The Effect of the Academic Attainment of ESL Teachers on Evaluation of ESL Learners' Errors: Educational Degree-Based Study

Wael Abdeen
English Language and Literature
Faculty of Arts, Birzeit University
West Bank, Palestine

Abstract
This paper analyzes reactions and evaluations of 70 participants, native and non-native speakers of English to 32 errors written by learners of English as a second language, ESL. It investigates the effect of the academic attainment of ESL teachers on the evaluation of ESL error seriousness. The educational attainment of teachers, both native and non-native, include the B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. degrees. Participants in the study include 34 non-native Palestinian ESL teachers, 26 English native speaking ESL teachers, and 10 English native speakers who are not teachers. Errors in this study are taken from compositions written by Arab-Palestinian students. Eight error categories including prepositions, concord, word order, plural, pronouns, spelling, vocabulary, and verb form are used. Four correct sentences are also included. All participants for the study had to underline errors and evaluate them by indicating the points from 0-5 they would deduct for each error; 5 indicates very serious errors; 0 is for error-free sentences; "1" is for errors which can easily be excused; "2", "3", and "4" are means to show intermediate degrees of seriousness. Results of the study show that the three academic groups differ in their evaluation of errors. Whereas the Ph.D. groups are the most lenient, the M.A. groups are the least tolerant. The non-teachers are the most tolerant of all groups.
Keywords: Educational attainment and ESL error evaluation, English native speakers' vs. non-natives' ESL error evaluation, error gravity,

Introduction: The Study
Interest in ESL teachers' perceptions and reactions to learners' errors began in the 1970s and increased in the 80s with a number of publications e.g. (James, 1977),(Hughes & Lascaratou 1982), (Davies, 1983), (Van, Meyer,& Lorenz, 1984), and (Shoerey, 1986). As a field in second language research, it is categorized under the topic of "error gravity". Error gravity looks into evaluations to errors committed by ESL learners. Judges are given erroneous sentences that are taken from English language learners' writings and are asked to judge the seriousness of those errors.

Correcting ESL learners' writing is possibly the hardest task teachers have to do because such tasks are subjective for both teachers and learners. This subjectivity is quite often distressing to learners who get a grade without receiving guidelines showing the rationale for that grade. Correction is upsetting to teachers as well. Teachers depend on their experience in evaluating learners' errors. It seems that teachers have inner criteria that help them evaluate their students' errors. These criteria appear to be organized in a way that errors of different language aspects and categories are evaluated differently. Van, Meyer,& Lorenz (1984) state, "ESL writing instructors face the chronic dilemma of deciding how much to emphasize structured and mechanical correctness in relation to instruction in other areas such as content and organization"   (p.427).

Interest in this research stems from(1) the interest to compare and contrast between Arab-Palestinian teachers' perceptions and those of teachers from other linguistic backgrounds, namely English teachers, to see if Palestinian teachers share a global sensitivity for judging and evaluating ESL written errors, (2) the concern to know if the evaluators' academic attainment, including B.A., M.A., and Ph.D., plays a role in the evaluations process and the perceptions the educated groups have about error categories; the researcher has not come across any academic-degree-based study in this field, (3) the fact that no study about error gravity has been conducted in the Arab World, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, and (4) the curiosity to compare between on-teacher English native speakers vs. English native and non-native Palestinian ESL teachers. It tries to answer the following questions:

1. Are there differences in the evaluation process between native and non-native speakers? If yes, what are these differences?
2. Are there education-based differences in the evaluation process between native and non-native Palestinian ESL teachers? If yes, what are these differences?
3. Are there degree-based differences in the evaluation process between the B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. groups, native and non-native? If yes, what are these differences?
4. Are there differences in the evaluation process between native groups, teacher and non-teacher? If yes, what are these differences?
5. What are the most and least irritating ESL errors to these different groups?
6. Which group is the most tolerant and which is the least lenient?

