Error Treatment in Teaching English to EFL Adult Learners: A Study in Current English Language Teaching Practices in Native/Non-Native Divide Context in Saudi Arabia

Muhammad Sabboor Hussain Raja *

Qassim University, Saudi Arabia

Khaled Basher Albasher

Qassim University, Saudi Arabia

Aisha Farid

Qassim University, Saudi Arabia

Abstract

The purpose of this article is to investigate EFL teachers' (native and non-native) practices regarding error treatment in teaching English to adult learners in Saudi Arabia. It determines the advantages of current teaching practices in native/non-native divide paradigm, and finds out what care and cautions need to be taken while correcting the errors committed by EFL learners to obtain the desired results. Data were collected by the administering a five-point Likert-scale survey to 50 EFL teachers, 25 natives and 25 non-natives. T-tests for the independence or association between the attributes were run using SPSS version 14. Both qualitative and quantitative research tools were administered to get the relevant data. The qualitative tool of interviews was used and ten teachers (five natives and five non-natives) were interviewed to serve the research purpose. The qualitative and quantitative data was included to complement each other and validate the research at the same time. The results confirmed that all the EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia, regardless of whether they were natives or non-natives, were generally more severe about errors by students. The results of the study also revealed that although teachers believed that students were prone to commit errors, they asserted that students' written errors must be immediately corrected and comments must be given. However, they were in favor of not only peer feedback but also believed that grammatical errors in oral communication should not always be corrected. The results of the t-test revealed that there were no statistically significant differences in the approach to grammar errors between the native and non-native EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia. This paper intends to pave the way to create self-awareness among EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia to analyze their teaching practices while addressing the learners' errors and bring an improvement in this regard.

Keywords: error treatment; native-non-native divide; adult learners; EFL context

* **Correspondence:** Muhammad Sabboor Hussain Raja, Email: rajasaboor@hotmail.com

INTRODUCTION

The question about the right approach towards error correction in grammar teaching has always occupied a place of prominence particularly in EFL contexts all over the world. Traditional grammar teaching and grammatical error correction have always been integral parts of each other. Grammar Translation Method (GTM) teachers assert that it is very important for the language learners to receive feedback on their errors. They believe that it is only then the learners become aware of grammar rules (Borg, 1999). In the same way, error correction remained a leading principle in Audio-Lingualism, practiced in 1950s and 1960s. However, a major shift took place when GTM gave way to communicative methods in the late 1960s and in the 1970s. It brought about a change in attitude towards students' errors and the ways of error correction. Error correction was opposed because of its negative effects on the learners and the learning process (Truscott, 1996). It was, in a way a major shift of focus on the learners and learning from the teacher and the teaching. In particular, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach opposed the provision of direct feedback on grammatical errors. It almost abandoned error correction in language teaching, and emphasized on meaning instead of form (Harmer, 2001; Richards & Rodgers, 2001). All this led to a refreshing culture of change and transformation in the ELT domain.

The debate on the issue of provision or non-provision of error correction led to two opposing schools of thought. Truscott (1996), a leading figure in the movement against error correction, was against the provision of feedback and believed in abandoning grammar correction in English language teaching. He asserted that there was no convincing evidence that error correction improved the accuracy of the learners' writing skills. On the other side, the school of thought in favor of error correction led by grammarians like Ferris (2002) asserted that students needed feedback from their language teachers in order to make up their deficiency so as to avoid and rectify errors. His theory was reinforced by the experimental researchers like Lyster & Saito (2010) who found out through a meta-analysis of studies about error correction that provision of feedback facilitated the development of L2 grammatical knowledge. The major theorist behind all such research efforts was the renowned linguist, Hendrickson (1978).

This study takes Hendrickson's (1978) as a theoretical framework. He attempted to find answers to five questions regarding grammatical error correction viz., i) Should the learner's errors be corrected? ii) If so, when should the learner's errors be corrected? iii) Which errors of the learner should be corrected? 4) How should the learner's errors be corrected? And iv) Who should correct the learner's errors? These five questions have remained largely unanswered, despite the fact that there are numerous studies regarding error correction. Hendrickson himself points out that the answers provided by teachers and linguists regarding these questions are mostly non-empirical and speculative (Abdollahzadeh & Maleki, 2011). The answers to these questions lead to create a better teaching and learning environment, and EFL teachers are assisted in a meaningful way. The present study tried to investigate the answers to these questions

from EFL teachers' perspectives. The answers to these questions were investigated from the teachers with differences of being natives and non-natives in the teaching field in Saudi Arabia

Thus, the research question of the study is as following:

How different are the native and non-native EFL teachers in their approach towards error correction in grammar teaching to adult learners in Saudi Arabia?

