Effective Feedback in Second Language Acquisition: Oral Feedback vs. Written Feedback

Ali Morshedi Tonekaboni
Young Researchers and Elite Club, Tonekabon Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tonekabon, Iran

ABSTRACT: The role of corrective feedback (CF) is debated in second language acquisition (SLA). It has not been unequivocally shown that corrective feedback is effective in SLA, in particular not in the case of on-line processing, as in writing second language (L2) proficiency. Hence, the way in which it is provided for the learners should be taken into account as it makes an impact on the learners’ comprehension of the presented comments (Ferris, 2003; Thonus, 2002). The central question in this project is whether oral or written feedback has a significant effect on increasing the knowledge of EFL learners’ writing production. Based on this, the present study aimed at identifying the types of teacher corrective feedback based on its form and purpose, investigating the effects of different types of teacher corrective feedback on Iranian EFL learners’ writings and determining the types of revisions that the language learners make to their writings as a result of TCF they receive. To this end, this study was conducted among 58 advanced EFL learners studying General English classes. The present study has qualitative and quantitative-explored fifty EFL learners’ preferences for receiving error feedback on different grammatical units as well as their beliefs about teacher feedback strategies. Finally, the findings of the study show that the L2 learners’ level of writing ability influences by written feedback on errors pertinent to particular grammatical units and their writing performance.

Keywords: SLA, L2, corrective feedback, teachers’ comments, oral corrective feedback

INTRODUCTION

Feedback is an essential concept in most theories of learning and is closely related to motivation. Behavioral theories tend to insist on extrinsic motivation such as rewards in SLA (Weiner, 1990). From acquisition aspect, feedback for motivation and language correction are keys concern for language educators. Feedback can be defined from different perspectives. Based on Hattie and Timperley’s (2007) work, feedback can be defined as information provided by an agent with respect to one’s performance or understanding! (p. 81). The emergence of the field of L2 writing is a relatively recent phenomenon. Over around the last 5 decades, the number of interrogate into L2 writing issues have grown rapidly and produced fruitful results. Feedback is a vital part of language acquisition that influences students’ learning and achievement. Feedback helps both the teachers and their learners meet the aims and instructional means in acquisition. The absolute destination of this study is to explore the usefulness of computer-based feedback on second language acquisition, especially the role of feedback mechanism in acquisition of second language.

The Theoretical Framework

A substantial body of research in SLA has been devoted to the role of classroom interaction in second language acquisition. It is believed that during classroom interactions learners receive comprehensible input, opportunities to negotiate for meaning, and opportunities to produce modified output (Gass and Varonis, 1984, 1985b; Swain, 1995; Oliver, 1995). Meanwhile, research reveals that exposure to input alone, is not sufficient for learners to acquire the target language items to a high level of proficiency (e.g., Lightbown & Spada, 1990; Long, 1996; Long & Robinson, 1998; Norris & Ortega, 2000). This especially applies to those features which are semantically redundant, syntactically complex and cognitively demanding. To compensate for learners’ failure to notice some aspects of input, researchers have attempted to direct learners’ attention to some linguistic features in the input which are problematic for learners. Corrective feedback is among the techniques which are believed to facilitate L2 development by providing learners with both positive and negative evidence (Long, 1996). Several studies have investigated the effects of different types of corrective feedback in second language classrooms (Macky, Gass, and McDonough, 2000; Lister and Ranta, 1997; Lyster, 2004; Loewen, 2004; Sheen, 2004).
However, to date there has been little agreement on how teachers should react to the errors made by L2 learners. In fact, researchers and educators have taken different positions with respect to teacher feedback. A group of researchers consider error correction as harmful, time consuming, and ineffective (Truscott, 2007, 1996, 1999; Semke, 1984; Sheppared, 1992; Kepner, 1991); another group defend the use of error feedback and believe that correcting students' written errors would help them improve the quality and accuracy of their writing (Rahimi, 2009; Ferris, 1999, 2003, 2004; Lee, 1997, 2004; Hedgcok & Lefkowitz, 1994). This study tries to just search about two main types of feedbacks which consisted from oral feedback and teacher comments. Also the participants of this study were selected from just one institute. On the other hand the instrument which was used in this study was just a type of essay questionnaire. Although the main aim of this study is related to the effect of two type of feedbacks but in order to check this important we tried the effect of feedback on three grammar sections (punctuation, inflectional morphemes and coordinators) as a subtitle.

**Significance of the Study**

How do learners acquire a second language? After many years, researchers in the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) have accelerated many answers. Numerous variables thought to affect acquisition have been identified, from cognitive and affective factors such as motivation, brain lateralization, aptitude, and attitude, to external influences such as access to other speakers of the target language and comprehensible input, whether naturalistic or by effective instruction. I illuminate the vision of language and learning as a dynamic system, and identify a specific application of one aspect of complexity theory to SLA, the essential element of feedback. Thus, a successful application thereof could lead to a development in the field. However, writing does not only reside in the classroom, the need for well-organized, successful writing can be seen almost everywhere, writing a formal letter to your supervisor, a casual letter to a friend, a poem or a novella, even a short memorandum are all examples of writing, i.e., the need for acceptable writing is found in about all everyday life practices; a fact that has contributed to the development of the genre approach in writing.