Literature Review
Errors are often inevitable outcomes in a second language learning environment. Brown (1987, p. 169) states, "Human learning is fundamentally a process that involves the making of

mistakes".Errors are studied from different perspectives. Whereas they are seen as a matter of bad learning and negative transfer and interference of the first language, a view deeply rooted in the behavioristic school e.g. (Skinner, 1957) and (Lado,1957), errors are considered systematic, logical, and justifiable by cognitive linguists e.g. (Chomsky, 1965, 1968) and (Dulay& Burt, 1973). James (1998: 1) states that error analysis is a major component of core linguistics; he defines error analysis as "the process of determining the incidence, nature, causes and consequences of unsuccessful language". Ludwig (1982) states that the aim of error studies has changed in scope and analysis over the years. While some studies e.g.(Richards, 1997), (Richards & Sampson, 1997), (Corder, 1971, 1997),(Selinker,1992), and (James, 1998) look into the types of errors and the frequency of their occurrence in an effort to advance understanding about learners' linguistic processes and communicative strategies, other scholars e.g. (James, 1977), (Hughes & Lascaratou, 1982), (Davies, 1983), (Van, Meyer,& Lorenz,1984), and (Shoerey, 1986) investigate native speakers' reactions, evaluations, and rankings of ESL errors to determine which errors are tolerable and acceptable and which cause intolerance and irritation. By doing so, concentration shifts from learner-focused approaches to research focusing on native speakers' and ESL teachers' reactions to learners' language errors.

How are errors defined and what determines whether a certain structure is erroneous or not? Brown (1987,p. 170) differentiates between a mistake and an error; "a mistake is a performance error that is either a random guess or a slip, in that it is a failure to utilize a known system correctly" and error as "a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of a native speaker". Brown, however, claims that it is not always easy to differentiate between mistakes and errors. Ferris (2014, p. 3) defines error as "morphological, syntactic, and lexical forms that deviate from rules of the target language, violating the expectations of literate adult native speakers". Tran-Thi-Chau (1975) states that errors are determined by "tests of acceptability or non-acceptability by native speakers" . (p.41)

Researchers e.g. (James, 1977), (Hughes & Lascaratou, 1982), (Davies, 1983), (Van, Meyer,& Lorenz,1984), and (Shoerey, 1986) look into errors from a different perspective; they try to investigate how teachers and speakers of a language perceive different language errors and if these evaluators have some sort of error categorization. These researchers compare between native and non-native teachers' evaluations of ESL written errors. Interestingly, they find the same results which are non-native English language teachers' intolerance of ESL learners' errors compared to native English teachers' leniency. Another finding is that whereas non-native teachers seek accuracy, native teachers mark for comprehensibility. It is worth mentioning that research in error evaluation has also been investigated in different languages, e.g. (Politzer, 1978) and (Delisle, 1982): *German*;(Guntermann, 1978) and (Chastain, 1980): *Spanish*;(Piazza,1980) and (Ensz, 1982): *French*. They all, however, have one common goal: "investigating evaluations to learners' errors".

This study is carried out to see if findings of this study are consistent with other studies. However, this research goes a step further. It investigates the role of the teachers' academic attainment in the evaluation process. Three groups of different academic attainments participate in this study. These groups include teachers with B.A., M.A., and

Ph.D. degrees. Academic attainment is researched to investigate if it plays any role in the evaluation process. If yes, what is it? How does each group perceive errors? Ten non-teacher English native participants also take part in the study. The aim of the their involvement is to look into the perceptions and evaluations of people outside the academic community.

The Study Material
The data for this study are taken from compositions written by Arab-Palestinian learners of English as a second language. Errors to be evaluated in this study are of the same error categories used in Hughes and Lascaratou's(1982) study; reasons for the use of the same error categories is to make comparisons and contrasts between our findings and those of other researchers. Thirty-two sentences of eight error categories including prepositions, concord, word order, plural, pronouns, spelling, vocabulary, and verb form are used; four sentences of each category are included. Four correct sentences are also included. Sentences used in the study are presented in the appendix.

Methodology
The erroneous sentences are given to evaluators who are asked to evaluate the seriousness of errors using a scale from (0-5) by indicating the points they would deduct for each error. "0" is for error-free sentences and "5" is for errors considered very serious. "1" is for errors which could easily be excused. "2", "3", and "4" are means to show intermediate degrees of seriousness. The second method is post-research interviews with some participants. Interviews are conducted to give deeper insights about evaluations.