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Foreign language learning is a process of hypothesis and trial and error occurrence is inevitable. Students' errors are valuable feedbacks for professional and well trained teachers. Errors are indispensable to the learners themselves, for we can regard the making of mistakes as a device the learner employs in order to learn. It is the language teacher's job to closely observe the psychological process his learners undergo in order to understand the nature and reasons of errors and need to correct them. Intolerance to the language learners' errors can be taken as non-professional attitude of the teachers or lack of pre-service/in-service training for them.

The role of English language teachers has transformed considerably in recent times. EFL teacher is no more viewed as a father or mother figure in the class as is expressed in the following figure:
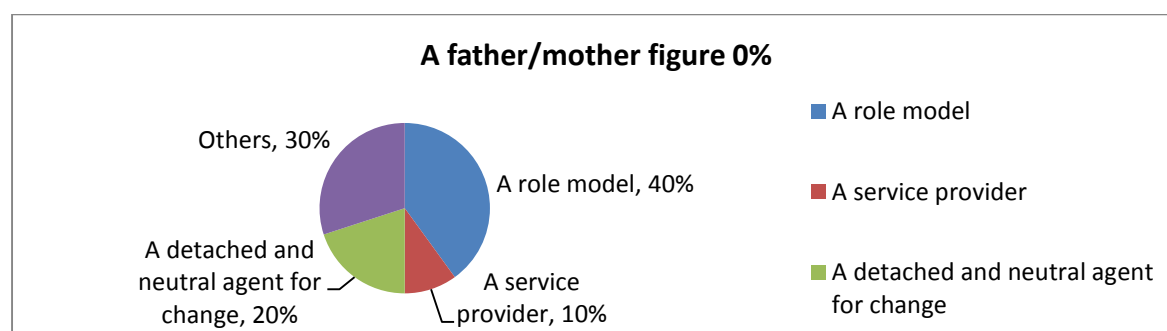
Figure 1. adopted from Hussain, et el, (2012)

Hussain, M.S., et el, (2012) opine, "It is point to note that teachers of second language in today's teaching scenario are no more identifying themselves in the traditional motherly or fatherly role. A visible majority, however, identifies itself as role model for their students. The concept of teacher as service provider and neutral agent is also gaining weight. About one third (30%) of teachers have their idiosyncratic versions of their roles as teachers such as: 'friend', 'facilitator', 'leader', 'motivator', 'mentor', 'educator', 'colleague' etc. One of the participants did not agree to any role proposed in this researcher, rather she liked to see the combination of all the above" (p-98).

Thus, a language teacher plays some new roles now such as the role model, service provider, neutral agent, friend, facilitator, leader, motivator, mentor, educator, and a colleague. Teacher as a feedback provider covers almost all the roles as providing feedback to learners' errors is one of the most significant one (Sultana, 2009). This role

of a teacher as a corrector was quite dominant in GTM. However, with the change in approaches from traditional to modern, teacher's role as a feedback provider has also changed. In the traditional methods of language teaching, a teacher was considered as the only source of knowledge; and hence it was only his/her duty to not only impart knowledge but also correct students' errors.

Recent approaches put emphasis on students' autonomy when it comes to error correction (Sultana, 2009). As a result, student-centered techniques of error correction, like peer correction, group correction and self-correction, have emerged on international ELT horizon. Lin and Chien (2009) believe that correction is not always applied by the teacher. They assert that in learner-centered educational settings, where a more collaborative learning is exercised and learner autonomy is highlighted, peer correction is required. However, the context must be taken into consideration before the application of any error correction technique (Sultana, 2009). The language teacher needs to be very vigilant in grasping the contextual complexities to make the correction work more meaningful, purposeful and effective.

Modern approaches to language teaching favor more of STT (Student Talking Time) than TTT (Teacher Talking Time). Accordingly, researchers like Rollinson (2005) prefer student-student feedback to teacher feedback on the grounds that students are more comfortable with their classmates. Rollinson asserts that with peer feedback the classroom becomes less dominated by the teacher, and therefore, the atmosphere in the classroom becomes friendlier. As a result of this, the focus also shifts from teacher to students, and the class becomes less of teacher-centered and more of student-centered. Scharle and Szabo (2000) also support this opinion and assert that students should be made responsible for their learning. It acts as a move to make the language learners more involved and interested in the class activities.

However, the benefits of peer feedback have also been questioned by teachers and students at times. Harmer (2004) points out the possible side effects of peer correction and argues that the student, after getting corrected by his fellow student, might feel inferior to him/her. This can be quite detrimental to the learner's morale, motivation, learning zeal and zest as it will affect his/her self-esteem. Similarly, students may consider their peers less proficient to provide feedback on errors (Diab, 2010). This brings the role of language teachers as the feedback providers and correctors of learners' errors back in the limelight.

