

UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT



UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH PROPOSAL:

“ERROR CORRECTION TECHNIQUES USED BY ENGLISH AS FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHERS
FOR CORRECTING STUDENTS’ ORAL DISCOURSE IN INTERMEDIATE I COURSES AT THE
FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR DURING THE
SEMESTER II, 2014”

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“The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires.”

— William Arthur Ward

In memory of our beloved teacher

René Hernandez

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*“For the LORD gives wisdom;
From His mouth come knowledge and understanding”*

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STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Learning English has become a very important tool in our society due to globalization and the growing opportunities industrialized countries offer to those who are capable of developing in a specific area. These opportunities motivate many people to learn a second language since they know they will have more chances of succeeding in their lives. However, while learning a second language, students find out it is not as easy as they thought because there are some factors that make the learning process difficult. One of the most important factors students deal with in the learning process are errors and mistakes. Errors and mistakes are a natural part of the learning process and they need to be treated as a teachable moment. Although the word “mistake” and “error” seem interchangeable, they are quite different from each other. A mistake can be thought of a slip of the tongue and can be self-corrected when attention is called. On the other hand, an error occurs because the learner does not know the correct form or structure of the language being learned, and thus it cannot be self-corrected. Even though, linguistics treats errors and mistakes differently; in this research, both will be treated the same since in daily life people see them as the same.

This is how the idea of working on this project began because when the researchers were studying in the different English levels at the FLD, there were some teachers that did not correct the mistakes students made in the classes. Then when students moved to the next English level, they were making the same mistake, but in that case they were corrected by the teacher and the students tried to never make the same mistake again. Another reason for developing this research was that now that when those students began to work as teachers, they could see some colleagues making some spelling, grammar and different mistakes and they are transmitting these mistakes to their

students. So, with the desire of helping English teachers and future English teachers too, the group decided to work on a research like this one with the purpose of putting together a theoretical framework for teachers and future professionals in this field that will make error correction more effective in the classroom.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROBLEM

As it is discussed, errors and mistakes in this document will mean the same, even though; linguistics treats errors and mistakes differently. But, is it important to correct mistakes? Is it effective? Does it work? Or is it not good for students? There are three reasons why correcting students' mistakes are really important for their learning process.

The first reason why correcting mistakes is important is because it helps students to learn better. When teachers correct their students, students are aware of what mistakes they are making; as a result, students do not make the same mistake or at least they know that they are wrong, so they can correct themselves. As John Orlando (2011) says failure is one of the best teachers. We learn to write and speak by making mistakes and correcting our mistakes.

The second reason why correcting mistakes is important is because in that way students, as future teachers, will not make the same mistakes. Since they are going to be teachers, they will not make the same mistakes they did in the past because they were corrected during their learning process so that they will not transmit any mistake to their students. This means that they will learn from their mistakes. Pat Hensley (2005) states that we as teachers need to let students finish something instead of expecting perfection in the final product. We need to let them learn from their mistakes. This is a real life situation because when the students get out in the real world, they will make mistakes, and they need to learn that it is not the end of the world. Having students look at their final product and reflect on what they did right as well as what they did wrong is very important. If students cannot see that they did anything right, they will give up and stop trying.

The third reason why correcting mistakes is important, is that if teachers correct students in a gently way, the level of anxiety will be reduced and also students will feel motivated. M.A.J (2009) says that an important reason why teachers' correcting errors gently is really helpful is that it supports the student in terms of integrative and

assimilative motivation. Integrative motivated learners have a tendency to learn both the language and culture that is an inseparable element of learning languages. Furthermore, learners who have assimilative motivation have a tendency to become a part of the target culture. These types of motivations are vital in a language classroom.

All these reasons listed above are the main reasons why the researchers consider that this is a part of the learning process and all teachers must involve themselves in. It is not that teachers are just correcting mistakes, but they are helping students to be better professionals in the near future. However, the researchers found in their experience that even though the theory says that students must be corrected, many teachers do not apply error correction techniques and for that reason nowadays there are many “professionals” that are not performing their English in the correct way.

OBJECTIVES

General Objectives:

- ◆ To detect which are the most common mistakes students in Intermediate I courses at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador during the Semester II, 2014 make in order to provide teachers with a theoretical framework that will make error correction more effective

Specific Objectives:

- ◆ To determine which are the most common mistakes students make in Intermediate I courses at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador during the Semester II, 2014
- ◆ To find out which are the most frequently used error correction techniques in Intermediate I courses at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador during the Semester II, 2014
- ◆ To establish which of the error correction techniques used by teachers in the Intermediate I courses at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador during the Semester II, 2014 are effective

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- ◆ Which are the most common mistakes students make in Intermediate I courses at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador during the Semester II, 2014?

- ◆ Which are the most frequently used error correction techniques in the classroom in Intermediate I courses at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador during the Semester II, 2014?

- ◆ How are errors corrected in Intermediate I courses at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador during the Semester II, 2014?

- ◆ Do teachers correct the mistakes students make in Intermediate I courses at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador during the Semester II, 2014?

- ◆ Do teachers correct the mistakes students make in Intermediate I courses at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador during the Semester II, 2014 in an effective way?

- ◆ What type of errors do teachers correct in Intermediate I courses at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador during the Semester II, 2014?

JUSTIFICATION

The main reasons for performing an evaluation about the error correction techniques implemented in the Intermediate I courses at the Foreign Language Department has been based on the problems that have been observed in students when they try to communicate or express their ideas to the class or to their classmates. This can be seen just as a problem that every single student has, classifying them as good students or bad students but, it is not that simple because it is harder and more serious that it looks like. Taking into account the importance of this phenomenon, the purpose of this research project is to detect why students from intermediate courses are carrying speaking errors without being corrected by the teacher or themselves, performing fossilization on the language and converting the errors a habit in their daily lives. Regarding whether errors should be corrected or not, Ur (1996) noted that positions vary according to the method. That is why it is very important to realize if teachers at the FLD are paying the necessary attention to this issue. If they do not, this research report will help not only to students of this department, but also teachers to succeed when teaching English. Also, this paper will enrich the knowledge that teachers have about error correction techniques because at least the most important theories will be mentioned. When developing the research, specific data will be obtained using research instruments that have been already established before. The data obtained will be useful for both, teachers and students of the department. As a result, this research project has the intention to propose a theoretical framework for the teachers to provide a variety of techniques or methods that they can apply in order to improve the classes they develop and help students to succeed on their speaking skills.

DELIMITATION OF THE PROBLEM

Error correction techniques are very useful and important in every single foreign language class since learning a second Language is not as easy as some students may think it is. For some students that would be like a piece of cake, but for some others it is not. In light of what has been mentioned above, this study is based on how error correction techniques are being implemented in the FLD at the University of El Salvador and it was developed in the first and second semester of 2014. Moreover, this study has been based as a descriptive research because it will explain and describe the issue being studied. In addition, the subjects that are taking into account are students from the English Teaching major. These students are the ones that are taking Intermediate I. According to the semester registration, there are eight groups in this level. The sample has been taken within these groups and the time to develop the observation was from August to October, 2014.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In a foreign language classroom, it is common to measure students' knowledge by looking at the mistakes they make, since teachers will figure out in which areas students will need some backing. Errors play an important role in the learning process and they can be seen as something natural. Without errors, how do teachers know there is something that needs improvement? For students who are learning a second language, learning is not much a question of acquiring a set of automatic habits, but a process of discovering the underlying rules, categories and systems of choice in the language by some sort of processing by the learner of the language presented to him by the teacher (Corder, 1973). But, how do students know they are acquiring the language being learned? In order to see if the learning process is effective, students have to go through several stages and processes. One of the most important factors included in almost all the stages and processes of language learning is error making. As Brooks (1960) points out, "like sin, error is to be avoided and its influence overcome, but its presence is to be expected". So, error making is inevitable and it is necessary and crucial to language learning. For that same reason, it is really important that teachers know the type of errors that exist and also the techniques to use in order to correct the errors effectively.

But, why are errors important? According to Corder (2000), errors in the classroom are significant in three ways: one is that they provide the teacher with information about how much the learner has learned; secondly they provide the teacher with evidence of how the language was learned; and finally they function as devices by which the learner discovers the rules of the target language.

There is another question that needs to be answered, and this one is: which mistakes should be corrected in the language classroom? Every day in every English class, teachers perform error correction. Since no human learning is perfect, it comes as no surprise that students of English make a lot of mistakes in the process of acquiring the new language. In reaction to that, their teachers must often provide them with some kind of feedback, which often takes the form of correction. Although the process of correcting

might seem straightforward at first sight, it is in fact a very complex issue that involves many decisions on the part of the teacher before any correction as such is actually carried out.

One of the most common mistakes treated in the classroom are spoken errors. Spoken errors present the greatest difficulty since they can easily destroy a student's confidence with too many interruptions (Burt, 1975). Also, overcorrection cuts off students' sentences, causes them to lose their train of thought, and prevents them from relating to a new sentence (Burt and Kiparsky 1972). "Corrections of all students' errors will also reduce their desire to say anything at all.

The purpose of error correction is to improve learners' accuracy and language acquisition. To help learners become not only increasingly accurate but also increasingly independent as English speakers, they should always be provided with ample opportunities to self-correct, and engage in peer correction. As criteria are fashioned, the teacher will develop preferred ways to address errors (cf. Chaudron 1977, 1988).

What kinds of mistakes can be encountered in the language classroom?

In order to develop speaking skills effectively, teachers should be familiar with the following four stages that characterize the interlanguage development. The four stages are based on observations of what the learner does in terms of an error.

The first stage of random errors is a stage which Corder (1973) called 'pre-systematic'. Here, the learner is only vaguely aware that there is some systematic order to a particular class of items. Inconsistencies like "He cans speak French" occur. The second stage of interlanguage development is called 'emergent stage'. The most remarkable feature of this stage is the fact that the learner has already begun to internalize certain rules. This stage is also characterized by 'backsliding' in which the learner seems to have made certain progress and then gets back to some previous stage. The learner is not able to correct errors, even if these are pointed out by somebody else. The third stage is a 'systematic' stage. In this stage, learners are able to correct the produced errors. The final

stage is the 'stabilization' or 'post-systematic' stage. The linguistic system is complete enough and thus, attention can be paid predominantly to fluency practice. It means, learners can correct their errors without waiting for feedback from other people.

It is also inevitable to remark that correction of speech errors is a complex phenomenon and many variables like age, educational background, level of proficiency, and interests of language learners should be taken into consideration. Another thing to consider is the activities that learners are involved in. In case of fluency practice, it is strongly recommended to sustain the flow of oral performance and postpone the correction of errors to final stages of language lesson.

Types of Errors

In an EFL classroom, it is common to find different types of errors students make. Researchers in the field of applied linguistics usually distinguish between two types of errors: performance errors and competence errors. Performance errors are those mistakes made by learners when they are tired or hurried. Normally, this type of error is not serious and can be overcome with little effort by the learner. Competence errors, on the other hand, are more serious than performance errors since competence errors reflect inadequate learning. In this connection, it is important to note that researchers like Gefen (1979), distinguish between mistakes which are lapses in performance and errors which reflect inadequate competence. From everyday practice it is quite clear that students want their errors to be corrected. Teachers' classroom behaviour is in this respect influenced by chosen teaching methodology as well (Freeman 2002). Some methods recommend no direct treatment of errors at all. In natural environment (e.g. mother tongue acquisition), children are corrected by parents in case of only small percentage of errors that they produce. Other researchers as Burt and Kiparsky (1974) distinguish between local and global errors.

Local errors do not hinder communication and understanding the meaning of an utterance. This can also be a linguistic error that makes a form or structure in a sentence appear awkward. However, the intended meaning of a sentence is not hard to be understood by the teacher or any other person because the communication is not blocked and the teacher can decide to correct the error or let it pass. Local errors involve noun and verb inflections, and the use of articles, prepositions, and auxiliaries. It means, they only affect a single element of a sentence, but do not prevent a message from being heard. Global errors, on the other hand, are more serious than local errors because they interfere with communication and disrupt the meaning of utterances. Native speakers attend only to global errors and not in the form of direct and immediate interruptions, but at transition points in conversation. So, global errors cause misinterpretation of the message in the utterance or to consider that message incomprehensible within the textual context. When global errors involve wrong word order in a sentence and the communication between the teacher and the student is blocked, the teacher has to require correction from the student or the student can correct himself (Valdman, 1975).

