) claimed there is little doubt amongst theorists and practitioners OEC 'is an integral part of teaching', and Chaudron (1988, p133) stated:

> From the learner's point of view, the use of feedback in repairing their utterances, and involvement in repairing their interlocutors' utterances, may constitute the most potent source of improvement [in target language development].

He went on to state that OEC should succeed in 'modifying the learner's interlanguage rule so the error is eliminated from further production' (ibid, p.150). Mackey (2007, p.15) affirmed that OEC gives:

> additional opportunities to focus on their [learners'] production or comprehension. (…) Feedback may also be facilitative of SLA in allowing learners to subdivide complex production tasks into more manageable ones, to the effect that they are able to perform them better than they might have done otherwise.

There has been much discussion among researchers that explicit correction is more beneficial than implicit OEC, and Varnosfadrani and Basturkmen (2009) found developmental early features are learned better with explicit correction and developmental late features with implicit correction. However, Norris and Ortega (2000, p.423) stated 'no single investigation of the effectiveness of L2 instruction can begin to provide trustworthy answers' in their review of OEC studies, stating that 'two studies observing exactly the same effect may come to contradictory conclusions' due to the research variables. Ellis (2007) later agreed that it is impossible to come to any conclusion about the effectiveness of implicit or explicit feedback from all the studies as

the OEC model is applied differently and uptake is tested in a range of ways. Each study is dealing with a localised (mainly monolingual) environment, which invariably means the results and interpretations are limited to the specific context. The nature of their teaching environment makes any findings and interpretations ungeneralisable due to the individuality of the students and teachers involved. They do, however, offer insight into the differing contexts and conditions, which may help teachers understand their methods.

Russell and Spada (2006) reviewed 15 OEC studies dating from 1977 to 2003, concluding that OEC has a significant impact on language acquisition and it is generally lasting. Russell and Spada identified moderating variables such as the type, source, and focus of the OEC, and the manner of correction which appear to influence learning. Mackey and Goo (2007) completed a similar review, finding that immediate learning from OEC was evident as Russell and Spada (2006) found, however, the post-test results in many studies showed the acquisition is temporary as many corrections are later forgotten. In addition, the context in which a particular study took place was reviewed, with Russell and Spada (2006) highlighting no evidence in differences between classroom and laboratory outcomes, suggesting claims that unnatural learning environments impact learning more greatly are unfounded. Mackey and Goo disagree, stating that the gains were significantly greater in laboratories. Interestingly, both parties found the results were inconclusive regarding the comparative value of explicit and implicit OEC; no difference was found in the outcomes of general and specific treatment. Although a majority of the correction was offered by teachers in the studies reviewed, it is unclear to what extent peer-correction was influential on uptake and how far the corrections focused on form rather than content. Indeed Mackey and Goo (2007, p.446) suggested 'more research specifically designed to examine the effects of different feedback types and opportunities for modified output is necessary to obtain a clearer understanding of their roles in language learning'. In a later review Li (2010, p.349) found similar results, and suggested that 'researchers should embark on the mission of investigating the factors constraining its [OEC's] effectiveness'.

2.6 Conclusion

Previous research shows there is little conclusive evidence and consistency in the arguments surrounding various OEC methods' long term value. As Sheen (2010b, p.177) noted:

> One of the key contributions CF [corrective feedback] research has made to date is to highlight the importance of taking into account multiple factors in explanations of SLA. In the case of CF, these factors include feedback type, error type, interaction type, mode (oral vs. written vs. computer-mediated), L2 instructional contexts, age, proficiency, L1 transfer, learner orientation, anxiety, and cognitive abilities. CF research is also of obvious relevance to language pedagogy: It helps to inform when, how, and how often learner errors should be corrected.

There has been a strong emphasis on numerical data in earlier empirical research, much of it from testing. This is a somewhat restricted view of what takes place in the learning process, and it is becoming increasingly important for the teachers' attitudes and students' responses to OEC methods to be examined. A qualitative approach that takes all the variables (students, teachers, context, pedagogy, etc.) into consideration would be beneficial to further the debate. This study will not be exploring the discussions on individualism within its scope, but it should be noted that previous studies have shown significant differences between learners which may account for the preferences for, responses to and effectiveness of OEC. Such factors include age, gender, motivation, first and other languages, previous learning experiences, learning strategies and types, and general beliefs about language learning (see Dörnyei, 2005 and Skehan, 1989).

This study considers all the issues raised above in relation to the types of correction teachers offered, to the efficacy of the common methods. It is not the intention of this thesis to continue these discussions, but rather consider them in relation to the way in which OEC is administered in the classroom, and the perceptions of both teachers and students alongside their preferences and understanding of how OEC contributes to language acquisition. The following chapter reviews some of the key studies into beliefs and behaviours of teachers and students in language learning which will form the central subject of this research.

3. OEC - beliefs, attitudes and actions

Teachers are active, thinking decision-makers who make instructional choices by drawing on complex, practically-oriented, personalised, and context-sensitive networks of knowledge, thoughts, and beliefs (Borg, 2003, p.81).

Following the interest in the OEC methods used, an increasing number of researchers have taken an interest in the beliefs and attitudes of teachers and students towards OEC. The psychology behind the methods has grown in prominence, researching the students' responses to OEC beyond whether there is uptake or not, and the thought processes of the teachers as they decide whether to correct or not the utterances of their students. The teachers' perceptions have been shown to have a significant influence on their actions, and therefore exploring these may help understand the practical workings of OEC in ELT. This chapter explores some of the key studies into teachers' and students' perceptions of OEC that underpin the focus of my own research findings in Chapter 5. Detailed discussions were included in the Critical Analytical Study (CAS), and have been précised here.

3.1 Teachers and OEC

A key researcher, Borg (2003, p.81), claimed despite the evidence presented to them, teachers use personal preferences and experience as the primary source of influence on their practice, calling on their interactions with students in the classroom and teaching context to guide them. This is further supported by research from Farrell and Kun (2007) who claimed teachers were much more likely to offer correction in response to the students, the activity and the context rather than any institutional instructions or guidance. The multifaceted, comprehensive and contextual information of the current research illuminates the intricacy of the subject and goes further to demonstrating the complexity of the decision making process for teachers. Therefore, being able to understand these decisions and thought processes is important to ensuring learning is maximised.

Time constraints and the prescribed curriculum were naturally cited as influential factors by Mori (2011, p.461), largely dependent on the nature of the course and the

preferences of the institution. Other cited factors include assessments, student motivation, and classroom management approaches (Phipps and Borg, 2009), however, the teacher's own philosophy was cited by Farrell and Kun (2007) and supported by Mori (2011) as the most significant influence. In interviews with teachers, Mori (2011) found the decision to react to errors was driven by their awareness of students' personalities, culture, language, and learning, all of which are entirely dependent on their context. Mori's research is supported by Basturkmen's (2012) later analysis, suggesting that OEC stems from multiple micro-decisions and reactions that are dependent on the individuals involved. The teacher's thoughts, actions and feelings, derived from their culture, experiences and socialisation (see Bourdieu, 1991), are indisputable and inevitable aspects of their teacher persona, and serve a useful purpose to guide teachers towards actions and reactions to situations that present themselves using certain presumptions and judgements about their students and educational context. These are accumulated as the teacher continues to work in the same or similar contexts, helping to define, redefine and develop their teaching. The extent to which these aspects influence the teacher’s response is potentially underestimated. This constructivist approach (see Gale, 1995) enables teachers to continuously add to the knowledge and understanding they have to adapt and modify according to the context.

Through interviews Sepehrinia and Mehdizadeh's (2016) research showed teachers were responding to their context and based on their understanding of the situation. When presented with a lot of errors the teachers offered selective feedback, which Sepehrinia and Mehdizadeh (2016, p.11) attributed to appreciation of the Affective Filter (Krashen, 1982), time limitations (focusing on the pressing issues) and the type of activity the students were engaged in. During observations, Sepehrinia and Mehdizadeh (2016) found teachers used recasts more than other types, further supporting the findings of Lyster and Ranta (1997), as well as Panova and Lyster (2002), Sheen (2004), and Lyster and Mori (2006). Sepehrinia and Mehdizadeh also found some teachers offered more correction than others. Lower level students were given less correction, which the researchers stated was evidence of a reluctance to interrupt what already appeared to be laboured output. Selective feedback was applied by many of the teachers; some claiming that over correction would discourage communication and have 'negative emotional reactions' (ibid, p.11) and a teacher's preference for explicit correction led to an atmosphere where students were more cautious in their speech. One class was given very little correction during observation, which Sepehrinia and Mehdizadeh claimed encouraged students to freely

communicate without fear of making mistakes. The primary concern for the teachers appeared to be establishing a safe, communicative environment.

Few studies have explored teacher cognition but one study by Han (2001, p.585) discussed the considerations teachers should make when correcting students:

> ...the teacher has several “tasks” to accomplish: first, assessing where the student is at in terms of acquiring the specific linguistic feature; second, identifying the source of the IL [interlanguage] form; and third, deciding on a concrete corrective strategy (e.g., explicit correction, elicitation, recast, or a combination of strategies).

Han's study presents some interesting points, for which Borg's (2003) work on cognition and attitudes provided further interesting insights into the actions of teachers in the classroom. Borg (2003, 2015) consistently suggested the beliefs of the teacher regarding learning and teaching impact their actions and indeed in some cases their personal beliefs are contrary to the institution's educational culture. He concluded that teachers' decision making process is multifaceted and firmly based on their understanding of their classroom context, but the motivation often remains hidden, and therefore this forms part of the rationale for this study.

Phipps and Borg (2009) reviewed the relationship between teachers’ beliefs and practices. Finding that the teachers were heavily influenced by their own learning experiences and perceived expectations or preferences of the students, Phipps and Borg noted that teachers' beliefs can outweigh their training and education regarding their practice and pedagogical decisions. Where decisions are more firmly grounded in their own experiences, not only are teachers more likely to do it (and repeatedly), experiences provide a framework by which they teach. As Borg (2003) previously stated, the beliefs, attitudes and knowledge of the teacher govern their actions, however there is little research into the specifics of OEC. Schulz (2001, p.255) further asserted:

> Although one would expect considerable agreement among members of a profession regarding approaches to developing knowledge and skills in their discipline, [foreign language] teachers, as a group, show sizable discrepancies in their belief systems. Sources of teacher beliefs are quite complex. Without doubt, teachers’ preparation and in-service development (including professional readings) play a role; so does their own professional experience in observing student success rates with particular forms of instruction. But their own language learning experience (i.e., the way they were taught) has surely colored their perceptions as well.

Larsen-Freeman (2012) added that a growth in methodological understanding enables better decision making, informed by the teacher's experiences as well as the theory.

Being educated in many teaching methods may be more important than being trained in one, providing teachers with freedom to be responsive, creative and developmental, aiding the learning process for a range of learner types. This study aims to review some of the issues raised here and explore the perceptions of teachers of multilingual student cohorts in order to add more to the debate from a new context.

3.2 Students and OEC

Understanding the perception and preferences of students is as important as comprehending the teachers'. Loewen et al. (2009) distributed questionnaires to 754 students and found that the English L1 speakers were more tolerant of errors and breaking of grammar rules, than other language speakers. Arabic and Chinese learners were most in favour of correction and Japanese students were more concerned with grammatical accuracy than communication, which was in contrast to the English, Italian and Portuguese speakers. There may well be cultural differences in the expectations and receptiveness to OEC, hence further information into why there are differences would be constructive. Where the responses to OEC were particularly positive, the students were on an academic preparation course where accuracy for assessments was likely placing more pressure on students to acquire the target language and therefore more emphasis on attention to mistakes. Griffiths and Chunhong (2012) also reported students' more favourable responses to OEC when there was a tangible correlation between treatment of errors and assessment grades. From Loewen et al.'s (2009) findings, it would seem that where the correction has a purpose and where the students are motivated to acquire the 'correct' form, they are more likely to be expecting OEC and receptive.

In a later study, Lee (2013) reviewed the perceptions of advanced ESL students and their teachers. In contrast to other studies, her students were of mixed nationalities, making these findings of particular interest in relation to my own research. Lee, corroborating the findings of Katayama (2007), found the students preferred explicit correction, provided promptly following the error, to maximise learning opportunities. Lee also found the students responded to recasts in over 92% of cases, attributed to the learners' advanced language proficiency, which counters other studies which suggest that recasts rarely result in uptake (see Russell and Spada, 2006, and Mackey and Goo, 2007). Lee's students indicated that they should repeat the teacher's correction, although it is not clear why or how helpful they perceive it to be.

Additionally, Kartchava and Ammar (2013), found students' attitudes have a considerable effect on detecting corrections and thus accurate acquisition. This is particularly true of subtler OEC such as recasts. Pawlak (2014, p.80) suggested:

> if learners show a proclivity towards explicit correction, they may ignore implicit recasts, either deliberately or unwittingly, since they will fail to discern the teacher's informative intention, thus treating the negative evidence as irrelevant.

In a study of 249 adult Japanese language learners, Katayama (2007) found that over 92% desired correction and generally agreed that OEC assisted awareness and learning of the language. Whilst teachers commonly have selective correction practices, focusing on errors impeding communication, only 21.5% of the students in Katayama's study approved of this practice. The students stated that selective correction was insufficient and did not assist the improvement in spoken ability and 62.3% of respondents endorsed teachers correcting all errors to improve accuracy. Logistically this is very hard to fulfil as the teacher will need to address grammatical, lexical, phonological, pragmatic and any other issues that arise within one session, rather than targeting the specific language point of the lesson or reoccurring issues. There are possible cultural influences stemming from the students' typical learning environment and teaching practices which need to be more fully explored to find areas of commonality. Where students are expecting correction and do not receive it or 'enough' OEC they may become disillusioned.

A selective approach to OEC has been debated and, although some students support targeted OEC, the selection process is based on the teachers' perception of the error, not driven by the views of the students (Yoshida, 2008). As Yoshida (2008) indicated, where teachers perceive students to be able to self-correct or require less scaffolding to do so, they opt for elicitation or implicit correction. There is a clear partiality towards recasts as a method of OEC, despite being deemed ineffective in terms of uptake and longer term interlanguage development (see Chapter 2 for further discussions on this). This perhaps shows a lack of awareness by teachers to the kind of correction that is meant to be more beneficial and one which students respond to, or perhaps a feeling that recasts are preferable to the students. Explicit feedback is expected by students and is largely recognisable to a majority (Lasagabaster and Sierra, 2005), yet the research still shows high levels of recasts. Further research into this decision may illuminate this further and enable more mirrored attitudes to OEC for teachers and students. Overall, the research by Katayama (2007), along with Yoshida (2008, 2010), Schulz (2001), Brown (2009), and Lee (2013) among others, showed correction is

consistently coveted by students. If the correction is not valued or perceived to be beneficial, then understandably the students and teachers will not partake in the process.

Whilst it is often seen as a deficiency of the teacher that the correction is not received, there are arguments that suggest the student should take responsibility for adapting to the pedagogical differences of a language classroom. With intensive or long-term courses, students may adjust their learning style and develop an ability to recognise the more subtle forms of correction, such as recasts, that are so popular. This is of particular interest given the nature of the courses taught by the teachers participating in this research study. Han and Kim's (2008) investigations showed students can be trained to distinguish implicit forms of OEC, resulting in students grasping the feedback more convincingly. Their study presented pedagogic strategies 'buttressed with authentic classroom examples' (ibid, p.35) to guide teachers to recast more effectively. The strategy of 'negotiating recasts' (a series of recasts in conversation) seems to lack clarity in correction of grammar or lexis or clarification of meaning, one of the key debates in the value of recasts. This study does little to conclude these discussions; arguably it further demonstrates the confusing nature of it. In the examples used, it is unclear whether the student understood they were being corrected.

Kim's (2004) review of the 'mismatch' between teachers' intentions and learners' interpretations identified that teachers are not adjusting their correction to their students' ability levels. Kim's (2004, p.16) rather dim view that teachers' lack of awareness of their student's abilities may mean they depend on 'hunches' when providing OEC is perhaps a little severe, but nevertheless raises questions about what teachers are basing their correction decisions on. Kim (2004) reiterated that the correction needs to be targeted to the individual student and fine-tuned to their internal logic. Discussions regarding the impact of student's proficiency on their ability to identify and internalise the feedback followed, in particular in relation to implicit corrections. Lee's (2013) discussion in relation to the students' level focused on the ideas of learner training and language learning experience, stressing:

> even though students most prefer explicit oral CF [corrective feedback], the result verifies the assertion that if students have a high proficiency level in the target language, they can more easily recognize teachers' implicit CF, so they can notice and potentially correct their erroneous utterances without interrupting communicative flow. (ibid, p.228)

Kaivanpanah, Alavi and Sepehrinia (2015) also claimed higher proficiency learners were more adept at responding to teachers' feedback. Yoshida (2010) further found that implicit corrections are given to more capable students and explicit correction is provided where students are considered unable to correct themselves. Ohta (2001) suggested success comes from staying within the 'zone of proximal development' (see Vygotsky, 1978) to provide scaffolding, not testing, of the language which may explain why some OEC elicits output more than others in the studies. Where the correction is outside the students' capabilities, they are unable to uptake. Yoshida noted that students may be able to identify the difference between their utterance and the correction, but may not be able to account for it. Therefore it is important for the teacher to help facilitate this through input and feedback. Allwright and Bailey (1991, p.99) stated:

> [i]f one of our goals as language teachers is to help our learners move along the interlanguage continuum, getting closer and closer to the target language norm, then, the thinking goes, we must provide them with the feedback they need to modify their hypotheses about the functions and linguistic forms they use.

Examples and explanations will form an important part of the feedback, so it is crucial that the OEC incorporates this also. Teachers and students may find more effective learning strategies if they are more congruent and working constructively together.

3.3 Reviewing the perceptions of learners and teachers

Lee's (2013) questionnaire to students and teachers found that the adult ESL students were in favour of high frequency correction, claiming they learn far more from correction, particularly when offered immediately after the error. Furthermore, the teachers in Lee's study felt learners should repeat the correction to facilitate better learning. The students concurred. This finding is particularly interesting when combined with the research into efficacy discussed in the previous chapter. The students' repetition, Lee claimed, is due to their cultural (and therefore educational) background, stating the nature of the Asian learning system is an influence on perceptions of verbal communication, and thus OEC. According to Lee (2013, p.228) the educational system is reported to focus on 'reading and grammar learning based on rote-learning and memorization' which may explain why there is a focus on repeating the correction for automatisation.

Schulz (2001) found that overwhelmingly, students showed a want and appreciation of OEC, where teachers show a greater balance of those in favour and those against. Whilst there was a general consensus that error correction was an important part of the learning process, the disparity lies with the learning outcomes and perceived student attitudes towards it. Lasagabaster and Sierra (2005) noted that where the teacher gave correction the participants felt the error was dealt with rapidly with no examination or explanation of the problem. As Schulz stated (2001, p.255):

> Clearly, such sizable discrepancies in perception between students and teachers in both cultures regarding the value of error correction need remediation if we believe that such discrepancies in belief systems influence learning.

Schulz (1996) discovered the students held stronger beliefs about the value of grammar instruction and OEC than the teachers. In several of Schulz's studies, she found that students were overwhelmingly in favour of error correction, but teachers were far less enthusiastic or believing in the benefits. In a later study, Schulz (2001) established that 90% of students felt spoken errors should be corrected compared to just 30% of teachers. This was irrespective of the first language spoken or the target language under study. Further to this, Schulz (1996) discovered that 86% of students disagreed with the statement "I dislike it when I am corrected in class", only 33% of the teachers believed students to be positive towards error correction. Moreover, in the same study 3% of students and 45% of teachers agreed with the statement "teachers should not correct students when they make errors in class". This clearly demonstrates that teachers are likely acting in a way they feel is appropriate, which may result in students feeling they are lacking instruction or focus on form. These findings are of particular interest in my study, and will be discussed with my participants.

Yoshida (2010) found teachers and students both insinuate a desire to simply proceed rather than deliberate the errors, although the rationale for this was unknown. Yoshida (2008) discovered the students preferred to have some thinking time, however, where they did not know the answer they would like to receive the correction and explanation. Yoshida (2010) later found that teachers tended to refrain from giving explicit correction to students they perceived to be capable of self-correction. The teacher’s assumptions that the student is able to identify the correction, knows the correct form, and is able to reformulate it, are where the failure in OEC lies. This poses a significant dilemma for teachers, who must (in addition to other considerations) decide whether the student is lacking in the linguistic knowledge to self-correct, and thus provide the necessary correction and explanation. Yoshida maintained there is evidence OEC should be

implicit enough to avoid friction (the Affective Filter - Krashen, 1982) but be explicit enough for the students to address it (Schmidt's Noticing Theory - see Skehan, 1998). Yoshida claimed socio-affective factors hinder the learner's ability to notice and adopt the correction for uptake. It is becoming clearer why teachers are selective in their corrections, given the complex thought processes and decision-making preceding corrective moves.

Furthermore, Yoshida (2010) alleged teachers expect students to respond to OEC yet students are unable to identify OEC in many incidences, in particular when it is implicit. Lasagabaster and Sierra's (2005) research also suggested further information, clarification or more explicit attention on the error are necessary to ensure uptake and therefore learning, supporting Schmidt's noticing theory discussed previously. Yoshida (2010) found that despite the students stating they were uncertain about the correction or the basis of the error teachers refrained from clarifying as this would disrupt the lesson. The teachers did not wish to interrupt the fluency of conversation with explicit correction methods. Conversely, in Lasagabaster and Sierra's (2005) study, both teachers and students agreed when grammar mistakes occur more time should be dedicated to explaining the error and the reason for the correction which would no doubt disrupt the lesson significantly. Further to this, participants suggested where a grammatical error is the result of first language transfer the teacher should bring this to the attention of the student(s) with an explanation of the appropriate English form. However, this assumes the teacher is able to recognise, categorise and correct the error within a suitable time frame. With a delicate balance to be had between accuracy and fluency, the complexity of OEC becomes apparent here.

Schulz's (2001) study of over 1400 students and 200 teachers showed considerable discrepancy between teacher and student perceptions of the role of error correction. Students felt that corrections should come mostly from the teacher, where teachers felt correction could come from peers. Teachers were far more hesitant to giving OEC compared to students, with 90% of students claiming they should be corrected when speaking, and only 30% of teachers (ibid, p.254). Schulz (2001, p.256) importantly notes 'if teacher behaviours do not mesh with student expectations, learner motivation and a teacher's credibility may be diminished'. As Schulz (2001) deliberated, considering the conflicting information presented by theorists, perhaps the teachers should be looking to their students for the guidance they need to adapt their teaching practice. If the students are largely of the same opinion, universal correction methods could be deployed. Where opinions diversify, teachers could provide individualised responses that work with, rather than against, the student's learning style. Learning is

an individual process, and by adapting processes and differentiating, learners may not only respond better to the instruction but be more attentive. Yoshida (2010, p.303) warned 'it must be remembered that what happens below the surface of CF–response interactions is still unknown'. This study aims to explore the teachers' thought processes and the students' preferences to add further information to this discussion from a new context.

3.4 Conclusions

In reviewing the previous research, it is apparent there is a disparity in the beliefs of the two pivotal groups in the learning process. As Brown (2009, p.56) warned:

> Teachers who value accuracy in production but choose to adopt less overt or obtrusive strategies in correcting grammar mistakes may end up with disillusioned students whose unrealistic expectations are not met.

This statement by Brown offers several important points to consider. Firstly, the assumption that explicit correction is somehow better received. Secondly, this statement only considers grammar mistakes, which leaves questions regarding lexical, phonological and pragmatic errors, as well as discussions on what constitutes mistakes compared to errors and slips. Finally, the idea of 'unrealistic expectations' by students is subjective and may not be considered idealistic by teachers rather than students, again possibly creating feelings of conflict. As much of the research is driven by teachers, researchers need to be careful not to dismiss the views of students as invalid or impractical.

Despite offering some interesting insights, it can easily be argued that these studies are not only missing some crucial information to determine the exact nature of the problem, but their interpretation of the data is limited. The extent to which the students and teachers disagree is shown in the large scale study by Schulz (2001), but the study also demonstrated the disagreement amongst teachers. Nevertheless, the speculation Schulz among others offered, appears primarily from the researcher than from the data. The information gleaned in the research reveals the distinction in opinion but not the cause of this, leaving the researcher to speculate. Lasagabaster and Sierra (2005) proceed further, discussing the data found with the teachers and learners and identify some of the key impetuses, but only seem to reiterate the assertions of others on this

issue. Yoshida's (2010) study offered an array of information further confirming the issue, but like Schulz, gave only supposition on the rationale.

Whilst there are a multitude of research projects that can describe the differences in perception between teachers, students, and teachers and students, there are relatively few that can provide a reasonable explanation. Even fewer can claim to have explored options for reducing the impact of these differences to enhance the learning and teaching experience in the foreign language classroom. In order to progress the current research, a new approach needs to be taken. Brown (2009, p.55) instructed teachers to engage in discussion with their students on instructional strategies and adds to this claiming:

> The match, or mismatch, of L2 teachers' and students' perceptions ... can improve the understanding of each group's perspective on effective teaching in the L2 classroom. Not only can teachers and students benefit from this increased awareness, so too can basic language directors, administrators, and teacher trainers.

This increased awareness of each others' perspectives is assumed to create knowledge and agency in the learning process from a constructivist perspective. Knowledge can be crucial to improvement, but as each individual (teacher or student) contributes their own attitude and outlook on teaching and learning, it is hard to reconcile that any such research papers can presume to change the dynamic without an action or participatory research model to test that theory.

3.5 Taking the research forward

The plethora of research papers published globally and across contexts have provided some useful insights into OEC. Having read and reviewed so many of the current studies, there are still many areas to explore, not least specifics in relation to my own professional context. The researchers' desire to find a solution to a practical problem is obvious. A range of methods and research focuses all centre on teaching and learning of languages with a majority seeking to find professional practice that maximises learning. Some researchers focus on empirical study or quantitative data to provide evidence based practice reforms (Ammar and Spada, 2006; Havranek, 2002; Katayama, 2007). However, many of the newer studies show an inclination for mixed methods. The researchers have opted for a statistical analysis and find the answers to their questions of 'how many/much', but explore their findings with qualitative enquiry into reasons and rationales, adding depth and breadth to the arguments.

Furthermore, individual interviews with teachers can facilitate an in-depth exploration of pedagogical practices and beliefs (Littig, 2009). Focus groups may enable mapping of opposing views, allowing further exploration of ideas (Carey and Asbury, 2012). Few of the studies reviewed here and in the CAS involve interviews or focus groups and concentrate instead on applying the researchers' knowledge to what they observe. Qualitative data collection, particularly from action or participatory research, can add valuable data through discourse for the participants as well as the wider field. For this reason, I have chosen a participatory approach, outlined in the following chapter, which should explore the thoughts and perceptions of OEC and the student experience from the teacher perspective.

In addition to this, much of the research available avoids interaction with learners. The learner's voice is often dismissed or marginalised. Learners' preferences may be discarded as inconsequential, suggesting learners are not experts in learning. When students are clearly a key factor in the decision making, it is important to use their perceptions to facilitate the development of the teachers' perceptions. Lasagabaster and Sierra (2005, p.125) stated:

> Those teachers who listen to their students' voices are more likely to foster and protect the enthusiasm, vitality and sustained commitment which their learners need in their efforts to learn a second language well. (…) We believe that the exploration of students' opinions constitutes an essential source of information to improve the process of learning in general and correction strategies in particular.