'What' and 'when' part of the error correction has to be judged and executed by the teacher. Although students consider feedback as a source of improvement, but it is the teacher who decides about the time of correction, the type of correction and whether to correct or not to correct. According to Hendrickson (1978), global errors need not be corrected and they are generally held true. But the expressions such as "a news", or "an advice" are systematic errors, and they need to be corrected. As to what kind of errors should be corrected, it needs teachers' intuition and understanding of errors. At the same time, the teacher should consider the purpose of the analysis and analyze them in a systematic way. Regarding the timing of error correction, there are two options, they

are immediate and delayed (Quinn, 2014). Quinn argued that both these feedback options may help learners change their incorrect language features if they provide them with accurate models. However, Quinn acknowledges differences of opinion among researchers regarding the advantages of these two types of feedback. As little time as possible should be allowed between the commission of errors and the provision of correct model. Long (1977) maintains that the value of feedback diminishes if there is more time between the error and the correct response. However, Long (1977) also recognizes that the delayed correction has the advantage of avoiding the inhibiting effects of interrupting learners. Similarly, delayed correction may allow learners to self-correct. In short, the teacher has to keep in mind the learning/teaching objective at the time of correction. If the objective is fluency enhancement, delayed correction or unconscious correction is most probably the right approach.

After the advent of communicative language teaching, the topic of the timing of feedback has rather diminished. The linguists were divided in their opinions on the issue as some believed that feedback be provided immediately, while others were in favor of delayed feedback (Quinn, 2014). This debate never reached to its logical conclusion. Now, a large number of studies focus on the type of feedback instead of the timing of the feedback. Such studies concern more with how the effectiveness of feedback vary depending on the degree of implicitness or explicitness or the function of the types of feedback (Quinn, 2014). Tootkaboni and Khatib (2014) assert that generally there are two kinds of feedback provided by teachers. They are explicit feedback such as grammatical explanation and implicit feedback such as repetition, recasts, clarification requests, facial expressions and confirmation checks. They maintain that how teachers correct students' errors is a key issue of interest in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) to both teachers and researchers in modern times.

There are two main strategies used by the teachers in reacting to students' errors viz., the direct and indirect feedback (Ellis, 2009). Tootkaboni and Khatib (2014) maintain that in direct feedback the teacher provides the correct form, while in indirect feedback the teacher either indicates the location of error or the type of error. Researchers like Ellis, Basturkmen and Loewen (2001) have concluded that teachers prefer indirect feedback. There has also been some distinction concerning the focus of feedback. Tootkaboni and Khatib (2014) assert that the teacher may either provide unfocused feedback with extensive correction or focused feedback with intensive correction. In short, there are many researchable issues in the area of error correction in ELT.

Hyland and Anan (2006) have pointed out some potential issues in research in error correction. They maintain that error correction is a threefold process of identification, evaluation and correction, but most of the studies have addressed only the latter two processes. They observe that studies have investigated strategies teachers use for provision of feedback, but how teachers recognize students' errors have not been focused much.

In order to identify, analyze and correct an error, the foremost important step is to distinguish between a "mistake" and an "error". According to Brown (2000), a "mistake"

refers to a performance error in that it is a failure to utilize a known system correctly, while an "error" is a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of a native speaker, reflecting the interlanguage competence of the learner. Interlanguage is a term adopted by Selinker (1972). It refers to the distinction of the second language learners' system that has a structurally intermediate status between the native and target language learners. The conceptualization of the learner's interlanguage competence evinces that the learner is no longer looked on as a producer of imperfect language replete with mistakes, but as intelligent and creative being who follows logical steps of acquisition and creatively acts upon his linguistic environment. It is considered a good attempt on the part of the learner to produce order and structure to the linguistic stimuli surrounding him. The analysis of errors with this approach leads to an understanding of the psychological process of learning and the psychological process of foreign language learning. The beginning stages of learning a second language are characterized by a good deal of interlingual transfer from the native language. In the early stages, the native language is the only linguistic system upon which the learner can draw (Xie & Jing,2007). There can be some other causes of learners' errors. These could be the intralingual transfer, cultural interference and insufficient linguistic knowledge. Moreover, the learners may tend to use communicative strategies like avoidance, language switch and prefabricated patterns.

Similarly, Asassfeh (2013) puts forward four noteworthy observations about research in error correction. They are: 1) most of the research about error correction has been conducted in ESL context than EFL context, 2) there are no conclusive results about the usefulness or otherwise of error correction, 3) it is not clear whether direct feedback is more effective or indirect one, and 4) whether teachers should be selective in provision of feedback or address all errors by learners.