Causes of Errors

As English teachers, it is very important to identify what makes students commit errors, so they can help overcome those errors. But what are the main causes of error making? There are mainly two major sources of errors in second language learning. The first one is interference from the native language and the second one can be attributed to intralingual and developmental factors. When someone is learning a new language, it is common for a student to apply the knowledge of the native language to the target language. The native language of a learner plays a significant role while learning a second language because students contrast the characteristics of the target language with their mother tongue. This may not be a successful strategy for the students since the languages are not the same. Errors due to the influence of the native language are called interlingual errors. Interlingual errors are also called transfer or interference errors. The view that the

native language plays a mostly negative role was emphasized as early as the forties and the fifties by Fries (1945) and Lado (1957). Also Brown says that “interlingual transfer is a significant source of errors as the native language is the only previous linguistic system upon which the learner can draw.”

Although recently researchers tend to minimize interlingual errors and emphasize intralingual and developmental errors (Dulay and Burt 1974), negative transfer or interference is still acknowledged as an important factor in second language learning (Jordens, 1977; Kellerman, 1979; Touchie, 1983). Intralingual and developmental errors are due to the difficulty of the second language. Intralingual errors reflect general characteristics of the rule learning such as faulty generalization, incomplete application of rules and failure to learn conditions under which rules apply.

According to the authors mentioned before, Intralingual and developmental factors include the following:

- 1. Simplification:** Learners often choose simple forms and constructions instead of more complex ones. An example of simplification might involve the use of simple present instead of the present perfect continuous.
- 2. Overgeneralization:** This is the use of one form or construction in one context and extending its application to other contexts where it should not apply. Examples of overgeneralization include the use of “*teached*” and “*goed*” as the past tense forms of “*teach*” and “*go*” and the omission of the third person singular *s* under the heavy pressure of all other endless forms as in *he go*. It should be noted that simplification and overgeneralization are used by learners in order to reduce their linguistic burden.
- 3. Hypercorrection:** Sometimes the zealous efforts of teachers in correcting their students' errors induce the students to make errors in otherwise correct forms. Stenson (1978) calls this type of error “induced errors.” As Brown (1980) mentions,

students often make errors because of a misleading explanation from the teacher, faulty presentation of a structure of word in a textbook, or even because of a pattern that was memorized in a drill but improperly contextualized.

- 4. Faulty teaching:** Sometimes it happens that learners' errors are teacher-induced ones, i.e., caused by the teacher, teaching materials, or the order of presentation. This factor is closely related to hypercorrection above. Also, it is interesting to note that some teachers are even influenced by their pupils' errors in the course of long teaching.
- 5. Fossilization:** Some errors, especially errors in pronunciation, persist for long periods and become quite difficult to get rid of. According to Selinker (1979), fossilization is when certain erroneous linguistic terms, rules or subsystems fossilize in the interlanguage of the learner of a foreign language and he tends to keep these forms in his interlanguage and these forms keep showing themselves when the learner speaks the language being learned.
- 6. Avoidance:** Some syntactic structures are difficult to produce by some learners. Consequently, these learners avoid these structures and use instead simpler structures. Arab ESL learners avoid the passive voice while Japanese learners avoid relativization in English.
- 7. Inadequate learning:** This is mainly caused by ignorance of rule restrictions or under differentiation and incomplete learning. An example is omission of the third person singular "s" as in: He want.
- 8. False concepts hypothesized:** Many learners' errors can be attributed to wrong hypotheses formed by these learners about the target language. For example, some learners think that "is" is the marker of the present tense. So, they produce: He is talk to

the teacher. Similarly, they think that “was” is the past tense marker. Hence they say: It was happened last night.

Error Correction Techniques Identified in ESL Classrooms

Once the teacher has identified the causes of error making in his students, he can choose the appropriate error correction technique to lead a successful learning in the classroom and avoid fossilization or faulty teaching. Also, teachers need to be aware of the task or activity that is develop in the class to whether correct errors or not and select the technique that suits the best for that activity. While some forms of correction are explicitly provided by the teacher, others aim to actively involve the learners in the process of identifying and correcting their own errors; the latter approach produces more positive results. Woods (1989) talked indeed about how hard it is for a teacher to correct errors in the classroom. He mentions that it is not an easy task for teachers since they have to identify an error when students are speaking; second, to interpret that error and then correct it. But how can a teacher correct his students? There are many error correction techniques that teachers can apply during their classes or courses and some of those techniques used in ESL classrooms have been identified in previous studies (Lyster, 1998; Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Bartran & Walton, 1994; Schachter, 1981); some of them are the following:

Recasting and Prompting

One of the error correction techniques a teacher can use is recasting and prompting. These techniques are used to deal with errors of language learners; recast provides reformulations of all parts of a learner’s erroneous utterance without changing its central meaning (Long, Inagaki & Ortega, 1998). Recast certainly helps the student to direct him in the correct meaning he wants to express. For example, when a student is giving information related to an issue on his community, he makes a mistake using an auxiliary. The teacher can repeat what the student has just said so that the student will

recognize the mistake he has just made and correct himself immediately. On the other hand, prompting withholds the reformulations and encourages learners to correct their errors by themselves (Lyster, 2002). In this method, the teacher does not correct the mistake made by the student. Instead, the teacher tries to get the student to self-correct himself. Teachers and researchers, who are very attracted to this method, express that in this way more attention is paid to the linguistic form. Moreover; the student is creating an awareness of noticing the correction. For example, when a student makes an error, the teacher, by using this method, does not tell him the correct form. However the teacher directs the attention to the error that the student has made so that the student is able to self-correct.

Repetition

Another error correction technique teachers can use in the classroom is repetition. Repetition is when a teacher focuses mainly on repeating the student's error by pointing it out with a different intonation, so the student can realize when the error was made and immediately create a self-correction action (Abdullah, 2010). Repetition can be simply seen as the easiest technique to implement inside the classroom but it requires to be applied in the correct way. There are two types of repetition the first one is the selective one- also known as on the spot- and the second type is delayed repetition. The first one, on the spot can be dangerous for the students' confidence. This means that the teacher can do so with caution and not too often, and choose an appropriate technique that does not slow down the pace too much. The teacher needs to be careful not to 'jump' on one student for making a mistake. The teacher can ask his students to repeat what they have said by using phrases like: "please repeat" or "please say that again" (ask for repetition) or he can also echo up to the error or let it hang for students to finish (repeat up to the error). The second type of repetition is delayed error correction repetition (after). At an appropriate stop in the lesson, the teacher can make some error correction. A good place to do this is at the end of a section, practice, or activity (error correction makes a nice transition between parts of the lesson). This technique is also divided into two categories: repeat up to the error and repetition of the correct answer.

Repeat up to the error is good for vocabulary errors; the teacher can write the sentence on the board up to the error and have students finish the sentence. This can be done with all students, thus re-enforcing the correct form to be used by hearing several variations. On the other hand, repetition of the correct answer is when the error has been corrected and the teacher makes his students repeat the correct answer. This technique works best with low level students or when the error seems to have become a bad habit.

Elicitation

Elicitation is another error correction technique that can be used in the EFL classroom. If a teacher takes the time to gather information to get the correct use or form of the language, he is implementing elicitation. *Elicitation* is a correction technique whose aim is to engage the learners in identifying and correcting their own errors. Lyster and Ranta (1997) describe elicitation as the most effective way of addressing learners' errors because it involves the learner in the correction process, which in turn leads to the most amount of uptake. Correspondingly, Bartran and Walton (1994) add that elicitation is very effective because having learners do the correction by themselves can help them feel more motivated, independent, and cooperative. Peer correction is a form of positive automatic correction that results from the interlocutor's inability to comprehend an utterance; the speaker is then forced to make an effort to correct his previous utterance in order to get his idea(s) across. More explicit forms of correction have also been identified. For example, Schachter (1981) claims that some ESL teachers rely on the use of the interrogative word 'What?' as a correction technique. By asking 'What?' the teacher explicitly indicates to the learner that his previous utterance was not clear and that it needs to be repaired. However, Schachter says (1981) this technique is not very effective because teachers also use 'What?' "to register shock, surprise, or even disagreement with regard to the last utterance" (p.128). The problem relies on the fact that teachers use 'What?' for communicative purposes, not merely to correct errors, and students are often confused as to the teacher's intent (i.e., it is ambiguous). One example of elicitation would be when a student says "She love going to the zoo", the teacher can ask him if he is talking

about the singular or plural person, or he can ask the student to repeat the sentence again.

Integrated approach

Another error correction technique identified in the ESL classroom is the one known as integrated approach. Consequently, learners' attention is drawn to the connection between language form and meaning at the crucial moment when they need to use the forms to convey their intended meaning. This means that teachers can correct students when they are speaking because this time is crucial for students so that they can use the language form and meaning by the time they are speaking. One example of this method is when a student is describing a lived situation in the past and he or she uses an incorrect grammar structure. In a situation like this, the teacher can tell the student an accurate linguistic form so that the student can express his idea. This kind of method is rarely seen applied by teachers because sometimes they do not want to stop the flow of the conversation, as a result, the student who makes the mistake will continue doing it. (Loewen 2007)

Overt or Explicit Correction

Another technique recognized in handling errors produced in SLA is *overt or explicit correction*, defined by Lyster and Ranta (1997) as explicitly providing the learner with the correct form. These researchers argue that overt correction is one of the least ambiguous forms of correction; yet, in their study, this technique did not show to be very effective. Bartram and Walton (1994) observed that although explicit correction is frequently used in communicative activities, it interrupts the learner's intent to communicate, making the learner feel uncomfortable, and inhibiting his or her willingness to communicate in the target language.

Body Language Technique

A somewhat different type of correction technique, *body language*, has also been suggested as an effective tool in handling language errors. It refers to nonverbal cues through which the learner's attempt to communicate is non-verbally interrupted. Bartran and Walton (1994) suggested, for instance, that hand movements can be used to indicate errors about word order and tense (mainly present, past, and future). Moreover, they proposed that facial expressions such as frowning and doubtful looks are effective ways to tell the learner that there is a problem in the utterance he has produced. Correspondingly, Schachter (1981) suggested that language teachers should rely less on verbal correction and use a series of hand signals to indicate when a learner makes an error. She also proposed the use of hand movements to indicate errors related to tense, agreement, pluralization, prepositions, and word order.

It is clear that error correction plays a very important role in the learning process and it is a vital part of teaching. Now, there is a new question that needs to be answered and it is who should correct students? Traditionally, teachers have been the most common sources of feedback to language learners in the EFL classroom (Alwright & Bailey, 1991). However, with the CLT this concept about correction has changed and teachers have become more of one possible sources of correction. As Edge explains, this has been done with the purpose of giving learners the opportunity to get involved in error correction, so they can think about the language used in the classroom (1989). Also, he explains that if correction is needed and if the student who commits an error cannot correct it nor can any other classmate help him, then the teacher has to give more help without giving the correct form straight away. Broughton et al (2003) point out correction may also come from other people than the teacher such as the learner himself (self-correction) or other learners in the classroom (peer correction). The types of correction regarding who should do it according to Paul Adams (2013) are self-correction, peer-correction and teacher correction.

Self-correction

The first method mentioned by Adams is self-correction. Self-correction demonstrates comprehension of and responsibility for the language. It builds awareness of the language, in turn leading to more self-sufficient speakers. Also, it makes students more confident speakers and it encourages independence from the teacher. Moreover, students are more motivated and confident with themselves. Students who can self-correct obviously understand the mistake, and make the necessary adjustments to their language production. It thus allows the teacher to gauge understanding and application of the target language. If a student can make the necessary correction to newly taught information, then it demonstrates he has absorbed the information and he can apply the target language in real conversation. With self-correction, there also comes an increased awareness of the language. Students can better notice and correct problem areas, whether these problems result from personal weaknesses or ones connected to their L1 (2013).

Peer Correction

Another method teachers can use is peer correction. This is a method of correcting work where other students in the class correct mistakes rather than having the teacher correct everything. Peer correction is useful because it means involving the whole class in the moment and it also allows the teacher to check what the rest of the class knows. If, for example, it becomes evident that no one in the class really knows where the problem lies then the teacher can take appropriate steps to explain it to everyone. (Cotter, 2009)

Teacher correction

The last method that can be used to correct students' errors is teacher correction. This is probably the most popular method of correction in the ESL/EFL classroom. The teacher helps the student by identifying the problems accurately. The correct method is given immediately. The teacher can use modeling or highlighting to catch any errors in the early stages, before they are repeated by the students. The teacher can also focus on

common errors made as a class rather than picking on individual students, this can lead to group correction. When working alongside the teacher, the student can help in analyzing the error. However, error correction can be very demanding on the teacher and threaten the confidence of the students (Adams, 2013). As some researchers say, this is an effective means, but one that should be last and the least frequently used form of English or other foreign language correction. It is the least recommendable to be used in the class. The teacher observes the mistake and corrects the student.