Students should be allowed to engage in the discourse surrounding pedagogy; critically analysing the approaches and rationales. Baumfield et al. (2013, p.72) suggested students and teachers need to adopt a pragmatic understanding of teaching and learning and avoid a 'who knows best?' attitude. Performativity data, cognitive processing details and attitudinal testimony from learners adds depth to the arguments presented by researchers, rather than the all too often skewed 'evidence' presented. Language barriers are often cited as reasons to exclude or limit students' voices, and in some circumstances this may be the case, but wherever possible efforts should be made to facilitate their inclusion. With these issues in mind, this research project was designed to allow the students inclusion, adding their perceptions to the research in order to provide a more rounded view of the interactions in the classroom, and avoid providing my own supposition and assumptions to the data. By empowering the students to contribute to the construction of knowledge and understanding it may make some teachers uncomfortable as it could dissolve the 'unwritten but widely understood hierarchical covenant that binds teachers and students' (Brooks and Brooks, 1993,

p.102), nevertheless it is important for multiple views to be recognised and not silenced.

The previous research concerns itself with statistical analysis, the data gained from observations, testing and questionnaires shows ‘evidence’ of efficacy and ‘evidence’ of attitude. This research may initially provide interesting results, but frequently fails to explain, or make causative relationships between variables. Where an interpretivist or post-modernist perspective may provide biased and presumptive findings, in order to really understand the beliefs and attitudes of the research presented on this subject, qualitative data would explore and challenge some of the ideas behind the beliefs and attitudes of both participants in the error correction process. As Norris and Ortega (2000) claimed, much of the current research uses varied methods and practices not conducive to the building of generalisable knowledge. There is no doubt these studies have developed the knowledge of the researchers into the subject of OEC, but in a localised context, thus there is scope for further research. There is clearly a need for more data on the beliefs, attitudes and knowledge of both teachers and students. The following chapter will discuss the design and theories underpinning my research into OEC.

4. Methodology and research design

If you believe that the significance or the 'meaning' of what is done lies in the ideas, intentions, values and beliefs of the agent, then those ideas, and so on, have to be taken into account. (…) The individual's consciousness and intentions are the significant factors in explaining why things happen as they do. (Pring, 2015, p.53)

4.1 A brief overview

This chapter outlines how the design of the study was formulated, the tools used to explore the research questions and a description of the positions taken regarding the realities and knowledge which informed the methodological choices made. These principles are reviewed in relation to broader fields of social and educational research, and subsequently examined through the lens of language and ELT research. This is followed by a discussion of the methods, with a particular focus on the use of questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and focus groups; the research tools used to construct the narrative in relation to the questions through a three-stage participatory research model. The ethical issues inherent in the study and some reflections on the researcher positionality are subsequently considered, along with their potential impact on the outcomes of the study. The overall research design, process and participants are described along with some further consideration of the rationale behind the approach to analysing and presenting the findings of the study.

This study employed both qualitative and quantitative data collection. Thirteen students from an intensive English course completed a questionnaire, incorporating both closed and open questions on OEC preferences and beliefs. Concurrently, six teacher semi-structured interviews were conducted in a multilingual teaching context, with a focus on EAP for university preparation courses. Some of the key data from these two participant groups were subsequently shared with a focus group of five teachers who assisted in the interpretation and development of the discussions. All data was then collated into themes around the reoccurring points and overarching question, which are presented in Chapter 5.

Whilst current research has reported on a wealth of practitioner-led enquiry into the pedagogical aspects of OEC, a number of questions remain regarding the perceptions of those involved in teaching and learning. This study aims to further explore the decisions and understandings of ELT teachers and students, in order to gain an increased awareness of those perceptions. The conclusions drawn from this research may help other practicing teachers reconsider their methods of OEC, identifying

possible areas for improvement in practice. This study aims to further the debate on OEC, facilitating a more multicultural perspective.

4.2 Placing the findings within ELT and OEC research

Drawing on Brown and Rogers (2002) and McKay (2006) on researching SLA, it was clear that much of the research focuses on finding a solution to an identified pedagogical problem. Rather than offering suggested solutions, I aim to inform myself about OEC in order to improve my own practice, whilst offering the tools and findings which may help others to do the same. OEC is an important part of that wider discussion and has become a focus for many researchers over the years. Findings from Lyster and Ranta (1997), Lyster (1998) and Roothooft (2014) have suggested teachers frequently believe they are offering tangible corrections in a manner that is suitable to both the context and the error. Yet the research indicates that students are often unable to identify the correction being offered, or are uncertain as to what is being corrected or why. Teachers and researchers presume that students have an impractical expectation of error correction; wanting all errors corrected and explained explicitly (Katayama, 2007; Lee, 2013). With the exception of Borg (1998, 2003), few researchers have reviewed the complexity of a teacher's thought processes in this area and therefore I aim to explore this aspect within my context. Where most previous studies focused on describing the problem and identifying the differences, this study aims to create occasions for reflection and facilitate the sharing of perceptions for greater understanding through a participatory research model.

To the best of my knowledge, no other study has been completed using this model with multilingual student groups in a UK setting. Whilst previous work identified a difference in the perceptions of teachers and students, this study is equally interested in finding circumstances where teachers and students are aligned. Where many studies may lead to an assumption that teachers and students have different perceptions, and despite a diverse group of students in UK English language learning contexts, this is not to say that divergence is the case in all classrooms. Some homogeneity in the expectations and experiences of the students may still exist, regardless of the cultural and educational variations of the students in any one classroom. The experiences of the teachers from a variety of student cohorts, and indeed in different locations globally, may mean the views are remarkably different to the students' as the teachers adopt or adapt to the localised educational norms. The literature reviewed above explores some of the key studies into teacher and student perceptions, showing

comparable results from similar methods to the ones proposed in this thesis. These studies concluded the differences in perception cause tensions and missed learning opportunities. This study will explore the views of teachers and students for similarities and seek to discover how these attitudes have been formed and how these views may impact the learning environment.

My initial research and readings have led to some interesting but inconclusive findings for my context. My own multicultural, multilingual teaching context has been relatively under-researched, and many of the studies cited in the CAS and throughout Chapters 2 and 3 demonstrate a largely localised teacher and student cohort, where they have the same L1 and nationality. Whilst this provides interesting results offering indications of possible points of comparison between students and teachers, it brings with it many questions about the application of the findings in other contexts and the extent to which the teachers' and students' shared context may result in less conflicting views. Thus the varied culture and educational system of the teachers and students in my context may lead to greater divergence in perception. The additional dynamic in this case is the teachers are native English speakers and therefore do not share the culture of the students, thus adding another point of possible disparity.

Within the previous research there is also a propensity for a singular research method, with interviews being most common. Whilst arguably it is easier to focus on a single data collection method, whether quantitative or qualitative, it leaves the research potentially limited in the possible findings. As a review of the previous research shows, the emphasis is also on the researcher to provide all of the interpretation. Although this is not unusual, I feel that it can be limited, and by employing a mixed method approach to data collection and allowing the participants to review the data as part of a participatory research project, it can enable more detailed and informative interpretation. Adding this dynamic could benefit the participants, as well as the researcher-practitioners, and allow the learning environment to be more productive and mutually beneficial (Gray, 2009). The heightened awareness of each other's perspectives, from a social constructivist perspective (see Gale, 1995, in particular Von Glasersfeld's chapter p.3-15), creates knowledge and agency in the learning process. For this reason, I have developed a model to focus on sharing data between and with participants to provide an opportunity for reflection. This will be discussed in detail below.

Previous researchers approach the relevant topics from mixed standpoints, in that whilst some are seeking evidence to support a hypothesis (e.g. Katayama, 2007; Schulz, 2001), others seek to find meaning in a phenomenon (e.g. Mori, 2011; Borg,

2015). With regard to the perceptions of OEC, I explored the thoughts and feelings of both teachers and students. In doing so, I combined methods of previous researchers and provided a new context to the research to generate alternative perspectives and findings. Therefore, I firmly place this study within the ELT field and those reviewing the perceptions of OEC. By providing a context that is not only directly relevant to me, but thousands of other practitioners in multilingual classes, I hope to expand some of the core issues raised by the current research.

4.3 Project overview

Much of the research related to the topic took a critical realist perspective, presumably stemming from the practical educational and learning aspect of this stance relating to realities of the individuals (Houston, 2014), which although not entirely aligning with my paradigmatic stance, could have an influential bearing on my research. I drew on the previous research to support and exemplify findings, but felt that a reflective process model would enable further contemplation of my own practice as well as the pragmatics of OEC. This research offered an insight into not only a pedagogical issue, but also a context that so far has been little researched. It was important to acknowledge that many teachers work with multilingual groups in an English speaking country, and as such it was of great importance to highlight the issue of OEC in this particular context. In doing so, this project can provide significant new knowledge in ELT from native speaker practitioners and multicultural learner groups.

This research aims to understand a complex, multifaceted classroom situation, and to explore the reasons, obstacles, feelings and beliefs involved from both parties, with a goal of finding points for future ELT development. The participatory and constructivist approach allows for an equal working relationship between participants and researcher as we explore the findings collectively. The research project was not designed to provide a 'reality' for everyone, but rather to explore the world of teachers and students as they perceive it. In addition to collecting quantitative data to compare and contrast with other studies, I felt it was important to underpin these ideas and expand on them through qualitative data to increase our understanding. Drawing on Schostak (2002) to use the qualitative research design, I use the data as a narrative, but acknowledge the limitations of the thesis in including the narrative in its entirety. Although using mixed methods is not unusual, I was surprised how few studies into OEC do so, despite post-positivist social research developments. This appears to be a missed opportunity to better understand the learning and teaching of modern languages, and therefore there

are many questions that remain unanswered. In adopting a mixed method approach I designed this research project to mitigate some of the difficulties in providing a voice for the participants and adequately connecting the practitioners and professional practice. The combination of quantitative and qualitative data adds depth to the information, whilst the participatory aspect enables an added layer of analysis that other studies neglect by not utilising the insights of others in the interpretation of the data.

4.3.1 Aims and objectives

The principle aim of my research is to gain a better understanding of teachers' and students' perceptions of OEC. Whilst, previous research studies have reviewed the perceptions of OEC, there has been limited agreement on the meaning and significance for teachers and students. The aim of the study is to move beyond the confirmation of the findings of other studies and to focus more on the rationales for these thoughts and feelings as well as exploring the impact these perceptions have on ELT. I am interested in how teachers and students perceive OEC, how these perceptions are formed, and how they may change over time. Adopting a mixed approach, incorporating questionnaires, and two forms of dialogue, I aim to go beyond identifying how teachers' and students' perceptions differ, but attempt to explore a change in perception through a sharing of data, discussion, and reflection using participatory research within a constructivist framework. My intention is to enable a more informative perspective of OEC from a UK context.

4.3.2 Theoretical Considerations

My understanding of research is still evolving, in particular the terminology and accurate statement of positionality. I was sceptical of defining my stance from one paradigm, as much of my reading leans towards other aspects, including critical realism, and naturalistic inquiry. Where critical realism allows for the complexities of the social world, looking at the meanings of social interactions as well as enabling mixed methods research, it focuses on understanding causality, exploring reasons why (or why not) in particular contexts (Bhaskar, 1978). It enables the relationship between the researcher and the researched to be developed as part of the process, rather than forcing the nature of the relationship of interviewer/ee to be minimally unequal. However, it does not provide for the changing nature of the social world (the practices, norms, habits or rules), which constructivism can embrace more openly. The characteristics of naturalistic inquiry argues that realities are 'multiple, constructed and

holistic' (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p.37), with which I concur. I believe any inquiry is value-bound and the possibility for generalisations can be limited to the time and context of the study, but the researcher and the researched are inseparable, influencing each other in the way that I also believe teaching and learning occur. The meanings, understandings and interpretations are all personal to the participants, but by combining these ideas with those of others could enable contradictions to emerge and the complexity of the issues to be explored. This constructivist approach therefore seems the most appropriate given my personal views of reality and knowledge.

Having explored Jackson and Mazzei (2012), I was keen to explore my view of interpretivism and how research can add knowledge to the field and, as the authors suggest, to think 'with' rather than 'about' the data. My ontological assumptions mean that there is no singular truth or reality, and the concept of reality is fluid and in constant change, being added to and adapted by the world around us. I am interested in how these realities appear for the participants, in particular the teachers, and how the teachers respond to the views of the students. The mutual engagement of researcher and participant constructs a subjective reality and shared understandings. Subjectivities will be consistently apparent in my research, including pedagogical preferences, assumptions about learning, and beliefs on OEC, but social constructivism allows for and embraces the individuality of perceptions leading to the discovery and development of new knowledge, thus contributing to the wider understanding of pedagogical approaches, including that of OEC. As Pring (2015, p.46-47) stated:

> ...in our research and evaluations [we] try to ‘make sense’ of the situation we find ourselves in. We do this through ‘constructing’ connections, meanings, frameworks through which experience is sieved and made intelligible.

Calling on Somehk (2006) and McNiff and Whitehead's (2002, p.18) discussion on action research, I see knowledge as a ‘living process’, generated from experiences, and perpetually incomplete, following the broadly constructivist perspective. Building on Bernstein (see Ivinson, Davies and Fitz, 2011), I suggest knowledge is cumulative; developed, shaped and augmented over time. It is difficult to separate knowledge from perception (Pajares, 1992), but the discussions will provide the existential presumptions or 'personal truths' that are transmitted as knowledge. Perceptions are the truth and reality of the individual, which is at the core of this project and the constructivist paradigm. A constructivist approach reflects not only my own beliefs in learning and development, but most importantly it allows for reflection on and reaction to others. I applied a constructivist take on perspectives as always socially formed

within a particular time and space. This also connects to my previous considerations that reality is both multilayered and specific to the individual, linking into critical realism and the research currently available. However, the exploration of the individuals within this study leans towards more constructivist theoretical underpinnings.

There is little homogeneity in ELT; teachers, students, contexts and pedagogy differ widely. As such the traditional views of 'soundness' of methods of reliability and validity may be challenged by other researchers for a less rigid and consistent approach (Pring, 2015). Where critical realism can favour reliability and validity in empirical research, constructivism enables discussions to be at the forefront of the research, with the findings produced and developed collectively without the focus being on generalisations that may not suit wider contexts. However, the rich dataset from qualitative data enables a participant's view of a localised context which may have some relevance elsewhere, which was a useful consideration when formulating the research questions and model for this study.

4.3.3 Participatory research - power, knowledge and truth

Drawing on Foucault's (1969) discussions on knowledge (see also Ball 1990), I feel it is important to acknowledge here that the 'subject' of OEC is not a fixed concept. It manifests itself in different ways and the thinking around it has altered as time has progressed. For the purposes of the paper I have used a definition of OEC to aid the reader's understanding of it, but feel that it also has several meanings. Depending on the individual's beliefs on how knowledge is created, it can have a slightly different interpretation and significance for each person. The discourses around OEC are never constant which adds to the variations in the teachers' understanding of OEC and their perception is also shaped by their level interactions with these discourses (Smith, 2001). The perceptions of the teachers and students is assumed to be characteristic of the latest information and are often interactive with beliefs (Smith, 2001) which means that these are therefore captured in this thesis to represent their current perceptions. Whilst I take generally constructivist approach to learning and knowledge gaining, I am aware that is not the universal view, and as such will seek to find a 'working definition' of OEC to ensure that the participants and I are discussing the same concept regardless of its terminology or level of understanding.

This research project will reflect the beliefs of the teachers and students, not to find a collective belief, but to understand commonality and possible reasons for any differences. Participatory research is designed to assist the researcher in exploring concepts and ideas that participants hold. However, participants are not passive

commodities in research; they have agency in the production of knowledge and ultimately in the improvement in practice (Santos, 2015). The plurality in knowledge in this research project needs to be understood along with the basis of the knowledge, both within the group of participants and externally. Participatory research allows the teachers and the researcher to share understandings and explore them rather than relying on a singular interpretation. It also enables the participants to be both subjects to be the researched and researcher. Their shared experiences and discourses create interconnected dimensions of practice and the professional, which provide pedagogical knowledge from a combined perspective. As Bergold and Thomas (2017) concluded, participatory research is a mechanism for openness, honesty and a bringing together of the subjective views of a subject matter. It is this combination of knowledge that I sought to collate.

Further to Hawkins' (2015) view of power and participatory action research, it is clear that there are definite power dynamics relating to the research process, whether overt or more subtle. Whether the researcher is consciously aware or not, they can steer the research to fit with the data collection and hypothesis that suits their aims and objectives. As Hawkins argued, the researcher is ultimately responsible for writing the thesis and thus has the capacity to include, exclude and manipulate the data as they see fit. I was, therefore, mindful of maintaining the authentic voices of the participants and reporting their views accurately and extensively in the following chapter. The teachers all have something to contribute and their voice is important, and therefore the value of each was encouraged as equally significant as experts in their context. The aim of this research is not to obtain a universally held assumption about OEC, but to provide an opportunity to explore and develop the thoughts and beliefs of the participants, to go beyond their own experiences and to listen to those of others. It is the decision of the participants whether they wish to change their views. This is where action research may prompt altered actions but where participatory research merely hopes to affect greater understanding (Kagan, 1992).

Issues of authority may arise in research discussions. I cannot control the perceived power of the participants, but by using peers rather than including managers, any hierarchical power may be reduced during the focus group discussions. Hawkins (2015) discussed the perceived power dynamics of the relationships between participants and the researcher. Wherever the research is being carried out by a practitioner (albeit a researcher-practitioner) I feel the relationship can be more balanced than an external researcher who enters an institution to observe and ask questions. It is important in participatory research that the sources of power and

agency are acknowledged and that power inequalities are not erased, but can be reduced through participatory research as the researcher and the researched search together for knowledge (Grant, et al. 2008). The premise of participatory research is the notion of equality – of power and of knowledge – between participants and researcher. Gaventa and Cornwall (2008) claimed that participatory research is a way of closing an inequality gap and through sharing and analysing the data the participants are able to assist in the interpretation. Objectivity, so highly valued in other research paradigms, is rejected in return for collective analysis. The voices of all participants are accepted and valued as knowledge of the field.

Knowledge may produce varieties of power as participants deliberate, particularly amongst peers (Gunnarsson, 2009); however, the power is not necessarily static. Using a participatory model I could argue that participants are agents in the discussion, each having their opportunity for power as their relative expertise is shared. When the social group is assuming a level of understanding that equals their own, the power may change as it becomes clearer that the knowledge on certain aspects is disparate (see Bourdieu, cited in Grenfell and Kelly, 2004). Further to this notion of expertise, the plurality of knowledge is an interesting notion for me. Fals-Borda's statement (2006, cited in Santos, 2015, p.4) resonates with me:

> it seemed counterproductive for our work to regard the researcher and the researched, the ‘experts’ and the ‘clients’ or ‘targets’ as two discrete, discordant or antagonistic poles. Rather, we had to consider them both as real ‘thinking–feeling persons’ (*sentipensantes*) whose diverse views on the shared life experience should be taken jointly into account.

Where the researcher is perceived as the expert and the participants as targets, it can change the research into less participatory and more observatory-reporting research methodology. This was something I was keen to minimise, and I was mindful of my own voice and that of the participants, and therefore I synthesised these views throughout the following chapter. By using the focus group to explore the initial findings, I added my own voice into the discussion rather than allowing it to dominate. Whilst I may be seen as an expert by nature of the researcher-practitioner position, I am keen to explore the ideas of others as experts in their context. Their collective experiences add layers of useful data to the field, which is why a minimum level of experience was requested in order to be able to contribute to the discussions.

I believe teachers learn from and develop their understanding based on their own learning experiences, the initial training course, continued professional development, and shared information from other teachers. Zoshak (2016) outlined the different types

of discussions that teachers have with each other and the value those moments of sharing can have. As Zoshak (2016, p.220) stated:

> ‘Tiny talks’ recognize that professional development, like teaching, is not simplistic, straightforward, and one-note; even when brief and seemingly rushed, both can be a rich environment for reflection, learning, and responding to new discoveries.

Through sharing thoughts and ideas with each other, teachers are able to challenge the ideas of others and reflect on their own, possibly assimilating their views. I feel sharing is an important part of teachers' professional advancement. A classroom can appear to be a closed environment, unique to the moment, but there are still elements that can overlap and similarities can provide opportunities for experimenting with materials, activities and teaching styles (Borg, 2015) which can also be shared through 'tiny talks' (Zoshak, 2016). By using the focus group for sharing ideas, I feel this encapsulates the concept of 'tiny talks', of accumulating and developing understanding through discourse as well as the environment for reflection.

Habitus (good practice and assumptions within a given field) and capital (our qualifications, experience and understanding of the field) are important aspects of knowledge (Bourdieu, cited in Rawolle and Lingard, 2013). How we perceive the world is influenced by a range of factors, including our culture, education, and language. Sharing a space (such as a classroom) or a situation (for example teaching a particular group) does not necessarily mean a shared experience. Our interpretation of the situation is individual and may change. Knowledge is also transitive, changing with new experiences and interactions with people and information, which teachers and learners acquire in their changing environments. The capacity for reflection is an important aspect of habitus, as it helps to understand the relational workings of education and those operating within it. According to Bourdieu (cited in Rawolle and Lingard, 2013), this reflexivity provides agency, and also a useful underpinning for the explorations in this study. I aim to understand what the teachers and students 'know' of teaching and learning and how these impact ELT in my context by exploring their habitus.

Within constructivism, Heikkinen et al. (2001) discussed the view that there are multiple truths, which are collaboratively reconstructed in order to create new knowledge and truth. For this reason this participatory research model is appropriate for investigating, developing and challenging ideas through social interaction. In research, as Heikkinen et al. (2001, p.20) argued, researchers must be resolved to finding an ‘unfinished truth’, a ‘provisional consensus’. It is difficult to reach a consensus or mutual understanding

at the end of the process, but a more considered comprehension of the subject and a compromise resulting in an adjustment of knowledge is possible. James (1994, cited by Heikkinen et al., 2001, p.14) claimed 'true ideas are those that we can assimilate, validate, corroborate and verify'. I would therefore argue that truth is something that can only be defined and quantified by the individual. Our interpretations of the world delineate what we perceive to be true and thus there may be some degree of agreement, but ultimately the truth is internal, thus cannot be validated externally. As such participatory research enables those different truths to come together, through relativism we can begin to understand the world around us without a universal truth. I advocate the constructivists' perspective for assimilating information, using previous experiences to help shape the understanding of something new, or to better understand existing truths.

4.3.4 Researcher position

I acknowledge that I am part of this research and that I was collaborating and co-constructing knowledge with the participants. It is impossible to separate a practitioner-researcher from a project such as this, which is so deeply rooted in personal curiosities. It would be naive to attempt data analysis without acknowledging my own perspective which enables an aspect of insider research that further constructs my own knowledge of OEC, whilst exploring the knowledge of other teachers. By being a part of the profession and part of the teachers' institution, I hope to convey equality in our circumstances, and this study is focused on knowledge generation, not judgement. The narratives that emerged resonated and I was mindful to represent the participants and avoid exerting undue power or privilege through selection of data.

I am not neutral or independent of the research and have an agenda and aims for the research, and as such have likely influenced the study. Habermas (1984) described power as a contaminant to truth, but by establishing myself as a practitioner-researcher and clearly outlining the aims and objectives of the study prior to commencement, I felt the teachers reflected on their practice openly. The more connected the researcher is to the situation the more the research is influenced by it (Patton, 2002), and I remained mindful of that throughout the process. Researchers are not outsiders, rather they are observers linked to the project through their interests, agendas and aims. A researcher's position is inherently difficult to define in many cases, and is often multifaceted. Reading the research papers for the literature review, it showed that the researcher is often intertwined with the researched, through work, study, associates or the field more generally. I feel this researcher position is often overlooked or at least minimised. Such connections can enable access to the participants and facilitate a

forum of dialogue that would be challenging otherwise. These relationships are vital to assisting exploration of something as personal and emotive as your professional conduct. It is therefore not in my interest to extract myself from the research, rather to embrace the familiar context and issues and further add to the research through my own experiences, which is where the essence of the research stems from.

I was willing to place myself within the research project to work in tandem with the participants to understand OEC. The teacher's perception of OEC may be contrary to that of my own, as their *habitus* (see Bourdieu, in Grenfell and Kelly, 2004) dictates their view of what happens and how. Teachers may have a theory implicit in their actions, based on their beliefs and experiences of learning and teaching (Pring, 2015); indeed it is this that may drive the actions of the teacher and therefore becomes inherent in the research questions. The purpose of the interviews was not to challenge ideas, but to enable expressions of them. Drawing on Kemmis and McTaggart (2008), participatory research enables a degree of collaboration and cohesion and by exposing my own vulnerabilities and lack of clarity on OEC I hoped to create a balance of power between facilitator and research participants, and a stronger working relationship developed between myself and the teacher participants as a result of this collaborative process.

As a colleague and peer of the teacher participants, there is an established professional as well as personal connection between us. Scott (1996) claimed a close relationship between the researcher and the researched may result in 'contamination' of results, leaving any conclusions questionable. Despite this possibility, I am not evaluating the effectiveness of the teachers or their OEC techniques; rather I am concerned with the thinking behind the action. It is a discussion on opinions rather than performance. As co-researchers we are able to explore our experiences and understandings and how these change over time without being challenged on our teaching. I chose the research design outlined below as it allowed the researcher-practitioner to be incorporated into the study, enabling a deeper understanding of OEC for both the researcher and the researched. In this process, knowledge is created between accomplished and informed professionals and language learners, and my development of the project depends on the responses of the participants.

In relation to the students, I am more removed as I am not their teacher but I am a member of the faculty. I have not met the students and have no influence over their learning experience, and as such I am more a data collector than a co-participant with this group. However, as a teacher I am interested in the perceptions of students and have a strong desire to understand the learners' experiences of OEC. I am keen to

accurately represent the voices of the students, and have used quotes where possible to ensure the students have a clear and valuable contribution to the discussion. It is not for me to diminish the experiences or feelings of students, but as a researcher to provide a forum for exploration and an opportunity to understand OEC from their perspective to assist others in the development of a collective understanding.

4.3.5 Research questions

Using a carefully staged research model, I seek to understand OEC from the perspective of the participants. The main focus of the initial stage of the research project will be on the following questions:

- How do teachers respond to errors in spoken language in the ESL classroom?
- How do teachers perceive oral error correction in the ESL classroom?
- How do students perceive oral error correction in the ESL classroom?

Having collated this data, the research project will review the following principal question:

> To what extent are there tensions and commonalities between the perceptions of oral error correction (OEC) of teachers and students, and how does this impact ELT?

4.4 Ethical deliberations

Once ethical approval from the university had been acquired, the information sheet for schools, provided as part of that review (see Appendix F), was distributed to relevant institutions. The appropriate manager was approached and given details of the project and ethical consent was gained from the institutions. Volunteer teachers were requested and then approached for participation. Students were accessed via their teachers, and asked to participate. Information sheets and consent forms were distributed at an early stage to allow the students and teachers time to peruse the information, clarify issues or withdraw prior to commencement.