The present study intends to address some of these issues by investigating teachers' perception about error correction in grammar teaching in EFL context. Moreover, the study also seeks to investigate teachers' perceptions about the learners' errors and the correction work, and whether they should correct all oral and written errors or be selective in their feedback. It will also explore their teaching creeds whether they believe in traditional or innovative approach to error treatment/correction; believe in being implicit or explicit, direct or indirect, correcting immediately or delaying it, and using comments or no comments in error correction. Since there exists a major divide into the native and non-native teachers in the EFL context in Saudi Arabia in particular and all over the world in general (Hussain, M.S et el, 2012), the study will focus on finding the differences in approach towards Saudi adult EFL learners' errors in these two categories of the teachers.

METHODOLOGY

Mixed method approach has been used in this article using the quantitative and qualitative research tools in the following fashion:

Table 1. Research Tools

Quantitative Tool	Survey Items
	Errors should be welcomed in the EFL classes in Saudi Arabia.
	Errors indicate language learners' progress in the desired direction.
	Encouraging students to help each other in error correction causes discipline problems in EFL classes in Saudi Arabia.
	Only the grammar teachers in adult classes in Saudi Arabia should correct and explain students' errors.
	It is important to correct all grammatical errors in Saudi adult students' oral communication.
	Implicit error correction by the teacher gives a sense of achievement to the Saudi adult learners and they stay focused in the class.
	It is important to identify and correct all grammatical errors in the Saudi students' written work.
	A teacher should immediately correct Saudi students' errors and give them instant feedback in the language class.
	Delaying the correction work in the language class leads to bad habit formation in Saudi adult learners.
	A language teacher in the EFL class in Saudi Arabia should make frequent use of comments for the error correction.
Qualitative Tool	**Interview Questions**
	How do you view errors committed by your students in your English class in Saudi Arabia?
	How do you treat the errors committed by your students in English grammar?
	Do you think teachers' correction is more important or peer correction works better in Saudi Arabia?
	Do you think that students' grammatical errors should always be corrected?
	How would you compare and contrast the correction work on written and oral grammatical errors of your Saudi students?
	Can error correction affect students negatively? If yes, how? And how can we correct their errors without affecting them negatively?
	Do you believe that a language teacher should use comments for error correction?
	What do you think what is the right time for correcting the errors?
	What are your reservations and recommendations for the current grammatical error treatment practices in Saudi Arabia?

To find answers to the research question, data were collected from 50 EFL teachers working in different universities in Saudi Arabia. They were divided into native and non-native teachers. Out of 50 EFL teachers, 25 were natives and 25 were non-natives. To validate the quantitative data, the qualitative tool of interviews was also used. Ten teachers were interviewed keeping in mind the qualitative sample type: five natives and five non-natives.

A five point Likert scale questionnaire was administered. The questionnaire (quantitative tool) was developed on the basis of existing literature on teachers' beliefs about error correction in grammar teaching and the five questions posed by

Hendrickson. The questionnaire comprised ten closed-ended items covering all the five questions by Hendrickson (1978). 60 questionnaires were distributed among teachers, out of which 50 were returned. Thus the response rate was 83%. The internal consistency reliability of the instrument was found to be .795, which indicates that the instrument was internally reliable. As for the interview (qualitative tool), it was semi structured with nine interview questionnaire items framed and duly sent to the target population of five native teachers and five non-native teachers well in time to sensitize them on the issue and get to the depth of their perceptions and opinions (refer to appendix-A). This qualitative tool of semi structured interview served to validate the quantitative data on one hand, and brought the key themes of the issue under research on the surface on the other hand.

FINDINGS

Findings from quantitative research tool

The results of the survey items have been analyzed using SPSS at two stages. First, the differences of perceptions among teachers were found through percentages for all the seven items. Table 2 is a count percentage table which excludes 'neutral' category and the other four categories are combined into two. Second, independent samples t-tests were used to know the differences of perceptions between native and non-native teachers.

Table 2. Differences of perceptions through count percentages

	Errors be corrected	Teacher correct errors	Peers correct errors	Implicit error correction	Correct all oral errors	Correct all written errors	Immediately correct errors	Comments be given for error correction
Agree	75%	10%	36%	77%	30%	80%	52%	56%
Disagree	2%	70%	62%	8%	62%	20%	31%	28%