In spite of the fact that correction is useful, there are still some language theorists who find error correction completely useless (Truscott 2007; Krashen 1982) or claim that it influences only the immediate performance but leaves their general competence untouched (Schwartz 1993). Even though some theorists say it is good to correct students' errors, some others say errors should be ignored because it affects students' motivation in a negative way and disrupts the flow of the communication in the class. Although errors are evidence of learner development, teachers should avoid using correction strategies that might embarrass students, frustrate them or even prevent them from communicating (King 1974). Krashen points out that error correction can raise the students' level of anxiety and that this could impede their learning of the language. This is why error correction should not be seen or understood as criticism or punishment since correction is a way of reminding students of the forms of Standard English (Edge 1989). When correcting, teachers help students to become more accurate in their performance and to be aware of error making. So, a few questions have to be answered to help teachers at the Foreign Language Department make informed decision regarding this issue. Some of these questions are the following:

- ◆ Which are the most common mistakes students make in Intermediate I courses?
- ◆ Which are the most frequently used error correction techniques in the classroom?
- ◆ How are errors corrected?
- ◆ Do teachers correct the mistakes students make?

- ◆ Do teachers correct the mistakes students make in an effective way?
- ◆ What type of errors do teachers correct?

TYPE OF STUDY

The type of study carried out in this research was the descriptive study. A descriptive research design is a scientific method which involves observing and describing the behavior of a subject without influencing it in any way. This was used with the goal of finding out how error correction was implemented in the Foreign Language Department at the University of El Salvador. The subjects in this type of study were observed in a completely natural and unchanged environment. This means that the observers went to the classrooms and were silent participants without affecting the environment in which they were developed.

RESEARCH DESIGN

In order to answer the research questions stated at the beginning of this report, a non-experimental research design was developed. This type of design helped to give validity to the study. The way in which the non-experimental design was implemented was throughout three different observation guides and one questionnaire. Observation was considered as the form of validating other evidence previously done by other authors. Additionally, Observation, as Judith Bell (2010:191) points out, can be useful in discovering whether people do what they say they do, or behave in the way they claim to behave. Moreover, it was fundamentally necessary to find evidence throughout an observation. The phenomenon was observed as given in its natural environment. Besides that, the questionnaire helped to contrast what students say happen in the classroom to what really takes place in a regular class. The variables in this report were neither manipulated nor compared. What has been gotten for this design is going to help to look for a solution to the issue that is being studied.

POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The population of this study consisted of 266 students who were taking Intermediate English I at the FLD at the University of El Salvador. To choose the sample, a probabilistic sample was made. A probabilistic sampling method is any method of sampling that utilizes some form of random selection. The groups chosen to administer the observation guides were selected by a random process. In order to do so, there were eight pieces of paper with the number of each group that attend classes. The two pieces of paper were taken from a box which indicated who the participants of this study would be. For the questionnaire, the researchers decided to include a 25% of each group, in order to have the opinion and feelings of the rest of students. These were the groups and the number of students that each one had:

Group 1: 19 students

Group 6: 39 students

Group 2: 34 students

Group 7: 42 students

Group 3: 36 students

Group 8: 34 students

Group 4: 0¹

Group 9: 23 students

Group 5: 39 students

So, the 25% of each group is as follow:

Group 1: 19 = 5

$$19 \times 25\% = 4.7 = 5$$

Group 2: 34 = 9

$$34 \times 25\% = 8.5 = 9$$

Group 3: 36 = 9

$$36 \times 25\% = 9 = 9$$

Group 5: 39 = 10

$$39 \times 25\% = 9.7 = 10$$

Group 6: 39 = 10

$$39 \times 25\% = 9.7 = 10$$

¹ This group was closed and a new one was opened for students who could not register the subject. The new group is group nº 9

$$\text{Group 7: } 42 = 11 \qquad 42 \times 25\% = 10.5 = 11$$

$$\text{Group 8: } 34 = 9 \qquad 34 \times 25\% = 8.5 = 9$$

$$\text{Group 9: } 23 = 6 \qquad 23 \times 25\% = 5.7 = 6$$

After this process, the groups that were observed were group N° 8 and group N°9. The first group attended classes from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. and the second one from 6:15 to 8:00 a.m. For the questionnaire, the students chosen were either volunteers or selected by the teacher in charge of the group.

The reason why a 25% of the population was chosen was upon the first advisor's suggestion. It was intended to use the formula presented by Sampieri in his book Research Methodology, but due to time the previous formula was used (25%).

DATA GATHERING PROCESS

Elaboration of the instruments

The instruments designed for this research were three observation guides and one questionnaire for students. The first one focused on the types of errors students commit during their classes. On it, local and global errors were presented and the categories they are sub divided. There was also a section where the observers could write any comment that was relevant to the investigation. The second observation guide focused on the techniques used to correct students' errors and it was divided in self-correction, peer correction, teacher correction and also, there was a space for no corrections made in the classroom. In the first category, the observers checked how errors were corrected in the classroom. They could be either self-corrected, teacher corrected, peer corrected or not corrected, in the second category, the observers wrote how many errors were corrected in the class. At the end, there were a total of errors corrected or not. The last observation guide focused on the stage of the class in which students were corrected. This observation guide was divided into the stages of the class, presentation, practice or production stage; the types of activity develop and a section to write relevant information of the class observed. As in the second observation guide, there were a total of errors corrected and if they were self-corrected, teacher corrected or peer corrected. The questionnaire designed had five close-ended questions related to students' oral mistakes and their reaction to error correction. The statements had being created in order to get firsthand information from students to get their opinions about the topic being studied.

The participants of this study were two groups of Intermediate English level I from the University of El Salvador. One group was attending classes in the morning and the second one in the afternoon. The observers asked for permission to the teachers in charge of each group so the instruments could be administered in one month (from mid-August and September). Each observation guide was administered in seven days and the results were compared with the theory about error correction.

DATA ANALYSIS

The data gotten from the different instruments was analyzed according to the objectives that each one had. This was with the purpose of codifying the data in a statistical point of view. In the first instrument, the analysis was statistical since the frequency from the type of error that students committed was obtained. Moreover, the results showed the mode between the two categories that were global and local errors and the sub categories that they are divided into. In the second observation guide, the frequency for the techniques that teachers used the most was presented. Also, the way in which errors were corrected, they could be corrected by using teacher-correction, peer-correction and self-correction. As in the previous one, the mode was given. The third observation guide showed in which stage of the classes observed students were corrected. The second instrument that was a questionnaire was analyzed by taking the frequency about student's opinions in how they were corrected in the class. All these were done by using a program called SPSS. This was with the purpose of presenting charts and graphs of the relevant information gotten from these instruments and to answer the research questions. By doing so, the information was compared with what theory says and what happens in real life scenario and to build the conclusions and recommendations.

QUESTIONARE

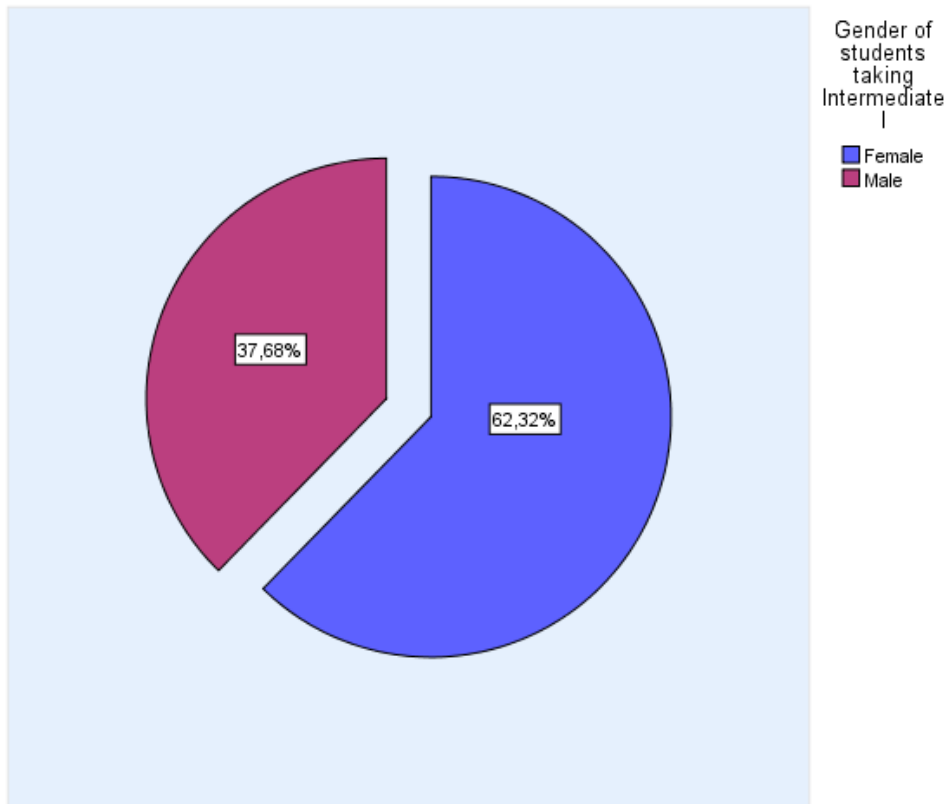
Generalities:

Gender of students taking Intermediate English I

Statistics		
Gender of students taking Intermediate I		
N	Valid	69
	Missing	0
Mean		1,38
Median		1,00
Mode		1
Std. Deviation		,488

Gender of students taking Intermediate I					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	43	62,3	62,3	62,3
	Male	26	37,7	37,7	100,0
	Total	69	100,0	100,0	

Chart 1



Source: Questionnaire administered to students from Intermediate English I at the University of El Salvador, Semester II-2014

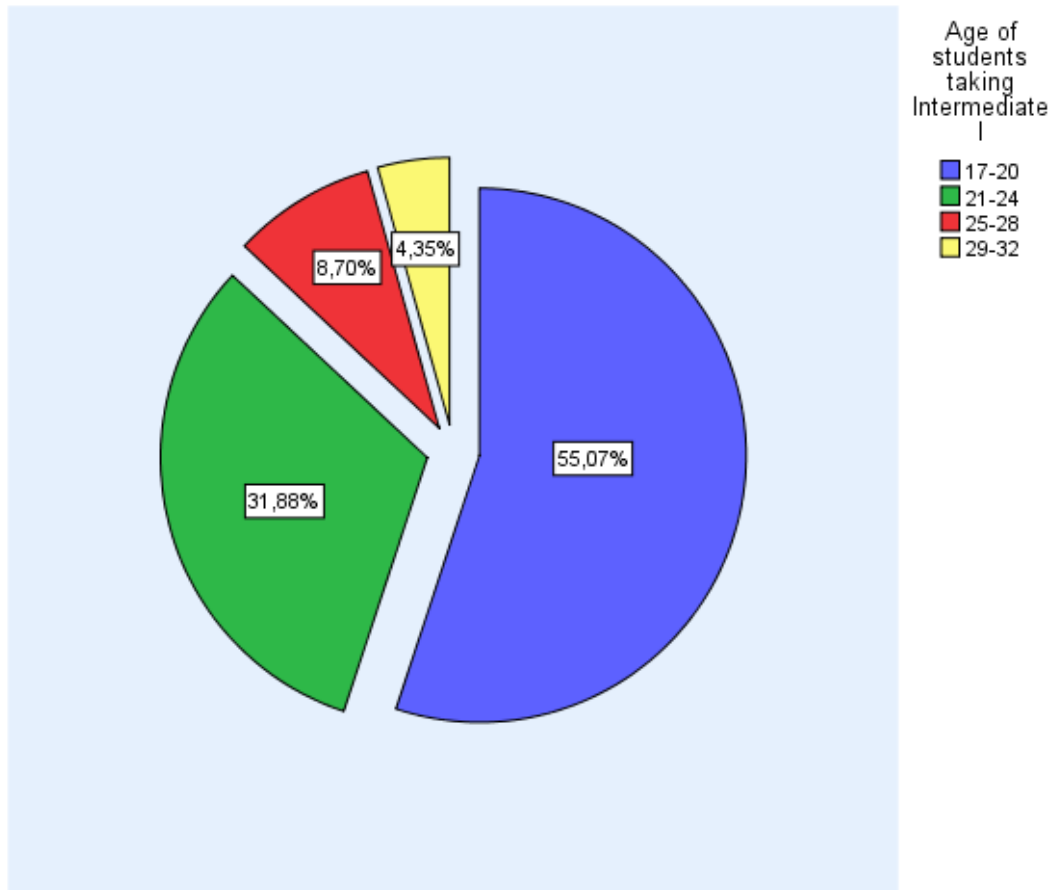
The first question that was asked to the population selected from the sample in the questionnaire was their gender, on this regard; the result showed that 62.3 % were female (43 women). On the other hand, 37.7 % of the population was male. Based on this, it can be said that the majority of the population was female. In the pie chart that is below it has been reflected this data.