4.4.1 Informed consent

All participants were provided with a project overview and consent form to audio record the interviews and focus group (teachers) and use the questionnaire data (students) for the project. Copies of the information sheet and consent form for teachers and

students have been included in the appendices. Consent is paramount to the project and any aspects of the discussions that are not covered by the ethical governance would be retrospectively negotiated for inclusion with the participant.

4.4.2 Right to withdraw

I provided a clear brief for the study and allowed any questions or discussions to take place prior to commencement. Contact details were provided to all participants to inform me of their withdrawal request. Once commenced, participants had the right to withdraw at any time, but teachers were encouraged to commit for the interview and focus group in order to enable the reflective aspect to be pursued. Participants were offered the opportunity to review the thesis and withdraw their contribution prior to submission.

4.4.3 Confidentiality and anonymity

All teacher data was anonymised, and pseudonyms were used throughout to enable clarification of the different views, but not reveal the participants' identity. It is possible that the teachers may be recognisable due to the interconnected profession and specific location, but every effort was made to maintain anonymity. Due to issues of confidentiality, copies of the transcripts have not been included in this thesis. The data will not be used for any other project or publication.

Students' questionnaires were anonymous, and distributed and collected by the teacher and thus names cannot be used in the discussions below. Pseudonyms were not used to avoid cultural appropriation or misidentification.

4.4.4 *Targeted discussions*

As Grant, Nelson and Mitchell (2008) discuss, it is important to be honest about your position within the research project and your expectations. My existing relationship with the teachers was an important factor in creating open channels of communication so it was important to me not to jeopardise that by calling into question the teachers' practice. The project is not focused on evaluating the teachers' OEC techniques, but rather deliberating the general themes. The interviews were structured around the key findings of the current literature and asking teachers how they use OEC and how they perceive it. The questions were carefully worded not to be leading or judgemental on the teachers' practice, but exploratory of their beliefs and experiences. The focus group was the most significant stage in the research. It was important that the questioning was not targeted at a particular comment or person in order to keep the discussion neutral. The questions for the focus group were based on the data from the student questionnaires and the teacher interviews. Questions were carefully worded so as not

to identify any particular person's opinion or comments from the interviews, but were exploring key themes. I wanted to understand the teachers' perceptions, hence using the focus group for further exploration and discussion.

4.5 Research process

Calling on the work of Cohen et al. (2018), the pragmatic basis of the participatory research model reflects not only my professional development principles but it also enables collective contribution to change practice. I use a model based on the principles of participatory and classroom action research (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008; Grant, Nelson and Mitchell, 2008), which encompasses reflection, focusing on the practical aspect of the interpretation of the data and context within which it was gathered. During the focus group teachers were given the opportunity to reflect on the process and the learning outcomes for them.

4.5.1 Research setting

I decided to complete this research within a private language learning context in a UK setting for two key reasons. Firstly, where previous research has focused on monolingual contexts, typically in a country where English is not the first language, many of the language classes in the UK have multiple nationalities and mother tongues represented creating diverse student groups. Secondly, there is typically a constantly changing student cohort, which provides particular challenges. There is limited research into short and intensive courses of ESL; therefore pedagogy presents a significant impact when condensed in this manner. This study provided an opportunity to explore this context providing datasets for other teachers to gain knowledge from this particular context.

The students were participating in intensive language classes in a UK university setting. The students were in mixed nationality classes according to their level of English determined by their previous English exam results or a placement test. The students were exclusively studying English on an intensive course. They receive approximately twenty hours of group instruction per week. The purpose of their study ranged from a specific need for a higher competency level for university study or work, to a more general interest in improving their English level.

The teacher participants were all employed in a private college environment where the students are taking English classes in addition to specific subject courses. The teachers had approximately five hours per week over the course of an academic year with their students as part of a university preparation course. Each student cohort is of

mixed nationality and are grouped according to their subject interest and further subdivided by their language level, having been assessed prior to arrival. This context offers further insight into UK teaching of mixed nationality groups which is little covered in previous research.

4.5.2 Participants

The teachers were requested to have an ELT qualification, at least five years teaching experience and currently teaching a multilingual class. It was important for this project that the UK's multilingual class environments were explored with a sample of teachers with wide student cohorts and with experience to draw on. Those teachers wishing to participate were included in the study, resulting in seven teachers; six were interviewed of which four also participated in the focus group. They were joined by an additional volunteer teacher to make six participants for the focus group (including myself). The volunteers had experience ranging from five to over 20 years. Their qualifications are varied, but all hold a professional certification (e.g. CELTA or CertTESOL) or a PGCE. Several have Masters degrees (though not necessarily directly related to ELT). All the teachers work in the same setting with a focus on preparation for university study. All the teachers had taught in private language school contexts, most had taught abroad for several years before teaching in the UK, and mostly in Asia or Europe. All had taught in a UK setting with multilingual classes and had experience of teaching students from all over the world, though mostly Asian and Middle Eastern students.

I approached the course leader at the university to find participant students. The students were required to be over 18 years of age to ensure informed consent. The students were selected according to their level of proficiency in English to ensure that they were able to articulate answers sufficiently. A minimum level of B1 on the Common European Framework of Reference for Language was therefore required and as students were pre-tested before commencing study it enabled suitable student groups to be quickly identified. The students were asked by their teacher to answer the questionnaires on my behalf, and anyone unwilling to complete the questionnaire was not required to do so. The criteria identified 15 students who were eligible across two classes, of which 13 students aged 18-30 years old completed and returned the consent form and questionnaire. The following first languages were spoken: Japanese (3), Chinese (3), Italian (3), German (2), Arabic (1), French and Portuguese (1). 12 of the participants had been studying English in the UK for 3-4 months at the time of the questionnaire. One student had been studying for more than six months in the UK. Of the 13 participants, 8 had been studying English for more than 10 years, and 3 for less than 4 years.

4.6 Research method

My initial research project was designed around a participatory action research model. This would be focused on reviewing data from a specific group of participants, collecting data in stages and then comparing data across the participant groups. The primary plan for this study was to find teachers and their respective groups of students to complete the study as a group of participants. Each of the stages of the research process would be repeated with a different group of participants. The data would not be shared across the groups, but would remain as discrete data sets for later thematic analysis. The research would involve several stages with each individual group of participants as follows:

Stage 1:

- Observation (videoed where possible) of a typical lesson,
- Semi-structured interview with the teacher,
- Questionnaire (with closed and open questions) distributed to students.

Stage 2:

- Interview with teacher, using data collected from students and stimulated recall from video to discuss OEC examples.

Stage 3:

- Teacher Diary - completed once a week for 4 weeks, after a lesson with the same group as those observed, with prompted questions for reflection.

Stage 4:

- Focus group with the students and their teacher to discuss themes arising throughout the data collection and what (if anything) has changed.

This research design was created using an action research model, which would hopefully be able to address the perceptions of teachers and students within the same class for greater clarity and reflection of the situation. The research model enables a cycle of data collection and analysis, but allowing the data to be collaboratively explored with the teacher. This was not designed to be action research in the sense that I was not trying to change the way the teacher does something, more that it is an opportunity for periodic guided reflection on what the teacher does which may result in a change in action. It was important to me to reiterate that it was the rationale for the

correction methods and approaches that was more interesting and therefore I was not making a judgement on their teaching capabilities. It is also an opportunity for students to reflect on their views and assumptions of OEC.

Unfortunately due to delays beyond my control, the teachers I had previously contacted were no longer able to participate and as such the project design had to be reshaped based on the participants I could obtain to be included. Due to necessity, the students and teachers were from different institutions and therefore the previous planned action research model could no longer be accomplished. However, it was important for me to maintain the reflective process and the teachers' input in the processing and discussion of the data collected. I wanted the research to be collated and discussed, not overly analysed by a single researcher, but maintain the participation of the teachers in particular as I felt this not only fitted with the research paradigm that I was working within, but also the pragmatic subject of the study. The aims of the research project, whether the original or the one executed, were to remain focused on the perceptions of teachers and students of OEC in order to provide insights for the wider ELT field.

The project was redesigned into three key stages, each incorporating the different methods as follows:

Stage 1 - distribution of the student questionnaire to 13 participants.

Stage 2 - an audio recorded semi-structured interview with six individual teachers.

Following these, the dataset was collated and consolidated, and questions were prepared from any recurring themes emerging from the data.

Stage 3 - an audio recorded focus group dialogue with five teachers, discussing key themes from interviews and questionnaire answers.

The questionnaires distributed to the students were modified to include open questions (Q8, Q15, Q24 and Q25) which would have been addressed through the focus group. The student participants were still representative of the multicultural groups found in private language schools and therefore were found to be suitable participants for the study. It is unfortunate, however, that the number of students who were able to participate were lower than previously hoped, but with the limitations of time and access to participants it was important to have a diverse and suitable student voice, which I feel was achieved. The addition of the open questions enables a voice for individual students which could have been lost following the redesign of the data collection. The interviews and focus group were run as previously anticipated, but with

teachers only coming together for the focus group discussions due to the differing institutions of the participant groups. It was important to the study to facilitate the focus group aspect and the voices of the participant groups as individuals to ensure the contribution to knowledge was achieved.

4.6.1 Methods of data collection and analysis

By incorporating different stages into the research project, constructivism can emerge as a dominant theoretical framework. I drew on elements of action research to assist in answering the question at the centre of this research project which addresses a pedagogical problem. I refrained from applying a full action research model as, despite the presence of stages and opportunities for reflection throughout, there is no presumption of an 'intervention'; there was no prescribed or even suggested change in action as is usual in action research (see Heikkinen, et al., 2001), and no suggestion that something is unsound. This also therefore requires no judgement (presumed to be by the researcher) or assumption of a superior option, which I would deem to be inappropriate. I accept the actions of the teacher as acting in accordance with their beliefs and professional judgements. I focused on the practical aspects of language learning, including the students' preferences in relation to the teachers' and the quantity of error correction students and teachers felt was appropriate. I therefore find the reflective aspect of participatory research fits well with this model, as well as my beliefs of learning and teaching, my theoretical framework and the desire to find a better understanding of OEC.

The chosen participatory research model allows for plentiful discussion and consideration of various aspects of pedagogy and context, which is an integral part of collaborative working and research. As Brooks and Brooks (1993) affirmed, constructivist teachers encourage students to engage in experiences that may present contradictions that challenge their own views and hypotheses, and it is this concept that steers my data collection and final analysis to a constructivist participatory research model. Data was divided into the three stages in order to facilitate the participatory aspect of the data analysis.

4.6.2 Questionnaires

Drawing on Foddy (1993) the questioning was framed by the research questions as well as the logical progression of concepts. The questionnaires focused on two key areas: learning English and then specifically OEC, and provided both qualitative and quantitative data (see Appendix D). The questions related to the correction methods were based on the categories presented by Lyster and Ranta (1997) in order to remain

consistent in both meaning and terminology with the current literature. Further questions were derived from previous research and readings on key issues as well as questions to establish the general beliefs of the students in relation to key aspects of OEC. The students answered a series of 25 questions, using a Likert-scale design (see Oppenheim, 1992) and open questions to facilitate meaningful data collection.

To avoid the 'central tendency' described by Douven (2018), questions 1-7 and 16-23 had four possible answers, which encouraged students to decide either negatively or positively according to the statement. According to Asún, Rdz-Navarro and Alvarado (2016) the Likert scale has been criticised for leading to inconclusive information lacking clarity as a result of the middle option. Douven (2018) explains that the middle answer could represent a lack of knowledge, lack of understanding, lack of decision or an inability or unwillingness to commit to a view and therefore a four-point scale was used to avoid any possible misinterpretation of responses. Questions 9-14 used a five-point scale as this related to frequency, rather than an opinion, which means the central tendency is mitigated here. The remaining questions were open questions to enable the students to answer in more detail in relation to the preceding set of questions.

Questionnaires can remove the pressure to answer, which can be present in interviews and may enable a more considered and formulated answer; especially for students with limited linguistic capabilities. Dörnyei and Taguchi (2010) suggested that questionnaires are a suitable way of acquiring a base data set that can be used as a point of exploration or a point of analysis, which was how the data was used here. Offering a Likert scale relies on students' receptive rather than productive skills to provide their opinion, and makes it an accessible form of data collection for lower level students. A Likert scale assumes a degree of linearity of opinion, and therefore the addition of a comment will provide opportunities for elaboration and clarification of the points being raised in each section.

Although questionnaires do not necessarily correspond directly with the theoretical framework underpinning this research project, it is important to note that after careful consideration of the possible methods of obtaining the desired information from the students in the initial data collection process, a questionnaire was deemed highly appropriate given the time, language capabilities and data required. Although limited in their ability to express detailed information and elaborate on ideas, questionnaires can be preferable to interviews due to the accessibility of them for all students and the ability to capture information in a simple format. The questionnaires were designed to progress and expand ideas and were piloted to ensure the answers will provide

insightful data from an important participant in OEC. The pilot questionnaire was issued to six of my students of a similar level to those needed for the study. The questions resulted in responses to those anticipated from the questions and no changes to the questionnaire were made.

4.6.3 Semi-structured interviews

Again drawing on Foddy (1993), I framed the prompts around the research questions. I also wanted to explore their perception of the students' experiences to gain an insight into their understanding of their students. Littig (2009) Richards (1996) and Brinkman and Kvale (2015) discussed the virtues of interviewing professionals for conveying informed relevant insights from a well-informed position. The semi-structured nature (see Clarke and Hoggett, 2009) enabled points of tacit knowledge or *doxa* (Bourdieu, in Grenfell, and Kelly, 2004), to be clarified, explored and reviewed to show multiple realities. As a teacher, I am familiar with key concepts and the terms relating to ELT, but should not assume knowledge and I sought to gain definitions, examples and explanations wherever possible. In interviewing 'experts' in their field, Richards (1996), Borgner et al. (2009) and Borgner and Menz (2009) suggested this provides 'insider' perspective due to their well informed status. Due to the contextual nature of ELT, it was important to explore a possible shared construct of OEC and wider educational discourses. An initial question was for teachers to define OEC and their understanding of it to ensure clarity of the subject matter. The discussions with the teachers included some brief biographical data-gathering followed by questions on their use of OEC, their perception of OEC, and their thoughts on their students' perception of OEC. A copy of the question prompts is in Appendix C. The questions were designed to establish their definition of correction as well as examples and focus on three central themes discussed in the current literature: the timing of correction; preferred correction methods; and student responses to correction.

Interviews were audio recorded for accuracy and transcription for later thematic correlation and comparison. The interviews were transcribed in order to provide the teacher's views in their own words throughout the following chapter. The importance of doing so was recognised by Arksey and Knight (2011), stating that the process of transcribing enables the researcher to become familiar with the emerging themes, which made mapping the responses to the student questionnaire answers easier. Transcription also enabled follow up questions for the focus group to be created. Whilst discourse and conversation analysis (Murphy, 2010; Schiffrin et al. 2001; ten Have, 2007) have long been used to identify the nuances in the way we speak, this study focused on the content of the interviews. The transcriptions here focused on the

subject of the discussion for thematic analysis rather than reviewing the manner in which it was said. By reviewing the content of the discussion for recurring themes, repeated terms and even casual comments it provided an opportunity to explore these later in the process. These themes were identified using NVivo software and coding of the transcripts to enable collation of the themes across the interviews. Nevertheless, I needed to be mindful of not over-processing the information, but focus on the main concepts relating to the substantive to ensure openness at the next stage. This initial data collection process is typically where many other research projects use various data analysis tools (including discourse analysis, statistical analysis and thematic analysis) to review the data from the researcher's perspective. It is from this point that my research project became more constructivist as I shared the information with the participants for us to interpret collaboratively.

While interviews can be an appropriate choice for qualitative research projects, from a constructivist paradigm they can offer a unique opportunity to have a discussion about the ideas and concepts at the centre of the research project. Berry (2002) claimed a semi-structured approach enabled an exploration of any issue raised but equally allowing a focus and for specific points to be explored through further questioning. There were key questions that appeared in the student questionnaire that were also discussed with the teachers in the interviews to enable comparisons and identify points for discussion in the focus group. Berry (2002) also argued that conversation skills are more significant than the questions, and frequently allow participants to deviate and mix trivia and details contributing to the enquiry. Additionally, as Berry (2002) asserts, open questioning (particularly in semi-structured interviews) requires interviewers to recognise when to respond with further questions so data can be extended through distinct, focused and thorough questioning; offering the opportunity to explore the topic and provide comprehensive, but potentially conflicting, answers from the same question. Importantly, as Berry warned, the interviewer needs excellent listening skills to ask further questions or revisit details. Therefore a pilot interview was conducted in order to practise and refine the questions with a volunteer teacher. The responses to this interview were not used in the current study as the teacher did not fit the criteria set out for the research, but provided useful points to ensure that the questions were aimed at the overall research questions.

4.6.4 Focus group

Focus groups are a little used technique in OEC research, but as Lasagabaster and Sierra (2005) found, they can be very productive in discovering and exploring differences in opinion. Using guidance from Morgan (1997) and to some extent

Hollway and Jefferson (2000), I was keen to explore some of the positive aspects of focus groups to help understand and develop the data from the previous stages of research. Where different perspectives are represented and when the discussions are focused it can provide some interesting and in depth comparisons and discussions. An overbearing participant can supersede the voices of the others and skew the results if the researcher and other participants are led by their assertions (Bryman, 2016). Therefore I facilitated the conversations to ensure that everyone had an opportunity to speak and express an opinion, however brief. Key themes on aspects of OEC such as student responses, timing of correction, and methods used for correction were identified in the interviews. Other themes from the questionnaires, which identified questions that provided areas of contrast or overly negative responses, resulted in some key questions emerging for the focus group discussions (see Appendix E). I was mindful that the questioning was focused on general OEC concepts rather than a discussion on the teachers' own practice in order to have open discussions and lessen partiality or judgement. This allowed for analysis of the information to come from the focus group rather than the researcher. The focus group was audio recorded for later transcription to provide quotations in the following chapter.

The number of participants was carefully considered to avoid too many voices and therefore not enough focus. The six participants invited were also interview participants, but due to timing and availability two interviewees were not available and so another volunteer teacher was invited to join the group to make five contributors. This was not only to provide an additional voice to the study, but also to provide a different perspective on the data already collected as she was not already engaged in the process. Although Cohen et al. (2018) acknowledged that group discussions may not provide the same level of detail as interviews with similar numbers, there is still value in the triangulation they offer and the opportunity for alternative perspectives. Indeed this project was specifically designed to have a focus group to explore the findings as I felt that this would be more conducive to understanding the ideas of others and the varying views on the complex topic of OEC in line with the theoretical framework. The focus group was also carefully designed to follow the interviews and questionnaires in order to have some clear points for discussion and to assist in developing the understanding of OEC through multiple perspectives on the key themes arising from the previous data set.

It was important to me not to analyse the data alone, but to share the information with the teachers in the focus group and ask them to reflect on the answers from the students and the key themes expressed in interviews. The questions presented to the

group related to the general research questions and I was therefore wanting the focus group's analysis and for the voice of the participants to be a significant and essential element of the research data. I argue that by allowing the participants to explore the research findings allowed their truth, their understanding, their meaning to be presented within the research. I wanted to refrain from following the path of other researchers of an observer-reporter. A focus group is conducive to my constructivist perspective, and allowed multiple perspectives to be explored. The focus group provided a rich data set, and as per the interviews a transcript was made to further develop my understanding of the thoughts and feelings of the teachers and their views on the student data.

My personal contribution to the focus group discussions was made not unlike the other participants, though I was mindful not to overshadow or dominate the views of others and thus exert undue power over their contributions. I presented the data from the interviews and/or questionnaires and asked the group for their responses to these, and as the conversation progressed with a range of views being expressed, I asked further questions, or added my own views to the discussion to facilitate additional debate. Whilst other researchers may prefer to remain neutral in focus group discussions acting as facilitator rather than participant (as in Lasagabaster and Sierra, 2005), my participatory research model was designed to enable my voice to complement the teachers, however to ensure balance I refrained from presenting my own views until others had made their thoughts or understanding known to reduce any influence on the contributions of others. It was important for the study design to have the prominent voices of the teachers from the focus group, whilst also acknowledging my own position and opinions. A constructivist framework embraces this participatory method and I feel it was a significant aspect of the research findings and contribution to the wider OEC and ELT discussions. I also wanted to ensure that the discussions were focused on the themes important to the participants, not my own interests.

4.7 Discussion and analysis of research findings

The following chapter presents the findings of the questionnaires, interviews and focus group. The data has been collated into core themes from all three datasets and from both participant groups using quotations from the teachers and students throughout. The data was collated and processed in stages to follow the theoretical framework underpinning the study. Data was first collected separately from the interviews and questionnaires. From the interviews I was able to identify some reoccurring themes,

for instance student experience (in particular confidence), individuality in responses to OEC, and intelligibility, which I was able to use as points for discussion at the focus group (see Appendix E for the focus group questions). Whilst listening to the interviews (from the audio recordings) I noted key themes that were raised by the interviewees. These were noted on a table (see Appendix L) which were then added to following each listening of the individual interviews. I was not seeking to analyse the information at this point, and did not create a transcript, but merely to identify the main areas of interest of the teachers and any areas that are consistently being raised by the teachers across the interviews. For example, one re-occurring theme (both repeated within the individual discussions and by multiple interviewees) was that teachers felt students may be embarrassed or uncomfortable when they make a mistake that is corrected by the teacher. This formed the following question in the focus group:

> *Some teachers stated that they felt students can be embarrassed about making mistakes and being corrected in class. A majority of the students said they are happy to be corrected. What is your opinion on these views?*

This was done with other high frequency themes. To avoid influencing the interviews I refrained from reviewing the interviews or questionnaire responses until all stage one and two data had been collected.

I collated the data from the questionnaires into a spreadsheet to ensure correct counts for each closed question and copied all the open question answers in a document before colour-coding any similarity for each answer (see Appendix K for the questionnaire data). From the questionnaires I was able to find aspects where students were generally positive or negative, which would also form a discussion point in the focus group. By briefly reviewing all the information, I was able to find areas of commonality and disparity between the teachers and students on a few points, which formed further questions for the focus group. Most of the questions for the focus group stem from the questionnaire data, where students have had a majority positive or a majority negative response or where there was a specific anomaly in the answers (for example, the questions regarding peer correction). Reviewing the count for questions two (*Teachers should correct **ALL** my speaking errors in class* - 8 of the 13 agreed) and three (*Teachers should **only** correct errors that make communication difficult* - 10 out of 13 disagreed) showed that students want their errors corrected and not just the ones that cause communication difficulties. This was in line with the literature and these responses formulated the following question for the focus group:

> *Students stated that they did NOT want the teacher to only correct errors that made communication difficult. Teachers stated they usually only correct students where communication has broken down. Why do you think we have opposing views?*

Not all questions were explored in the focus group due to time, but as many as possible were presented for discussion.

As a researcher-practitioner I was keen to be involved in the discussion in the focus group, as the research design and the subject of the discussion was very much with my own practice and curiosities in mind. Rather than facilitate the conversations and contributions of others and stand back from the discussions, I felt it was pertinent to add my own views to the discussion for comparison with others, for self-reflection and as another teacher's voice in the data analysis. A participatory approach through the focus group was intended to facilitate as many views and interpretations to be included as possible, including my own. Whilst my own voice is not directly represented via quotations in Chapter 5, my voice is made clear throughout. The voices of the other participants were of greater interest and validity for direct quotation, and thus their views are represented through extensive quotations in the next chapter.

Following the focus group discussions, I created transcripts for the interviews and the focus group using speech to text software and manual editing. To begin the initial data collation, I created a table populating it with the information from the student questionnaires according to the spreadsheet, at this point excluding the open questions. Where there was contradictory information in other questions these were highlighted and where there were related questions in other areas of the questionnaire (for example Q4 and Q22 on peer correction) these were combined. By using the questionnaire data as the initial focus, I was ensuring that the responses were not forgotten or dismissed within the discussions and allowed the teachers' perceptions to be placed alongside these. Using the questionnaire results as a framework, I mapped quotes from the interviews and focus group to the specific sections of the questionnaire to provide a combined teacher and student voice on the specific points. This enabled the information on each of these areas to be collated from across all areas of the data. In particular for Q24 relating to how students feel when they are corrected, I found a lot of discussion points and therefore selected reflective or pertinent points from interviews and the focus group to illustrate a general consensus or a specific view as necessary. During this stage of the data assembly and coordination, the contributions from interviews or focus group participants were differentiated through the use of a different font. This was to add further clarity on when these opinions were expressed and this was carried through to the final analysis in Chapter 5 where it is mentioned when these

comments were made. Statistics from the questionnaires are combined and compared to the student's open answers, which are quoted wherever possible.

As the table of data was populated, the information was reviewed for repetition of ideas and connected points, the information was reorganised into the main concepts underpinning the research questions identified in the following chapter. Although initially the information was collected according to the individual questions and sections of the questionnaire, the order of the themes presented in Chapter 5 denotes the prevalence of these concepts in the data. Whilst revisiting the data repeatedly and reorganising the information it become clear that although the initial research questions relating to the teachers' and students' perceptions had been answered the information was better presented collectively under the themes as per Chapter 5. This was to ensure a comparison of the perceptions and a discussion of the findings rather than a description of the two participant group's perceptions independently. This also enabled the literature relating to these themes to be compared to the findings from this study. With many of the studies also reviewing the perceptions of teachers and students, it is prudent therefore to maintain a thematic analysis to facilitate true discussion and comparisons. The principle question on the impact of any differences in perception is therefore covered in more detail in Chapter 6, the conclusion.

The layering of the data in this manner provides a collective contribution to the debate on OEC and further analysis of some of the key concepts in relation to language teaching and learning. Further to this, the literature and theories from Chapters 2 and 3 were also referenced in relation to the findings, adding a comparison to the findings as well as identifying the areas of knowledge progression.

5. Discussions and analysis of research findings

"[I have] genuine questions over the effectiveness of it and whether it's actually a complete and utter waste of time and I'm not 100%. I would like to see the results of your research actually because you might tell me when to stop wasting my time!" (Sarah)

5.1 Introduction

The data from the student questionnaires, teacher interviews and the focus group are combined here under the key themes emerging from across the participants. The combined data is collated into the themes of students centred teaching and learning, responding to speaking, responding to errors and educating, teaching and learning. As outlined in the previous chapter, the data from student questionnaires was layered with information from the teachers' interviews to form questions for the focus group where further qualitative data was collected in relation to the arising themes. These themes are presented in Sections 5.2 to 5.5 below. The results of the questionnaire data and themes extracted from the interviews are presented in Appendix K and Appendix L (respectively) and are reviewed here under the themes outlined in the discussions in Chapter 4 and the research questions.

5.1.1 Teaching in context

The participant teachers' voices presented here represent a limited but important view of the multilingual learning environment. The teachers participating in this study are working in a private college in the UK. Their students are from all over the world and their classes focus on English for academic purposes (EAP), preparing the students for university study. In contrast, classes on an intensive English course, like that of the student participants, are solely for learning English and may not involve taking an exam at the end of the course. Furthermore, the contact hours in private language schools may be up to twenty hours a week exclusively dedicated to English, where the teacher participants generally only had five hours per week with their students. Although the teachers were not teaching in an intensive language course context, they had all done so in their recent career history and had trained with that context in mind. Further to this, the students all stated having studied English at school as part of their compulsory education. Thus, despite not representing the same context at this time, both parties have experienced the other. The teachers and students are able to provide insight into learning and teaching across contexts. This becomes important when discussing the

differences of opinion, as although they are currently representing different contexts, if following the constructivism paradigm, the opinions are based on an accumulation of experiences and therefore can be compared and explored.