The results in the above table show that respondent teachers were slightly inclined towards traditional approach regarding error correction in grammar teaching. In the traditional teaching techniques, teachers immediately correct students' written errors and write comments in their notebooks in red ink. The results show that teachers are not very selective in their feedback: they tend to address almost all written errors committed by students. Thus their feedback is unfocused. Resultantly, students' proficiency level in the target language is not very satisfactory. However, an overwhelming majority of respondent teachers (77%) also believed that implicit-correction should be encouraged, which is in line with modern psychoanalysis of the affective side of the learners committing errors: the learners are corrected without being made embarrassed and keeping their affective filter low. Additionally, a great majority of respondent teachers (70%) are not in favor of teachers correcting students' errors. They seem to believe in alternate ways of correction like implicit correction, self-correction and peer correction. Moreover, a few teachers (30%) believed that students' oral errors should always be corrected. The findings reveal that teachers put more

emphasis on accuracy in writing skill than in speaking skills, and also believe in the basic function of language learning, that is, communication. It is mainly for this reason that a number of teachers (62%) disagree on correcting all oral errors of the learners. The results confirmed earlier studies that non-native English speaking teachers are generally more intolerant towards grammatical errors by students.

Descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were used to know the differences of perceptions between native and non-native teachers about error correction in English language teaching. The following table shows the mean score for each item of the questionnaire, along with the results of independent-samples t-test across them. Results of descriptive statistics and t-test for native and non-native teachers about error correction in grammar teaching are shown in the same table:

Table 3. Statistical Analysis

	Native Ts. Mean Score (25)	SD	Non-Native Ts. Mean Score (25)	SD	t-value	Df
Errors be corrected	3.64	1.31	4.34	0.67	2.370499	48
Teacher correct errors	1.9	2.07	2.4	0.96	1.09527	48
Peers correct errors	2.68	1.49	2.64	1.11	-0.10615	48
Correct all oral errors	2.52	1.36	2.28	1.06	-0.68712	48
Correct all written errors	3.84	1.22	4	1	0.5	48
Implicitly correct errors	3.4	0.98	3.88	0.6	2.057983	48
Immediately correct errors	3.22	1.27	3.44	1.19	0.624758	48
Comments be given for correction	3.8	1.13	3.04	1.17	-2.31261	48

* Ts = Teachers

As the above table shows there is no statistically significant difference between native and non-native teachers' perceptions regarding the five areas of error correction in grammar teaching. Native and non-native teachers had almost the same beliefs about the teachers correcting errors, taking help of peers for error correction, correcting all oral and written errors and immediate errors correction. The results indicate that native-nonnative divide has nothing to do with teachers' perceptions about error correction in grammar teaching. This result may be interpreted in terms of the same teaching environment. This makes sense in the context of a centralized system of education where administrative policies, syllabus and other aspects are decided by a single decision making body. However, there is found a native-nonnative divide in their different perception and practices about how they view learners' errors correction, the utility of implicit error correction and whether comments be given for correction. This difference is further discussed in the analysis of the data collected from the sample on the qualitative tool.

Findings from qualitative research tool

The qualitative tool used for this research was interview. The questions in the interviews focused on how the teachers perceive their students' errors, what they think could be the causes of the errors, what kind of errors their students make in English

class and how they treat their students' errors. All the teachers in the sample presented almost the same views regarding these aspects of errors correction. They find the errors committed by their learners not an impediment in learning but a sign of learning. The major causes of the errors made by the Saudi adult learners are found to be their first language interference and over generalization to some extent. All also agree that the error correction is a sensitive issue as it may harm the learner's integrity and self-confidence, and he may lose his interest in learning the language. Therefore, errors must be dealt with care and caution. However, error correction is considered indispensable in a language class.

Errors in a language class are inevitable. The language learners are always expected to make errors in their oral as well as written work. The old Grammar Translation method which stressed on the avoidance of errors in learners' work has got obsolete. Now the teachers are aware of the importance of learners' errors in a language class. They find these as guiding stars reflecting upon the learning process of learners. Mr. S. (non-native) finds these "natural phenomena". Mr. Steve considers them to be a "part of learning", whereas Dr. S. (non-native) takes them to be "the sign of learning". In other words, the teacher today is conscious of the fact that errors reflect how much the learners have learned and guide the teachers what next to focus on in language teaching.

Saudi adult learners are found to commit errors mainly due to their mother tongue influence. Their mother tongue "Arabic" is not only found to have influenced their spellings but also their grammatical structures. Resultantly, many spell certain words with the letter "b" instead of "letter "P" since Arabic language doesn't have any alphabet "p". Mr. M. (non-native) points out "they (Saudi learners) use "b" at the place of "p". The same kind of first language influence is witnessed in the Saudi adult learners' structures. Mr. S. (non-native) points out that following the Arabic word order in a noun phrase, the Saudi learners tend to make noun phrases in English and the result is "*horse beautiful" instead of "beautiful horse". Mr. S.S (native) thinks that "the students in Saudi Arab are processing English out of the Arabic, but this translation directly from Arabic to the correct English doesn't always work out." All the teachers agree to the point that one major reason for this flawed trend in Saudi learners is due to many reasons like lack of reading and writing practice, not enough time allocated in curriculum for reinforcement or revision and lack of homework culture. Mr P. (native) says "there is no reviewing, no homework culture, not having students review what they learned in class also slows down the learning process".

