ABSTRACT

An abstract of the thesis of Cherise Frehner Mahoney for the Master of Arts in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages presented October 18, 2005.

Title: Teachers' Beliefs Regarding Error Correction: The Relationship of Philosophy and Practice.

In English as a Second or Other Language (ESOL) classrooms, oral errors occur frequently. The manner in which the instructor treats an error is the focus of this study. The initial aim is to collect the philosophical ideals of error correction from ESOL teachers. I then observed actual teacher practice in the classroom to determine if practice correlated with belief.

The question that this research project considers is, *are teachers' philosophical beliefs regarding error correction consistent with their classroom practice*? In order to answer this significant question, the following research questions were also posed and answered: 1) What are teachers' philosophical beliefs about error correction in beginning level adult community ESOL classrooms?, and 2) What error correction techniques are teachers using in their beginning level adult community ESOL classroom?

The data collection for this project was a process of eliciting from the participants their ideas about error correction through a questionnaire and interviews. From this I ascertained each teacher's philosophical beliefs

regarding error correction. I then observed the teachers in their classroom by way of video data. When student errors occurred, I recorded the teachers' treatment of the errors on a coding schema. In a second part of the data collection process, I met individually with the teachers to discuss the video data and my coding of the error correction episodes.

This study found that the two practitioners were able to answer questions about their perceived error correction practices in the classroom. They had opinions about which error correction methods were effective and which were less or ineffective. This study further showed that the practitioners could not always answer accurately which types of error correction methods they used in class and with what frequency. This was especially true of error correction methods that were perceived as less effective.