5.1.2 Experiences of learning and teaching

The teachers have all completed a training programme, which focused on using a communicative method, following a generally Social Interactionist Theory (see Gallaway and Richards, 1994 and Vygotsky, 1978), through which teachers are encouraged to focus classes on communication through pair and group work in order to facilitate functional talk and language practice through tasks. This is representative of much of the teacher training materials (for example, Hall, 2011; Harmer, 2007; Harmer 2015; Hedge, 2000; Scrivener, 2001; Thornbury, 2007; and Ur, 2010). When asked about their teaching styles, the teachers all cited interactive activities and high levels of communication in their lessons. Brooks and Brooks (1993) discuss the teaching methodology of collaborative learning, using constructivist approaches of sharing and peer-teaching whilst creating meaning and relevance. This seems to be the current trend amongst the teachers here, and as such in adopting a teaching style that recognises the development of knowledge through social interactions, it could be supposed that teachers are (perhaps unknowingly) constructivists. Collaboration and interaction is seen as part of the learning process for many of the teachers in this study, thus driving and being driven by a belief that this is a legitimate teaching tool that allows the teacher to step back and for students to support each other. With this in mind, the findings here show a great deal of empathy and consideration for that communicative environment and the participation of the students within it.

The teachers indicated their perceptions of OEC are likely influenced by their collation of training information, practice and reflection as well as conversations and readings on OEC which all help to develop the teachers' understanding of the students, errors, and OEC through deductive reasoning. This is consistent with Woods (1996), who found teachers construct their own pedagogical theories based on their experiences and observations. Equally, the experiences of students of learning a language include a range of teachers, coursebooks, activities and environments. Students likely accumulate their views based on these experiences and these consequently shape their current expectations and desires. The students' experiences of learning English may also vary across the learning environments from their culture. It is therefore inevitable that students will prefer certain types of activities and tasks and prefer some teacher's style and manner more than others. These differences in experiences are

shown in the questionnaire responses and in the discussion from interviews and the focus group with the teachers.

5.1.3 Research questions

The current literature does not fully explore the multilingual UK ESL classes as experienced by teachers and students. As a result of the gap in knowledge set out in Chapter 3, the following research questions were employed:

- How do teachers respond to errors in spoken language in the ESL classroom?
- How do teachers perceive oral error correction in the ESL classroom?
- How do students perceive oral error correction in the ESL classroom?

Having collated the data, the research project will review the following principal question:

> To what extent are there tensions and commonalities between the perceptions of oral error correction (OEC) of teachers and students, and how does this impact ELT?

The data has been collated thematically, as outlined in Chapter 4 and the research questions have therefore been answered collectively according to the themes of the teachers' consideration of the student, student responses to error correction, learning outcomes, exams and assessments, the efficacy of OEC and the value placed upon it, and the teaching and learning discussions relating to error correction. In order to address the final question in relation to the tensions and commonalities in the perceptions of teachers and students, the following themes contain views from all participants as much as possible in their own words, with the addition of the quantitative data from the student questionnaires. Data from the questionnaires and interviews can be found in Appendix K and Appendix L respectively.

5.2 Student-centred teaching and learning

During discussions it became apparent that the experiences and previous understandings of students, classes, teaching and learning contribute to the development of the teacher’s perception of OEC. The teachers discussed their own learning experiences and their teaching career, directly and indirectly referencing the

approach many of them had taken with their students in relation to these. The students were at the centre of much of the discussion with 'student' or 'learner' being mentioned 360 times throughout the interviews and focus group, and the terms featured in a majority of the answers. The teachers' desire to make the classes a pleasurable experience, with meaning and purpose was also at the forefront. On reflection, it became apparent in the interviews, and even more so in the focus group, that the practitioners have a student-centred pedagogy based on communication, collaboration, autonomous learning and tasks designed to challenge students' skills and knowledge. One of the main topics that emerged was how much the teachers considered the individuals in the classroom.

5.2.1 The confidence quandary

Each teacher stated they would consider the personality of the student, in particular relating to their confidence. Without exception, the teachers discussed how they would make a judgement on the correction they gave, the method and timing used and the likely impact on the student before offering any feedback. Many of the teachers clearly asserted that if a student was considered to be lacking in confidence (and crucially not necessarily lacking in linguistic ability), the correction would be selective and done with sensitivity. The teachers explained that rather than address all the errors, they would select ones that were thought to be a 'slip' or ‘mistake’ where the student could be prompted to self-correct (for further discussions on these concepts see Chapter 2). This falls in line with research by Han (2010) and Kim (2004) who found implicit correction worked well with these types of inaccuracies. Alternatively the teachers would choose errors that were common to the group so other students in the class could benefit from the correction and avoid it being targeted at one specific student. The teachers also claimed that they would not correct a student who contributed to the conversation who was normally reticent as this was thought to curtail future participation, which follows Krashen's (2003) Affective Filter theory. The teachers felt it was important for students to grow in confidence and that OEC is one way in which that confidence could be shattered. As Bridget stressed, "*I think sometimes if a student doesn't have a lot of confidence, if you over correct, you're just reinforcing the lack of confidence"*. Others agreed, claiming over-correction leaves students feeling frustrated and discouraged, and therefore felt it was better to allow the students to express their ideas fluently, rather than focus on accuracy to enable communication. Confidence to speak was at the forefront of the teachers' minds and was the driving force for many of

the decisions made in the classroom. Without the confidence to speak, OEC ultimately becomes redundant.

Several of the teachers stated they would favour fluency over accuracy in the beginning, to ensure that students become accustomed to speaking in class, and correction can be introduced at a later stage of the course when confidence and reticence have altered. When asked about her teaching style, Bridget stated that:

> "*I believe very strongly that if students feel comfortable then they learn… I don't ever want to have a student feel worried or scared in my classes and I think a lot of my teaching style is making sure I teach students to feel free to ask questions and fail and it not be a problem, so it's a lot of building confidence*".

This confidence, she claimed, enables the students to communicate, to check their knowledge, so students are conversing naturally. The other teachers similarly described their teaching style with a strong sense of inclusion and support. Students were less likely to be corrected if the teacher felt it would be received negatively or would dissuade them from further participation. The teachers felt the primary focus was having confidence to speak and when the rapport was such that the students would remain confident enough to participate the teachers would introduce OEC.

Several of the teachers referred to their own learning experiences, either generally or specifically language learning. These experiences have shaped the way they teach; it became apparent in their teaching choices, either in the way that they elicit ideas and answers from the group, or the way that they correct their students. This links to the research by Borg (2003), which shows the experiences and attitudes of the teachers influence the actions in the classroom. Many of the teachers stated they would refrain from placing pressure on students and singling them out for correction, and rather direct the feedback more generally to the group. This broadly follows the research by Krashen (2003), suggesting again that teachers consider the feelings of the student before offering OEC to retain rapport. Furthermore, the teachers would actively avoid correcting everything, believing that this would be "*demoralising*" (Claire) and detrimental to the learning. Therefore the teachers would offer selective correction, to ensure a more positive response from the students. In her interview, Tina affirmed this view:

> *"Yeah, definitely not over correction. So not correcting every time. You can point out when something is perfect, even when it's not actually perfect, so it's like 'yes you got that one!' So encouragement… I'm trying not to make them feel that they are always wrong. If you want*

> *them to speak they have to feel comfortable speaking. And they have to feel they are progressing with their speaking, even when they are not. Because if they stopped speaking they are never going to get any better!"*

However, when probed none of the teachers were able to recall an incidence where a student responded negatively to correction, merely that some students were more dismissive of the correction than others. They suggested this may have been as a result of the timing of the correction, which perhaps interrupted the communication of ideas. Alternatively, it may have been something the student did not feel was important to their conversation at the time as their partner was able to comprehend.

When asked about the things she considers before offering correction, Claire answered "*obviously I don't want to embarrass them in front of the others, because they're at such a vulnerable age anyway*". The context in which she was teaching (teenagers and young adults) was something she repeatedly indicated was an issue to consider. Her younger learners were cited as being more susceptible to embarrassment. The teachers unanimously claimed that the lessons they prepared and their actions in the classroom were all based on their appraisal of the students' abilities, their stages of learning, and their assessed and apparent abilities in English. Beyond that, the students' individual personalities were also considered and teachers spoke of having different expectations of participation for the various students. This meant some students may receive more correction than others as they are seen to be able to accept it favourably.

Several teachers noted that they used humour to deflect any issues of embarrassment or awkwardness. One teacher stated that by making "*funny faces*" to clearly indicate there had been a mistake, which both drew the attention to the error, and made it something fun to engage in. Another teacher stated that she would continually ask students questions and elicit answers from them so that they would be used to interacting with her in front of the class. She also challenged students to produce more complex and linguistically challenging utterances, so the students would not feel the difference in the interactions and would happily cooperate. The teacher in this case noted students were reticent to start with, but would soon become more comfortable with the interactions and did not fear them. She attributed this to repeated exposure or 'training', which she had tried for her own anxiety in social situations. The teachers in the focus group felt this was the way to engage students effectively in OEC without creating issues relating to the Affective Filter (Krashen, 2003), which also follows the findings of Sepehrinia and Mehdizadeh (2016).

Tamsin was much more optimistic about the contribution of OEC to student-teacher interactions and the place for positive feedback along with it. She claimed students can be encouraged through positive feedback to build confidence:

> *"So I think generally, overall, [I have] a very, a very positive, proactive approach to error correction. So anytime anybody contributes, there is a recognition of their effort in contributing whether it's correct or incorrect, and then how it's always slightly modified by the individual because some students enjoy that dynamic of 'No…no… try again… And again', they like that interaction. Of course, I wouldn't do that with a less confident student, you know, I would be tempted to do something like I would ask them to repeat it a bit louder so as everybody hears, I would definitely say, 'yeah, fantastic. Lovely. Say that again, for me'. And if it's a little thing like tense, visual signals work really well." (Tamsin)*

Without confidence to speak the teachers all agreed that OEC was inconsequential and therefore obtaining and maintaining the courage to, especially in front of the whole group, was vital. During the focus group the teachers suggested, given the findings from the questionnaires, they may become less concerned with embarrassing students or reducing their confidence from OEC.

5.2.2 Relationships and rapport

In order for confidence to grow, relationships need to be forged that support it. In her interview, Claire mentions the teacher-student and student cohort dynamics:

> "*In the past, I mean for adult students, it [OEC] can be quite... I don't wanna say demoralising, but it can be demoralising, but also sometimes who this error comes from seems to matter. As in, if I had male students who were maybe in their 50s or 60s, they wouldn't want to be corrected by the 20-something girl especially not in front of others. Even though I was the teacher and even though that was my job, they would still be quite reluctant to be corrected, and they wouldn't take it very well.*"

This negative reaction to correction can be somewhat confrontational for the teacher and student(s) and therefore create a greater divide within the classroom dynamic making corrections awkward and unproductive. Tina further suggests that establishing the general feel of the group is imperative:

> "*I think you've got to pick your moments. And... Pick your timing, and if you're making them feel insecure, by continually pulling them up, that's very negative. And definitely a drawback to actually encourage them to speak. [...] And they won't be able to focus on the rest of the*

> *lesson because they are so terrified they might have to speak at some stage. Yeah… So I think it's a case of getting to know your students as quickly as possible."*

These assessments of the students' attitude may take some time in contexts where classes occur for only five hours a week. As Bridget suggests in her interview: "*I think there's got to be a rapport and relationship with the students*", which can take time to establish before embarking on a correction culture. In intensive courses, where classes are for several hours per day, it allows for a more rapid probe into preferences and thus a more timely adaptation to the students. However, the teachers agreed rapport was important to the use of OEC and directly impacted future interactions and was something they were mindful to develop early in the course. Only one student suggested the teacher's attitude could be problematic in OEC (Q24, see section 5.2.4 below), nevertheless the teachers feel this is a significant factor in the 'success' of OEC. According to the questionnaire results, the students were overwhelmingly positive about receiving correction and overall did not indicate much negativity towards OEC. This raises questions as to whether teachers are too concerned with the students' feelings and refraining from correcting, and therefore should be more focused on providing input and feedback to benefit the students' learning. Nevertheless the teachers felt that a good rapport was important to the learning process, and would be mindful of the manner in which the OEC was given in order to maintain that.

5.2.3 Collective responsibility

From the questionnaire data, although teachers were understood as the primary OEC provider, the students also wanted correction from their peers, which reinforces the notion that students are keen to get correction on a range of errors from whoever is available to assist in their learning. However, it is not without its problems. In relation to peer correction, just as building a rapport between teacher and student, Joanna suggested "*towards the beginning of the course, it's more difficult, because then it might feel like one of them showing the others up."* Although nine of the students stated that peer correction was acceptable to use (Q4), eight students also rated the peer correction method in Q22 as bad, showing a contradiction in their opinions. It possibly depends on how it is done, or by whom. As Sarah stated:

> "*I only ever really set up peer correction if I then have the final say. And I tell them 'you're going to look at each other's essays' or 'you're going to talk to each other', and 'I have the final say which one is better'."*

In the focus group this issue was further discussed and Sarah suggested that "*[students] don't see each other as an authority. When you have a teacher, why would a peer in any way be an authority?"* Michelle also commented that:

> "*they are paying for us to do our job. And even though we might facilitate peer correction in a way that as professionals we might consider to be of value and all of those other things, their perception is we are the teacher and we should be probably at the front telling them what they are doing wrong, and correcting them and why on earth would be wandering about with our pen in our hand while their peers do our job for us*".

This perception is a good point, and in a private educational institution, it may be an important factor in the students' expectations. Sarah also points out that the difficulties of peer correction, where there is significant disparity in student abilities, peer correction can be problematic. The higher level students may feel relied upon by the teacher to provide the correction, whilst not being stretched and challenged themselves in their own learning; in effect becoming a classroom assistant rather than a student. As Michelle suggested this may detract from how the students see our role as teachers and thus diminish the student's experience. The learning outcomes therefore may diminish and peer correction is devalued, despite being seen as a legitimate, and often unthreatening, way to provide OEC by teachers.

Joanna claimed that her experience was different. Her class of multi-level students were able to support each other effectively by working collaboratively. She implied that respect and rapport is imperative for this to work, but her experience of peer correction has been positive for the students:

> "*I know that I can trust them to try and help each other with their errors. (…) I think if there's a good enough sort of respect between the two of them, I think if the one who's slightly weaker doesn't view this like a personal fault, it can be [successful]. So I think the maturity levels of the students who are doing it definitely helps because they're not just being like 'I'm better at English than you are', it tends to be more like 'I want to help you improve'. …*

She also suggests, though, that teachers need to consider the group because *"it has to be done quite carefully, because otherwise it could go wrong*." Again, this demonstrates the need to assess the students' attitudes and relationships in order to make peer correction a viable option. Although Pawlak (2014) and Ortega (2009) claimed negotiation of meaning and peer interactions can provide useful feedback to continue communication, there is the possibility of hostility if overt correction is offered from a classmate.

Whilst peer correction may be seen as a less confrontational or demoralising way of correcting student's errors by the teachers, the students may be more dismissive of correction from others due to a lack of acceptance of the offering, or, as Claire noted, the classroom dynamic. She discussed her own attitude to peer correction:

> "*They could be my best friend in that room or they could be anybody, but just the fact that they felt that they were in any way better than me, then I'm like 'well you're in the same class as me, so what makes you think you can correct me?*'".

From this discussion, it was evident Claire was using her own experiences of peer correction and previous lessons using classmates for corrections to determine whether this was something that may be an issue with her current cohort. The teachers made it clear that the group dynamic and relationships between the class members was a principal consideration, and methods and approaches varied for OEC as much as it did for materials and lesson aims.

Despite studies suggesting that clear indicators to the student that there has been an error, five of the students rated Q17, where the teacher clearly states that the utterance is wrong, as 'bad'. Teachers may need to be mindful of this distinction in class activities. Allowing classmates to correct errors during closed conversations as part of the natural negotiation of meaning is perhaps the preference of students, whereas teachers may feel the need to interject and be involved in the correction process by nominating another student, thus highlighting the error. By writing the errors on the board and allowing students to identify and correct the errors (Q23), it may engage the students in the correction process collectively whilst also using students' existing knowledge to find the correct form, rather than isolate students for specific errors. Nine of the students felt this was 'good', however, this method requires a planned and timed section of the lesson where these issues can be explored. Teachers may feel this is most suitable at the end of the activity or at the end of the lesson, but as mentioned by some of the teachers, the pressure of time in their lessons may mean no time is left available and so corrections go unexplored. In order to make peer correction more plausible perhaps then teachers should be scheduling more board based collaborative correction into the lessons in order for all students to benefit from the review and correction in an unobtrusive and less confrontational way.

As part of this discussion, I want to emphasise one responder. This student highlighted Q22, and referenced it again in Q25, stating clearly the teacher was to provide the correction, "*not another student*". The teachers were surprised by this response and

had not anticipated such a firm response. Although there is no explanation for this, possible reasons put forward by Claire include fear of being given incorrect information from another learner (and therefore 'learning' something erroneous), or possibly a feeling of being identified as weaker. Additionally, other teachers suggested taking on the role of the teacher may be too much pressure for some students, and indeed have a detrimental effect on their own learning and participation (the Affective Filter - Krashen, 2003). This may create undue pressure on the students and a feeling of awkwardness if they are unable to help their classmate. For this reason Julia felt it was better to allow students to provide feedback on skills and task criteria rather than the linguistic aspects. By providing the scaffolding to provide feedback, such as a checklist of specific items to be included in their speech or presentation, the students may be more participatory and accepting of the corrective process, but this may not provide linguistic development. Overall, it was felt that correction could come from peers as well as the teacher, but must be done with caution.

5.2.4 Student reactions to OEC

Only a few teachers felt students generally responded positively to correction. Twelve of the 13 students felt the OEC was a positive experience (Q24) and they reported generally positive feelings towards being corrected. The teachers were not surprised by this, but expected a more apathetic view. One student stated:

> *"I am glad to hear my error being corrected and I'm happy to hear how a native speaker will say in the context also what appropriate words they'll use" [sic]*

The students felt OEC helped identify the errors, having said that, for some students there was also a caveat that the corrections need to be offered in a constructive way in order for them to be a positive experience. A "*patronising manner*" was not appreciated by two of the students and the teachers' attitude was reported as key to ensure the positivity of the interaction by another. Whilst many students reported feeling "*pleased*", "*glad*" or "*happy*" to receive corrections, a couple of the students stated that the teacher's corrections were somewhat expected as this was part of the teacher's role to provide that feedback; *"I think it's his job".* In agreement, this was reiterated by Sarah and Michelle in the focus group. However, despite these expectations, the teachers still preferred to be more selective about what they correct, and avoid a feeling of over-correction citing a fear of confidence depletion. It would seem that students are significantly more positive about OEC than teachers appear to

be, and as a result, perhaps it is the teacher's mindsets that need to change, as suggested by Julia:

> "*Sometimes it's the focus, that we maybe look at error correction as being negative, scary. And it's not. And maybe if we renamed it as noticing then we would all think it's quite positive.*"

However, this view was largely not held by the students. One student reported that they felt "*encouraged to improve*" as a result of correction; the teacher is able to challenge the student's own knowledge to self-correct and therefore develop their own language skills. A couple of students claimed that the correction helps them to understand the error and one further stated that it helps to identify the frequency with which the errors are made. The extent to which this is universally true is questionable, but it seems these adult learners were looking for OEC to be part of the learning strategy. One student also stated that "*[correction] shows that they [the teacher] are listening to me and want to help me improve*". This suggests that the student wanted acknowledgement of their contribution to the conversation or interaction, but also wanted the teacher to desire to support the students in their development, rather than just responding robotically to the utterances. Claire affirmed that listening to the students' ideas, not just listening for the errors, has a more positive response from the students during discussions and encourages them to communicate.

From the evidence presented here, and in other studies outlined in Chapters 2 and 3, students have a more positive attitude to OEC than teachers. As one student stated, "*teachers correct me, thus I won't make same mistakes next time*" [sic], which suggests not only that the teacher will provide correction where the student makes a mistake, but also an assumption that it is effective. As discussed in Chapter 2, there is no agreed conclusion that correction 'works' in the long term, and therefore this student's view may be somewhat misguided. Teachers' attitudes seem to reflect the research, with some scepticism of the longer-term outcomes of even repeated OEC. Perhaps the expectations of students about the efficacy of OEC compared to the relative success of written correction for improvement needs to be highlighted and addressed for students. Also, perhaps teachers should be well versed on the nature of OEC and, where possible, trained on how to ascertain correction methods that are more well-received and beneficial.

5.2.5 One size does not fit all

Following the discussions regarding confidence and class dynamics, the teachers felt the rapport they develop with their students and the relationship they have enables a degree of intuition on how the students are going to respond and whether the students will welcome the correction as part of their interactions. When asked about whether there were preferred or better methods, Claire responded:

> "*I guess, as a teacher, you have to experiment with all of the different ways. Because trying to stick to the one method of error correction it's just not (a) realistic, and (b) also it's not practical to have this one size fits all for the students*"

This was further supported by Julia, who explained that:

> *"There's just no best method... You have to tailor your style, depending on which classroom you're walking into, who these people are and how they respond to you on that particular day, because they are a different person every single day. And sometimes they're not going to respond to error correction and sometimes they are, and you can tell what mood they're in and also what mood you're in that day. So it constantly changes."*

This depth of awareness likely occurs if the teacher is engaging with the students, but nevertheless it empowers the teacher and the students to work together in an environment where mutual respect exists. Adapting the OEC methods may need to become as normal as adapting to the general learning styles or special needs of students. This extra layer of consideration, the daily changing dynamic of the group and the teacher's relationship with them, was something that has not been widely referenced in previous work on OEC. Perhaps it is difficult to acknowledge because it further complicates the learning and teaching environment. The class consists of multiple constantly evolving individuals. A way of managing the difficulties of the individuals is perhaps to learn about them and recognise their current disposition, which for these teachers seemed to be something innate and intuitive, yet critical to maintaining rapport, engagement, confidence and learning. Each of the teachers suggested that they build a connection with the students, gaining trust and understanding, which may go some way to alleviating the embarrassment or Affective Filter (Krashen, 2003) as they can assess the group and adjust accordingly from lesson to lesson.

There is an assumption that by avoiding over-correction at the start and making feedback a positive experience, students will be more willing to participate in speaking

activities. Nevertheless, there are still some questions about whether this does, in fact, enable free discussion and whether students will feel any value in speaking if the teacher is not providing correction. Whilst this softer strategy may facilitate contributions from some students, others may see discussion time as wasted effort, even though they are sharing ideas and building on their understanding, as they are not getting feedback on their production. Therefore the teachers felt it is important to acknowledge these differences and ensure that students are either reassured of the benefits or encouraged to contribute and OEC offered in a manner befitting of these attitudes. During the focus group two of the teachers said they would consider asking their students how they feel about OEC in order to get a better understanding of their views.

5.2.6 Teacher knows best?

In line with many other research findings, the students here agreed that OEC played an important role in improving their language learning (Q8). Many of the students stated that they felt correction was how their mistakes were made known to them and this is what enables better speaking in the future. The students repeated the words "*important*", "*improve*" and "*understand*" in their answers to Q8. As one student stated, "*if you understand an error then you won't do that anymore. Thanks to the correction you learn*". This implies that some explanation has been given or that the student is aware of the reason for the error. Another student states, "*if the teacher doesn't correct the errors, the student thinks that it's correct and then he can't progress*". In agreement, the following comments were made: "*I have to be aware of my mistakes in order to improve. If nobody points them out to me, I might keep making the same mistakes*" and *"…you can learn a lot from your mistakes*". These findings are comparable to Loewen et al. (2009), who summarised the findings of many studies, discovering that students have an overwhelmingly positive attitude to OEC, regardless of their first or target language. The pivotal role that correction seems to have in the learning process, helping the students to comprehend the error and to develop proficiency by avoiding it in future, is not a surprising view. However, when this view is juxtaposed with the research into efficacy discussed above, there is a question over whether students should be aware of the lack of impact of many of the correction methods. Students consistently and globally state OEC is important to them and to the learning process, but the question still remains where this view comes from. Whilst there is evidence that written feedback can be beneficial, perhaps there is an assumption by students that all feedback is rated equal.

However, perhaps teachers are dismissive of the students' understanding of OEC and how it works for them. As Sarah stated:

> "*quite often I feel the most effective teaching is the teaching they [students] think they want or the teaching they think they need. Whether I personally think that this particular method is going to help them, is kind of by the by and sometimes I think if students will gain confidence if I have corrected them then I am quite happy to do it. Whether I think it's actually going to stop them making that error in the future or not is kind of immaterial. Because they will feel empowered and they will feel 'oh I got that bit right' or 'I've learnt from it' and dah dah dah. That's kind of what my job is."*

The debate between doing what the teacher feels is the best course of action and providing the students with what they think is best is a difficult one to resolve. As Sarah pointed out, in some cases the teacher may feel obliged to follow what the student wants or expects as they are viewed as customers perhaps more than learners. This may be opposing their intuitive or reasoned decisions, but nevertheless the considered best course of action. As the students in this study and in others clearly state they feel OEC works and is important to language learning, it is interesting many of the teachers question the use of it. In particular Sarah's point here is pertinent that teachers do not always act in accordance with their beliefs.

Contrary to this view, Bridget argues that

> "*I think you've got to be careful, especially in an environment where they're clients, they're not students, just giving the client what they want is not necessarily what the best thing is. And I think, you know, students might think certain things are great".*

Perhaps there is an assumption here that teachers know best, that they are the expert in teaching and learning and therefore student expectations or demands may not be the right way forward. As customers, perhaps for students there is some premise their expectations will be met. Where the teacher and student have a differing opinion, there may need to be discussion about the way in which the teacher will support the students and how the learning will be delivered from the start of the course, so that the learners can better understand the rationale of the pedagogy as well as ask questions in relation to their understanding of the learning environment. As many UK teachers are not working in traditional English language teaching situations, and the courses are often skills based rather than language based, the rationale is perhaps more necessary. This does not detract from the fact that students may need to accept the teacher's decisions in the classroom and focus on skills acquisition.

Classes for these teachers were different from traditional language courses, as the students have a goal of university entry. The course and its content are designed to prepare students for the expectations of university classes and assessments. Seminars were seen as an important learning opportunity for students, and as such students being able to share their knowledge with others was something the teachers felt may be new or challenging for some students. Both convergent and divergent tasks were identified by teachers as speaking skills focuses, with a Vygotskian view of learning through interaction and collaboration (Vygotsky, 1978, 1987). Classes were therefore also an opportunity for students to practise discussion and debate skills as well as language. Claire felt that whilst correction is important, classes are also an opportunity for students to share ideas and opinions on a range of subjects and that those ideas and opinions should be acknowledged:

> "*I'm a stickler for accuracy but at the same time both as a language learner and as a teacher I've always wanted to feel and make my students feel that what they are saying is equally if not more important than how they're saying it. (…) And for me that would be the ultimate goal of learning. To make them feel like what they're saying and how they're saying it is important is very very very very very much the primary goal*".

Claire added:

> "*I want them to always feel like they are conveying their emotions, their intelligence. Because sometimes I feel… we assume sometimes that our students aren't as intelligent just because they are not able to be 100% accurate in the 2nd, 3rd or even 4th language. And for someone who speaks as many languages and doesn't always get it right I would never want anybody listening to me to think I've got a lower IQ just because I made a mistake here or there*".