Correction of the learners' errors has always been a critical issue. The teachers engaged in teaching language to Saudi learners are also conscious of the complexities involved in error correction work. Correcting adult learners' error may play havoc instead of benefiting the learners if not done the right time and the right way. Mr. S. (non-native) opines that "it is not always necessary to tell the students that they are making mistakes". Dr. S. (non-native) shares his view that "… without hurting the self-confidence… ego and self-image of the learners, you can make some correction work".

An adult learners' self-image is the most sensitive part of his being which if affected may lead to adverse results. Mr. Stevens (native) says, "the confidence of many students is razor thin…if you immediately stop the student ad correct …it could create a barrier that could impede the learning process". Mr. M (native) says, "correcting the errors of the learners at the wrong time, it can really snatch the self-image and motivation of the learners and it can leave them emotionally drained".

All the teachers agree that not all errors need correction. However, the teacher must make a mental note of all the errors committed by the learners to work on it. Mr. S. (non-native) is of the opinion that "the major errors or mistake that the students commit in their writing exercises should be corrected…but the minor mistakes can be ignored." Dr. A.S. (non-native) shares her view that "there are times when error correction is inevitable…because of these errors, meaning gets affected". She also points out that "there are some structures which are part of …syllabus, and they (students) are tested in these items…these errors should be corrected". Moreover, the errors which may seem to become a permanent feature of learners' linguistic competence may need teachers' prime attention. In this regard, Dr. S. (non-native) is of the view that "(when) you feel that there is a collective sort of error made by all the students and correcting that will not hurt individual learners…correction of error (should be done) immediately…(otherwise) this may lead to a collective wrong habit formation." Mr. S.S (native) says "looking for trends and addressing them in a larger context for the whole class can be more comfortable for many students instead of feeling exposed and embarrassed".

The time when correction is inevitable, the teacher's task is to carry it out sensibly and in variety of ways. It is not advisable to stop and correct learners' errors in oral communication or speaking activities where the purpose is fluency and effective communication of ideas instead of accuracy and all correct sentence structure formation. Dr. S. (non-native) is of the opinion that "in oral communication… interfering the learners' communicative flow can be counterproductive". Dr. A. S. (non-native) thinks "… it depends on the kind of errors as well as the situation in which the error is committed … if the purpose of the activity is fluency, all errors need not be corrected… after they (students) have completed the task, the teacher may have a discussion on global errors". However, all teachers agree that almost all writing errors must be corrected. Even the comments are sometimes necessary to direct the learners towards correct structures. Teacher's comments also play a very important role in motivating or de-motivating the students towards adopting correct structures. Dr. S. (non-native) is of the view that "comments are double edged weapon… a big tool with the teacher to either destroy the learners or make or break them". Therefore, a teacher should avoid giving negative or discouraging comments verbally as well as in writing. Comments must be positive and encouraging. Mr. P (native) says," …negative comments or criticism or hurting the ego of the learner… can play a havoc with the learner's zeal and zest for learning". Teacher's comments may be an explanation of the error or source of motivation or reinforcement. Mr. Stevens (native) is of the view that "maintaining a positive atmosphere is critical." Moreover, the correction may be done in many ways.

First of all, all the teachers discourage using direct correction of the learners' errors since it may make the learner feel embarrassed in front of the whole class and may de-motivate him in the long run. Therefore, the teacher may correct globally taking the whole class in general or may use peer correction at time. Mr. Stevens says, "many times peer to peer interaction is beneficial because of friendly relaxed relationship". Dr. S. (non-native) is of the view that "peer correction makes the class learner centered. Students feel responsibility for their learning. They have the sense of achievement. They are more involved into the class and motivated and they take part in activities in an enthusiastic manner".

CONCLUSION

This research paper has attempted to clarify some hypothetical misconceptions. This study investigated the influence of social and cultural background of teachers belonging to the native or nonnative category on their approach towards learners' error correction in grammar teaching. There has been a general assumption in EFL world that native and non-native teachers have different approaches on the issue at hand. However, the results of the study showed similarity of perceptions between native and non-native teachers regarding error correction in grammar teaching. There may be differences of beliefs between native and non-native teachers at school level, but at higher level, while dealing with adult learners, all teachers have almost the same perceptions. Teachers' beliefs about error correction in grammar teaching are independent of these individual characteristics.