Age of students taking Intermediate English I

Statistics		
Age of students taking Intermediate I		
N	Valid	69
	Missing	0
Mean		1,62
Median		1,00
Mode		1
Std. Deviation		,824

Age of students taking Intermediate I					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	17-20	38	55,1	55,1	55,1
	21-24	22	31,9	31,9	87,0
	25-28	6	8,7	8,7	95,7
	29-32	3	4,3	4,3	100,0
	Total	69	100,0	100,0	

Chart 2



Source: Questionnaire administered to students from Intermediate English I at the University of El Salvador, Semester II-2014

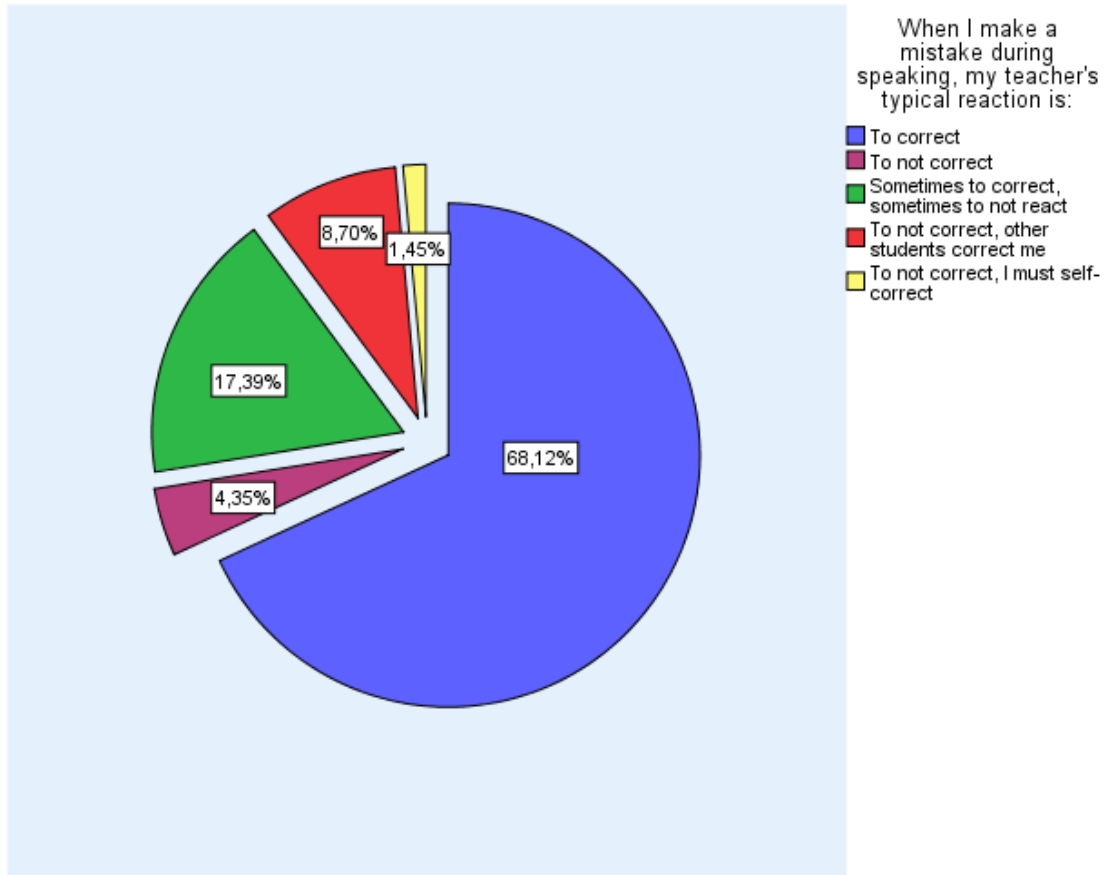
In the chart above, it has been gathered what was the age of the students taking intermediate I at the time that the instrument was distributed. The results showed that students taking this class were between the ages from 17 to 20 years old. This category is the most frequent in the study since it has a 55.1 percent. The lowest age gathered in the same question was the one that was between 29 and 32 years old with a 4.3 %. The average that remained in the middle was students from 21 to 24 years old with 22 frequencies having a 31.9 percent in study.

1. When I make a mistake during speaking, my teacher's typical reaction is:

Statistics		
When I make a mistake during speaking, my teacher's typical reaction is:		
N	Valid	69
	Missing	0
Mean		1,71
Median		1,00
Mode		1
Std. Deviation		1,126

When I make a mistake during speaking, my teacher's typical reaction is:					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	To correct	47	68,1	68,1	68,1
	To not correct	3	4,3	4,3	72,5
	Sometimes to correct, sometimes to not react	12	17,4	17,4	89,9
	To not correct, other students correct me	6	8,7	8,7	98,6
	To not correct, I must self-correct	1	1,4	1,4	100,0
	Total	69	100,0	100,0	

Chart 3



Source: Questionnaire administered to students from Intermediate English I at the University of El Salvador, Semester II-2014

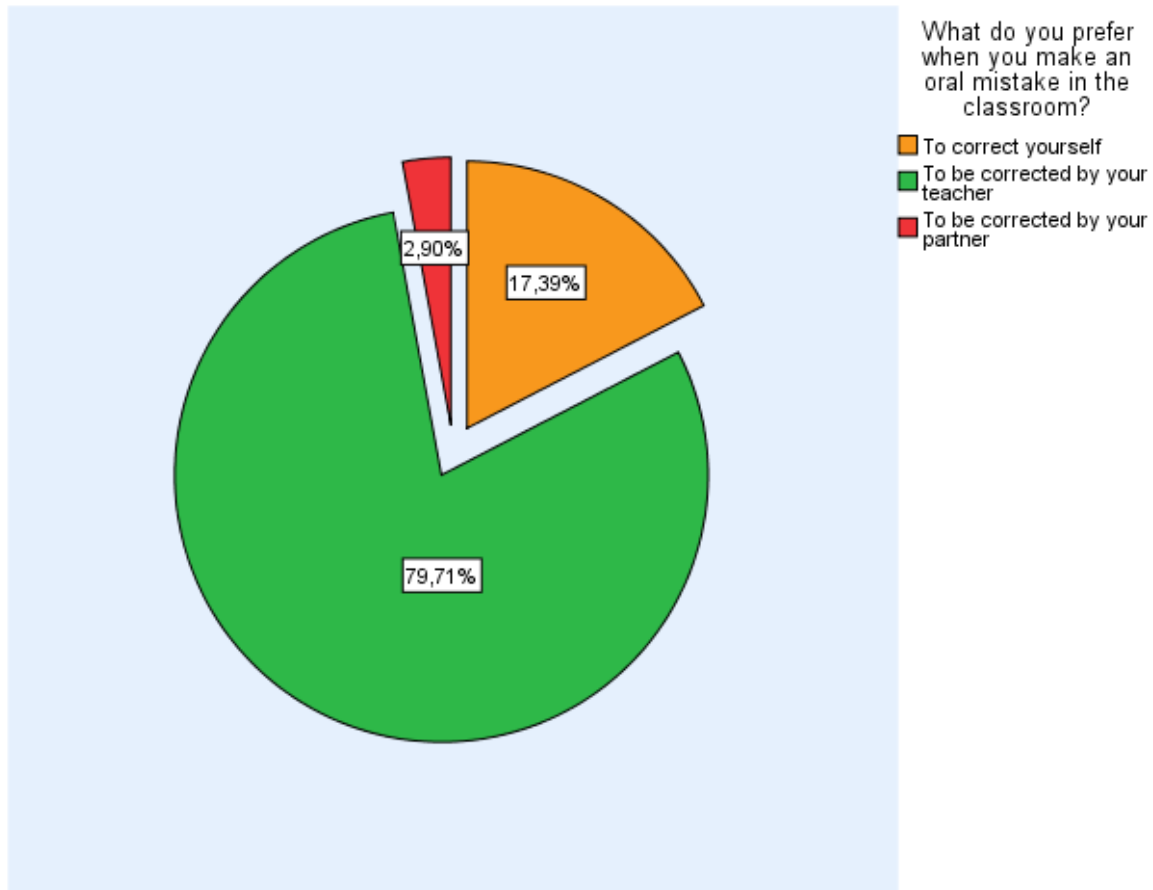
This question was made to the students in order to know how is their teacher's typical reaction when they make a mistake in speaking activities. The chart revealed that most students agreed teachers correct them when making a mistake with a 68.1%. Yet, there still are some students that considered teachers are sometimes correcting them and sometimes they are not, showing a 17.4 percent in the results. The lowest result gathered from the study was self-correction when making a mistake with just a 1.47%, this means that students are expecting to be corrected rather than correct themselves in speaking activities.

2. What do you prefer when you make an oral mistake in the classroom?

Statistics		
What do you prefer when you make an oral mistake in the classroom?		
N	Valid	69
	Missing	0
Mean		1,86
Median		2,00
Mode		2
Std. Deviation		,430

What do you prefer when you make an oral mistake in the classroom?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	To correct yourself	12	17,4	17,4	17,4
	To be corrected by your teacher	55	79,7	79,7	97,1
	To be corrected by your partner	2	2,9	2,9	100,0
	Total	69	100,0	100,0	

Chart 4



Source: Questionnaire administered to students from Intermediate English I at the University of El Salvador, Semester II-2014

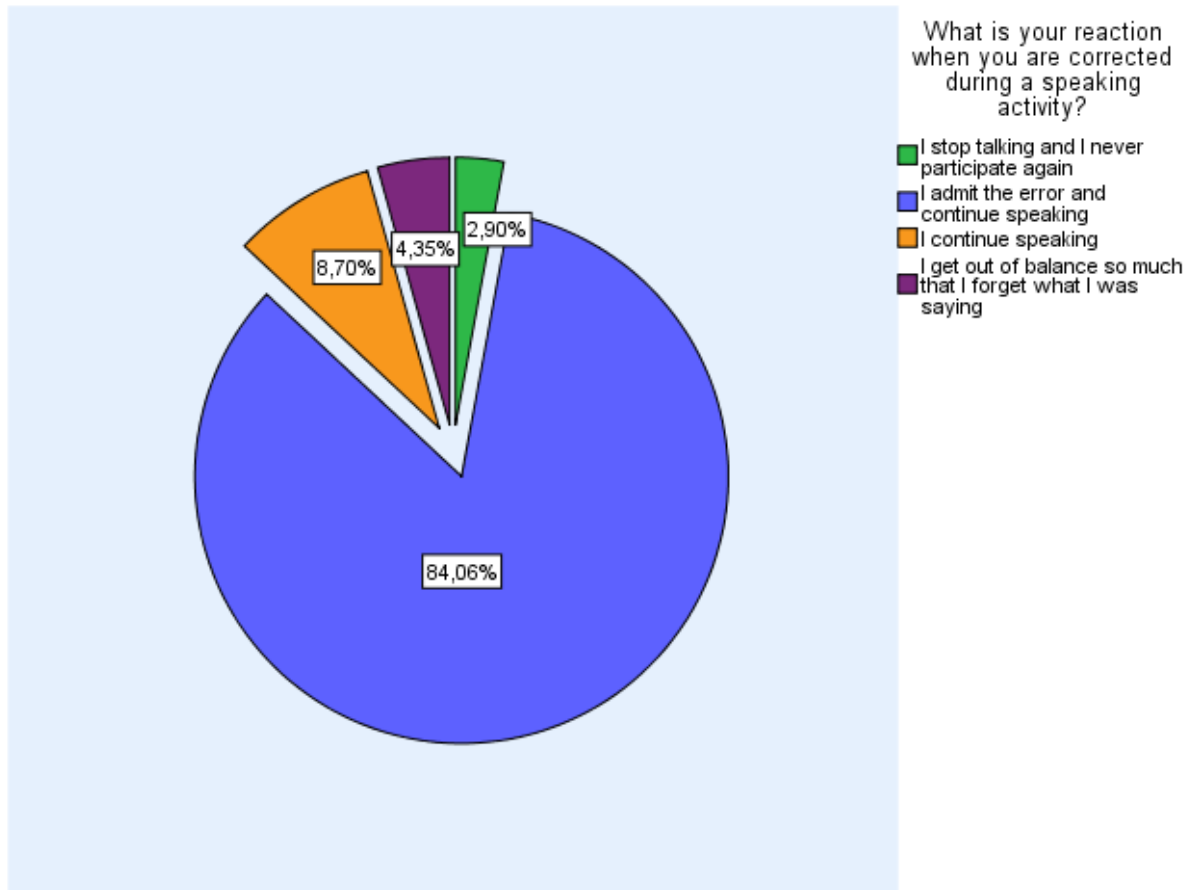
This question was asked to the students in order to know students preferences when making an oral mistake in a class. The results gotten showed that they prefer being corrected by their teachers with a 79.7 percent. On the other hand, a 17.4% prefer to correct themselves rather than the teacher or other classmates. A few students preferred to be corrected by a partner with a total of 2.9 %. This showed that more students are expecting to be corrected by the teacher than correct themselves when making a mistake in an oral activity