Sarah also felt that intelligence was called into question when getting something wrong linguistically:

> "*But the thing is, as a language learner you don't want to get it wrong. You don't want to sound stupid, basically. You've maybe been laughed at for getting things wrong, you've maybe had a teacher in the past who was horrible if you got something wrong… Maybe it's just an important part of your self identity and self as in how many languages you speak and cultural associations with the languages, and if you're getting it inaccurate in everything you say you feel like a plonker!*"

As Sarah touches on here, there are several possible pride related issues, but ultimately the students do not want to feel inferior to others in the class. The compromise between accuracy and fluency is difficult; teachers seem to favour fluency

to encourage contribution to classes, and develop rapport and confidence rather than following the students' desires for correctness. This may be a careful compromise which have the students' best interests at heart, but nevertheless may be detrimental to the overall learning process. The teachers in the focus group felt that they needed to reconsider the student data collected in the study with a view to reflecting on their own choices, with two further suggesting a discussion with their students about OEC.

Although the teachers largely agreed correction was important to students, they felt it was given too much status and was not as important as students felt it was, particularly for their students who had already reached a B1 level of English. For the courses they were teaching, focusing on academic skills with some academic language development, writing was the primary output focus and as such feedback on this was more prevalent. There was a general agreement amongst the teachers that OEC was something that was not a primary concern during the lessons, but dealt with ad hoc, reactively and in relation to the lesson objectives, regardless of the importance placed by students on correctness. If the students feel OEC only happens on 'special occasions' or is at least perceived to be an occasional event, it may seem more special as a result, making it desired more strongly, and more frustration arises when it is not delivered. The more targeted OEC seems sound when considering the arguments relating to the saliency and efficacy of it discussed in Chapter 2, yet there seems a dilemma placed on teachers to make a judgement. Teachers can either follow their intuition and selectively correct students with a view to maintaining rapport, focus and confidence, or adhere to the requests of the students and correct all errors and feel they do not get the intended content of the lesson completed.

If correction is deemed a way of avoiding embarrassing miscommunication moments and potential for students to be underestimated, then it becomes clear why students value that input so highly. However, teachers' scepticism, perhaps from experience and the current research, may be why teachers are less inclined to correct and place a lower value on it than students. These differing values may be a source of the tension between teachers and students. Teachers decide what happens in the classroom, selecting the errors, the methods and the timing of correction. The students are perhaps unaware of the number of errors they make, as Joanna mentions in the focus group, or they may have a false belief that their English is full of errors where in actual fact an upgrade is what is really required, as further suggested by Julia. An upgrade is viewed differently to a correction by the teacher, as there is nothing grammatically, phonologically or lexically wrong with what was said, it is merely that there is an

alternative, perhaps more complex way of expressing their view more eloquently. Students, however, may view this as an error, in the sense that this is not the best way. Further exploration of this may be required in order to establish where the boundary lines are for both students and teachers. Clarifying whether language is deemed an error by either party may help ascertain the attitude towards OEC and find a balance that suits both factions.

5.3 Responding to speaking

5.3.1 What's not right?

The questionnaire asked students to identify the kinds of errors that should be corrected (Q9-Q12 and Q15). Five students felt grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation errors should always be corrected, with a further five suggesting they should be corrected often. Pragmatic errors were to be corrected often by eight students suggesting these errors were less important. Grammar and pronunciation each received seven mentions as the most important aspects to correct (Q15). Grammar was cited as the key to communication, with one student stating "*proper grammar can be crucial to intelligibility*". Another student agreed, stating "*errors of grammar are the ones that make the communication impossible*", with another claiming grammar and vocabulary were most important "*because pronunciation is not a big problem as long as the others understand*". Derwing and Munro's (1997) research showed grammar and lexical errors had a high correlation with comprehensibility, but this would cause only minor processing delays and interlocutors were generally able to realise the meaning from the context. The focus group showed the teachers largely felt that grammar and vocabulary could be dealt with in other ways, so pronunciation was more important to correct during speaking activities. The teachers also seemed to be largely sceptical of the long term learning outcomes of OEC, in particular for grammar and lexis without metalinguistic feedback, which was felt to be more 'teaching' than 'correcting'.

Despite the responses to Q9 to Q12, seven students felt pronunciation is most important for communication, with one student claiming "*because I want always pronounce correctly*" [sic]. Another student concurred, stating "*it is most important to correct what makes communication difficult, such as pronunciation*". The teachers felt that pronunciation was relatively brief and uncomplicated to correct as it usually involved providing and repeating the model. Modelling and drilling the pronunciation is encouraged in teacher training and can be done out of context as, unlike grammar or

lexis, it is rarely associated with meaning or use. There is still a sense that the native speaker model is the model by which learners are measured for intelligibility (Golombek and Jordan, 2005), despite communication often being between non-native speakers. Students may also feel 'correct' pronunciation is seen as like a 'native', as one student stated "*first I should speak correctly, then try to be a native speaker*". Global English and ELF debates (Crystal, 2003; Jenkins, 2000, 2006; Kachru, 1992; Seidlhofer, 2005) show the plurality of pronunciations from the wide range of English speakers, making 'native' pronunciation questionable, though the teacher most likely has a clearer articulation of the sounds than the student, and can provide a model by which the students can follow. Incorrect pronunciation may also signal a mistake or slip rather than an error, as the student is actively attempting to use a word in their vocabulary set but is potentially unsure of the articulation. There is greater acknowledgment perhaps of the pronunciation differences between English speakers, but perhaps less awareness of the other linguistic disparities. The difficulty lies in establishing whether the utterance of the student is grammatically incorrect, in what way and according to whose grammar rules. In this study, and implicitly in the literature reviewed earlier, the decision on correctness was made by the teacher. This was based either on their own grammatical knowledge or their acceptance of the inner and outer circle language deviations (Kachru, 1992).

The difficulty arises in establishing whether the student's incorrect utterance is the result of an error, a mistake or slip, regardless of the 'correct' target form. Establishing the degree of knowledge of the student is imperative to deciding whether to note the error, correct the mistake, or ignore the slip. This is further compounded when the need for 'correctness' also needs to be endorsed, for example in an exam preparation class when students will ultimately be graded on accepted norms of language. In this case the teachers referred to the lack of input time surrounding their classes in order to focus on errors and treat them with a level of input and exploration that is needed to actually provide sufficient detail to 'fix' them. With this in mind, it is understandable that mistakes which are easily reacted to are favoured over more intricate linguistics discussions relating to errors. The students however, were studying English full time and may feel there is ample opportunity in their classes to repeat some of the input. For errors in grammar and vocabulary, perhaps the input is more tangible and understandable for written work, which may be why the teachers frequently mentioned pronunciation when discussing OEC. Pronunciation practice can only be done through verbal output and therefore this may explain the attention on this particular aspect of OEC.

5.3.2 Correct or communicative?

For the teachers an important consideration was whether students would be measured against a 'correct' form of English in an exam (for example, IELTS). There was some consideration by the teachers what 'correct' English was, examples of American and English variations were given and how that is established and measured in the exams. Where students intended to take examinations or needed to pass an assessment, the teachers paid closer attention to the accuracy of the utterances, and made more effort to correct anything they perceived to be problematic within the perceived grammar rules. Where students were not imminently studying for an exam the teachers seemed more interested in encouraging and fostering open communication, with focus on content rather than accuracy. The teacher's were intent on improving the students' abilities to function effectively in their current and future circumstances. Arguments presented by Hyland and Anan (2006) showed communication is possible without correct grammar, although lexical deviations may cause some confusion. Taking into account the range of dialects or regional variations of English in addition to the non-native variances in English recognised by Kachru (1992) it could be argued that intelligibility is in fact the most important aspect. Language variations show that two interlocutors can follow different accepted language norms, but are able to communicate effectively and successfully, which teachers may be drawing on when considering corrections.

For the teachers' students, they are assessed in their English through two different routes. The first is the external Cambridge International English Language Testing System (IELTS) which is used to establish a student's level of English according to criteria set by an examining body for academic study (see Appendix B for the marking criteria). Additionally, students must participate in an academic English programme as part of their pathway studies, where students learn academic skills and language. The teachers reported feeling pressured to ensure students attain their targets, and felt they lacked time to do so effectively, consequently the focus became more on learning skills rather than language development. Half of the teachers reported feeling that the lesson time did not really allow for much review of language, especially following errors, and therefore would provide the correction quickly and move on without exploring the reason or explanation, or would not pursue it at all. Sarah states that she uses OEC that is *"quick and easy, and I don't have to think about them if I'm totally honest".* She claims that this is because she feels:

> "*error correction largely gets in the way of what you're trying to achieve in a lesson… because we're so pressured for time in this school. It is different when you've got three hours with a class in a language school".*

In an intensive language course, students may have several hours of English classes per day, compared to the singular fifty minute session at the school Sarah referred to. Sarah went on to say:

> *"we're so pressured for time that I let a lot more errors go here (…) than I have done in my previous teaching career [in a private language school]. And I think that I tend to just employ whatever method pops into my head at the moment that seems responsive to the student that isn't going to disrupt the flow of the lesson too much."*

The sentiment was echoed by the others and in much of the other research (for example, Basturkmen, 2012; Borg, 2003; Farrell and Kun, 2007); communication over correctness, and focusing on the wider perspective. In both the interviews and focus group the teachers compared the approaches they take in their current context of short lessons in contrast to that of working in a private language school. Therefore, the teachers argued, although the need for concise and clear input are imperative for the student's learning, the time allowed to do so was an inhibitor. They felt that the private language school context allowed for a focus on errors in each lesson, enabled revision and review of certain complex or problematic aspects where they felt that the time pressures and skills-based assessments in their current context meant that they were not able to do this. Several of the teachers in the focus group expressed frustration at not being able to explore the arising issues in more detail, if at all, due to the course content and assessment needs, which meant they felt the students were missing out on important input. These differences were, according to the teachers, an important factor in determining how much time is spent on correction, and how much time can be dedicated to language development. Although the teachers all acknowledged a need for a degree of correctness for the assessments, there appeared to be a resolve that even for the speaking exam intelligibility was the key factor in determining the students' success, reflected in the mark schemes (see Appendix A and B). Julia claimed that she would not add more correction into the class unless the students were clearly going to fail assessments as a result of their errors. Enabling students to gain higher grades for attempting higher level language, without necessarily being accurate, is seen as a better strategy than OEC by several of the teachers.

Sarah stated that for her accuracy was not the ultimate goal, claiming that she "*would rather something really interesting than something really accurate*" during the

discussions with her students. She further claims that "*perfection can be overrated*". Whilst there is clearly a need for a degree of accuracy, indeed this is a significant part of their English language tests, for much of the students' future lives the need for accuracy diminishes in favour of ability to share ideas with others (verbally and in writing) in a manner in which it can be interpreted by others. However, teachers would respond to errors in different ways depending on various factors. Tina details some of the considerations when faced with different student cohorts:

> "*If it's a high level [group], and it's more likely to be an accident rather than a repeated error then I wouldn't highlight it at all. I think everybody makes mistakes. (…) It depends how regular it is, it depends on how many students are doing it, it depends on whether it's something they missed or just something they just had an error with. (...) Are they the high level and should know better or is it just a one-off error because they didn't do that yesterday? Is it that they are focusing so much on high level vocabulary that they lost their grammar? Are they focusing on functional language and they've lost their vocabulary? It really does matter what they are trying to focus on at the time."*

Other teachers agreed that their responses depend on a range of factors. When asked what she considers when correcting students, Claire explained the errors she felt are most pressing create issues for understanding meaning:

> *"I think, because of the context we're teaching in I would be more likely to correct say things like word formation errors. Like, I don't know, errors in forming nouns, or adjectives or adverbs. Those kinds of things, just because I know how much the meaning could change if you say the wrong thing. So I'm more interested in preventing any type of miscommunication. Rather than just going, Oh, that's the wrong tense or… you didn't use a relative noun here, or you didn't add a clause here, or you forgot this connective. So it's more like, Oh, that's a different meaning. I think what you meant to say was... And then correct it like that."*

It would seem the corrections are mostly targeted at issues that cause confusion in meaning, which during an interactive assessment such as a discussion could be hugely problematic. Expressing the correct meaning was important to this teacher which, when coupled with the marking criteria, would suggest that the course is designed to test students' communicative competence rather than their language ability more specifically. However, Loewen et al. (2009) found students were most positive and receptive to OEC on academic preparation courses where the correction had a clear purpose in assisting in passing assessments. Having said that, all the research findings presented here and in the CAS demonstrate students would rather be correct than communicative.

Although the students felt correcting selectively was not preferable (Q3), the teachers felt this was the better strategy with some groups due to their current level of ability. As Michelle points out:

> "*I think we [teachers] either consciously or subconsciously recognise that, for some of them [the students] the best that we can give them is English as a functional lingua franca. That they can go into an environment and speak to native speakers and other non-native speakers and be understood. And for some of them we know that's the best we can give them therefore we choose what we correct based on that being best use. For a lot of them their aim is to sound like the Queen. And the two things are so utterly different and maybe we need to, with very low groups, perhaps we need to have that conversation. (…) and you might end up with one or two students who still absolutely insist on you correcting everything then I guess you have to make a judgment on whether you are actually going to do that or not*."

Joanna further implied that teachers assess the students they have and make judgements on the best way forward:

> "*I think also we tend to have the attitude we want to give our students confidence, because I've met so many students that come over and they make errors and stuff, but they come and they say their English is terrible and I just think it's not a score! (…) So when you encounter students that sort of have that, and you know that they have a background where they're constantly being corrected every single step of the way. I think sometimes then we swing completely the other way and say 'no you're doing fine, let's give you the confidence to speak'*".

The teachers seemingly agreed they favour intelligibility over accuracy, nearly all stating that they would refrain from correcting students whilst they were in conversation as they felt this would be harmful to the overall communication task. The students also stated they would rather be corrected after they have finished speaking (Q14 and Q25), which suggests a desire for some communicative focus. Where communication failed and the interlocutors were unable to comprehend each other, the teachers would offer assistance by correcting or reformulating the utterance in order for the conversations to continue. This largely follows the findings of other studies into the teachers' perceptions regarding OEC, for example Hyland and Anan (2006), and James (1998). The rationale for this was the students would be more accepting of the correction in that moment and would adopt the appropriate form. It was also necessary for successful completion of the task. Although Sarah said "*intelligibility is more important*", she acknowledged that view was not necessarily the view of students. Ten students felt correcting only errors affecting communication was 'bad', suggesting that

there is an importance placed on learning from the error and improving, which was indicated in their responses to Q3 and Q8. In contradiction, nine students also stated that they wanted to focus on communication in class and not worry about their errors. The teachers agreed that students looked to the teacher to help in situations of communication breakdown and therefore were generally receptive to the correction. Perhaps then, students are accepting of errors when they are able to communicate effectively and there is no need for an intervention.

Albrechtsen, Hendriksen, and Færch (1980, p.393) claimed the context in which the error occurs influences the intelligibility of the interlanguage (IL), perhaps more so than the language error itself. They went on to state:

> The intelligibility of IL is not a function of relative proximity to the target language but a function of different types of errors in specific textual and situational contexts. In contrast to a number of previous studies, no clear difference was found between the intelligibility of errors in content words as opposed to the intelligibility of all errors in general, phonetic, syntactic, and lexical. (ibid, p. 394)

The contextual nature of the classroom conversations may help the interlocutors to comprehend meaning without the need for full grammar control. With the development of methodology in language teaching towards communication skills, it is therefore understandable that comprehensibility has been prioritised as a language teaching objective. Whether this change is to the detriment of linguistic correctness is still debatable, as there is little data to analyse the different errors across contexts.

The speaking assessments in the teachers' course (a seminar discussion and a presentation in small groups) are marked according to communication capabilities holistically rather than specifically their language accuracy (see Appendix A). This in itself is perhaps evidence of a move away from grammar and lexis precision and a move towards communicative competence. The teachers also expressed a communicative approach to teaching which is designed to facilitate confidence in speaking not correctness. This is not to say that the teachers, or the students, do not value exactitude, but rather that the need for expression is greater than the need for perfection. The teachers felt that the students could succeed against the marking criteria without being linguistically precise. However, as Joanna reflects:

> "*So I think sometimes I do just end up being more concerned if the idea is getting across rather than accuracy. So I think it's [OEC is] something that yeah, I need to remind myself more of how important that it [OEC] is, because I am a stickler with it in the writing*, (…) *[Error correction is] definitely one of those things that I… I've changed my*

> *mind about; it is something I continually have to remind myself of. (...) I think it [OEC] is important, especially as they are getting, you know, any level if they're going to be going to university, for our students, things like that. They need to be able to express themselves well, and clearly. So I think it is more important than I've probably given it credit.*"

When considering a range of exam or assessment criteria, both fluency and correctness are valued (see Appendix A and B) and therefore a degree of focus is required on both of these areas. The decision then comes as to whether these can be worked on simultaneously or whether these need to be addressed separately. From the focus group and interview discussions, as well as much of the discourse from teaching and learning sources (see Chapter 2), the feeling is clear; fluency *or* accuracy. Tasks and activities are designed to focus on one of these aspects, and as Bridget suggests "*if you're doing things that are speaking for fluency, I don't think there's any point in correcting errors".* In order to prepare for exams, the teachers agreed that both fluency and accuracy were important, but in practice fluency was the main aim of many of the classroom activities. Claire suggests that fluency may be coupled with a desire to communicate complex ideas, demonstrate critical thinking, and a drive to participate in debates:

> *"Because of our teaching context, I think now I'm much more interested in the content of their ideas and the content of what they're saying, rather than how well they're saying it".*

Sarah claimed that focusing on the content of the course rather than the accuracy of what they say was preferable, as communicating ideas has higher value than the language they use to express it in the assessments:

> "*I think that's probably why we don't ever correct possibly as much in things such as [the course we teach] or whatever, as, as maybe general English pre-intermediate who are who are working through Cutting Edge [coursebooks] or whatever, because we… that isn't our primary goal. We are thinking of them as academics and future academics. And we are very much interested in the 'what' in many ways more than the 'how'*."

Others agreed, further stating that content is often the initial focus as students become more accustomed to the communicative learning style. However, as Claire goes on to say, classroom interactions and assessment practice are treated differently:

> *"If it's just class interactions like with, with their group or with me, or just generally, I don't over monitor how they're saying things, as long as I'm getting the point. And as long as they are at least effectively trying to push themselves to say something, I'm happy with that."*

On reflection half the teachers in the focus group stated they felt their preference for content over correctness was something they would reconsider given the data collected from the students. The focus group displayed more of a resolve to include more OEC, or at least consider it, than was suggested in the teachers' interviews.

5.4 Responding to errors

5.4.1 Corrective methodology

When asked to consider the different forms of correction outlined by Lyster and Ranta (1997), students were overwhelmingly positive about the correction methods with the exception of Q17 ('The teacher tells me the error and gives me the correct grammar/word/pronunciation') and Q22 ('The teacher asks another student to correct my mistake'). Agreeing with Hattie and Timperley (2007), the students seemingly felt feedback is a powerful influence on language learning. Responses to Q16 ('The teacher gives me the correct grammar/word/pronunciation when I make a mistake') shows that all bar one student feel recasting is a valuable form of correction, which Lasagabaster and Sierra (2005) claimed is often not recognised by the student. When asked about recasting, the focus group largely agreed this was something did more often, but were unsure if it was useful. In the focus group, Michelle disclosed:

> "*I know that I recast probably a bit too much - it's a habit I fall into - and I had a student in a class who was very good at picking that up and pointed it out to me, because I would recast and he would say 'I must say this?' (laugh) it was actually quite useful because it was only when he did that that I appreciated that oh yeah I do use that a bit too much, but for him I could say 'yes that's the right way of saying it' but I thought he's the only one asking me that question, I don't know what the others are getting out of this*."

Despite the students largely believing that recasting is a good method of correction, it remains to be seen whether these students could identify it during a lesson, as Michelle suggested, and whether the reality is different to the perceptions. The research suggests that more overt correction and prompting are more effective (see Ellis, 2007; and Sheen, 2006). The teachers in this study discussed the different methods of correction and, as Bridget postulated:

> *"…to some extent for students to fix errors, they have to probably actively take part in it. But there's only so much a teacher can do if the student's not actively working to put into their memory."*

When the students are engaged in the correction process, Bridget felt that it was more effective, claiming:

> *"there's a point, you can't do everything for them. (…) And you'll tend to find that very actively involved students will fix errors quicker because they're trying, whereas ones that are less… I don't know whether involved is the right word, but the less keen probably will repeat the errors*".

The teachers felt there was a limit to the efficacy of their input, in particular OEC, if the students are not willing to take the correction on board. As Joanna put it:

> "*I think often for error correction, it depends on that context. So I think for a lot of our students, if they're not putting the effort into trying to correct their mistakes, then no they don't improve. And that gets really difficult because as the teacher there's probably only so much you can do in providing those good models."*

This view of deeper cognitive engagement (see Skehan, 1998) has been argued as an important part of the learning process. Without the engagement, Skehan (1998) argued that learning is likely to be reduced, which Bridget here seemed to assume. Less engaging correction methods, such as recasts, are generally considered less effective as they require little or no undertaking by the students (Al-Surmi, 2012; Braidi, 2002; Ellis, Basturkmen and Loewen, 2001; Egi, 2010; Mackey and Philp, 1998; Panova and Lyster, 2002; Sheen, 2006;), which is why Michelle may find a majority of her students are not aware of the OEC she offers. Yet the teachers stated they use it for ease and perhaps habit, which reflects the findings of Lyster and Ranta (1997), and not because they necessarily believe the students' language will improve.

Prompting through questioning (Q18) and allowing students to self correct (Q19) were rated positively by all bar one of the students. Prompting and questioning have long been perceived as the better methods of correcting, according to Ammar and Spada (2006), enabling the student to consider their utterance and make the necessary changes. The student has the opportunity to draw on their own knowledge rather than relying on the teacher to provide it, which results in greater cognitive processing (Yoshida, 2008) and therefore the student is engaged in the correction, as Bridget suggests, and the focus group felt this was more productive. Where the teacher offers more explicit correction (Q17) the student responses were more evenly divided. There were no strongly negative ratings, but five rated it 'bad' and only two rated it as a 'very good' method. It seems that the explicit correction where the teacher states what they said was wrong is not favourable, and where the teacher explains the correct form

without stating overtly the student's utterance was wrong (Q21) is much better, which received only positive ratings. Although they may appear similar in their method and perhaps in the methodology, the subtle difference of stating the student is wrong and providing the correction compared to explaining the error and providing the right form could have a very different impact on the student. Explaining the error explicitly will no doubt draw attention to the error and the correct form, allowing the student to process their own utterance and, for example, the grammar rule being applied. Stating a student is wrong may not result in a favourable response and may result in hindered learning according to the Affective Filter (Krashen, 2003). Nearly all the teachers felt this related to their presumptions of feeling embarrassed and stupid if the error is so overtly identified, and that the students' preference for a clear but softer indication was more in line with their view of the reception of OEC.

In line with the students' responses to Q21 ('The teacher explains why I said something wrong'), in the focus group Julia stated:

> "*We're [teachers are] told [during training] not to tell students that they do something wrong, not to tell students no, it should always be 'oooh kind of… do you wanna try that again?'. We should tell them it's wrong! They should know it's wrong. (…) …there's so much going on in the classroom sometimes it is hard for them to know if it's the idea, the pronunciation, is it grammar, what is it?! I think clear signals help."*

Despite this, Julia was also cautious in advocating explicit statements of error to the students, claiming that, contrary to previous teachers' feelings that the students would be demoralised if they were told directly of their error, students need to build robustness to the feedback and accept it:

> *"They are in a learning environment, where they need to know but they also need to be resilient in terms of having feedback when things are wrong sometimes* ".

Sarah further stated a preference for clarity, as Julia does, to respond to the error with a direct negative statement:

> "*I tend to be very clear like 'nope' (finger wagging). And if they say something wrong I'm like 'no'. That means either I'm going to invite them to correct themselves or I'm going to correct it for them or at least something is about to happen, because I think they know, if they were just sharing an opinion and I disagree with the idea, I wouldn't do that (wags finger) I wouldn't like wave my finger and be like 'you're wrong' (laugh) So I tend to try to signal it before we go into whatever correction method we're about to go into*."

This way of signalling to students that the utterance has an error may seem direct and could be interpreted as confrontational, but as Julia and Sarah both emphasise, this enables the student to notice the correction and be able to understand the language was problematic not the content. This requires the rapport with the student mentioned earlier to enable this playful interaction that overtly identifies the error without affecting the overall learning atmosphere. Joanna added:

> "… *if you've got a relationship in the classroom, where the teacher very explicitly says, 'Okay, this is how correction is going to work', then the student would find it clearer, whereas if that's never done, or the teacher doesn't do it incredibly obviously, then those cues are going to be lost on the student, unless they're really sensitive to it. And they notice that maybe there's a slight change in the teachers posture or whatever*".

The teachers were seemingly aware of the need for students to know an error has been made and they are being corrected, but a conflict in their willingness to do this so overtly. There seemed to be an acknowledgement that the feedback may not always be taken in the spirit in which it is intended. However, Joanna pointed out:

> "*The way that we work here is different to teaching General English or in a language school is that here often our students don't see themselves as language learners, so it's up to the teacher to create that environment where they feel like 'I am still learning the language' rather than just 'I need this to get me through the other side'. So It's a bit different that way as well as*".

From this, we can infer some students may not be expecting error correction for language, in contrast to the findings of Loewen et al. (2009), which further raises the need to establish from the students what their expectations are.

Additionally, Julia mentioned how previous education experiences influence their experience in the UK:

> "*The students also come from a different cultural backgrounds where they're teaching is different, they are told yes or no. They are clearly told if they are right or wrong. It must be really confusing to come to England where everyone is really polite and they are not telling us we're making mistakes."*

These factors are important to the contextualisation of the comments being made. The students are from a range of cultures and as such may have different expectations and experiences of learning than the teachers. This in itself can make teaching more complex. The more cultures the teachers are working with the greater the range of student expectations. Thus, the teachers may be drawing on their previous

interactions with similar cultures and their understanding of the pedagogical norms of the students, but they agreed they may need to reconsider their assumptions based on the questionnaire findings. When asked how OEC makes them feel, one student responded "*If I come in England to learn english it was to have this type of correction*" [sic], which suggests students are looking for the native speaker teachers in the UK to offer something different to the OEC they are used to. Three of the teachers in the focus group felt teachers generally need to reconsider their corrective methods and having found their methodology was not in line with the students in the study.

5.4.2 Timing it right

The students' responses were interesting for Q13 ('Teachers should correct the error as soon as it is made') where nine voted 'sometimes' and Q14 ('Teachers should let me talk and correct my errors when I have finished speaking') for which seven students voted 'often'. Despite the seemingly contradictory statements, teachers felt this was largely what they expected, with none of the students suggesting that corrections should take place at the end of the lesson. Li et al. (2016) found a disconnection with the context or the task downgrades the value of the correction and makes it less effective, particularly for grammar, as the students were more likely to use the corrected forms immediately after. The students here principally felt that the best time was after the activity had been completed (two thirds of respondents). Perhaps this demonstrates that while students want correction, their main focus is actually on communication for the task, which links to Q6 ('I want to practice speaking in class, and not worry about my errors') where nine students voted positively, suggesting that students would rather have opportunities for conversing and collaborating. The responses from Q13 and Q14 are further reiterated in Q25, where students felt correction was best made "*at the end of the activity*", when they have "*finished speaking*" were in equal proportions to those who felt it was best to do it during discussions, thus adding further problems deciding when to correct. Perhaps this is why teachers are selecting the errors to correct into ones that can be dealt with swiftly during conversation and those that need more analysis saved for later in the lesson.