However, the study has also confirmed some prevalent notions. The results indicated that teachers are now in a transitional mode and trying to move away from the strict traditional approach regarding error correction in grammar teaching. A growing body of research (Grami, 2010; Rehman & Alhaisoni, 2013) believes that EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia follow traditional teaching methods due to which students' English proficiency level is very low. In this study, there were a number of teacher who favored correcting all written errors and many oral errors, and were not only intolerant towards students' errors but also believed that feedback must be immediately provided in written mistakes. However, at the same time, the respondent teachers believed in a more collaborative approach towards error correction, in the form of peer correction. Then, there was a majority of teachers who disagreed with correcting all errors in their learners' oral performance. Moreover, they believed in tolerating these errors till the time they became a hindrance in overall communication. The results showed a combination of traditional and modern teaching techniques towards error correction on the part of EFL teachers. However, further research is needed to show the impact of these mixed teaching approaches on students' language learning. Moreover, further studies need to be done to investigate the factors which lead to these mixed teaching techniques on the part of EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia.

The results of the study suggest several implications: first, it will bring about awareness in EFL teaching by informing the teachers about the error correction approaches regardless of their background as native or non-native teachers. Secondly, the study

throws light on the changing attitude of all English teachers to their adult learners' errors in English classes from being more of traditional approach towards more of communicative approach. This shows that they understand the communicative needs of their learners and try to bring them on the path of independent users of the language, by making them conscious of the real purpose of learning a language-communication. This is done by adopting various techniques of correction and timely feedback for some more serious errors. However, they still need to know the ways of dealing with the errors at the right time to facilitate their learners in their learning endeavors. Moreover, this study enriches our understanding of the way teachers perceive correction of learners' errors in grammar teaching.

The findings suggest that continuous in-service training is necessary to develop teachers more professionally. It will allow the teachers to aware themselves of the new trends in the field of language education and thus reflect on their practices. This will provide teachers with a forum to discuss their perceptions about different aspect of language teaching and also get feedback about their teaching. Consequently, teachers will be polished professionally. Limited space and scope of the paper does not permit the researchers to suggest the drastic changes in the teaching approaches, methods and techniques of the EFL teachers. It does, however provide a starting point in that direction. It is hoped that this paper will lead to contemplative teaching practices and shape up the teachers as action researchers being the practitioners in the teaching field. It may also invite the researchers to explore the best ways of carrying out the EFL learners' error correction task. The psychological impact of error correction on the EFL adult learners has been an under researched area. This paper paves the way for the future researches and researchers to explore this area further.

REFERENCES

Abdollahzadeh, E., & Maleki, S. (2011). On the effect of recast in task-based grammar instruction across two age groups: adolescents vs adults. *Linguistics and Literary Broad Research and Innovation 2*(1), 51-69.

Asassfeh, S.M. (2013). Corrective feedback (CF) and English-Major EFL learners' ability in grammatical error detection and correction. *English Language Teaching 6*(8), 85-94.

Borg, S. (1999). Teachers' theories in grammar teaching. *ELT Journal, 53*(3), 157-167.

Brown, H. D. (2000). *Principles of language learning and teaching*. Longman, Inc.

Diab, N. M. (2010). Effects of peer- versus self-editing on students' revision of language errors in revised drafts. *System 38*, 85-95.

Ellis, R. (2009). A typology of written corrective feedback types. *ELT Journal, 63*(2), 97-107.

Ellis, R., Basturkmen, H., & Loewen, S. (2001). Preemptive focus on form in the ESL classroom. *TESOL Quarterly, 35*(3), 407-432.

Ferris, D. R. (2002). *Treatment of error in second language student writing*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Grami, M. A. G. (2010). *The Effects of Integrating Peer Feedback into University-Level ESL Writing Curriculum: A Comparative Study in a Saudi Context.* Doctoral dissertation, Newcastle University.

Harmer, J. (2001). *The practice of English language teaching*. Edinburg: Pearson Education Ltd.

Harmer, J. (2004). *How to teach English*. London: Longman.

Hendrickson, J. (1978). Error correction in foreign language teaching: Recent theory, research, and practice. *Modern Language Journal 62*(8), 387-398.

Hussain, M. S.; Hussain, M. M.; Awan, M. A; Farid, A. (2012). Teachers Identity in the Modern World, and the Factors Which Shape them up Professionally and Psychologically. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research* 3(1), 93-101.

Hyland, K., Annan, E. (2006). Teachers' perceptions of error: The effects of first language and experience. *System 34*, 509-519.

Lin, G. H., & Chien, P. S. (2009). An investigation into effectiveness of peer feedback. *Journal of Applied Foreign Language Fortune Institute of Technology, 3*, 79-87.