3. What is your reaction when you are corrected during a speaking activity?

Statistics		
What is your reaction when you are corrected during a speaking activity?		
N	Valid	69
	Missing	0
Mean		2,14
Median		2,00
Mode		2
Std. Deviation		,522

What is your reaction when you are corrected during a speaking activity?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	I stop talking and I never participate again	2	2,9	2,9	2,9
	I admit the error and continue speaking	58	84,1	84,1	87,0
	I continue speaking	6	8,7	8,7	95,7
	I get out of balance so much that I forget what I was saying	3	4,3	4,3	100,0
	Total	69	100,0	100,0	

Chart 5



Source: Questionnaire administered to students from Intermediate English I at the University of El Salvador, Semester II-2014

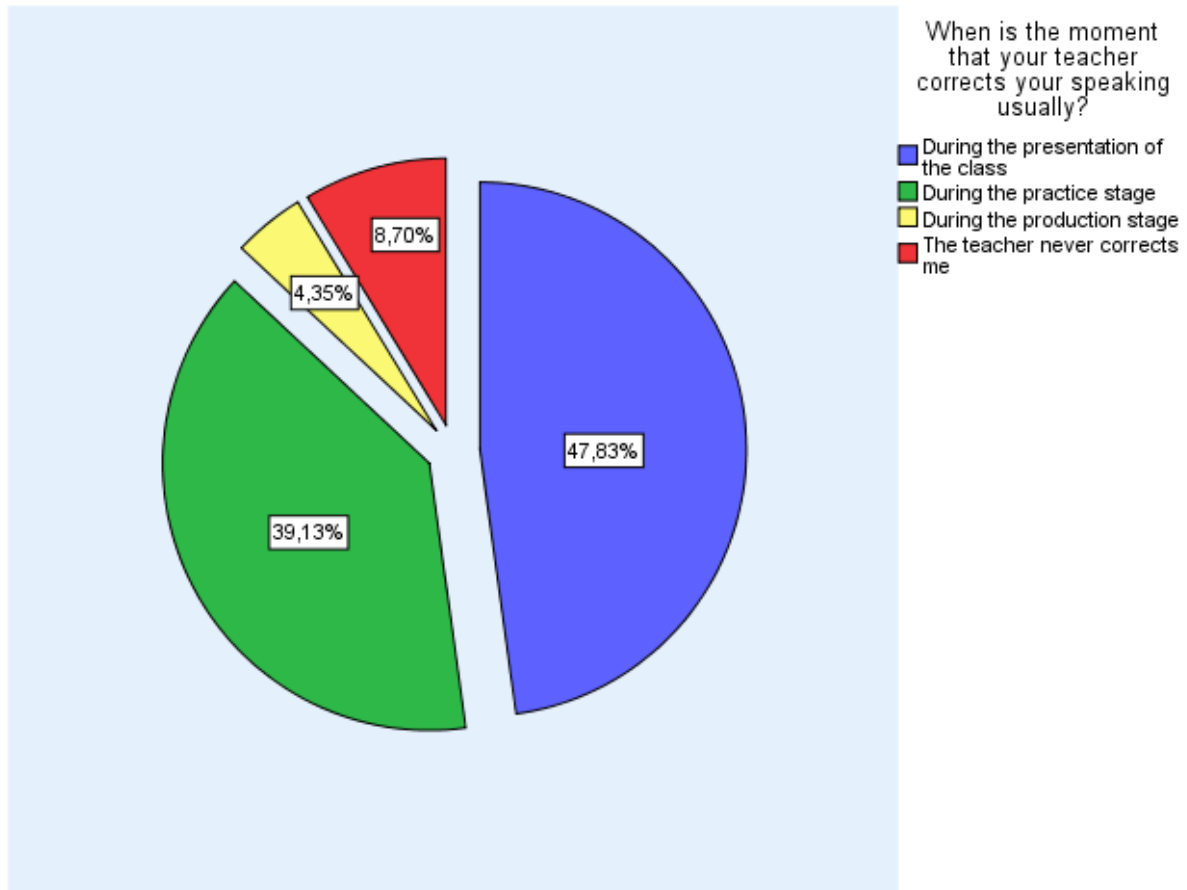
This question was made to the students to see their reactions when they are corrected during a speaking activity. The results revealed that most students admitted the error and continued speaking with an 84.1 %. Another result gotten from the same question was that a frequency of 6 students agreed they just continue speaking without paying any attention to the mistake they have made having an 8.7 percent. The result that is not frequent, yet it is happening, is that student at this level get out of balance so much that they forgot what they were saying with a 4.3 percent in the chart.

4) When is the moment that your teacher corrects your speaking usually?

Statistics		
When is the moment that your teacher corrects your speaking usually?		
N	Valid	69
	Missing	0
Mean		1,74
Median		2,00
Mode		1
Std. Deviation		,902

When is the moment that your teacher corrects your speaking usually?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	During the presentation of the class	33	47,8	47,8	47,8
	During the practice stage	27	39,1	39,1	87,0
	During the production stage	3	4,3	4,3	91,3
	The teacher never corrects me	6	8,7	8,7	100,0
	Total	69	100,0	100,0	

Chart 6



Source: Questionnaire administered to students from Intermediate English I at the University of El Salvador, Semester II-2014

This question in particular was asked to students to check at what stage they were corrected the most. The results showed that students were corrected the most during the presentation stage having a 47.8 out of 100 percent. In addition, 27 students agreed they are being corrected during the practice activity with a 39.1 percent. Yet, some students feel they are being corrected at the production stage showing a 4.3 percent out of 100. This means that some students are being corrected in the stage that is not the one they must be corrected since mentioned before in the last stage students have understood the structure and they are able to use it with no troubles.

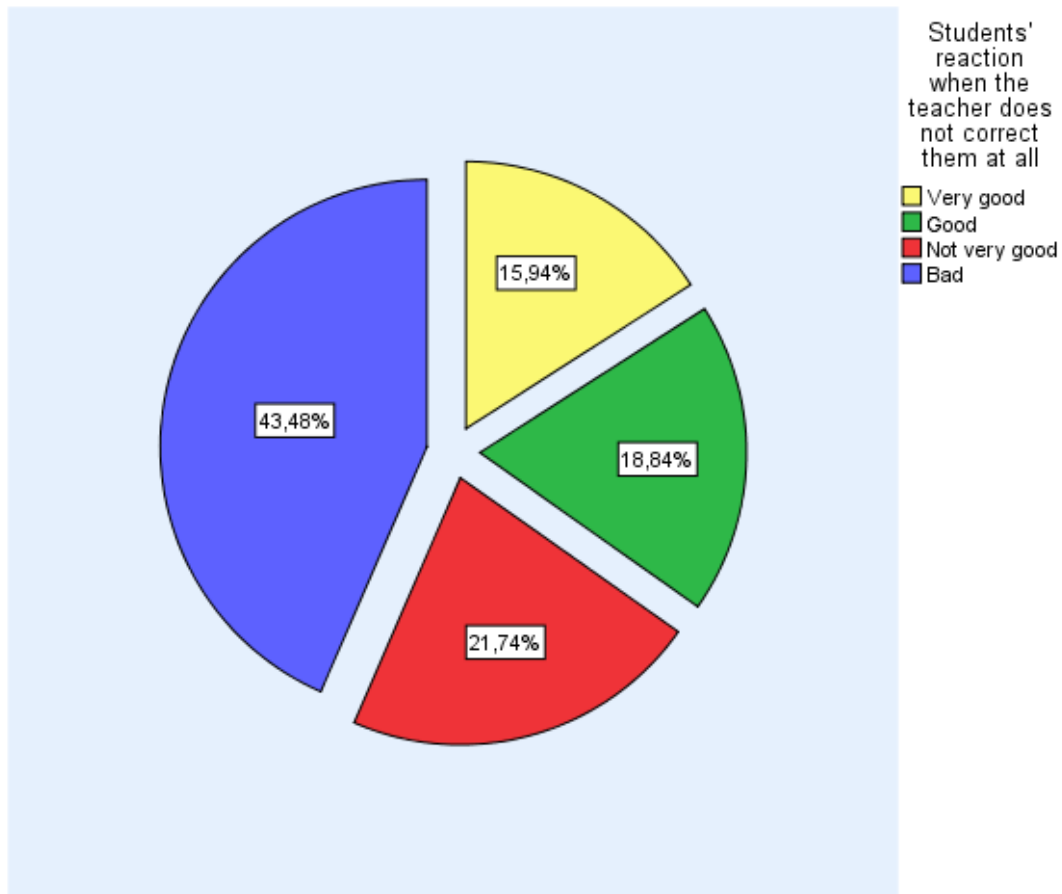
5. When I make a mistake during speaking, it is very good / good / not very good / bad when my teacher...

a) Does not correct me at all

Statistics		
Students' reaction when the teacher does not correct them at all		
N	Valid	69
	Missing	0
Mean		2,93
Median		3,00
Mode		4
Std. Deviation		1,129

Students' reaction when the teacher does not correct them at all					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very good	11	15,9	15,9	15,9
	Good	13	18,8	18,8	34,8
	Not very good	15	21,7	21,7	56,5
	Bad	30	43,5	43,5	100,0
	Total	69	100,0	100,0	

Chart 7



Source: Questionnaire administered to students from Intermediate English I at the University of El Salvador, Semester II-2014