The close proximity of the error and the correction may help make the correction more tangible and salient. Where the error requires more meaningful engagement, interruption may seem even less appropriate if the attention will be detracted from the original task, as suggested by the teachers here. For grammar and lexis, therefore, the correction may be made later, possibly through group or class correction activities where the errors have been noted on the board, rather than going through it individually

during the activity. This allows students to ask questions or clarify understanding as well as having further input for learning. As a practitioner, this feels more similar to re-teaching rather than correction, as there is clearly a significant lack of knowledge and therefore 'correction' feels an inappropriate term. In contradiction though, two thirds of the students also responded to Q23 that writing the corrections on the board and going through them at the end of the lesson was a good method of correction. Perhaps here though, the written element of the correction was what attracted the students to this method, as it enabled them to establish the difference in form more clearly. Research into written correction may provide further explanation on the saliency and usefulness of this particular method, but Bitchener et al. (2005) and Lightbown and Spada (2006) suggested feedback on writing can be equally inconsistent and problematic. Taylor (1986) further raises questions about the contrastive and error analysis that is often applied to written texts, which may well provide additional support for the use of these for OEC. However, he also noted that what may initially present as a tense error in writing may illuminate other issues to build a wider picture of the linguistic capabilities of the student where identifying all the relevant issues in a speech may be too arduous. Nevertheless, I am sceptical of 'written' OEC's benefit as it provides correction on a particular phrase (or even part of one), rather than taking into consideration the wider context and therefore may not provide assistance in producing the correct grammar in similar contexts later. Considering the findings of Skehan (1998) and other cognitive theorists, this makes it difficult to comprehend how the students make sense of the OEC if removed from the conversation.

Joanna claimed "*the teachers' perception is often that they don't want to interrupt the students, so they won't tend to correct them*." One student stated for Q24, correction was welcome, "*except some times may I feel she/he put me off*" [sic], which may mean the correction becomes a distraction from the communication. Only half the students stated that correction should be made whilst the students are speaking, with one suggesting *"teachers should correct errors as soon as they notice them or after I finish my talking (it depends)".* This student did not offer further explanation to clarify on what grounds correction should be made in each of these cases. In part, correction may be necessary to maintain the conversation; alternatively it may become a distraction if interrupting otherwise functioning communication. Pronunciation errors, which may be addressed more easily through briefly modelling and drilling the correction, might be more effective if done at the time of the error, as it requires less focus and engagement on the part of the student to comprehend and practise the correct form. Further to this, pronunciation is generally focused on a specific phonic or morpheme and therefore

could be less complex in terms of cognitive processing and the content of the conversation is not lost and conversation can continue promptly.

5.5 Educating, teaching and learning

5.5.1 Efficacy of corrections and the value placed on it

In these time-pressured circumstances and huge amounts of course content to cover, Sarah considers the efficacy of the correction that they offer:

> *"[I have] genuine questions over the effectiveness of it and whether it's actually is a complete and utter waste of time and I'm not 100% sure".*

This was a feeling echoed by the others in the focus group, who were unsure if their correction efforts were worth it. The distinction between errors and mistakes was clearer here. When discussions developed into debates on the usefulness of correction, the teachers felt that where errors were present, correction was not useful, but where students were making a mistake the correction that involved a prompt to self-correct was more productive. The teachers noted students tend to respond to the correction; acknowledging it and either repeating the corrected statement, or producing an altered statement of their own volition. This is largely consistent with the findings of other studies into perceptions of OEC discussed in Chapter 3.

The teachers suggested, both in their interviews and in the focus group, they may fall into habits of particular types of correction, regardless of personal or professional judgements on its usefulness. One of the difficulties with error correction may be the professional's perception of what correction constitutes. Joanna claims that echoing or parroting is often the correction method used, despite there not necessarily being any indication that there is something erroneous:

> *"I think parroting is one of the things that's really hard not to do. And I know that we all do it. And I watched so many teachers do it. And I think every time I see it, I must stop doing that but for some reason it's just such an easy thing to do. I think we do it with little kids as well, if you're in a conversation you end up, repeating things back. And I think that is one major issue that I think for whatever reason we've all just got that is difficult to shake."*

If the teacher is using this parroting as a form of correction, it becomes clearer why students are less able to identify recasts (as found by Lasagabaster and Sierra, 2005). If this correction method is known not to work due to its lack of clarity, it raises

questions why teachers still do this. This may be the result of observed and learnt behaviour or perhaps of common interactions with children, as suggested by Joanna in her interview. She later proposes that intuition and nature are what make a teacher use a specific method, not the belief that it is effective or that it is valued by the student:

> "*I would say I tried to… I try to vary, but then often you just you come back to that instinct response don't you*?"

Whilst my research is not looking directly at the efficacy of the methods, I am interested in their perceived effectiveness in improving language skills. Each of the teachers recalled being taught, to a greater or lesser extent, that spoken errors should be corrected. As Sarah ponders:

> *"[it's] just whether or not it's actually worth doing… it's just one of those CELTA things isn't it that you're like, Oh, I'm supposed to do this. Because this is our role. And then as you've been teaching for like 10 years, you're like, hang on a minute… just because it was on my CELTA doesn't mean I should be doing it all the time, or is actually worth it."*

This view is shared by many researchers reviewed by Norris and Ortega (2000), Ellis (2007) and also Mackey (2007). There is still some debate as to whether it has any great value, and hence perhaps a reluctance to make corrections and only tackle the utterances that can be quickly corrected or necessitate intervention.

When one combines this with the lack of time reported by teachers for exploration of errors, and the desire not to embarrass the student or make them feel uncomfortable in the class, it becomes an even more relevant consideration as to whether to invest time and effort into it. If teachers are simply doing it because they have been told to do it but have little or no idea as to whether it actually has any value, then it could be supposed that teachers are not inclined to invest in it. Any doubt in the efficacy of the methods, or the process more generally, may result in apathy or lack of deployment, which in turn may lead to frustration from students at the loss of something they perceive to be an important part of the learning process. However, as Tina suggests in her interview, the students may well have other focuses too:

> "*I think sometimes that sometimes they've got such a focus on university. And they've got such an idea in their head that it's essay writing, and reading for essay writing that they haven't quite thought that speaking for seminars will be important, and the fact that understanding of sounds for letters will make a big difference in lectures as well. I think sometimes as they have focused so much on progressing their writing that they see it as a secondary skill."*

Indeed, productive skills, particularly on EAP courses, may well focus on the writing of essays as this is often the method of assessment at university level. The other teachers in the focus group also agreed that writing was often a priority and took much of the feedback on language.

As previously mentioned, Pawlak (2014) felt that OEC was so much a part of language learning but perhaps the expectation of it has outweighed its true worth. If teachers are being trained that this is something that should be a part of the lesson, and their performance is also judged on their application of correction or feedback techniques, it is interesting that teachers feel somewhat inept. Despite this perceived importance and contribution to learning, Sarah states:

> *"But I definitely think in terms of things like lesson plans for observation and inspections I definitely think we give it more weight than it perhaps deserves, and I feel … actually… achieving lesson aims are much more important for me on balance, than picking up on a couple of things."*

This teacher clearly felt that OEC was not something that was an important part of their lesson and time would be better spent on content and skills learning for the impending assessment(s). Nevertheless, Sarah added the corrections in for the purpose of an observation rather than for the benefit of the students. This also raises questions about the efficacy of the correction that is provided during those observations and whether the teacher is using explicit correction techniques, known for eliciting a response from the student, in order to be more obvious. Thus, being seen to correct takes precedence over personal beliefs and supposition.

5.5.2 Training and pedagogical development

When asked about providing better or more training for teachers on error correction, the focus group felt that CPD sessions and observations were where they had learnt most about error correction. According to Julia, learning about the students is important to the success:

> "*there's no best method… And so we just have to kind of equip ourselves with all of the methods. And then whenever we can, whenever we want to, when we need to, being teachers like our job is to kind of read our students and see what they need. And so we have that backup of, of resources that we can use. Depending on the situation*."

When pressed on where these resources come from and how that repertoire of methods is learnt, the group felt that training had provided only a sample of OEC methods, focusing mainly on the 'polite' versions of recasting or questioning, but other teachers had provided them with the knowledge they have now. Therefore, the teachers must have become exposed to alternative methods from other sources. Sarah claimed that her learning had been from the teaching qualifications she had gained:

> *"[I learned about OEC] from the DELTA theoretical reading, presenting the methods and showing what works or doesn't and being like 'ok, I'll try that'. And through observation as well. As [Michelle was] saying, you've been observed by a student in that case*."

She went on to say:

> "*being filmed or recorded teaching and then watching it and suddenly realising there are so many things I was saying and how I was saying it, and how I was correcting students and was thinking 'oh dear! I should stop doing that!' Or 'I should do more of that!' Or 'I thought I corrected a lot, but actually I only corrected four times in an hour', which is not a lot*."

This reflective practice is often encouraged in teaching, but may not be specifically directed at a particular pedagogical point such as OEC. With a constantly changing student cohort, EFL teachers may become more adaptable, reflecting on their previous experiences to guide them through the new ones. Joanna reflects on her experimental approach and her ability to read the group in order to adjust the pedagogical style:

> "*It's hard though. (…) you feel like you're doing something but it's not making a difference I could be standing there doing something completely different and have the same result. I think it then just depends on the class. And so trusting a bit of that instinct that has come from the knowledge so you've read the stuff, you've seen the stuff and you've tried it out and then it's just adapting to the class and hoping for the best*".

This aspect of reflection seems to be the important point. It is gauging the students in the room at the time, recognising their attitudes and acting accordingly and layering these observations to create new understandings. This expectation that this is just a 'part of the job', a thing that teachers just 'do' was discussed nonchalantly by the teachers in the focus group, accepting that the decisions made in the classroom are as a direct consequence of the teacher's assessment of the individuals. This suggests that the teachers are calling on their accumulated knowledge to make these assessments and judgements, also demonstrating the importance of reflective working

practices. In order to improve OEC for the future with each student cohort, teachers need to actively seek the information they need to meet the needs of the students in the moment.

5.6 Brief reflections

Whilst it is clear the findings here are largely in line with the current research, demonstrating a more positive attitude towards OEC from students though more scepticism from teachers, where these findings differ is the level of adapting the teachers suggest is necessary. The teachers repeatedly state the OEC offered is dependent on the students, the activity, the focus of the course, the complexity of the inaccuracy, and consideration of whether it is an error or a mistake, as well as factoring in time and assessment requirements. These considerations show how much thought is required for deployment of OEC. The teachers were very much focused on the students and their needs in all the conversations, which suggested the teachers were using a student-centred approach as well as a degree of constructivism. The teachers have used their previous knowledge and experiences to guide them in responding to their students. The students show the mix of views which adds to the complexity of OEC as there is limited consistency in their responses, other than a generally positive view of the impact and importance of OEC. The students are also clearly drawing on their previous experiences to express their preferences and feelings towards OEC, with some of these experiences having been negative. The area where students and teachers agree is that it should be done with consideration. With students resolute on having lots of correction, and not selectively, from the belief it will improve their language development, there is a possibility for tension between teachers and students on this subject. If teachers are correcting solely the errors that cause communication failure then students may feel disillusioned and frustrated. Rather than teachers making a judgement, or just doing what the students want, there may be a degree of learner expectations to manage, and possibly also teacher attitudes to change. A balance between the two views may be preferable, but conceivably a discussion could take place and compromises made that both parties feel satisfied with.

6. Conclusions - perceptions of OEC and the impact on ELT

This concluding chapter brings together the discussions in Chapters 2 and 3 from the current research and the findings explored in Chapter 5. The data shows how the students and teachers have developed different views of oral error correction (OEC) and how they perceive it in the English classroom. This section will aim to tentatively answer the principal research question:

> To what extent are there tensions and commonalities between the perceptions of oral error correction (OEC) of teachers and students, and how does this impact ELT?

6.1 Research conclusions

6.1.1 Key findings and summary

The teachers in this study felt that students were perhaps unrealistic about how significant OEC is in the learning process. The teachers questioned the efficacy of OEC and its value, particularly in their own context where time was limited and therefore OEC was not a top priority. Although half of the teachers seemed to engage in it more, often pushing the students to modify their output, to 'upgrade' their language to more suitable academic phrasing or language indicative of a higher level learner, on the whole the teachers were more interested in fluency and confidence in speaking than correctness. This follows Vygotsky's (1978) theory of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and Krashen's (1982) input hypothesis and discussions of *i+1* to enable development of language not through correction, but through feedback more generally. One teacher felt more errors could be corrected than just the ones that cause difficulty through creating a culture of challenging what the students say on a regular basis. By encouraging students to upgrade their language students are challenged on a regular basis and therefore correction forms a part of that process. Teachers felt that building confidence for many of the students was a priority due to their reticence and/or lack of verbal interaction in their previous teaching environments and thus a culture of feedback may assist in this. Having said that, more than half the teachers said they do not provide much correction in the class so as not to cause

undue embarrassment or reticence, and therefore building the confidence of the teachers to do OEC is perhaps the real issue here.

Several of the teachers reported using correction for the repair of communication breakdowns or at least to assist in comprehension by other students. The teachers suggested a variety of methods of correction, which were dependent on the error and the students, but were seemingly designed to avoid overtly telling the student they are wrong to avoid humiliating them. Content and intelligibility of the communication in these classes seemed to outweigh absolute correctness, which is consistent with Han and Kim's (2008) findings. In this particular context, the teachers are working towards academic English skills, most notably essay writing skills. The emphasis on writing is perhaps a reason why teachers are less concerned with OEC as much of the language may be corrected through the students' writing and so speaking practice was more focused on production and fluency. In seminar discussions students share ideas and express opinions, and thus a need for intelligibility is more appealing than correctness, which is reflected in the marking criteria. The short lessons and limited contact time compared to intensive language school mean that most of the teachers felt that input on skills, and particularly writing, were prioritised.

It could therefore be concluded that the decisions and thus perceptions of OEC for the teachers in this study are partly driven by the contextual restraints and expectations. The teachers argued that in many cases the students would be interacting with other non-native speakers of English in their future lives and that communication, however eloquent, was the purpose of learning the language. As Kachru (1992) argued, there are deviations from the inner circle native speakers which still enable effective communication, which the teachers appeared to agree with. Furthermore, Richardson (1997, 2003) claims in meaning orientated classes, such as those described by the teachers, social contexts allow language to develop through interaction, which was often the focus of the teachers' classes, enabling task-based learning and collaboration. It could be argued then that the 'correction' offered is more focused on upgrading the language to more suitable forms for academic study, or providing scaffolding for comprehension. The question still remains of how much correction is actually given to students during classes and how much is contributing to long term language learning. The teachers appear to feel it is important to the students and to those who are assessing their teaching, but are unsure of the actual impact on language learning from the offered. A consensus was made that teachers need more information about OEC and better training in it.

The students in this study claimed that OEC was important to them and it had a tangible effect on their ability to improve. By 'knowing' their errors they can prevent the same from happening in the future and learn the correct forms to use. The students felt that OEC was needed and that provided it was done in a timely manner in relation to the activity, they were appreciative of the correction. The students felt that the correction should be given at the end of the activity, so as to enable fluency which was overall favoured by teachers, but with correction at a time where they are able to engage. In general, the students favoured more explicit or overt correction, where the teacher clearly signals that something is not correct in the utterance, however this does not mean that the teacher should tell them they are wrong. As Russell (2009) found, the students are sensitive to tone and demeanour during OEC, which was specifically mentioned by a couple of the students. Either by questioning or prompting, the students felt teachers should indicate that something is not 'correct', and unanimously students felt an explanation of the error/correction was 'good'. This clear message to the students then enables them to self-correct, something they felt was useful, or where the teacher provides them with the appropriate form. Students were divided on whether the error should be shared with the class, but 10 of the 13 students felt teachers should not only correct errors causing communication breakdown, with eight students saying teachers should correct all errors. Peer correction was ranked as 'bad' by nine of the students. The students were mostly positive of OEC and felt that errors should be corrected, in particular grammar and pronunciation. Regardless of the students' L1 or educational background, there is clear evidence students feel the role of the teacher is to provide OEC and language learning opportunities.

It is clear from the discussions with the teachers that they are drawing on their experiences to assist in their understanding of their current context. For some this included their experience of learning a language which may be a reflection of how they were taught or how they would like to be taught, but nevertheless is influenced by their own learning activities. This was particularly prevalent in one teachers' response. Further to this, teachers are using past experiences of success and failure of activities and approaches to deliver strategies to the current student cohort. This is often the primary source of beliefs regarding teaching (Richards and Lockhart, 1994), along with established practices from their institution or field. This tacit knowledge, acquired over time and a variety of contexts, can be invaluable in creating the intuitive responses to students. Each teacher expressed this intuition, an ability to assess the room and adapt accordingly. Although it is possible teachers maintain their beliefs and attitudes from the start of their career, with interactions with so many different student cohorts

and experiences of different contexts I find it hard to believe this of the teachers here. Their discussions demonstrate the constructivist view of teacher education; building on their understandings drawn from each situation and student group (Richardson, 1997, 2003). As Kolb (1984) suggested, ideas and concepts are not fixed, but are formed and re-formed through experiences and are in continuous modification. The extent to which their background modifies their actions and beliefs is unclear, and perhaps not quantifiable, but that does not detract from the fact that there is scope for the teachers to slowly develop their teaching which further demonstrates the constructivist nature of learning and knowledge creation. This is not to say that they are ineffective or 'doing it wrong', merely that there may be alternative ways depending on their students and the specific lesson. The teachers are the most suitable person to make these decisions based on their tacit and explicit knowledge of teaching, learning and the students.

From the participant teachers it was also evident that their own personalities drive their actions. As one teacher points out, she was previously involved in the performing arts and she describes how she believes each student has a 'part to play' in the class, actively encouraging the students to ask and answer the questions rather than relying on her for the information. This she states is because she is "*very aware in [her] mind that most learning comes from student to student, rather and teacher to students*". She also acknowledged that her own education has led her to believe that despite their relative lack of life experience (due to age), her students' shared knowledge is "*always going to be better than [her] individual knowledge. (…) The sheer number of students in the room will generate more worldwide knowledge than [she] could ever give from [her] UK perspective*". This profound belief that the collective knowledge and shared understanding is a way of boosting student confidence and allowing students to explore their role in the class is central to her teaching philosophy. The other teachers also seemed to feel this way. The communicative classroom was where old and new knowledge come together, for both the teacher and the student. It is interesting that the diverse backgrounds of the teachers clearly influence how they work and teach, supporting Richards and Lockhart's (1994) and Borg's (2015) findings, making the teaching styles and beliefs so varied amongst teachers in the same context. The fact that contextually they are the same but individually very different demonstrates the point that constructivist teaching is in action. I firmly believe the varied views of the students and teachers provide a unique insight into OEC in a complex and ever-changing context.

6.1.2 Tensions and impacts

Identifying whether something is an 'error' or a 'mistake' remains an issue in the classroom. Where a true 'error' has occurred the student is in need of teaching rather than correcting. Lightbown and Spada (2006) believed repetition and/or recurring exposure through teaching is needed for true adoption of the correct form and therefore reactive OEC is ineffective in long term language change. Yamamoto (2003) found OEC to be largely ineffective without clear indicators of the error and target form and without further input. Cook (2008) further claimed training learners to improve their strategies and raising teachers' awareness of learning styles may result in improved acquisition through maximised input, which may be better done through re-teaching. Where there is a need for metalinguistic feedback or explanation of the correction, which may distract from the task, teachers could prepare a section of a later lesson to cover the point in more detail with examples, explanations and practice activities. Alternatively the teacher can simply provide the corrected version of the statement with no explanation or clarification, in order for the conversation to continue successfully. Although this may not seem to be correction per se, it is nevertheless highlighting the failing of the utterance. The student is not required to acknowledge the correction and thus can continue with the task in hand. This option would perhaps be preferable where the communication between students has broken down and the need for correction is less important than the need for meaningful exchanges. Rather than providing lengthy correction where the student has made an 'error', teachers could focus on providing prompting for moments when the students have misapplication of the target language. By focusing on the language that is within the student's already acquired usage, but where perhaps the student has misused it, it would be more productive as the teacher is merely stimulating the memory of the student rather than having to provide new input. Clarification, explanation or even example may not be required. This would mean that the flow of conversation is not lost and the content of the discussion remains the focus. Students therefore obtain the learning they need as well as the correction they desire in these circumstances, and teachers can create a more productive learning environment.

As Sheen (2010a, 2010b) and Truscott (1999) acknowledged, there are many factors to consider when providing OEC, including the individual, the 'error', the activity and the timing, making it a highly complex decision making process. Whilst there is some commonality between the teachers and students, the choices and perceptions of the teachers seem to overrule the feelings of the students and thus may cause tension when either side is unsatisfied with the other. Teachers cited time constraints and the

curriculum (supporting Mori, 2011), assessments, student motivation, and classroom management approaches (supporting Phipps and Borg, 2009) as influential factors in deciding how to respond to errors. However, the teacher's own philosophy was cited by Farrell and Kun (2007) and supported by Mori (2011) as the most significant influence, and is apparent here. The teachers agreed that they make a judgement about what, when and why to correct, and use the method(s) they feel is best at the time. For a couple of the teachers, and myself, there was some serious scepticism in the benefits of OEC, which is clearly in contrast to the students' views.

In the interviews and focus group I found OEC was driven by the teachers' awareness of students' personalities, culture, language, and learning, all of which are also dependent on their context and the perceived need for OEC. According to Bourdieu (1991), the teacher's thoughts, actions and feelings are derived from their experiences, culture and socialisation and are undeniable and unavoidable, which I would suggest is evident here. These factors direct teachers towards actions and reactions using assumptions and beliefs about their students and educational context, which was embedded in the conversations I had with the teachers throughout this study. This constructivist principle of layering these influences to form new opinions and perceptions was evident in the discussions with the teachers, and although the experiences are varied, this still enables a considered and cautious approach to OEC that has the student at the centre of that decision. A firm belief that students need to have a positive learning experience was a repeated and significant theme, despite the students having a far more positive approach to OEC overall.

With more implicit OEC which may go unnoticed or be unclear when OEC is used, students are likely to feel either an elevated sense of correctness which may have a detrimental effect on their assessments or students may feel that teachers are not doing their job and they are not getting the feedback they need to develop. As students are paying customers it may create a damaging dynamic if the students do not feel they are getting value for money. Adult learners may have an increased awareness of how they like to learn and therefore teachers of these students may find it beneficial to discuss correction with them before commencing the course. Rather than teachers continuing to use methods they perceive to be 'best', they could negotiate with students to come to a more harmonious understanding. In doing so, students can feel satisfied that the teacher will correct errors in a manner that befits their perceptions and teachers have communicated to students their rationale and intentions. By using explicit correction methods of questioning or elicitation, noticing is increased and the current literature suggests students are more likely to engage in the

correction process thus acknowledging the input opportunity. Not only does a more explicit correction style enable noticing, the cognition research by those such as Skehan (1998) also shows an increased likelihood of longer term uptake as a result of the greater cognitive processing, which is the desired aim of OEC. As students are in favour of the explicit correction methods outlined by Lyster and Ranta (1997), adjusting our OEC may have more than one benefit. This 'ideal' situation makes an obvious connection between the perceptions of teachers and students in response to the literature and findings presented here. An open and honest conversation may well provide the necessary information to further develop as teachers and to support learners.

Furthermore, where students place significant emphasis on being 'correct' where teachers emphasise fluency and communicative competence, tensions may further arise. As can be seen from the findings and analysis, the teachers' more lenient attitude towards errors and thus may give rise to tensions with students as they feel they are being defrauded of their learning opportunities. Failure to offer correction when a student is speaking may result in a feeling of delayed embarrassment when a student realises they have made an error in a situation where they feel they are being judged on their correctness, for example in an assessment, interview or work situation. Students may feel that offering correction and being more assertive on being correct rather than fluent may negate or mitigate these circumstances and therefore avoid fossilisation of errors. However, much of the current research outlined in Chapter 2 suggested the methods used by many teachers have little or no long term impact on the interlanguage to the students (Roothooft, 2014), and thus teachers focus on communicative competence instead. Successful communication, as the teachers advocated, is not dependent on the correctness of the language, but rather the content of the idea. Ensuring that students understand the need for communication skills not just accuracy in language may help clarify the rationale for selective OEC and a focus on fluency. A clearer understanding of the reality of ELF or the different variations of English could help both teachers and students work towards a suitable target, especially given the multilingual learner groups with the UK context.

The issues relating to what is 'correct' will remain part of the discussion. There is no definitive 'correct' English according to the literature. The number of speakers of English is continually rising, not only as native speakers across the world, but more significantly as a second or foreign language. As the global Lingua Franca, English is continually adapting and updating, for example the Oxford English Dictionary adds new words coined each year and allows words to be deleted as they are discontinued from

current vernacular. Combine this with the various dialects from English-speaking countries and variations from countries where English is a recognised language, but where other languages are often used in daily communications, it creates a wide variety of 'correct' English. Therefore perhaps teaching should be moving away from the need for 'correctness', but embrace the multilingual plurality of English in the current global environment, as apparent in the teachers' discussion on intelligibility. This would also require a professional and pedagogical shift away from a native speaker bias, but towards a more communicative approach taking into account the ever moving target language. The socio-cultural purpose of learning a language should not be underestimated (Donato, 2000)., and thus the training and CPD for teachers should embrace ELF and prepare students for the very real possibility of using English only with other non-native speakers, as they do in the UK multilingual classes. If teachers prepare students to be Lingua Franca users the focus moves away from a 'correct' form of spoken language and more towards a pedagogical framework that represents the modern context of pragmatic competencies and variation tolerances. Communication of this change and the rationale for it with current and future students is imperative to maintaining a working and productive learning environment where the teachers and students accept that 'correct' is subjective and communicative competence is key.

6.2 Methodological conclusions

The current research is wide-ranging, and yet still raises pedagogical and practical questions. Personally and professionally this research has provided a useful education through exploring the current literature, and showed how little research there is into my own context and the issues relating to multilingual cohorts and assessment-focused courses. Whilst I can acknowledge my own constructed and developed understanding of my classes, it was interesting to learn the journeys of other teachers and where and how they have learnt about teaching. The teachers all shared a constructivist approach to learning, whether knowingly or not and to varying degrees, which enabled them to adapt and modify their classes to the students, context and courses they are teaching at any one time. It was also useful to enable the sharing of this acquired knowledge and understanding through interviews and focus group discussions to expand that knowledge further. The aspect of participatory research can be problematic. Drawing on Grant, Nelson and Mitchell (2008), I see challenges and the criticisms of participatory research, but I felt it was the most effective way to challenge the current thinking, and answer my research questions.