Long, M. H. (1977). *Teacher feedback on learner error: Mapping cognitions*. In H. D. Brown, C. A. Yorio, & R. H. Crymes (Eds), On TESOL '77 (pp. 278-293). Washington: TESOL. 278-294.

Lyster, R., & Saito, K. (2010). Oral feedback in classroom SLA: A meta-analysis. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 32*(2), 265-302.

Quinn, P. (2014). *Delayed vs immediate corrective feedback on orally produced passive errors in English.* Doctoral dissertation, University of Toronto.

Rahman, M., Alhaisoni, E. (2013). Teaching English in Saudi Arabia: Prospects and Challenges. *Academic Research International 4*(1), 112-118.

Richards, J., & Rodgers, T. (2001). *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching* (2nd ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rodriguez, A.G., & McKay, S. (2010). Professional Development for Experienced Teachers Working with Adult English Language Learners. CAELA Network Brief. *Centre for Adult English*

  Language Acquisition. Washington, D. C.

Rollinson, P. (2005). Using peer feedback in the ESL writing class. *ELT Journal, 59*(1), 23-30.

Samad, A. A., & Nurusus, E. (2015). The influence of teaching experience, school location and academic background on teachers' beliefs in teaching grammar. *Asian Social Science, 11*(15),

257-266. Scharle, A. & Szabo, A. (2000). *Learner Autonomy*. Ed. Penny Ur. London: Cambridge University Press.

Sultana, A. (2009). Peer correction in ESL classrooms. *BARC University Journal, 6*(1), 11-19.

Tootkaboni, A. A. & Khatib, M. (2014). The efficacy of various kinds of error feedback on improving writing accuracy of EFL learners. *Bellaterra Journal of Teaching & Learning Language & Literature, 7*(3), 30-46.

Truscott, S. (1996). The case against grammar correction in L2 writing classes. *Language Learning 46*(2), 327-369.

Xie, F., & Jing, X. (2007. Error analysis and the EFL classroom teaching. *US-China Education Review, 4 (9), 10—14.*

APPENDIX-A

Hope and pray that you are fine. I am conducting research on the topic *"Error Correction in Teaching English to EFL Adult Learners: A Study in Current Teaching Practices in Saudi Arabia"*. Your cooperation is needed in carrying out this project successfully.

Name: (Optional):-

Please select/highlight the option according to the following key:

Strongly disagree	1
Disagree	2
Neutral	3
Agree	4
Strongly agree	5

STATEMENTS	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Errors should be welcomed in the EFL classes in Saudi Arabia.	1	2	3	4	5
Errors indicate language learners' progress in the desired direction.	1	2	3	4	5
Encouraging students to help each other in error correction causes discipline problems in EFL classes in Saudi Arabia.	1	2	3	4	5
Only the grammar teachers in adult classes in Saudi Arabia should correct and explain students' errors.	1	2	3	4	5
It is important to correct all grammatical errors in Saudi adult students' oral communication.	1	2	3	4	5
Implicit error correction by the teacher gives a sense of achievement to the Saudi adult learners and they stay focused in the class.	1	2	3	4	5
It is important to identify and correct all grammatical errors in the Saudi students' written work.	1	2	3	4	5
A teacher should immediately correct Saudi students' errors and give them instant feedback in the language class.	1	2	3	4	5
Delaying the correction work in the language class leads to bad habit formation in Saudi adult learners.	1	2	3	4	5
A language teacher in the EFL class in Saudi Arabia should make frequent use of comments for the error correction.	1	2	3	4	5

Thanks and regards

APPENDIX-B

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

EFL Teachers' Error Correction Practices in Grammar Teaching in Saudi Arabia

Name:

Hope and pray that you are fine. I am conducting research on the topic "*Error Correction in Teaching Grammar to EFL Adult Learners: A Study in Current English Language Teaching Practices in Saudi Arabia*". Your cooperation is needed in carrying out this project successfully. I want to approach your good self for conducting an interview with the permission of recording it and quoting it in the research. Following are the structured questions of the interview. Some subsidiary questions will also emerge in the course of interview.

1. How do you view errors committed by your students in your English class in Saudi Arabia?

2. How do you treat the errors committed by your students in English grammar?

3. Do you think teachers' correction is more important or peer correction works better in Saudi Arabia?

4. Do you think that students' grammatical errors should always be corrected?

5. How would you compare and contrast the correction work on written and oral grammatical errors of your Saudi students?

6. Can error correction affect students negatively? If yes, how? And how can we correct their errors without affecting them negatively?

7. Do you believe that a language teacher should use comments for error correction?

8. What do you think what is the right time for correcting the errors?

9. What are your reservations and recommendations for the current grammatical error treatment practices in Saudi Arabia?