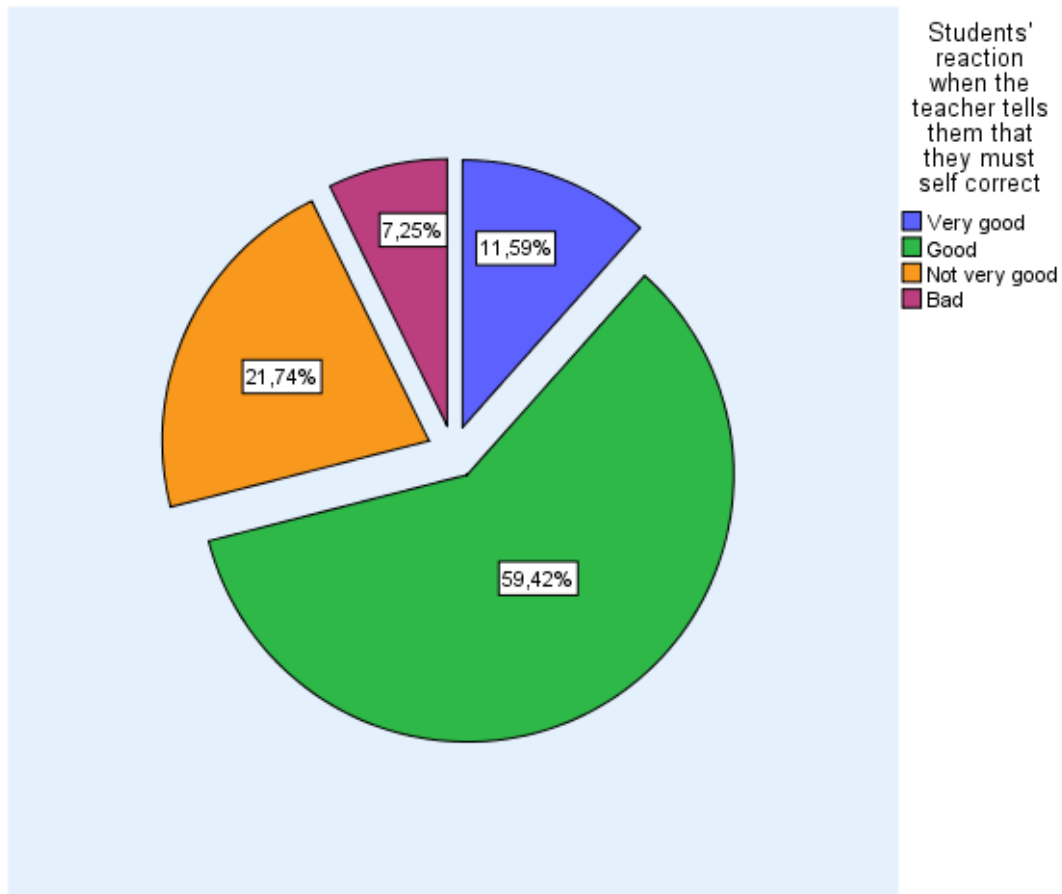
This graph shows that students considered very important to be corrected in the class either by the teachers or themselves. A 43.48% of the population said that they feel bad when they are corrected. This can give a wrong message that teachers do not pay attention to them or they really do not care about error correction. A 21.74% said it is not very good as explained before. Only a 34.78% of students considered that is very good or good not to be corrected by their teachers during a speaking activity.

b) Tells me that I have made a mistake but I must self- correct

Statistics		
Students' reaction when the teacher tells them that they must self correct		
N	Valid	69
	Missing	0
Mean		2,25
Median		2,00
Mode		2
Std. Deviation		,755

Students' reaction when the teacher tells them that they must self correct					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very good	8	11,6	11,6	11,6
	Good	41	59,4	59,4	71,0
	Not very good	15	21,7	21,7	92,8
	Bad	5	7,2	7,2	100,0
	Total	69	100,0	100,0	

Chart 8



Source: Questionnaire administered to students from Intermediate English I at the University of El Salvador, Semester II-2014

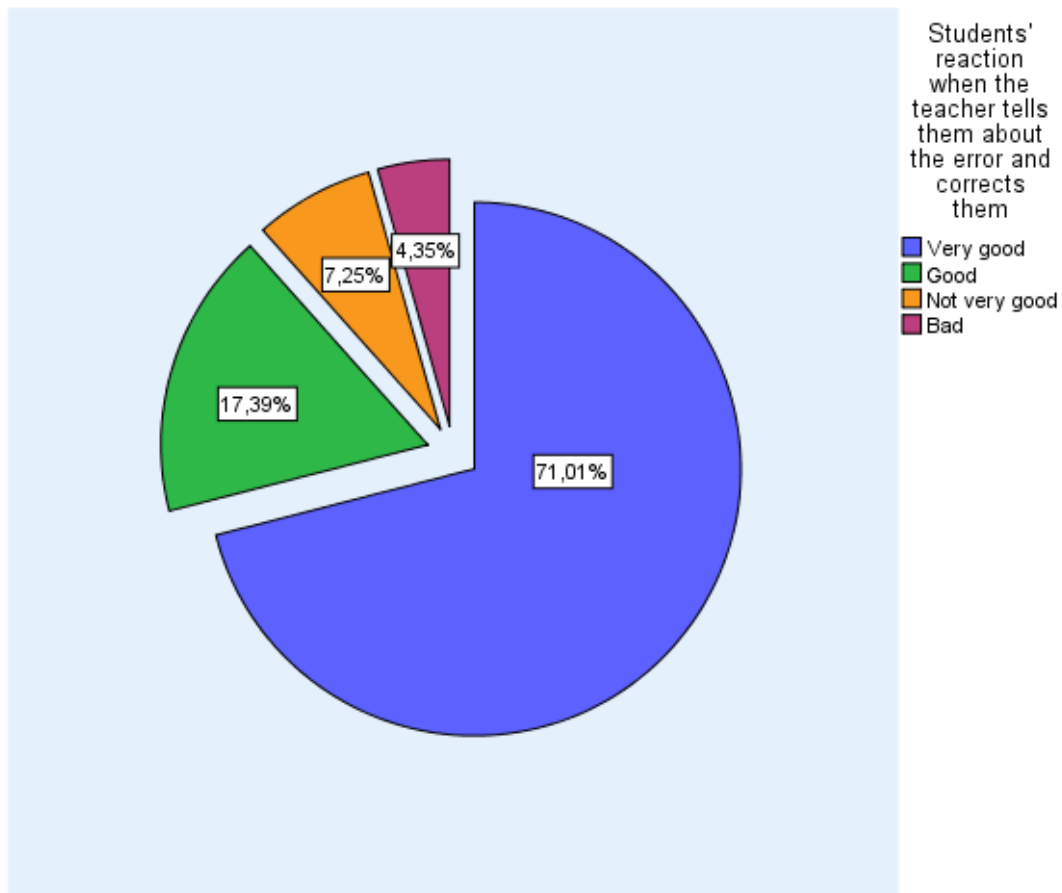
This graph shows the reactions students have when they are prompted to self-correct. A 59.42% of them feel good when their teachers tell them to self-correct, whereas a 28.99% do not feel good or do not like this. It means that a 28.99% of students are expecting to be corrected by their teachers. Somehow, it is not good because they are not independent and they keep waiting to either be corrected by the teacher or their classmates.

c) Tells me about the error and corrects me

Statistics		
Students' reaction when the teacher tells them about the error and corrects them		
N	Valid	69
	Missing	0
Mean		1,45
Median		1,00
Mode		1
Std. Deviation		,814

Students' reaction when the teacher tells them about the error and corrects them					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very good	49	71,0	71,0	71,0
	Good	12	17,4	17,4	88,4
	Not very good	5	7,2	7,2	95,7
	Bad	3	4,3	4,3	100,0
	Total	69	100,0	100,0	

Chart 9



Source: Questionnaire administered to students from Intermediate English I at the University of El Salvador, Semester II-2014

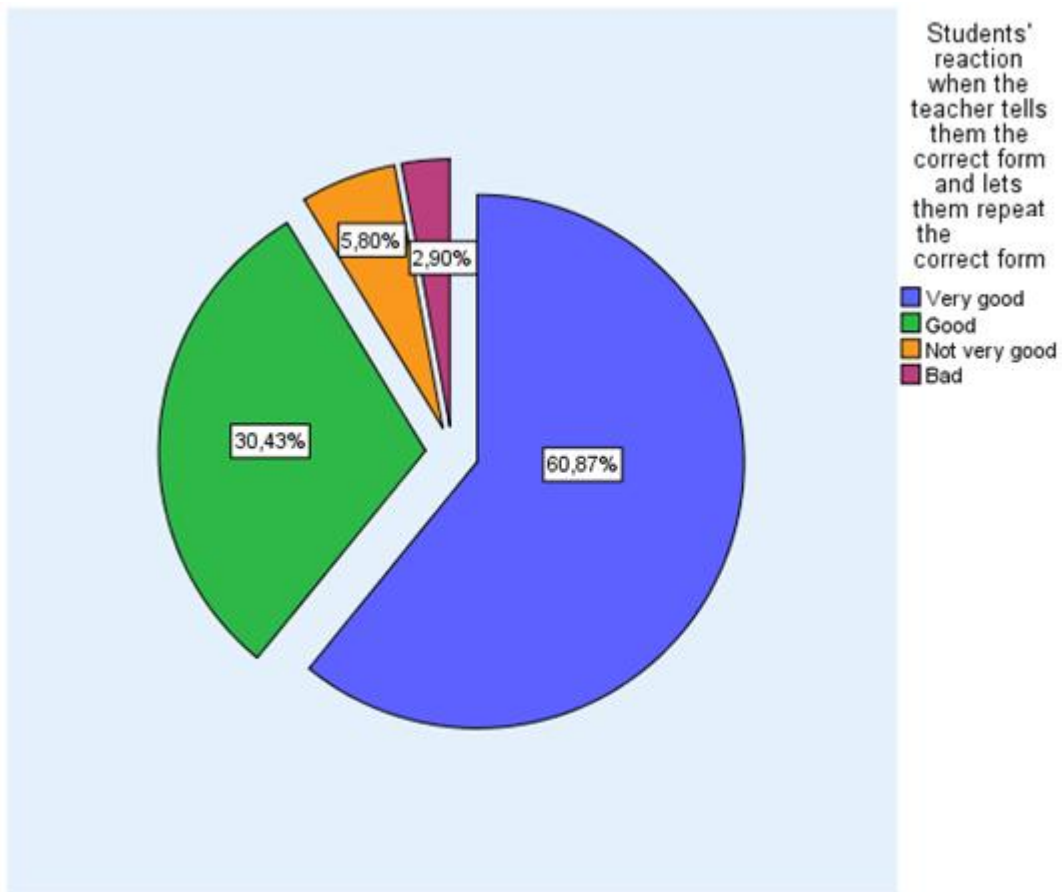
This question was made to measure students' reaction towards teacher correction. It is noticeable that an 88.40% of students like to be corrected by their teachers since they said it is a way they know something was wrong. On the other hand, an 11.60% of students do not feel good because they feel interrupted or hurt by their teachers.

d) Tells me the correct form and lets me repeat it

Statistics		
Students' reaction when the teacher tells them the correct form and lets them say the correct form		
N	Valid	69
	Missing	0
Mean		1,51
Median		1,00
Mode		1
Std. Deviation		,740

Students' reaction when the teacher tells them the correct form and lets them say the correct form					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very good	42	60,9	60,9	60,9
	Good	21	30,4	30,4	91,3
	Not very good	4	5,8	5,8	97,1
	Bad	2	2,9	2,9	100,0
	Total	69	100,0	100,0	

Chart 10



Source: Questionnaire administered to students from Intermediate English I at the University of El Salvador, Semester II-2014

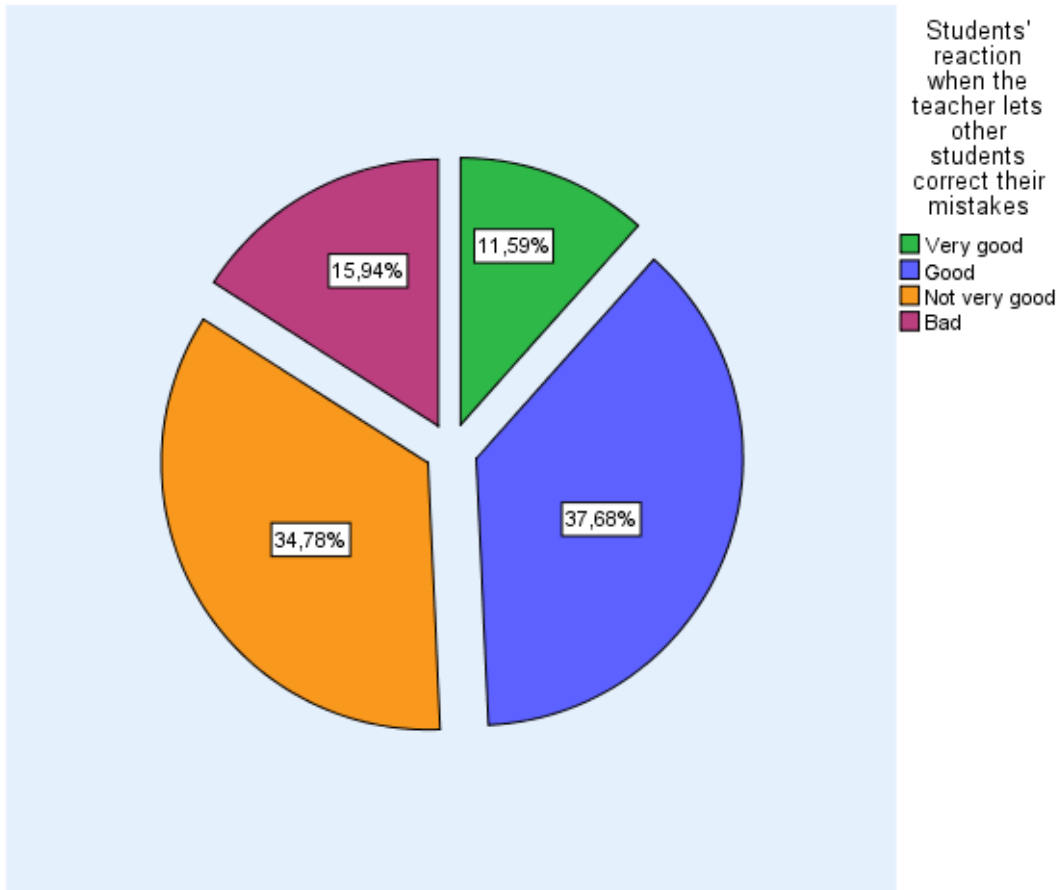
It has been noticeable that one of the most preferable techniques students like when making mistakes is teacher correction. This can be inferred with this question made in the questionnaire. A 91.3% of the students answered this question with a positive point of view since they feel good or very good being corrected by their teacher and especially when they can repeat again the mistake made in class but in the correct way. Only a 8.7% feel uncomfortable being corrected by their teachers.