By encouraging teachers to reflect on their practice and feel a sense of ownership of their beliefs, attitudes and action, they can begin to understand how these are received and perceived by the students and how these affect their experience of learning English with them. Furthermore, by discussing the views of the students with the teachers, we were able to gain greater insight into their understanding of the classroom, which not only shows different perspectives between the teachers and students, but also between themselves. This reflective aspect enabled one teacher to note her overuse of recasting in her corrections, and another teacher to consider that maybe she does not do enough correction to appease the students' desires. Follow up research may reveal that these teachers have modified their actions in the classroom or at least maintained a consciousness of the OEC they are offering. This is not to imply the teachers are in any way 'wrong', and no suggestion of a 'best method' has been made, merely that I am intrigued as to whether interactions with research can further add to the learning of the participants.

The quotes presented in the Chapter 5 have been used to present the voices of the participants as they discuss their experiences and the issues surrounding OEC. This is to demonstrate their ideas as experts in their own right, with valid and valued opinions. It was important to me to maintain their individual voices and not to allow my interpretations to overshadow them. I felt the interviews were less questioning and more a conversation where both of us were describing our experiences and this helped me to consider my own perspectives. The focus group equally offered the opportunity for me to explore my own thoughts and feelings and discuss those of others in more detail. This reflective process as a researcher-practitioner is important, not only for the research findings, but also for me professionally as I consider my pedagogical approach and beliefs. I believe it is important to acknowledge the years of research have undoubtedly changed my view, not least in highlighting my own methods of correction, and how I have developed as a teacher. It is clear to me that the focus group was an important learning opportunity for me and the teachers.

The nature of semi-structured interviews meant teachers had an opportunity to explore the ideas that were relevant to them and enable engagement with the various sub-issues relating to OEC. These proved to be very useful and interesting in developing the research project, as the teachers shared their experiences and practices which, although were similar in many regards, their nuanced diversity as well as their opposition was of particular interest to me. These formed the basis of discussion in the focus group to help me understand how these views develop and what influences them. The openness of the teachers to explore their own ideas and to listen to those of

others was invaluable in developing a deeper understanding of their perceptions of the students and classes they teach. The focus group was an important part of the process of data collection and analysis as it enabled a wider perspective to be presented in Chapter 5, rather than solely that of the researcher. By being part of the conversation rather than simply an observer, it also enabled me to reflect on my own practices, which as a researcher-practitioner was one of the key elements of choosing a participatory research model, as outlined in Chapter 4. In terms of my researcher position and impact on the study, it is difficult to determine to what extent I affected the responses, but the interviews and focus group felt free and sincere. The discussions were designed to be conversational between peers and to use this exchange of ideas to produce a co-constructed and developed understanding of OEC. The teachers provided a rich and interesting dataset, which shows the value of these participants on this subject matter.

The questionnaires from students provided some interesting and worthwhile additional data to the existing research findings outlined in Chapter 3. Whilst I would have liked to gain more student participants, I feel the sample size and the mix of students provides a useful picture of students' perceptions. I was careful not to identify the students by the L1 or nationality throughout as I feel other studies have focused on mono-cultural groups previously and I wanted to represent the students as a collective, to demonstrate the similarities, as well as identify specific individual differences, as outlined in Chapter 4. The open questions provided a more detailed look at the way students feel about OEC, which coupled with the rankings offer comparative findings to those studies outlined in Chapter 3. I would have liked to have been able to explore the thoughts and feelings with students in more detail using a focus group, but due to various time constraints and limitations, this was not feasible, but offers opportunities for further exploration in other studies. Nevertheless, the open questions provided an opportunity for the students to have a voice, which provided interesting and powerful quotes for Chapter 5 as well as points for reflection in the focus group. Chapter 5 shows a strong teacher voice throughout, but the analysis begins with the topic of student-centred learning and teaching as I wanted it to be clear that the teachers are not dismissive of the students' feeling towards OEC, but are very much considering them, perhaps a misinterpretation of them, but nevertheless with a view to creating a productive, safe and stress-free learning environment.

A small scale study such as this will have limitations, but the interviews and focus group bring a depth of understanding that help mitigate some of these. The intention, as discussed in Chapter 4, was for readers within ELT to transfer some of the

findings to their own context, rather than claiming generalisability for all ELT settings. This is a result of participatory research coupled with the constructivist approach taken, which highlights the individuality of experiences and knowledge through the multiple voices within the research. Another study would present different findings due to the context and the participants and the plurality of the truth within the findings. A similar study would need to consider the use of the student questionnaire rather than dialogue in ensuring a student voice and may consider increasing the number of student participants for a wider representation. In addition, another study may re-evaluate the nature of the researcher-practitioner positionality in that study and whether the research would prefer to be more removed from the dialogues and provide their own views separately. However, this thesis presents a new approach and some new perspectives to OEC as a result of the methods, context and participants.

6.3 Potential for further research

To further the findings of this study and that of the current research, I am curious to explore to what extent the students' views are driven by their educational culture. I am interested how their views are related to their general educational norms and the teaching practices of their home country or whether these views are specific to their individual learning experiences. By understanding more about the way in which teaching is delivered in other countries and how teacher training differs globally, it may help to understand how OEC is used in students' early learning. Additionally, this may help to understand how the students may feel later in their learning journey, particularly if joining a UK-based multilingual learning environment where the teaching and learning style is in contrast to their experiences in their country. It will also enable a comparison of the educational experiences of the students, which can also help to identify common areas that may assist teachers in developing their teaching techniques. Having said that, teachers need to remain mindful of the individual and not attach cultural stereotypes or assumptions to student cohorts, and learn more of the students' individual experiences.

If research into students' perceptions of OEC can be continued then the body of information can offer opportunities for pedagogy to develop. This would have ramifications on not only the initial teacher training courses, but also on the continuing professional development across the field. The knowledge I have gained from researching OEC has changed the way that I approach correction and changed the

way I think about language learning and the role of the teacher. Further research into the issues raised in Chapter 5, including intelligibility and the role of English as a lingua franca, assessments and the need for 'correct' English, as well as the concept of 'correctness', may provide useful further understandings of OEC in the modern teaching world. By understanding these better, we can learn to serve our students better.

6.4 Contribution to the field

The study sought to provide the voices of experienced teachers working in multilingual contexts in a UK setting to add to the multitude of monolingual studies that currently exist. The multi-national contributions from the students also presented here is an important confirmation of the perceptions presented in the current research, but with a collective voice as students of English across nationalities and languages. According to the statistics from English UK (2020, p.7) there were 508,614 overseas students registered to study English at one of their member centres in 2019, with adult learners staying for an average of approximately five weeks. Their data also demonstrates a wealth of different nationalities coming to the UK to study, which English UK (2018, p.8) suggested required over 11,000 teaching staff in their member organisations alone. With this depth in variety of language and culture coupled with the limited contact time with the students, this can make for a very challenging teaching environment. With this in mind, this research will be of interest for those working in a similar context and those teachers with mixed students cohorts.

In addition to the contextualised nature of this research, it has been designed with a constructivist framework and participatory approach. Where other studies have provided an interesting set of results from questionnaires, interviews and focus groups, few studies have combined these data collection methods and fewer still have used a focus group to assist in the discussion and analysis of data to explore the issues further. Much of the research centres on an interpretation of the data by the researcher and therefore it is dominated by their own suppositions, presumptions and interpretations of the information they have collected. Whilst this is a standard and valid form of data analysis, I wanted to avoid having my own view overshadow those of others. I have a varied and wide ranging teaching experience, all of which have no doubt influenced my interpretations. By combining my own experiences and understanding with those of others, I can add a layer of additional interpretation on to the data. I am able to provide further insight through exploration and discussion which

other studies have not been able to do. This methodological approach makes this study of greater value in the discussions relating to OEC and ELT. The findings consolidate the research of others whilst adding a new way of thinking and doing in the research of OEC.

The teachers' perceptions reinforce the findings of Borg (2003, 2015) that teachers based their decisions and actions on previous experiences and these are therefore an important factor to reflect on and should prompt practitioners to consider the teaching techniques they use. For the teachers who felt correction was important, their levels of OEC were reportedly higher than those who were sceptical. The teachers who felt it was expected of them, they did it begrudgingly and perhaps only when they were being observed. For others, it was something that became a reactive necessity only when communication failed or understanding was lost and therefore it rarely became part of their teaching. Despite this, Pawlak (2014, p.85) claimed:

> error correction is so deeply ingrained in language education and so much a fact of life for teachers and learners, that the prospect of abandoning it altogether is neither realistic nor feasible.

Whilst cancelling all OEC is not likely to be favourable to students, I doubt also it would be well received by teachers as it seems so embedded in our teaching methodology. However, understanding how OEC works (or not) and reassessing the way we do it and for what language we do it, according to this research study, is the way forward.

Whilst other studies have concluded OEC is a significant part of the learning process, I argue it is not. With complex linguistic points and taking the definition of 'error' to mean a lack of knowledge, it seems plausible OEC is unlikely to provide the desired outcomes, as suggested by the research in Chapter 2. As a learning tool, the teachers and current research suggested OEC has limited impact on long term language development. Teachers may find more benefit in increasing the revision and repetition of language learning to ensure the students have the necessary input and controlled practice to grasp the points more clearly, which they can then apply to tasks where functionality not accuracy is the focus. In particular, as the research suggests, complex language points (for example grammar or pragmatics) and true 'errors' require teaching rather than correction for the point to become 'learnt'. This is not to say that the way teaching is conducted needs to radically change, merely that the presence of increased language input and opportunities for clarification would enable students to learn the language point more effectively than through OEC. Teachers can build language

points into their lessons with clear learning objectives and therefore remove the expectation to do OEC to avoid detracting from the fluency activities.

However, pronunciation, due to its discrete nature, can be learnt through OEC effectively. This can be relatively quick and easy to model and practise during a task without metalinguistic feedback or explanation. Much like recasting, pronunciation correction requires limited cognitive processing. Where students are making 'mistakes', i.e. misusing a language point, this can also be reacted to with questions or elicitation, as outlined by Lyster and Ranta (1997), to prompt the student to recall the target language and self-correct. This requires little or no detraction from the task, allows students to engage in the OEC, and increases their memory of the error, as argued in the research reviewed in Chapters 2 and 3. This type of response can be reserved for the specific target language of the lesson or the functional language for the particular task. The OEC is thus clearly associated with the learning objectives for the lesson. In doing selective feedback and prompted self-correction, the research suggests students will engage in the process, recall their learning and it will reduce the possibility of negative reactions from over-correction or continued confusion.

As found in this and in other studies, the tension between teachers' and students' perceptions of OEC, based on misunderstandings of efficacy, psychological effects and origins of errors, have impacted the teaching and learning environment. Whilst there is significant difficulty in getting the balance right for both sides, OEC should not be allowed to cause hostility or frustration between learners and teachers. Where other studies suggest introducing more explicit correction, I feel my findings expose other considerations. From my findings and the growth in my own understanding and altered perspective, I argue there is still a place for OEC in SLA, but that the research highlights the complex considerations for the teachers, and the difficulties in addressing the errors in the language classroom. I have therefore considered changing the way that I approach OEC as a result of this research, and will further explore OEC in my classroom to continue my understanding. I offer these ideas as possible outcomes for myself as a result of this study, and they are not meant as a 'solution' for all but perhaps a suggested starting point for other teachers.

Following the findings of this study, teachers may engage in conversation with their students about OEC and contemplate their own beliefs and values regarding correction and 'correct' English. Having reflected on my own and others' opinions on this matter, I suggest that by reducing the importance of OEC by reserving it for pronunciation and the specific target language of a single lesson, I believe the OEC becomes more salient. Coupled with more explicit methods of correction incorporating questioning or

prompting, the students may have increased longer term recall of the language point. The research presented here implies that in capturing the 'errors' made by students and revisiting these through dedicated revision activities, students can gain more input which is what is really needed for uptake to occur. By treating errors as new language, the students and teachers may feel they are able to gain a better long term learning outcome. In incorporating these suggestions it is hoped that teachers and students feel they are able to benefit from the classroom interactions and the tensions between teachers' and students' perceptions are reduced.

6.5 Reflections as a researcher-practitioner

Having drawn on Dunne et al. (2005) and Somehk and Lewin (2011) as a place to start my journey, I still feel uneasy about my place as a researcher. I was interested in some of the concepts of research put forward by Dadds and Hart (2001) as they explored some of the ways in which research can be carried out and in some of the creative methods used by practitioner-researchers. I was intrigued by the findings of other studies, but felt I wanted to take these ideas and 'do something different'. This research project has been challenging. Not least the time it takes to complete and the continued motivation required to keep going, but the actual process of completing the tasks required was emotionally and mentally draining at times. The difficulties in securing participants made the project halt and it was very difficult not to let this become the end of the road. I was clear on my rationale for the study and although I had to make compromises in the research methods, I was consistently certain on my view of how teaching and learning occurs. It is evident that under the circumstances this project was completed in the best way possible, but I am disappointed the planned action research study became unfeasible. However, I feel satisfied that I have been able to achieve the outcomes I intended and have been able to provide a new and interesting insight into ELT and OEC research.

The process of completing this research project has enabled opportunities to consider my own perception of OEC and ELT more generally. At the start of the research process I embraced my lack of knowledge on OEC and pledged to reflect on my teaching in order to understand my own perceptions before embarking on finding the perceptions of others. I have frequently considered my own methods and timing, which has had a corresponding influence on my teaching practice. I make the corrections more explicit and note the students' responses more consciously. My views on OEC have altered following clarification of efficacy and an enhanced understanding of SLA.

I notice I focus on correcting pronunciation more readily and deal with grammar and vocabulary errors through textual input and controlled practice to make it more tangible and allow for more processing time. In terms of a practical impact, I feel my teaching practice and my students' learning have improved as a result of the research I have conducted.

Teaching practice will be continually changing as new theories and understandings emerge and as learners are constantly influencing the actions and assumptions of teachers. I pledge to continue learning and reading about OEC, to engage in discussions about language learning and to share my learning with others. As previously discussed, I believe that by sharing our experiences as teachers and the experiences of our learners we can understand more and become better educators. Therefore, I intend to continue my professional development and present my findings at conferences and in papers for other teachers to understand this better too. I will also make more time for 'tiny talks' (Zoshak, 2016) to capture the nuggets of information that may prove to be gold from colleagues and those in the field. The focus group shows how a short interaction between professionals can provide some interesting and contrasting views and therefore I hope to engage in more group discussions on ELT with other professionals in order to continue these kinds of learning opportunities. Doing this research has demonstrated my need for regular exchanges of ideas as part of CPD.

I believe that the accumulation of formal and informal training, teaching experiences, conversations with teachers and students, observations of lessons, and a multitude of other information shape the way we view our field. I have been reassured that other teachers seem to feel the same; their years of teaching have also provided learning through their observations and experiences. Their interpretations may differ, but I have never felt that they would or should be identical. I find it interesting that student cohorts can respond differently to different teachers and this can therefore diversely shape the way that teachers feel about their students and the way in which they teach. I would like to look into this more as part of an action research study to see how student cohorts change, or not, the teachers' pedagogical understandings and actions, but that can be left for another day.

Appendices

Appendix A: Example marking criteria for in-house speaking exams

Appendix B: Official Cambridge IELTS speaking exam band descriptors

Appendix C: Interview questions for teachers (prompts)

Appendix D: Student questionnaires

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Appendix F: Information sheet - school

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Appendix J: Consent form - teacher

Appendix K: Questionnaire responses

Appendix L: Themes from interviews with teachers

Appendix A

In-house speaking exam - Marking Criteria

Student:	**Class:**	**Date:**	**Assessor:**	**Overall Percentage:**	**CEFR Level:**

Level	**Contribution and Interaction** *a) Sustaining and supporting an argument* *b) Facilitating collaborative interaction*	**Mark**	**Language Content** *a) Range* *b) Accuracy*	**Mark**	**Language Production** *a) Fluency* *b) Coherence*	**Mark**	**Language Articulation** *a) Pronunciation* *b) Stress and intonation*	**Mark**
10 **C2** IELTS 8.5 – 9.0 ***90 - 100%***	a) Can argue a case on a complex issue, formulating points precisely, employing emphasis effectively and supporting all points with relevant evidence and / or examples. (I2) b) Can link contributions skilfully to those of other speakers, widen the scope of the interaction and help steer it towards an outcome. (C)		a) Exploits a comprehensive and reliable mastery of a very wide range of language to formulate thoughts precisely, give emphasis, differentiate and eliminate ambiguity. No signs of having to restrict what he/she wants to say. (C) b) Produces consistently accurate structures apart from 'slips' characteristic of native speaker speech. (I)		a) Expresses him/herself naturally and effortlessly; only needs to pause occasionally in order to select precisely the right words. (C) b) Creates coherent and cohesive discourse making full and appropriate use of a variety of organisational patterns and a wide range of connectors and other cohesive devices. (C)		a) Is effortless to understand. (I) b) Varies intonation and places sentence stress correctly in order to express finer shades of meaning. (C)	
8 - 9 **C1** IELTS 7.0 – 8.0 ***70 - 89%***	a) Develop an argument systematically in well-structured speech, highlighting significant points with supporting examples and concluding appropriately. (C) b) Relates own contribution skilfully to those of other speakers, giving feedback on and following up on statements and inferences and so help the development of the discussion. (C)		a) Selects an appropriate formulation from a broad range of language to express him/herself clearly, without having to restrict what he/she wants to say. (C) b) Consistently maintains a high degree of grammatical accuracy; errors are rare and difficult to spot. (C)		a) Expresses self fluently and spontaneously, almost effortlessly. Only conceptual difficulty hinders a natural, smooth flow of language. (C) b) Produces clear, smoothly flowing, well-structured speech, showing controlled use of organisations patterns, connectors and cohesive devices. (C)		a) Articulates virtually all the sounds of the target language, some features of L1 accent may be noticeable, but does not affect intelligibility at all. (C) b) Varies intonation and places sentence stress correctly in order to express precisely what he/she means to say. (C)	
6 - 7 **B2.2** IELTS 6.5 ***60 - 69%***	a) Develops an argument systematically with appropriate highlighting of significant points, and relevant supporting detail. (C) b) Gives feedback on and follows up on the statements of others to help the development of the discussion. (C)		a) Can express him/herself clearly and without much sign of having to restrict what he/she wants to say. (C) b) Shows good language control; occasional errors in sentence structure or word choice may occur, but without hindering communication. (C)		a) Communicates fluently and spontaneously, even when talking at length about complex subjects. (C) b) Uses a variety of linking words efficiently to mark clearly the relationships between ideas. (C)		a) Is easy to understand throughout; L1 accent has minimal effect on intelligibility. (I) b) Stress and intonation is used to support the message he/she intends to convey through there are some influences from L1. (C)	

4 - 5 **B2.1** IELTS 5.5 – 6.0 ***40 - 59%***	a) Develops a clear argument, expanding and supporting his/her points of view at some length with subsidiary points and relevant examples. (C) b) Helps the discussion along by confirming comprehension and inviting others in. (C)		a) Has a sufficient range of language to be able to express viewpoints and develop arguments without much conspicuous searching for words, using some complex sentence forms to do so. (C) b) Shows a relatively high degree of language control. Does not make mistakes which lead to misunderstanding. (C)		a) Produce stretches of language with a fairly even tempo; although can be hesitant and there are noticeable pauses. (C) b) Uses a limited number of cohesive devices to link utterances, though may be some 'jumps' in long contribution. (C)		a) Can generally be understood throughout, though mispronunciation of individual words or sounds reduces clarity at times. (I) b) Stress and intonation is acceptable, but may require some careful listening. (T)	
2 - 3 **B1.2** IELTS 5.0 ***30 - 39%***	a) Develop an argument well enough to be followed without difficulty most of the time, giving simple reasons to justify a viewpoint. (C) b) Exploits a basic repertoire of language and strategies to help keep the discussion going. (C)		a) Has a sufficient range of language to explain main points with reasonable precision. (C) b) Shows a good control of more basic structures and vocabulary, but makes mistakes when attempting to use more complex language. Despite errors, it is clear what he/ she is trying to express. (C)		a) Expresses self relatively easily and keeps going, despite occasional pauses to plan and correct speech. (C) May speak slowly or be halted by hesitancy. (T) b) Forms longer sentences and link them together using a limited number of cohesive devices. (C)		a) Pronunciation is intelligible even if a foreign accent is sometimes evident and occasional mispronunciations occur. (C) b) Can approximate intonation and stress at both utterance and word levels. (C)	
1 **B1.1** IELTS 4.0 - 4.5 ***10 - 29%***	a) Briefly gives reasons and explanations to support his/ her opinions. (C) b) Invite others into the discussion and is able to repeat back part of what someone has said to confirm mutual understanding and keep the development of ideas on course. (C)		a) Has enough language to get by, with sufficient vocabulary to express self with some hesitations and circumlocutions, but lexical limitations cause repetition and difficulty with formulation at times. (C) b) May have noticeable influences from mother tongue. (C) Makes frequent errors which may cause some confusion. (T)		a) Keeps going, but sometimes has to pause to plan and correct what is being said. (C) May revert to using prepared chunks of discourse. May be frequent repetition and self-correction. (I2) b) Links sentences but repetitive use of connectors and some breakdowns in coherence. (I)		a) Generally intelligible throughout, despite regular mispronunciation of individual sounds and words he/she is less familiar with. (C) b) Stress and intonation patterns may be very foreign, but are intelligible. (C)	
0 **A2** IELTS under band 4	a) Presents his/her opinion in simple terms, but requires patience from listeners. (C) b) Indicates when he / she is following. (C)		a) Communicates in a simple and direct exchange of limited information; in other situations generally have to compromise the message. (C) b) Uses some simple structures correctly, but still systematically makes basic mistakes. (C)		a) Makes him/herself understood in very short utterances, but pauses, false starts and reformulation is very evident. (C) b) Has limited ability to link sentences, is frequently unable to convey basic message.(I)		a) Speech is often unintelligible. (I) b) Strong influence of L1 on stress and intonation affects intelligibility. (C)	
U	Task not attempted, or unable to assess criteria due to lack of contribution.							

Key to level descriptors: C *= Common European Framework for Reference* ***I*** *= IELTS public descriptor* ***I2*** *= ISC* ***P*** *= Pearson GSE* ***T*** *= Trinity ISE II*

Provided courtesy of the participant teachers' institution.

Appendix B

IELTS

SPEAKING: Band Descriptors (public version)

Band	Fluency and coherence	Lexical resource	Grammatical range and accuracy	Pronunciation
9	• speaks fluently with only rare repetition or self-correction; • any hesitation is content-related rather than to find words or grammar • speaks coherently with fully appropriate cohesive features • develops topics fully and appropriately	• uses vocabulary with full flexibility and precision in all topics • uses idiomatic language naturally and accurately	• uses a full range of structures naturally and appropriately • produces consistently accurate structures apart from 'slips' characteristic of native speaker speech	• uses a full range of pronunciation features with precision and subtlety • sustains flexible use of features throughout • is effortless to understand
8	• speaks fluently with only occasional repetition or self-correction; hesitation is usually content-related and only rarely to search for language • develops topics coherently and appropriately	• uses a wide vocabulary resource readily and flexibly to convey precise meaning • uses less common and idiomatic vocabulary skilfully, with occasional inaccuracies • uses paraphrase effectively as required	• uses a wide range of structures flexibly • produces a majority of error-free sentences with only very occasional inappropriacies or basic/non-systematic errors	• uses a wide range of pronunciation features • sustains flexible use of features, with only occasional lapses • is easy to understand throughout; L1 accent has minimal effect on intelligibility
7	• speaks at length without noticeable effort or loss of coherence • may demonstrate language-related hesitation at times, or some repetition and/or self-correction • uses a range of connectives and discourse markers with some flexibility	• uses vocabulary resource flexibly to discuss a variety of topics • uses some less common and idiomatic vocabulary and shows some awareness of style and collocation, with some inappropriate choices • uses paraphrase effectively	• uses a range of complex structures with some flexibility • frequently produces error-free sentences, though some grammatical mistakes persist	• shows all the positive features of Band 6 and some, but not all, of the positive features of Band 8
6	• is willing to speak at length, though may lose coherence at times due to occasional repetition, self-correction or hesitation • uses a range of connectives and discourse markers but not always appropriately	• has a wide enough vocabulary to discuss topics at length and make meaning clear in spite of inappropriacies • generally paraphrases successfully	• uses a mix of simple and complex structures, but with limited flexibility • may make frequent mistakes with complex structures though these rarely cause comprehension problems	• uses a range of pronunciation features with mixed control • shows some effective use of features but this is not sustained • can generally be understood throughout, though mispronunciation of individual words or sounds reduces clarity at times
5	• usually maintains flow of speech but uses repetition, self correction and/or slow speech to keep going • may over-use certain connectives and discourse markers • produces simple speech fluently, but more complex communication causes fluency problems	• manages to talk about familiar and unfamiliar topics but uses vocabulary with limited flexibility • attempts to use paraphrase but with mixed success	• produces basic sentence forms with reasonable accuracy • uses a limited range of more complex structures, but these usually contain errors and may cause some comprehension problems	• shows all the positive features of Band 4 and some, but not all, of the positive features of Band 6
4	• cannot respond without noticeable pauses and may speak slowly, with frequent repetition and self-correction • links basic sentences but with repetitious use of simple connectives and some breakdowns in coherence	• is able to talk about familiar topics but can only convey basic meaning on unfamiliar topics and makes frequent errors in word choice • rarely attempts paraphrase	• produces basic sentence forms and some correct simple sentences but subordinate structures are rare • errors are frequent and may lead to misunderstanding	• uses a limited range of pronunciation features • attempts to control features but lapses are frequent • mispronunciations are frequent and cause some difficulty for the listener
3	• speaks with long pauses • has limited ability to link simple sentences • gives only simple responses and is frequently unable to convey basic message	• uses simple vocabulary to convey personal information • has insufficient vocabulary for less familiar topics	• attempts basic sentence forms but with limited success, or relies on apparently memorised utterances • makes numerous errors except in memorised expressions	• shows some of the features of Band 2 and some, but not all, of the positive features of Band 4
2	• pauses lengthily before most words • little communication possible	• only produces isolated words or memorised utterances	• cannot produce basic sentence forms	• Speech is often unintelligible
1	• no communication possible • no rateable language			
0	• does not attend			

Available online: https://www.ielts.org/-/media/pdfs/speaking-band-descriptors.ashx?la=en © Cambridge IELTS

Appendix C

Interview questions for teachers

- When did you qualify as a TEFL teacher? - What certification do you have?
- How long have you been teaching in your current role? In the UK?
- Tell me about your teaching experience (years, locations, students, courses etc).
- Tell me about the course(s) you are currently teaching.
- How would you describe your teaching style?
- What kind of errors do you feel you correct the most? Why?
- What (if any) types of errors do you think should not be corrected? (phonological etc)
- What do you believe causes students to make spoken errors? (L1 interference etc)
- Tell me about the method(s) you use to correct students' spoken errors (why?).
- Which do you feel are most effective? (why?) - do you think students would agree with that?
- At what stage in a lesson are you most like to correct a student's spoken error? (why?)
- How effective do you think error correction is on improving language skills? (why?)
- What things do you consider when correcting a student (paper and pen - mind map)?
- Tell me about any difficulties you have when correcting students (timing, focus, complexity etc). - use paper to draw on if necessary.
- How do you think students feel about error correction?
- How well do you feel OEC fits into your teaching? (time/opportunity in the lesson, teaching style, lesson focus).