Participants
Participants in the study consist of three groups: English native ESL teachers, non-native Palestinian ESL teachers, and non-teacher English native speakers. The educational attainment for the academic groups include B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. degrees. Participants are divided as follows:

1. Thirty-four non-native Palestinian ESL teachers. These include10B.A., 12M.A., and 12Ph.D. The native language for the non-native Palestinian group is Arabic. This group will be referred to as non-native Palestinian teachers and non-native teachers.
2. Twenty-six English native speaking ESL teachers including 10B.A., 8 M.A., and 8Ph.D. This group will be referred to as English teachers and native teachers.
3. Ten non-teacher English native speakers. This group will be referred to as non-teacher natives.

Data Analysis
Data analyses confirm previous results found by(James, 1977), (Hughes & Lascaratou, 1982), (Davies, 1983), and (Shoerey, 1986) in that non-native teachers in general are less tolerant of errors and deduct more points than native speaking teachers. The teacher groups, native and non-native, also deduct significantly more points than the non-teacher group. See table 1 for total points and averages of deduction. Total points refer to the overall number of points deducted for a certain error category and average refers to the number of points deducted by each individual participant for a certain error category.

Table 1
Total points deducted by Palestinian teachers, English teachers, and non-teacher natives.

Judges	No. of Judges	Total Points Deducted	Deduction Average per Person
Palestinians teachers	34	3368	99.1
Native teachers	26	2352	90.4
No-teacher natives	10	722	72.2

The maximum number of points a judge can deduct is 180 and the lowest is 0. Non-native-Palestinian teachers deduct more points than native teachers. The total points deducted by the 34 non-native Palestinian teachers are 3368 with an average of 99.1 points per teacher; 99.1 out of the 180 points a judge can deduct. Native teachers have deducted a total of 2352 points with an average of 90.4 per native teacher. However, a marked difference in the average of deduction can be seen between the non-teacher natives and the teacher groups, particularly the Palestinian ESL teachers. The ten non-teacher participants deduct a total of 722 points with a deduction average of 72.2 per each non-teacher native. Results of this study lend support to other studies of the same interest; native groups are more tolerant than non-natives. This raises a number of questions. Why are native speakers more lenient towards errors by ESL learners? Why are non-teacher native speakers the most tolerant of all groups? What role does the educational attainment play in error evaluation? Is there a similar trend between the different educational groups or do they differ?

Palestinian teachers pay the most attention to grammatical rules and accuracy. They rank concord first, verb form second, and spelling third. These categories, noticeably concord and verb form, are grammar-based aspects that are learned through rules. Rules are either right or wrong; there is no space for in-between grammaticality. Spelling is also definite. One teacher said, "They [learners] write the way they like; many write the way they pronounce words believing that spelling fully corresponds to pronunciation." Table 2 shows total points deducted and ranking of errors by all study participants.

Table 2
Ranking of error categories for Palestinian teachers, native teachers, and non-teacher natives.

Error Category	Palestinian Teachers		Native Teachers		Non-Teachers	
	Total Points	Error Rank	Total Points	Error Rank	Total Points	Error Rank
Concord	438	1	304	2	81	4
Verb form	434	2	256	7	80	5
Spelling	418	3	264	4	101	1
Pronouns	420	4	288	3	90	3
Plural	400	5	258	6	76	7
Vocabulary	380	6	332	1	93	2
Word order	348	7	260	5	78	6

Preposition	302	8	248	8	73	8
Correct	230	9	142	9	50	9
Total	3370		2352		722	
Average	99.1		90.4		72.2	

Palestinian teachers seem to know the grammatical rules more than the other linguistic aspects. To understand this, we need to consider the English language educational ecology of these teachers; the educational background for the Palestinian teachers included in this study is grammar-based.