e) Lets the other students correct my mistake

Statistics		
Students' reaction when the teacher lets other students correct their mistakes		
N	Valid	69
	Missing	0
Mean		2,55
Median		3,00
Mode		2
Std. Deviation		,900

Students' reaction when the teacher lets other students correct their mistakes					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very good	8	11,6	11,6	11,6
	Good	26	37,7	37,7	49,3
	Not very good	24	34,8	34,8	84,1
	Bad	11	15,9	15,9	100,0
	Total	69	100,0	100,0	

Chart 11



Source: Questionnaire administered to students from Intermediate English I at the University of El Salvador, Semester II-2014

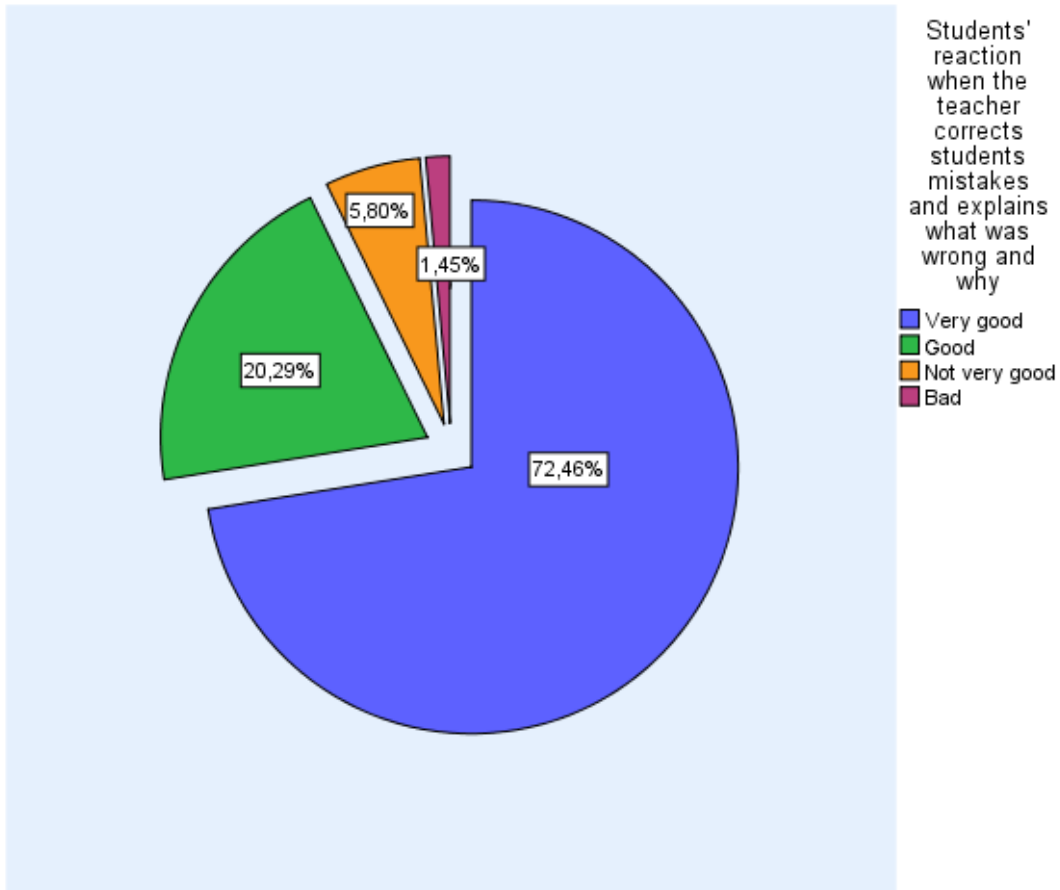
As on the previous graph, this one shows students' reactions when making mistakes. But this one is about peer-correction. While most students preferred to be corrected by their teachers, some others preferred to be corrected by their classmates. A 49.27% of the population said they like this type of correction. On the other hand, a 50.72% of the students do not feel comfortable or do not like being corrected by others but their teacher. In a way, this shows students' dependence in their teacher and lack of confidence in their classmates.

f) Corrects my mistake and explains what was wrong and why

Statistics		
Students' reaction when the teacher corrects students' mistakes and explains what was wrong and why		
N	Valid	69
	Missing	0
Mean		1,36
Median		1,00
Mode		1
Std. Deviation		,664

Students' reaction when the teacher corrects students' mistakes and explains what was wrong and why					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very good	50	72,5	72,5	72,5
	Good	14	20,3	20,3	92,8
	Not very good	4	5,8	5,8	98,6
	Bad	1	1,4	1,4	100,0
	Total	69	100,0	100,0	

Chart 12

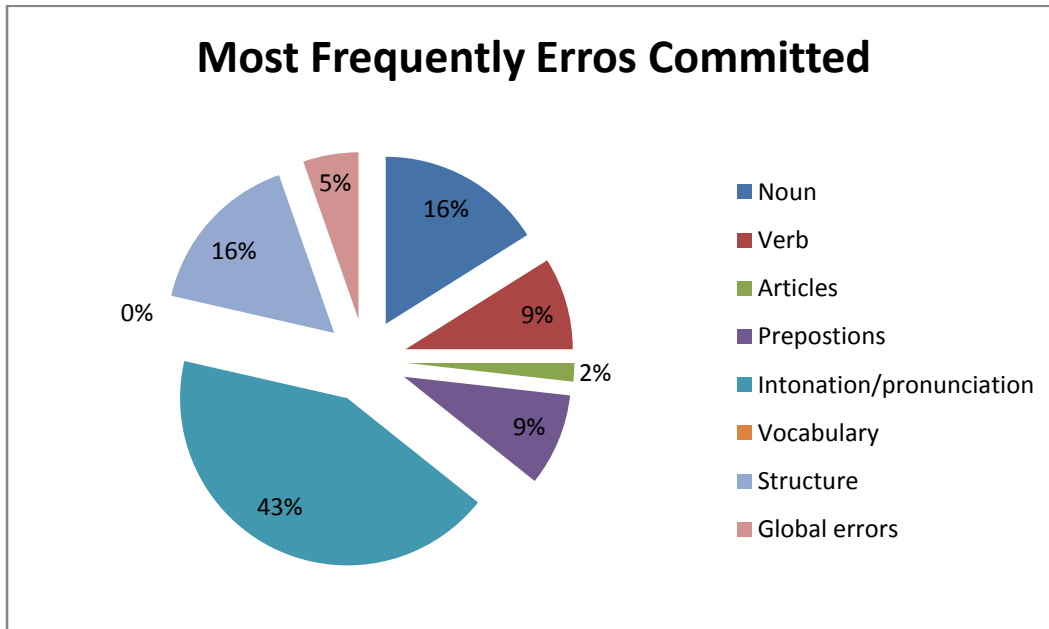


Source: Questionnaire administered to students from Intermediate English I at the University of El Salvador, Semester II-2014

It is important to know how students react when they are being corrected and also when they are explained what the mistake was. This question was made with the purpose to measure students' reaction while making mistakes and being explained why it was wrong. A 92.75% of the population feels comfortable and good when there are given an explanation of what the error was, moreover, when they know the reason so they can avoid the same mistake. Only a 7.25% of the students do not like or feel uncomfortable when this happens.

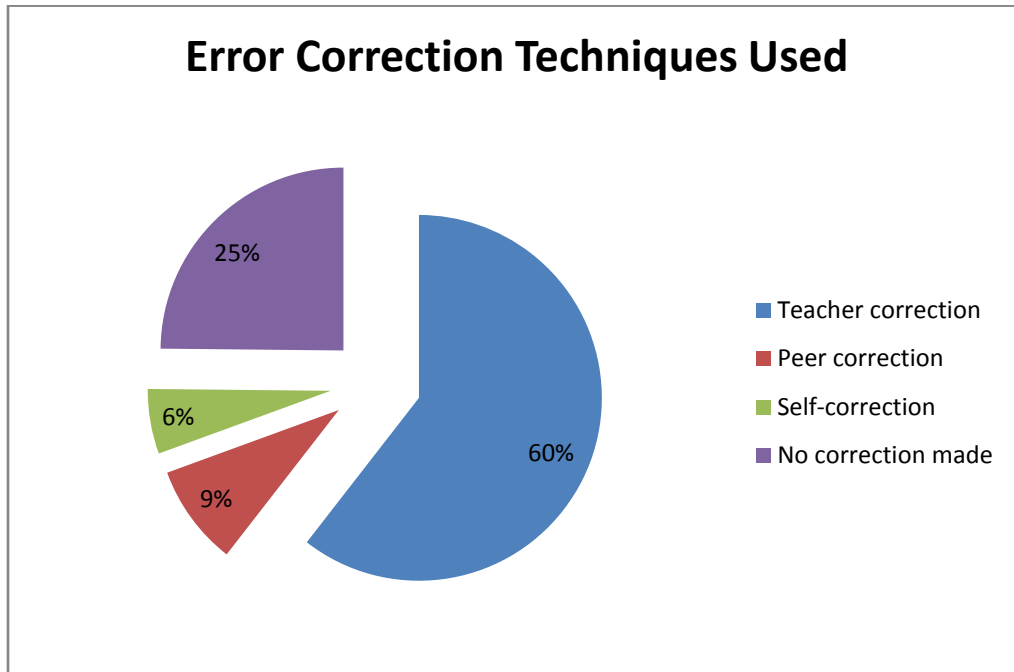
OBSERVATION GUIDE ANALYSIS

Types of errors students commit the most (observation #1)



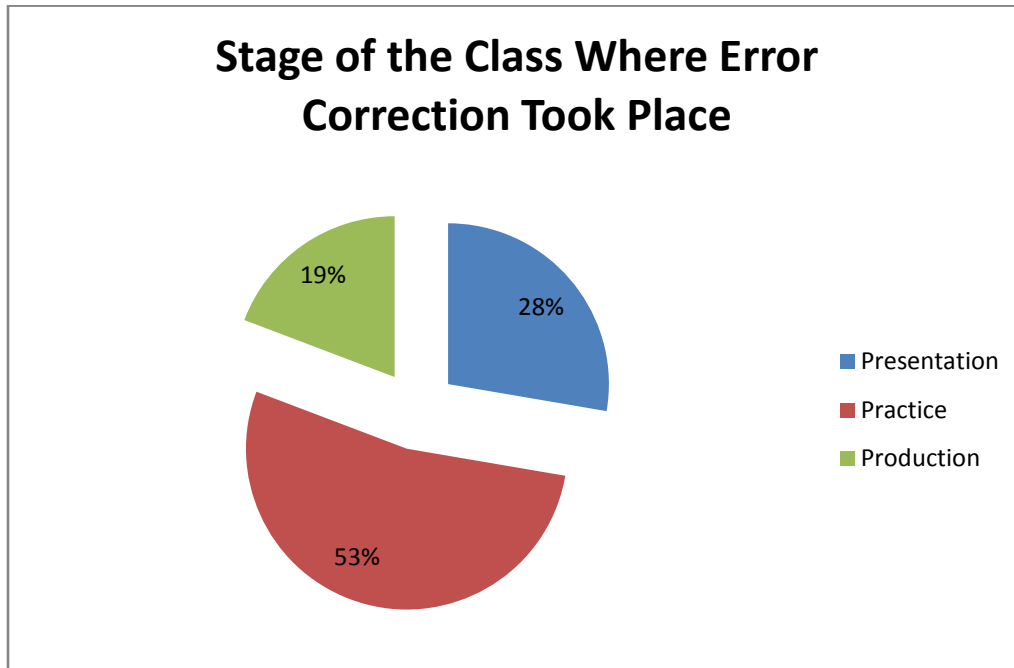
In order to get the data to be analyzed and answered one of the research questions stated at the beginning of the investigation, the first observation guide was administrated during September 2014. In the two groups observed, it could be noticed that most of the errors committed in the classes were local errors. Under this category, it can be said that pronunciation/intonation was the most outstanding error with a 43%. Noun and structure had a 16% each that indicates students still have problems with noun use and structure. In addition, verbs and prepositions showed the same frequency being a 9% each. One of the categories that students did not have problems with was articles with a 2% and vocabulary with 0%. On the other hand, global errors were not that high with a 5%. This shows that even though theory says that global errors should be corrected because it has a bigger impact in the message trying to be transmitted by the students in the FLD classrooms, students have to deal with local errors and not with global errors.