Appendix D

Student questionnaire

Part A – about you

I am _____ years old

My first language is _____

How long have you been studying English **in England**? _____

How long have you been learning English? _____

Part B – about learning English

The following questions are about correcting speaking errors. For each question please circle the answer you agree with most, e.g. if you strongly disagree with the statement circle '1' like this: ① and if you strongly agree circle '4' like this: ④

	Strongly disagree	dis-agree	agree	Strongly agree
1. I want my teacher to correct my errors when I am speaking in class	1	2	3	4
2. Teachers should correct **ALL** my speaking errors in class	1	2	3	4
3. Teachers should **only** correct errors that make communication difficult	1	2	3	4
4. I want my classmates to correct my speaking errors	1	2	3	4
5. It is important for me to be corrected in class	1	2	3	4
6. I want to practice speaking in class, and not worry about my errors	1	2	3	4
7. Teachers should only give individual students correction and not use my error as an example to the class	1	2	3	4
8. How important is error correction for you? Why?				

For the following questions, please tell me **HOW OFTEN** you want the errors corrected.

For each question please circle ○ the answer you agree with most, e.g. if you think 'never' circle '1' like this: ① and if you think 'always' circle '5' like this: ⑤

	never	rarely	sometimes	often	always
9. Teachers should correct grammar errors	1	2	3	4	5
10. Teacher should correct vocabulary (words/phrases) errors	1	2	3	4	5
11. Teachers should correct pronunciation, accent and intonation errors	1	2	3	4	5
12. Teachers should correct inappropriate expressions, e.g. S: I want a coffee T: "Can I have a coffee, please?" is more polite in a café.	1	2	3	4	5
13. Teachers should correct the error as soon as it is made	1	2	3	4	5
14. Teachers should let me talk and correct my errors when I have finished speaking	1	2	3	4	5
15. What kind of errors do you think are the most important to correct? (for example, pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary) Why?					

Part C – about correcting your errors

The next section is about how you like to be corrected. For each question please circle ⓔ the answer you agree with most, e.g. if you think this method is very bad circle '1' like this: ① and if you think it is very good circle '4' like this: ④

	Very bad	bad	good	Very good
16. The teacher gives me the correct grammar/word/pronunciation when I make a mistake, e.g.: S: I go to the park yesterday T: I WENT to the park yesterday	1	2	3	4
17. The teacher tells me the error and gives me the correct grammar/word/pronunciation, e.g.: S: I go to the park yesterday T: GO is wrong. You should say WENT	1	2	3	4

18. The teachers asks another question if I make an error, e.g.: T: where did you go yesterday? S: I go to the park T: what did you do yesterday?	1	2	3	4
19. The teacher helps me hear my error and allows me to self-correct, e.g.: S: I go to the park yesterday T: where did you say you WENT yesterday? S: I went to the park	1	2	3	4
20. The teacher repeats my error and waits for me to self-correct, e.g.: S: I go to the park yesterday T: I GO to the park yesterday? S: ... I WENT to the park yesterday	1	2	3	4
21. The teacher explains why I said something wrong, e.g.: S: I go to the park yesterday T: GO is present simple, you need to use past tense to talk about yesterday. S: I…WENT to the park	1	2	3	4
22. The teacher asks another student to correct my mistake, e.g.: S1: I go to the supermarket yesterday T: Juan, is that correct? S2: No, I WENT to the supermarket yesterday... it's past tense of GO	1	2	3	4
23. The teacher writes the students' mistakes on the board during the lesson and spends a few minutes at the end of the lesson looking at them, explaining and correcting them	1	2	3	4
24. How do you feel when teachers correct you?				
25. When should teachers correct your errors? (for example, when I am talking to my classmate, at the end of the activity, at the end of the class…)				

Thank you for taking the time to help me with my research.

Appendix E

Focus group question prompts

➢ In what ways has your teaching career (including the location, students, type of class/course, etc) influenced your teaching style? In what ways has it influenced your beliefs on learning and teaching?
➢ Students stated that they want a clear indication of when they have said something wrong. To what extent do you think students know they are being corrected in class when they have made a spoken error (pron, grammar, vocab etc)? To what degree do you feel teachers do this and in what ways could they make this clearer?
➢ Students stated they want lots of correction in class when they are speaking. To what extent do you think this is practical?
➢ Students stated that they did NOT want the teacher to only correct errors that made communication difficult. Teachers stated they usually only correct students where communication has broken down. Why do you think we have opposing views?
➢ Students overwhelmingly stated that error correction was important for language learning and it helps them to improve, claiming that the correction will prevent the error from happening again. Teachers stated that intelligibility was more important than correctness. To what extent do you agree with these views?
➢ Students said they wanted the teacher to provide individualised correction and feedback on their errors. How do you feel about this? What are some of the challenges teachers may have in doing this?
➢ There was a mixed response from students about whether to use peer correction for spoken errors. Why do you think this might be? What are your feelings on using peer correction for spoken errors?
➢ How important is correctness when students are doing speaking exams or assessments? Should teachers focus on correction more in exam preparation classes or around exam time?
➢ How do you feel about error correction having participated in this study? Have any of your views or practices changed? If yes - in what way and why? If no - why do you think that is?
➢ Having participated in this study, would you be interested in training or further information about oral error correction? Why/why not?

➢ To what extent do you feel it's possible to identify an error (lack of knowledge), a mistake (a misapplication or misunderstanding of knowledge) or a slip (a temporary loss of language control) in the moment the error occurs?
➢ What are some of the specific things you consider when deciding to provide correction for a spoken error?
➢ Teachers claimed that error correction can be difficult to fit into lesson. Do you think this is something that needs to be addressed? How? Why?
➢ Teachers stated that they felt students can be embarrassed about making mistakes and being corrected in class. A majority of the students said they are happy to be corrected. What is your opinion on these views?
➢ 10 of the 13 students said they have been studying English for more than 10 years. To what extent do you think correction can help them at this stage?

Appendix F

School participant information sheet

Project information sheet

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for taking an interest in my research project entitled 'Teacher and student perceptions of oral error correction in the English language classroom'. I am doing a Professional Doctorate in Education at the University of Sussex and as part of the programme I am completing a piece of original research. I am inviting teachers to join my research project. I am also looking for students of B1 level or above to answer questionnaires about their preferences.

Below is a series of questions and answers that I hope will provide you with further details of the research project, how it will work and how you will be involved.

What is the purpose of the study?

The project is focused on students' and teachers' attitudes to oral error correction and the practical issues of correcting students in class when they make an error when speaking. Error correction is a really interesting topic to me, and something we English teachers face every time we are teaching. I would like to ask some questions about what teachers do, how and why in the event of a student making a spoken mistake. I want to know what teachers think about when students make mistakes and how teachers respond to these errors. I would like to find some native speakers of English who have been teaching for 5 years or more in a range of locations or with multilingual students to participate in the project.

I would also like to find out about the students' perspectives. I would like to distribute a questionnaire to students to complete about their preferences and ideas on error correction. Students must have a level B1 or above in order to communicate their ideas. Students must be adults (aged 18+) to contribute to the research project, in accordance with the ethical approval from the University of Sussex.

Who is the researcher?

I am a practicing English language teacher with over 10 years' experience in a variety of different contexts and countries. I started my interest in oral error correction as part of my Masters in English Language Teaching approximately six years ago and have become passionate about developing my own understanding of spoken corrections ever since. I am looking to further develop that with the collaboration of other teachers and their students through a participatory research project.

Why you?

I am particularly interested in the kind of multilingual classes that happen in private schools in the UK. I would like to discuss the issues that arise in these contexts relating to error correction and the perceptions of teachers and their students to oral error correction more generally. I am looking for teachers with different teaching experiences and to talk about error correction.

What are you being invited to do?

The project consists of six stages divided as follows:

Initial data gathering
Stage 1 - a student questionnaire to class of B1+ level students
Stage 2 - an audio recorded semi-structured interview with the teachers about their thoughts and feeling relating to oral error correction.

Reflection and review
Stage 3 - an audio recorded focus group with the teacher and their students, discussing error correction in the learning process and generally thoughts and feelings towards oral error correction.

In total the process should be no more than 2 hours of the teacher's time over a period of 2-3 weeks in the form of two discussions. Both of these can be arranged around teaching schedule and other commitments.

When and where will the research take place?

I would like to complete the research at the school in the teacher's classroom or other room available. This I feel will enable a more relaxed environment for discussion, as well as avoiding any additional travel or time constraints for the teachers and students.

Do I need to do anything?

All I need is for you to sign the consent form to show that you understand the nature of the project and complete the questionnaire with the relevant information. I will contact you to arrange the interview as soon as I have the consent form. After the initial data collection I will arrange with you the next stage of the research project to fit with your commitments.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

I hope that the process will help your teachers understand error correction more widely as well as offering an opportunity to discuss their ideas and thoughts on this subject. As part of the process I will be asking teachers to reflect on their experience, attitude and feelings towards error correction to enable both teachers and I to find a way to create efficient and effective oral error correction in our future classes. I am happy to share with you what I have discovered so far as part of my research and reading, and will offer a CPD session to you and your colleagues at a future date.

Will people know I participated in the research project?

No. I will be recording the discussions using a digital audio recording device. The recording will be solely for the purpose of the project and not for release or use in any other capacity. I will use the recordings to review what I have been told in the interview and to make quotations of interesting things that have been said in my report. I will not write names or any details about the school into my report. I will take every care to ensure that schools and participants are anonymous in the report and all the information I get, including the audio recordings, will be kept safely and securely. The files will be stored according to a coding system which will be known only to me and any information about your school, the teachers or students will be kept anonymous at all times.

Can I retract my consent to the project?

Yes, at any time. If you change your mind, you can simply notify me to have your contribution removed from the final report. You can also read my report before I submit it to see what information I have used from the discussions. If you are unable to continue with the research please let me know and I will remove your data and destroy it.

How will the information be used?

I will use the information to inform my research project for the Doctorate in Education. It will likely be completed by December 2020. My research may also be presented at future conferences and in journal articles. Confidentiality will be maintained at all times.

If you are happy to continue with the research project, please complete the consent form in order for me to continue in accordance with the ethical approval given for this research by the University of Sussex.

Teachers wishing to participate in the project should be given a teacher information sheet, which they can read in their own time and complete the 'notification of interest' section at the end. I will collect any forms and make contact with teachers to arrange student engagement and distribution of consent forms.

Thank you for your time.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss the research project, please feel free to contact me via email to hg53@sussex.ac.uk and I will get back to you as soon as possible. Alternatively, you can contact my supervisor, Dr Andrew Blair via email to A.M.Blair@sussex.ac.uk for information about the Doctorate in Education and the research project.

Appendix G

Student participant information sheet

Project information sheet

Dear learner,

I am doing a Professional Doctorate in Education at the University of Sussex and as part of the programme I am completing a piece of original research. My research project is called *'Teacher and student perceptions of oral error correction in the English language classroom'*. I am interested in what you think about when you make a mistake when you speak. I would like to know what kind of error correction you like and don't like. I want to know how you feel when your teacher corrects you. You must be adults (aged 18+) to contribute to the research project, in accordance with the ethical approval from the University of Sussex.

Below are some questions and answers that I hope will give you further details about the research project.

Why you?

I am particularly interested in classes in private language schools in the UK. I would like to discuss your experiences of learning English in the UK in your classes and your experience of learning English in your home country.

What will I do for the research project?

I will give you a short questionnaire to complete with some questions about different error correction methods and how you feel about them.

When and where will the research take place?

The research will start when I have all the consent forms from the students. It will happen at the school in your classroom or other room available. I will arrange to come to your school to do all the research so that you can continue with your normal learning timetable.

Do I need to do anything before?

You need to sign the consent form to say that you understand the project and what you are asked to do.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

You will have the opportunity to tell me what you like and don't like about error correction and help teachers to develop their teaching skills to give different or better error correction.

Will people know I participated in the research project?

No. I will not write your name or any information about you into my report. I will be careful that you are not identified in the report and all the information I get will be kept safely and securely and will not be used for any other reason.

Can I cancel my agreement to the project?

Yes, at any time. If you change your mind, you can tell your teacher or you can email me (hg53@sussex.ac.uk) to remove your information from the final report. If you are unable to continue with the research please tell your teacher or me and I will remove your data from the report. You can also read my report to see what information I have used. I will do my best to represent you accurately and fairly.

How will the information be used?

I will use the information for my research project for the Doctorate in Education. It will probably be completed by December 2020. I may also present my research at future conferences and in journal articles. Your name and information will not be used at any time.

If you are happy to continue with the research project, please complete the short form below so you can sign the consent form, according to the ethical approval given for this research.

Thank you for your time.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss the research project, please feel free to contact me via email to hg53@sussex.ac.uk and I will get back to you as soon as possible. Alternatively, you can contact my supervisor, Dr Andrew Blair via email to A.M.Blair@sussex.ac.uk for information about the Doctorate in Education and the research project.

✂

My name: _____

I am interested in participating in your research project on error correction.

I agree to answer the questionnaire ☐ (please tick)

Sign _____ Date _____

Appendix H

Teacher participant information sheet

Project information sheet

Dear teacher,

Thank you for taking interest in my research project entitled 'Teacher and student perceptions of oral error correction in the English language classroom'. I am doing a Professional Doctorate in Education at the University of Sussex and as part of the programme I am completing a piece of original research. I am inviting teachers to join my research project.

Below is a series of questions and answers that I hope will provide you with further details of the research project, how it will work and how you will be involved.

What is the purpose of the study?

The project is focused on students' and teachers' attitudes to oral error correction and the practical issues of correcting students in class when they make an error when speaking. Error correction is a really interesting topic to me, and something we English teachers face every time we are teaching. I would like to ask some questions about what teachers do, how and why in the event of a student making a spoken mistake. I want to know what teachers think about when students make mistakes and how teachers respond to these errors. I would like to find some native speakers of English who have been teaching for 5 years or more in a range of locations or with multilingual students to participate in the project.

Why you?

I am particularly interested in the kind of multilingual classes that happen in private language schools in the UK. I would like to discuss the issues that arise in these contexts relating to error correction and the perceptions of teachers and their students to oral error correction more generally. I am looking for teachers with different teaching experiences and to talk about error correction.

What are you being invited to do?

The project consists of several stages divided as follows.

- an audio recorded semi-structured interview about your thoughts and feeling relating to oral error correction generally.
- an audio recorded focus group with other teachers, discussing error correction in the learning process and generally thoughts and feelings towards oral error correction.

In total the process should be no more than 2 hours of your time over a period of 2-3 weeks, which can be arranged around your teaching schedule and other commitments.

When and where will the research take place?

The process can be completed entirely at the school in your classroom or other room available. I will arrange to come to your place of work to conduct all the research so that you can continue with your normal teaching timetable. We will agree a day and time that suits you beforehand and from the beginning to end of the research project I will meet with you two times. If you prefer, we can conduct the discussion away from your school we can arrange to meet locally at your convenience.

Do I need to do anything?

All I need is for you to sign the consent form to show that you understand the nature of the project. I will contact you to arrange the interview as soon as I have the consent form. After the initial data collection I will arrange with you the next stage of the research project to fit with your commitments.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

I hope that the process will help you understand error correction more widely as well as offering an opportunity to discuss with other teachers their ideas and thoughts on this subject. As part of the process I will be asking you to reflect on your experience, attitude and feelings towards error correction to enable both you and I to find a way to create efficient and effective oral error correction in our future classes. I will share with you what I have discovered so far as part of my research and reading, and will offer a CPD session to you and your colleagues and present my findings from the research.

Will people know I participated in the research project?

No. I will not write your name or any details about you into my report. I will take every care to ensure that you are anonymous in the report and all the information I get, including the audio recordings, will be kept safely and securely and will not be used for any other purpose. The files will be stored according to a coding system which will be known only to me and any information about your school, you or your students will be kept anonymous at all times.

Can I retract my consent to the project?

Yes, at any time. If you change your mind, you can simply notify me to have your information and your contribution removed from the final report. You can also read my report before I submit it to see what information I have used from our discussions. If you would like to change information that you think does not represent what you think or how you feel, you can notify me. I will do my best to represent you accurately and fairly. If you are unable to continue with the research please let me know and I will remove your data from the report and delete all files.

How will the information be used?

I will use the information to inform my research project for the Doctorate in Education. It will likely be completed by December 2020, however you may request a 'work in progress' copy to review at any time to make amendments to the information relating to you. My research may

also be presented at future conferences and in journal articles. Confidentiality will be maintained at all times.

If you are happy to continue with the research project, please complete the consent form in order for me to continue in accordance with the ethical approval given for this research by the University of Sussex.

Thank you for your time.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss the research project, please feel free to contact me via email to hg53@sussex.ac.uk and I will get back to you as soon as possible. Alternatively, you can contact my supervisor, Dr Andrew Blair via email to A.M.Blair@sussex.ac.uk for information about the Doctorate in Education and the research project.

✂

Notification of interest

My name: _____

I am interested in participating in your research project on error correction.

Please contact me at _____ (email or phone) to discuss my participation further and distribute the consent form.

Sign _____ Date _____

Appendix I

UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX

'Teacher and student perceptions of oral error correction in the English language classroom'

STUDENT CONSENT FORM

By signing this document you are agreeing to participate in the above project as part of the Doctorate in Education through the University of Sussex.

Researcher: Helen Gibb

Please tick ✓box

1. I have read the information sheet for this study. I have had the opportunity to think about the information, ask questions and the researcher has answered them. ☐
2. I understand I am volunteering for this project and that I can cancel my participation at any time before the research is finished. I can cancel my participation without giving any reason and that my information will be deleted. ☐
3. I understand that my participation involves answering a questionnaire ☐
4. I understand that the information collected about me will be used to support other research in the future, and may be used for conferences or publications, but my name will be secret at all times. ☐
5. I agree to take part in this study. ☐

_____

Name of Participant Date Signature

Participant code:

Appendix J

UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX

'Teacher and student perceptions of oral error correction in the English language classroom'

TEACHER CONSENT FORM

By signing this document you are agreeing to participate in the above project as part of the Doctorate in Education through the University of Sussex.

Researcher: Helen Gibb

Please tick box

1. I confirm that I have read the information sheet for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily. ☐
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw without giving any reason and that my information and that of my students will then be removed from the study and destroyed. Withdrawal can be requested at any time during the data collection process. ☐
3. I understand that my participation involves several stages by agreeing to participate I am agreeing to all stages of the project. ☐
4. I understand that I will be audio recorded during my discussions with the researcher for later review by the researcher, but these will not be available for any other use. ☐
5. I understand that the audio recordings will be transcribed for analysis but all data will be kept securely in accordance with data protection policies. ☐
6. I understand that the information collected about me will be used to support other research in the future, and may be used for conferences or publications, but will be kept anonymous at all times. ☐
7. I agree to take part in the above study. ☐

_____

Name of Participant Date Signature

Participant code:

Appendix K

Questionnaire responses

Q/A				
	strongly disagree	**disagree**	**agree**	**strongly agree**
1			4	9
2		5	6	2
3	2	8	2	1
4		4	9	
5			3	10
6	1	3	7	2
7	1	6	6	
total	**4**	**26**	**37**	**24**

		count	**%**			**count**	**%**
Q1	**agree**	13	100	**Q1**	**disagree**	0	0
Q2	**agree**	8	61.5	**Q2**	**disagree**	5	38.5
Q3	**agree**	3	23.1	**Q3**	**disagree**	10	76.9
Q4	**agree**	9	69.2	**Q4**	**disagree**	4	30.8
Q5	**agree**	13	100	**Q5**	**disagree**	0	0
Q6	**agree**	9	69.2	**Q6**	**disagree**	4	30.8
Q7	**agree**	6	46.2	**Q7**	**disagree**	7	53.8

Q/A	never	rarely	sometimes	often	always
9			3	5	5
10			3	5	5
11			3	5	5
12			3	8	2
13			9	3	1
14			4	7	2
total	0	0	25	33	20

		count	%
Q9	often/always	10	76.9
Q10	often/always	10	76.9
Q11	often/always	10	76.9
Q12	often/always	10	76.9
Q13	often/always	4	30.8
Q14	often/always	9	69.2

Q/A	very bad	bad	good	very good
16		1	6	4
17		5	4	2
18		1	9	1
19		1	4	6
20	1	2	4	4
21			4	7
22	1	8	2	
23		2	7	2
Total:	**2**	**20**	**40**	**26**

		count	%			count	%
Q16	**good**	10	76.9	**Q16**	**bad**	1	7.7
Q17	**good**	6	46.2	**Q17**	**bad**	5	38.5
Q18	**good**	10	76.9	**Q18**	**bad**	1	7.7
Q19	**good**	10	76.9	**Q19**	**bad**	1	7.7
Q20	**good**	8	61.5	**Q20**	**bad**	3	23.1
Q21	**good**	11	84.6	**Q21**	**bad**	0	0
Q22	**good**	2	15.4	**Q22**	**bad**	9	69.2
Q23	**good**	9	69.2	**Q23**	**bad**	2	15.4

1st Language	
Japanese	3
Chinese	3
French	0.5
Italian	3
German	2
Portuguese	0.5
Arabic	1
total	**13**

Age range	
18-20	2
21-24	8
25-30	3
total	**13**

Time in England	
3-4 months	12
6-12 months	1
total	**13**

Studying English	
10+ years	8
8-9 years	1
4-7 years	1
less than 4 years	3
total	**13**

8.	Student responses: • "If I don't know the correct one, I couldn't speak well. I also confused about that if I was corrected many times in class. I wouldn't feel confidently to speak". • "it is important to be aware of what we have been learned and use it correctly" • "the speaking is my weak point. Being here for studying English, I'd like to improve my level of speaking. If I could speak correctly, even be a native speaker, I'll be much more confident. What's more, I can get more opportunities to make foreigner friends, to get jobs." • "error correction is very important for me because I am not a native English speaker, so I cannot understand the chip for speaking it correctly" • "It's really important for me to have any error correction because I can understand what is right and wrong." • "It is very important for me because I have to be aware of my mistakes in order to improve. If nobody points them out to me, I might keep making the same mistakes." • "For me, if it's to learn a language I want to learn without making errors. I think if the teacher doesn't correct the errors, the student think that it's correct and then he can't progress". • "strongly important, because I want to improve my English and know what my errors are". • "it's quite important because if you understand an error then you won't do that anymore. Thanks to the correction you learn." • "Very important, because it's my only chance to learn about my mistakes and improve" • "is very important, because you can learn a lot from your mistakes".
15.	Student responses: • "Intonation errors, because I made many errors at this part" • "for me pronunciation is the most important because I want always pronounce correctly" • "Pronunciation, grammar. First I should speak correctly, then try to be a native speaker" • "in my opinion as one of the Japanese people, pronunciation errors are the most important. In English there are some pronunciation that Japanese never use and can't pronounce correctly" • "pronunciation. I can't help me to improve my speaking skills" • "vocabulary and grammar. I don't want to misuse any words, it helps preventing misunderstandings. Proper grammar can be crucial for intelligibility" • "grammar and vocabulary because after you learn something it's more difficult to correct it" • "Errors of grammar are the ones that make the communication impossible" • "Grammar and pronunciation. Because they are fundamental in order to be understood by others" • "for me it is grammar and vocabulary, because pronunciation is not a big problem as long as the others understand"

	• "grammar because for me it's the most difficult and least likely to improve without correction" • "I think all mistakes are important to be corrected, especially in advanced levels. Anyway, it is most important to correct what makes communication difficult, such as pronunciation and vocabulary"
24.	Student responses: • "I always feel happy and that will be good for me except some times may I feel she/he put me off" • "for me it's okay. It doesn't matter to make mistakes. Teachers correct me, thus I won't make same mistakes next time" • "it's good for me and our classmates when the teacher notices my mistakes and correct them" • "I am really glad because I could recognise what mistakes did I make" • "if it is not done in a patronising manner I feel encouraged to improve - it shows that they are listening to me and want to help me improve" • "I think it's his job. If I come in England to learn english it was to have this type of correction" • "I am pleased to be corrected" • "I am interested in understanding the error" • "it depends on their attitude, but actually I am glad to hear my error being corrected and I'm happy to hear how a native speaker will say in the context also what appropriate words they'll use" • "more secure about my speaking, because I know what my mistakes are and how often I do them"
25. ,	Student responses: • "at the end of the activity" • "when I am talking to my classmate" • "teachers should correct errors as soon as they notice them or after I finish my talking (it depends)" • "when I am talking to my classmates" • "while speaking / after I've finished talking" • "in the moment the error is made. But just the teacher, and not another student" *(Q22 highlighted).* • "at the end of each activity" • "at the end of the activity" • "At the end of the activity"

Appendix L

The themes stated here were coded using NVivo qualitative data analysis software to highlight repetition of key ideas and topics within and across the interview data. The marks (I) represent one mention of the topic in the left column. Each of these marks related to a specific quotation highlighted in the transcript as it was coded in NVivo. This then assisted in the formation of the discussion points for the focus group. The ideas listed below have then been subdivided into wider themes as indicted below which correspond to the sections in Chapter 5.

Student confidence

	Sarah	Tina	Tamsin	Julia	Joanna	Bridget	Claire
Student personality/ confidence	IIIII	IIIII II	IIIII I	III	IIII	IIIII I	III
Explicit correction		II		II	I	I	
Positive feedback as well as OEC	I	II	II	II	I	II	I

Adapting to the students

Teaching style comes in response to students	I	II	IIII I	III	III	II	II
OEC methods depend on the student	III	II	IIIII I	II	IIII	III	IIII

Avoid individualising OEC, focus on group errors or offer correction to the group as a whole		III		I			I
Reticence hinders learning	I	II	IIII	I	II	II	I
Previous lang learning experiences shape teaching	II			III	I		IIII

Relationships and rapport between teacher and student and the cohort

T-S rapport	II	III	IIII I	IIII	III	IIII	III
Group dynamic and class relationships	II	I	IIII	III	IIII	II	II

Correction from teacher and students

Peer correction			II		III	III	II
Encourage engagement in correction in writing as well (end of activity/class) together		I	II	I		III	II

Students and OEC

Selective OEC	IIII	III	III	II	II	III	I
Learner training for more effective OEC			III	III	II	II	
Students understanding of being corrected	II	II	I		I	II	

Different aspects of OEC to consider

Deal with communication breakdowns more than other errors	IIII	I	II	I	II	II	II
Cause of errors is unclear	IIIII I	I	I		IIII	I	I
Upgrading of language as well as correcting		I	III	IIII	I	I	II
Communicative teaching approach for maximising speaking practice	I	III	II	II	I	II	III

Teacher opinions and responses to OEC

Importance of OEC	IIII	I	IIII	III	II	III	III
Student expects OEC	III	III	IIII	I	II	IIII	III
Sceptical of OEC efficacy	IIII	III	I	I	IIII	III	I
Lack of learning in short courses/short term study	I	I	I		II	III	
Doing OEC for the students not for the learning	IIII	II				II	
Cause of errors is unclear	IIIII I	I	I		IIII	I	I

Correct vs communicative competence and what to correct

Intelligibility more important than correctness	I	II	II	III	IIII	III	III
Assessment vs general English class differences	I	IIII	III	II	III	III	III
'quick' OEC is preferred due to time pressures	III	II	I		II	II	
'enough' OEC	IIII		I		III	IIII	

Training and pedagogical development for teachers

Training & CPD was limited	III	I	I	I	I	II	

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