Prepositions rank last in error categories; they actually rank the least serious for all Palestinian participants. Van, Meyer, and Lorenz (1984, p. 432) state that prepositions are idiosyncratic; they add that prepositions, pronouns, and subject-verb agreement are less rule-governed and less likely to interfere with comprehension. This may interpret why prepositions are not regarded irritating. Prepositions do not cause communication breakdown the way vocabulary does; students incorrectly add, delete, or replace them. Some participants, namely Palestinian teachers, look at sentences belonging to the preposition error category as either error-free or mistakenly replace correct prepositions by wrong ones. Disagreement among native speakers over the use of prepositions could also be noticed. For example, the sentence "The boy went off in a faint", which is deliberately copied from (Hughes & Lascaratou, 1982),marks disagreement among participants including native speakers. Some native speakers consider it right; others consider it serious. When non-native ESL teachers are asked about the category of prepositions, the following responses are obtained, "I get confused as to which preposition to use; though I may not know the exact correct preposition, I can still manage and I can put my message across"," Sometimes, more than one preposition can be used in the same sentence and in both cases the meaning is correct.", "We have them in Arabic; so I usually go back to Arabic when using them; they are not a problem for me."In fact, the four preposition erroneous sentences in the study are literal translations from Arabic.

Looking at table 2, one can see the relative closeness in evaluation between native teachers and non-teacher natives. For example, the former group regard vocabulary as the most serious. The latter group rank the same category, vocabulary, second. Non-native Palestinian teachers, however, rank vocabulary sixth. This supports (Shoerey,1986)who also finds lexical errors as more serious by native speakers than by non-native teachers. A possible interpretation for non-natives' ranking of vocabulary as tolerable is that non-native teachers' inventory of vocabulary will still be lacking regardless of efforts put to bring it to a better state. Vocabulary is by far among the hardest aspects for non-natives to attain in the sense that the number of vocabulary items in a language is more than can be easily attained. Regardless of the number of vocabulary items a learner knows, there will always be words that are not part of the learner's system. A non-native Palestinian teacher commented, "I'm not a dictionary; my mind is not a dictionary." Another one asked, "Am I an encyclopedia to know all the words of the English language?" It seems that when a learner knows a word that serves him/her well and helps him/her put their messages across, that learner will not feel the need to learn other synonyms that would serve the same function. This, however, is opposite to grammar, concord and verb forms, in which

definite grammatical rules are learned. Knowing these limited rules will be easier than knowing an endless number of vocabulary items.

Differences and Similarities between This Study and Other Studies

Data analysis of this study confirms(Hughes & Lascaratou, 1982) findings regarding spelling. It has found that non-teacher natives consider spelling as the most serious and rank it first with a total deduction of 101 points. This, however, contradicts (Shoerey, 1986) findings regarding the same category. Evaluators in the former study rank spelling last. The current research, however, shares Shoerey's findings that lexical errors are judged as more serious by native groups than by non-natives. In fact, results of this study show that both native groups consider lexical errors among the two most serious. English native teachers rank vocabulary errors first and non-teachers rank it second. An opposite evaluation of vocabulary can be noticed among non-native Palestinian teachers who rank vocabulary sixth, a result that lends support to (Hughes &Lascaratou, 1982) whose study rank vocabulary fifth. To Palestinians, the use of a certain vocabulary item that does not give the intended meaning but reflects a semi-synonymous meaning in a given context is considered good enough e.g. tell vs. speak.

Evaluation in Relation to Educational Attainment

This part of the study analyzes data from the academic attainment perspective of the Palestinian and native ESL teachers. Educational attainment considered in the study include teachers who hold B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. degrees. Non-teacher natives are excluded from this section. Table 3 shows the numbers of participants, Palestinian and native, and their educational attainment.

Table 3
Numbers of participants included and their educational attainment.

B.A. Teachers		M.A. Teachers		Ph.D. Teachers	
Palestinian	Native	Palestinian	Native	Palestinian	Native
10	10	12	8	12	8

Looking back at table 2, one can see that the three Palestinian academic groups rank concord as the most serious, verb form ranked second, andspelling third. Native teachers, however, rank vocabulary, concord, and pronouns respectively as the most intolerable errors. Both consider preposition errors as the least irritating.

B.A.: Palestinian vs. Native

Palestinian B.A. teachers rank concord as the most serious, verb form and spelling come second and third respectively. Native B.A. teachers, however, judge vocabulary as the most serious error, plural second, and pronouns third. Both B.A. groups rank word order sixth. Table 4 shows ranking of errors by B.A. groups, Palestinian and native.

Table 4
Ranking of errors by B.A. teachers, Palestinian and native.