Which technique was used the most



The second observation was administered with the objective to determine which error correction techniques were implemented the most in the FLD. It has been noticeable that teacher correction is the most common technique used in the classroom with a 60%. The next technique used the most was peer correction with a 9%, self-correction had a 6%. All these shows that students are waiting to be corrected instead of correcting themselves or having a classmate to help them with the correct form or usage of the language. In addition, no correction made had a negative impact on students learning process since their errors are being ignored making them think they are right when they are not using the language correctly.

Which stage students were corrected the most



The last observation guide was administered with the purpose of detecting in which stage of the class students were corrected. According to the findings, there were many errors in the stages presented. On the presentation stage, there were 36 errors committed; on the practice stage, there were 69 errors; meanwhile, on the production stage only 25 errors. These results show that errors are committed only in the presentation and practice stage with a 53%. Moreover, on the production stage, errors still happen but with less frequency.

FINDINGS

Answer to the Research Questions

- ✦ **Which are the most common mistakes students make in Intermediate I courses at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador during the Semester II, 2014?**

By performing the investigation, it was found that the most common mistakes that students are making at the moment of speaking was pronunciation, students are not able to pronounce the words in the correct way and also they are not making the necessary intonation when it comes to make questions, exclamations and also to make the difference between verbs and nouns. This is relevant at the moment of expressing an idea or providing a clearer message. For this reason, it is necessary that teachers consider this as something they need to focus on every class, by doing so, at the moment the students express their ideas, not only the classroom but in daily speaking, they do it in the way it has to be, so they deliver the correct message.

- ✦ **Which are the most frequently used error correction techniques in the classroom in Intermediate I courses at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador during the Semester II, 2014?**

Teachers are the ones who identify the mistakes and correct them. According to the observations performed on the classes, the most frequent technique used by the teacher was the correction performed by the teacher itself. Even though there are many other techniques that can be used, it seems that the easiest one is the teacher correction since it does not provide more effort in the class and it seems to be the most effective one. It is remarkable to say as well that the observation provided us a considerable percentage of no correction in the class; this is something harmful for the students since they will not be able to identify the mistakes they make. Self correction and peer correction were used but no as expected and no more than the teacher correction.

♦ **Do teachers correct the mistakes students make in Intermediate I courses at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador during the Semester II, 2014 in an effective way?**

According to the questionnaire performed, teachers are actually correcting students. Now, it is important to say that the most effective correction technique, based on the data gathered in the investigation, is the teacher correction technique. Besides that the teacher correction technique is the most used by the teachers, this investigation showed that this is the most effective one since is the most accepted by the students. This study suggests that more than a half of students consider error correction the teacher's responsibility. This is because students consider that the ones that have the knowledge are the teachers and for that same reason they are the ones that have to correct them. Teachers need to focus on the students' needs and help students to improve their skills since students recognized is better being corrected by teachers rather than using other correction technique.

MOST OUTSTANDING FINDINGS

Correcting errors is not an easy activity; teachers of English subjects at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador must get involved in the application of error correction techniques inside their classrooms. The first and the most outstanding finding that was gotten from the data collecting instrument was that the dominance of intonation or pronunciation errors made by the students must have been arisen from the fact that the students do not speak English, they only focus on asking questions, clarifying doubts, checking answers or speaking inside the classroom in the native language (Spanish). It was an aspect that at the beginning of the research was never taken into account and actually, it has not but, since this phenomenon was observed in the classes attended, we definitely can notice and assure that the implementation of errors corrections techniques is not sufficient enough since the teachers allow students to speak in Spanish and no communication skills are developed so when students of intermediate English Levels make errors, the errors are very basic, basic enough to considering this students a basic level ones.

As Tedick and de Gortari (1998) suggest, teachers should take the English teaching context into account and get to know what kind of classrooms behavior they display. The teachers that were in charge of the groups studied did not teach in Spanish their classes but, the majority of the explanations or the corrections that needed further assistance for students were given in Spanish by the teacher assistants. (Let us not forget that most of the students were speaking in Spanish).

CONCLUSIONS

Regarding teacher correction, students did not receive enough support when performing oral tasks; therefore, there are several conclusions according to the data collected throughout the observation guide:

- ◆ Local errors are the most common mistakes students make while learning a second language. Within this category, pronunciation/ intonation was found to be the most frequently error committed in the English classes observed. As it has been explained before, local errors do not affect the message transmitted. Although theory says that local errors are not that important as global errors, in this investigation global errors were not that frequently as local errors. This means that students are having problems in the use of inflections or grammatical factors that can be overcome by them by practicing properly the language.
- ◆ Even though teachers have experience in the teaching field, during the observations it could be seen that only teacher correction and peer correction were the techniques used, yet there are some students that were not corrected. It is well known that teachers in the past corrected students in almost everything. Nowadays, students need to be independent from the teacher and they must self-correct. By self-correcting themselves, they will be aware that there is something wrong with the language and they will be able to help other classmates. It is also important to point out that although some students do not make any mistake that does not mean they have acquired the target language properly since they can be avoiding the grammar or structure that is difficult for them.
- ◆ During the administration of the instrument the 25% of students did not receive any assistance in correcting their errors. This could be because sometimes there are too many students in a group and teachers cannot give the proper feedback to everyone and they would do it at the end of the class or in a general way. Another

case is in relation to self-correction and peer correction, these two techniques are not use as practices as to improve the use of the language because students are waiting to be corrected by the teacher or someone else (teacher assistant). It is important to let students correct themselves or let their classmates do it since they can help each other to develop their English skills in a better way.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for teachers

- ◆ **Consider the context.** Before you plan systematic error correction practices for your classrooms, you need to consider the context in which student language use and errors occur. As immersion teachers are well aware, students in the early stages of cognitive development and language acquisition need to be encouraged to produce language that communicates meaning; error correction techniques that require student reflection on language structures or vocabulary are not appropriate for learners in those early stages. The types of corrective feedback techniques that elicit student-generated repairs are clearly more appropriate for the more cognitively mature and L2 proficient learners.
- ◆ **Become aware of your current practices.** Immersion teachers can benefit by taking time to find out how they currently address student errors. Ask a colleague or classroom aide to observe you while focusing specifically on your feedback techniques. Or, should a colleague or aide not be available, audio record a number of your lessons and reflect on the recording.
- ◆ **Practice a variety of feedback techniques.** Good teachers understand that one size does not fit all. Individual learners may well differ in terms of the particular error correction technique most appropriate for their unique language development needs. Choosing to learn and use a few different types of feedback that seem to produce student-generated repairs increases your chance of reaching more students.

- ◆ **Focus on the learner, it is important to let the learner self-correct.** Remember that your students may well be more capable than you think. As teachers we often feel an urge to rush in with the correct response before students have had enough time to process the information. If we allow time and provide appropriate cues for the learner to self-repair, more often than not the student will come through. The least effective technique for correcting a student's incorrect language use is to simply give them the answer.

Recommendations for the students

1. **Always ask your teacher to provide you feedback.** It is really important for the students to ask for their mistakes and also to ask teachers to provide them feedback. Doing this students will be able to verify the mistakes they are making and that way they will be able to improve on their skills. Students have the right to ask and the teacher should help them out.
2. **Become an independent learner.** Nowadays, it is really important that students become independent learners. If teachers do not correct students or do not provide them feedback, students can feel free to do it by themselves. There are a lot of resources that can be used in order to improve students' skills.

Recommendations for future researchers

This topic is really interesting and allows you to verify the way teachers are correcting the students. As researchers, it can be suggested to go deeper in this type of research and there will be many interesting information.

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ANNEXES

THE RESEARCH REPORT

The format that will be used to develop this research report is as follow:

I. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

- A. Historical framework
- B. Description of the problem
- C. Objectives
- D. Research questions
- E. Justification/rationale
- F. Delimitation of the problem

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

III. TYPE OF STUDY

IV. RESEARCH DESIGN

V. POPULATION AND SAMPLE

- A. Population
- B. Sample

VI. DATA GATHERING PROCESS

- A. Research instrument(s)
- B. Data gathering plan

VII. DATA ANALYSIS

- A. Data base

- B. Statistical procedures
- C. Data analysis
 - 1. Univariate analysis
 - 2. Bivariate analysis
 - 3. Multivariate analysis

VIII. FINDINGS

- A. Answers to the research questions
- B. Most outstanding findings

IX. CONCLUSIONS

X. RECOMMENDATIONS

ANNEXES

Annex A. Research project

Annex B. Time Table

TIME TABLE

ACTIVITIES	MAY				JUNE				JULY				AUGUST				SEPTEMBER				OCTOBER				NOVEMBER			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Research idea	■																											
Statement of the problem	■																											
Historical framework					■	■	■	■																				
Description of the problem					■	■	■	■																				
Objectives		■	■	■																								
Research question	■	■	■	■																								
Theoretical framework									■	■	■	■																
Type of study									■	■	■	■																
Hypotheses elaboration									■	■	■	■																
Research design	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Questionnaire creation													■	■	■	■												
Piloting the questionnaire																	■	■	■	■								
Data gathering process																	■	■	■	■								
Data Analysis																	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■				
Presentation																												■

Data Collection Instrument (Observation Guide 1)

Topic: “Error correction techniques used by English as Foreign Language teachers for correcting students’ oral discourse in Intermediate I courses at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador during the semester II, 2014”

General objective: To identify what type of errors students commit the most.

Observation Guide administered to Intermediate I

Teacher’s name in charge: _____

Group: _____ **Schedule:** _____

Topic: _____

Type of Errors

Local Errors							Global Errors	Observations
Noun	Verb	Article s	Preps	Intonation	Vocabulary	Structure		

Data Collection Instrument (Observation Guide 2)

Topic: “Error correction techniques used by English as Foreign Language teachers for correcting students’ oral discourse in Intermediate I courses at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador during the semester II, 2014”

General objective: To determine which error correction technique is implemented the most when correcting students’ errors

Observation Guide administered to Intermediate I

Teacher’s name in charge: _____

Group: _____

Schedule: _____

Topic: _____

Error Correction Technique

No correction made	Self-correction	Peer correction	Teacher correction

How many students were corrected?				
None	Self-correction	Peer-correction	Teacher correction	Total

Observations/notes:

Data Collection Instrument (Observation Guide 3)

Topic: “Error correction techniques used by English as Foreign Language teachers for correcting students’ oral discourse in Intermediate I courses at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador during the semester II, 2014”

General objective: To detect in which stage of the class students are corrected

Observation Guide administered to Intermediate I

Teacher’s name in charge: _____

Group: _____ **Schedule:** _____

Topic: _____

Error Correction

Stage	Type of Activity	Observations
Presentation		
Practice		
Production		

How many students were corrected?				
None	Self-correction	Peer correction	Teacher correction	Total

4) When is the moment that your teacher corrects your speaking usually?

- a) During the presentation of the class b) during the practice stage
 c) during the production stage d) the teacher never corrects me

5. When I make a mistake during speaking, it is very good / good / not very good / bad when my teacher ... (select the most appropriate option for each):

	Very Good	Good	Not very good	Bad
..does not correct me at all				
.. tells me that I have made a mistake but I must self- correct				
..tells me about the error and corrects me				
..tells me the correct form and lets me repeat it				
..lets the other students correct my mistake				
..corrects my mistake and explains what was wrong and why				