Error Category	B.A Palestinian Teachers		B.A Native Teachers	
	Points Deducted	Degree of Seriousness	Points Deducted	Degree of Seriousness

Concord	144	1	104	5
Verb form	132	2	88	8
Spelling	126	3	90	7
Plural	114	4	116	2
Pronouns	112	5	110	3
Word order	102	6	96	6
Vocabulary	94	7	142	1
Preposition	88	8	106	4
Correct	60	9	48	9
Total	972		900	
Average	97.2		90	

Whereas Palestinian B.A. teachers deduct a total of 972 points, native teachers of the same educational attainment deduct 900 points with an average of 97.2 and 90 points per each B.A. teacher for Palestinians and natives respectively.

M.A.: Palestinian vs. Native
The researcher thought that the M.A. group would be more tolerant than the B.A. assuming that the higher the educational attainment, the more lenient the evaluator would be. Data analysis, however, shows the opposite. M.A. teachers, Palestinian and native, are less tolerant of errors than B.A. teachers. Palestinian M.A. teachers regard verb form as the most serious, plural and concord ranked second and third respectively. Native teachers like all other native groups are more tolerant of learners' errors than non-native Palestinian teachers. Native M.A. teachers rank concord first, vocabulary second, and spelling third. Both M.A. groups judge prepositions to be the least serous. Table 5 shows ranking of errors by M.A. groups, Palestinian and native.

Table 5
Ranking of errors by M.A. teachers, Palestinian and native.

Error Category	M.A Palestinian Teachers		M.A Native Teachers	
	Points Deducted	**Degree of Seriousness**	**Points Deducted**	**Degree of Seriousness**
Verb form	170	1	98	4
Plural	164	2	80	6
Concord	156	3	120	1
Pronouns	154	4	88	5
Spelling	150	5	100	3
Vocabulary	146	6	112	2
Word order	122	7	88	5
Prepositions	106	8	78	7
Correct	96	9	48	8
Total	1264		812	
Average	105.3		101.5	

Table 5 shows that 1264 points are deducted by M.A. Palestinian teachers with an average of105.3 points per teacher compared to a total deduction of 812 points for native teachers with a deduction average of 101.5 per teacher.

When we compare non-native teachers, M.A. and B.A together, it seems that these teachers share a similar perception of the seriousness of grammatical errors e.g. concord and verb form. Whereas Palestinian M.A. teachers rank verb form as number one serious error, Palestinian B.A. teachers rank it second. The former place concord third and the latter rank it first. Both groups judge preposition errors as the least serious.

Differences, however, exist between the two with regard to point deduction. Palestinian B.As. are more lenient than M.A. teachers with a deduction average of 97.2 for B.A. and 105.3 for M.A. Why is that? A possible explanation for this is that B.A. teachers are closer to students in terms of knowledge. B.A. teachers' proficiency, namely Palestinians, is not sophisticated nor highly concentrated. Teachers themselves may not have adequate mastery of the English language. Evidence for this can be obtained from the fact that some Palestinian B.A. teachers have failed to spot out errors in some of the sentences given. They have either unnoticed errors or underlined correct parts as erroneous. A non-native B.A. teacher commented, "Honestly, I didn't know if I did well or not." Another one said, "Can I ask about some of the sentences? I want to know. I couldn't figure out correct from incorrect sentences." A point to bear in mind is that these teachers are strict in grammatical errors.

A possible interpretation for M.A. teachers' stricter judgment might be due to proficiency differences between teachers and learners. They are the most to complain about errors. It seems that all kinds of errors irritate them. Teachers probably have high expectations for students. But as students do not meet those expectations, their errors are judged strictly. When Palestinian M.A. teachers are asked about errors, their answers reflect their intolerance. They responded by saying, "Who doesn't know subject-verb agreement?"; "How can someone use the past after to infinitive?".It seems that errors are irritating to the MA group. A non-native M.A. Palestinian teacher commented, "What's wrong is wrong; you can't regard a certain error as more acceptable than another." This lends support to Albrechtsen, Henrikse,&Faerch (1980,p. 394) who claim that studies looking into the hierarchical arrangement of errors are fruitless and ineffective because "all errors are equally irritating… irritation is directly predictable from the number of errors regardless of the error type or other linguistic aspects".

Ph.D.: Palestinian vs. Native
Ph.D. teachers, Palestinian and native, are the most tolerant of errors with more leniency by the native than the Palestinian. Results show that 1132 points compared to 640 points are deducted by Ph.D. Palestinian and Ph.D. native teachers respectively with a deduction average of 94.3 and 80 per each Ph.D. for both groups respectively. Table 6 shows ranking of errors by Ph.D. groups, Palestinian and native.

Table 6
Ranking of errors by Ph.D. teachers, Palestinian and native.

Error Category	Ph.D. Palestinian Teachers		Ph.D. Native Teachers	
	Points Deducted	Degree of Seriousness	Points Deducted	Degree of Seriousness
Pronouns	152	1	78	3
Spelling	142	2	86	1
Vocabulary	140	3	78	3
Concord	138	4	80	2
Verb form	132	5	70	5
Word order	124	6	76	4
Plural	122	7	62	7
Prepositions	108	8	64	6
Correct	74	9	46	8
Total	1132		640	
Average	94.3		80	

Data analysis shows closeness in evaluation between the two Ph.D.-teacher groups, native and Palestinian. Both groups rank the categories of pronouns, spelling, vocabulary and concord as the most serious. Palestinian Ph.Ds. rank pronouns as the most serious to be followed by spelling and vocabulary. In fact, this is the only non-native educated group that ranks lexical errors among the serious errors. Native Ph.Ds. rank spelling as the most serious; concord ranks second; they deduct the same amount of points for pronouns and vocabulary, which gives them the third rank. Both Ph.D. groups give verb form the same rank, fifth. Worthy of mention is that Palestinians rank concord fourth, a ranking away from the other Palestinian academic groups. This ranking reflects a less grammar-based evaluation than that of the Palestinian B.A. and M.A. teachers. The two Ph.D. groups seem to focus on intelligibility and communication.

When asked about how they perceive errors, one respondent said; "There are mistakes that make communication unintelligible if not impossible and at the same time other mistakes can be overlooked as they don't cause a breakdown in communication. You need to be understanding in this regard. If a learner can put his message across with minor errors, this is Ok." Another one said, "As time goes by, you start to have your own philosophy which is you can't make perfect of each learner you come across. Learners are of different kinds; some are good, others are slow or even fossilized. You need to deal with them from this perspective and accept your students with the abilities they have, so you look at their errors from the same perspective [acceptance]." A third commented, "A good learner is a good learner; but you can't have outstanding learners all the time. You need to accommodate your expectations to what you actually have; if you are to be very strict and seek perfection, no learner will pass and many will get frustrated; so you accept what you have and behave accordingly".

Conclusion

This study looks into judgments and evaluations of three groups consisting of 34 non-native Palestinians ESL teachers, 26 ESL English native teachers and 10 non-teacher

English native speakers to 32ESL learners' written errors. Findings of this study are consistent with and confirm other studies e.g. (James, 1977), (Hughes &Lascaratou,1982), (Davies, 1983), and (Shoerey, 1986),which find that native speakers, both teachers and non-teachers, are more tolerant of errors than non-native teachers.

The most lenient group is the non-teacher natives whose main interest seems merely communication. They focus on intelligibility of messages conveyed rather than grammaticality. The Palestinian teachers are the strictest; they focus on the grammatical accuracy of the learners' output. To Palestinian teachers, grammatical errors like verb form and concord are considered more serious than other errors e.g. prepositions and vocabulary. Perhaps, this is because grammaticality is basic and definitive. Verb form and concord reflect grammar basicness and violating a fundamental grammatical rule is very serious to them.

Native teachers, however, take an intermediate position between the two other groups, Palestinian teachers and non-teacher natives. Native ESL teachers seem to be interested in communication and intelligibility, but at the same time, they emphasize the basicness of rules, though to a lesser extent than Palestinians; intelligibility of communication is important and for it to be effective, attention must be given to both grammatical rules and the interaction process. Native teachers prove to be more tolerant of these errors than non-native Palestinian teachers. This can be attributed to the native speakers' better knowledge and mastery of the language. They know more vocabulary and have better mastery of the different linguistic structures and aspects, skills that very few non-native teachers can attain. Native speakers' tacit knowledge enables them to manipulate language aspects and to be more accepting of language forms that may not be acceptable or possibly ambiguous and puzzling to non-natives in general.

In this study, an additional dimension to error gravity studies is introduced. It is the evaluation of errors in relation to the academic attainment of judges. This study compares evaluations of native and non-native Palestinian ESL teachers in relation to their educational degrees. Error evaluations in relation to evaluators' educational attainment show that Ph.Ds. , native and Palestinian, are the most lenient of all educated groups, with more tolerance by native teachers than by non-natives. What is irritating to other groups is tolerable to this group. Perhaps, this is because their degrees equip them with more proficiency and wider knowledge of the various language aspects. In fact, it is in this educational group that the most marked similarity in evaluation between native and Palestinian teachers is noticed. They regard errors hindering intelligibility and comprehensibility e.g. vocabulary as more serious than errors associated with grammatical rules.

B.A. teachers rank second regarding tolerance of errors; native B.As. show more leniency than Palestinians with the same degree. Teachers with the B.A. degree, namely Palestinians, concentrate on basicness of rules rather than on intelligibility and communication. To Palestinian B.As, tolerance of errors other than the grammatical e.g. verb form and concord is perhaps because of their linguistic insecurity and insufficient knowledge in other language aspects e.g. vocabulary.

Expectations were that M.A. teachers would be more lenient than B.A. teachers, results, however, come opposite to these expectations. Analyses of error evaluations for native and Palestinian M.A. teachers show that these teachers are the strictest in evaluating ESL learners' errors. Interestingly, native M.A teachers show the same trend of leniency as the other native teachers; they judge errors less rigidly than Palestinian M.A. teachers.

Implication and Contribution of the Study
Even though, this study is limited in scope as it only considers written errors that are both limited in category and confined to the sentence level and even though it does not provide direct and decisive applications to the teaching/learning process and to error analysis, it still gives insight into the field as the findings of the study remain consistent:
1. Judgments have error hierarchies.
2. There are differences in evaluators' judgments.
3. Native speakers, ESL teachers and non-teachers, are more tolerant than non-natives Palestinian teachers in the evaluation of ESL errors.
4. The non-teacher native group is the most tolerant.
5. The academic attainment seems to play a role in the evaluation process and the ranking of errors.

About the Author:
Wael Abdeen is a Palestinian researcher who works in Birzeit University-Palestine, Department of the English Language and Literature. Research interests are English language learning and teaching, linguistics, and sociolinguistics.

References
Albrechtsen, D., Henriksen, B.,&Faerch, C.(1980). Native Speakers Reactions toLearners'Spoken Interlanguage,*Language Learning, 30* (2), 365-396.
Brown, H. D. (1987). *Principle of Language Learning and Teaching*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc.
Chastain, K. (1980). Native Speaker Reaction to Instructor-Identified Student Second Language Errors,*Modern Language Journal, 64* (2), 210-215.
Chomsky, N. (1965). *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax*. Cambridge, MA: M.I.T. Press.
Chomsky, N.(1968). *Language and mind*. New York : Hartcourt Brace Jovanovich.
Corder, S. P. (1971). Idiosyncratic Dialects and Error Analysis,*International Review of Applied Linguistics, 9*(2), 147-160.
Corder, S. P. (1997). The Significance of Learners' Errors. In J.C. Richards (ed.),*Error Analysis: Perspectives on Second Language Acquisition*(pp.19-27) New York: Routledge.
Davies, E. (1983). Error Evaluation: The Importance of Viewpoint,*ELT Journal, 37* (4), 304-311.
Dualy, H. and Burt, M. (1973). Should We Teach Children Syntax?,*Language Learning, 23* (2), 245-258.

Delisle. H. (1982). Native Speaker Judgement and the Evaluationof Errors in German,*Modern Language Journal, 66* (1), 39-48.

Ensz, K. (1982). French Attitudes Toward Typical Speech of American Speakers of French,*Modern Language Journal 66* (2), 133-139.

Ferris, D. (2014).*Treatment of Error in Second Language Student Writing*. Michigan: Ann Arbor/University of Michigan Press.

Guntermann, G. (1978). A study of the Frequency and Communicative Effects of Errors in Spanish,*Modern Language Journal, 62* (5-6), 249-253.

Hughes, A. &Lascaratou, C. (1982). Competing Criteria for Error Gravity,*ELT Journal,36* (3), 175-182.

James, C. (1977). Judgements of Error Gravities,*ELT Journal, 31* (2), 116-124.

James, C. (1998). *Errors in Language Learning and Use: Exploring Error Analysis*. London/New York: Routledge.

Lado, R. (1957). *Linguistics Across Cultures*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Ludwig, J. 1982. Native-Speaker Judgments of Second Language Learners' Efforts at Communication: a review,*Modern Language Journal, 66*(3), 274-283.

Piazza, L. 1980. French Tolerance for Grammatical Errors Made by Americans. *Modern Language Journal, 64* (4), 422-427.

Politzer, R. (1978). Errors of English Speakers of German as Perceived and Evaluated by German Natives,*Modern Language Journal,62* (5-6), 253-261.

Richards, J. C. (1997). A Non-Contrastive Approach to Error Analysis. In J.C. Richards (ed.),*Error Analysis: Perspectives on Second Language Acquisition* (pp. 172-188). New York: Routledge.

Richards, J. C.& Sampson, G. P. (1997). The Study of Learner English. In J.C. Richards (ed.), *Error Analysis: Perspectives on Second Language Acquisition*(pp. 3-18). New York: Routledge.

Selinker, L. (1992). *Rediscovering Interlanguage*. London: Longman.

Shoerey, R. (1986). Error Perceptions of Native Speaking and Non-native Speaking Teachers of ESL,*ELT Journal, 40* (4), 306-312.

Skinner, B. F. (1957). *Verbal Behavior*. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts.

Tran-Thi-Chau. (1975). Error Analysis, Contrastive Analysis and Students' Perception: A study of Difficulty in Second Language Learning,*International Review of Applied Linguistics,13,* 119-143.

Van, R.J.,Meyer, D. E.,&Lorenz, F. O.(1984). Error Gravity: A Study of Faculty Opinion of ESL Errors,*TESOL Quarterly, 18* (3), 427-440.

Appendix
Questionnaire items used in the study

No	Category	Questionnaire items
1	Verb form	Fruit like apples and bananas *don't be eaten* by cats and dogs.
2	Word order	The players play sometimes football in the local yard.
3	Pronoun	The book on the desk in the back is *mine book*.
4	Spelling	The *wether* was very hot when we arrived in the afternoon.
5	Correct	Nobody noticed them cross the street.
6	Concord	In the hospital, one of patients *were* not fine.

7	Plural	The people liked the *informations* in the newspaper.
8	Preposition	We could not say anything because we were not good *in* English
9	Vocabulary	The high speed *occurs* terrible accidents all over the world
10	Spelling	She didn't know what to do but she finally *shosed* the red one.
11	Correct	I'd rather stay home than go to work because of the rain
12	Vocabulary	We ate a very delicious *male* in the new restaurant.
13	Verb form	I *calling* all the time, but nobody answered
14	Pronoun	The man who *he* drives the bus to the city is not fast
15	Word order	She added to the water *some sugar* to make it sweet.
16	Concord	The little birds and their mother *was* swimming in the river.
17	Preposition	Many young and old people nowadays live alone *in* themselves.
18	Plural	The news *were* good because he was safe.
19	Spelling	The young woman didn't *eccepect* to win the money .
20	Verb form	In the early morning, my father *is goes* to work by bus
21	Pronoun	I like my school because *she* is big and near my house.
22	Vocabulary	The guides *tell* many languages like English, French, and Spanish.
23	Concord	My friend is still young, but he *smoke* all the time.
24	Correct	The boy went off in a faint
25	Word order	We didn't know *why should everybody* leave the bus in a hurry.
26	Pronoun	Pronouns are easy to learn because *its* number is small.
27	Preposition	The little girls were afraid *from* the dog in the park.
28	Spelling	My uncle wanted to fix the *bart* that didn't work.
29	Plural	The *mouses* were bigger than the cats in the zoo.
30	Verb form	The baby *cans* speak any word you want.
31	Vocabulary	The *affection* of pollution is bad for our health.
32	Correct	The doctor ordered that he take his medicine on time.
33	Preposition	A good example *on* a stop consonant is /d/.
34	Concord	There *is* not many sounds that are nasal
35	Word order	I met my two uncles in the mall *who live in America*.
36	Plural	The house was full of beautiful furnitures.