**Purpose of the Study**

Despite the dominance of process-oriented approach to writing in recent decades, teachers particularly in Iran contexts do not find it practical. The present study aimed at identifying the types of teacher corrective feedback based on its form and purpose, investigating the effects of different types of teacher corrective feedback on Iranian EFL learners' writings and determining the types of revisions that the language learners make to their writings as a result of TCF they receive. According to Ferris and Roberts (2001), knowing about students' attitudes and preferences about error feedback and their own assessment of their weaknesses in writing is important. They also note that students' attitudes and preferences have been neglected in many previous error correction studies and reviews. This paper therefore focuses not on writing itself but rather on ESL students own believes and preferences regarding feedback in L2 writing taking into consideration such immense effect of students beliefs on their success in writing in accordance with the second theme above. To be even more precise, we question ESL students' beliefs regarding feedback they receive from their language teachers as response to their writing errors, mostly surface-leveled, and how they operate them in their subsequent writings. Types of corrections include direct and indirect written feedback which will be both discussed and evaluated in relation to their application in actual pedagogic contexts and the gains expected from them from students' point of view. Moreover, the implication of different types of feedback will be examined with focus on different techniques that are mostly considered as indirect feedback with special regard to their level of explicitness and their effect on long-term accuracy of students writing as they perceive them. In order to tackle this issue persuasively, a number of Iranian university-level ESL students have been involved in a two-phase study where their perspectives, believes and preferences have been investigated through a structured questionnaire. The focus of this study mainly investigates:

![Feedbacks used in this Study (Purpose of the Study)](image-url)
Statement of the Problem

In spite of many researches done in the realm of ESL/EFL, writing is still one of the most difficult areas for language learners. It seems that writing in English is regarded on a complicated issue to grasp for majority of Iranian EFL learners and this problem remains unsolved for them so that they hate writing totally and this causes a barrier for other skills to improve. Owing to the lack of consensus on the effectiveness of teacher feedback, this study aims to gain more insights into giving effective feedback by asking what students think, want and do after they receive teacher feedback. Responding to student writing is one of the most controversial topics in second language (L2) instruction and theory. As most of the past studies have pursued the inquiry of teacher feedback in two general ways, namely students' preferences for teacher feedback (Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1994; Leki, 1991), and students' responses to teacher feedback (Cohen, 1987; Ferris, 1995), this study follows the similar traits and attempts to find out how students perceive teachers feedback, what they are concerned about, and what they do after receiving teacher feedback. Teachers provide feedback on student writing to support students' writing development and nurture their confidence as writers. Teacher feedback often takes the form of written comments on their final graded compositions. Received by students at the end of their writing process, these comments rarely have a great impact on students writing development as teachers intend. Students generally feel that they have finished working on the writing when they hand it in for a grade. Teachers can determine the content of the feedback by considering the elements of the writing that are strong or that need more work. It is important to identify positive features of the writing. Although students have indicated that they do not always find positive comments helpful to improve their writing, they appreciate receiving praise to nurture their confidence as writers and their motivation to write. Students say that they find elaborated comments on specific elements of their writing most helpful in guiding their revisions. They appreciate teachers getting involved with the subject of their writing, but do not like to have their ideas questioned or criticized. Also teachers use other methods to help students acquire the tools needed to learn English, or any other subject for that matter. Another method is oral feedback, which is used to immediately encourage students or correct them when making an error. Our aim is therefore to investigate what kind of oral feedback can be found in an EFL classroom and find out if there is any significant different between oral feedback and teachers comments. To study about this obstacle we tried to study about one of the important aspect of learning writing which is essentially related to teachers' feed backs. Teacher feedback can comprise both content and form feedback. Content refers to comments on organization, ideas and amount of detail, while form involves comments on grammar and mechanics errors (Fathman & Whalley, 1990). The study also provides several implications for teachers when giving effective feedback to students. This thesis focuses on the importance of teacher written and oral types of feedbacks on L2 students' writing development including its effects on both students' language accuracy and their motivation. It discusses students' feedback preferences in terms of content, compares the methods of giving feedback, and suggests instructional practices to help teachers to provide effective written feedback for their students. Feedback can be given directly or indirectly. In order to give effective written feedback, teachers should consider their students' needs for error correction and classroom realities. The level of difficulty in learning English writing, which intermediate Iranian students face, seems to be fully indicated by the hierarchy of difficulty proposed by us. There should be a whole-school approach to meeting the needs of different learners. Teachers should maintain high expectations of all students and ensure that writing is equally visible and valued across the full range of purposes, context and learning areas. The aim of teaching writing is to equip students with the knowledge and skills to write effectively for a range of purposes and in a variety of contexts. For students needing additional support with writing, it is the quality of teaching and assessment that makes the most difference to their achievement. This study investigated the effects of oral corrective feedback vs. teacher corrective feedback on Iranian EFL learners' essay writing. To this end, the performance of the participants were measured based on oral focused and oral unfocused feedback. The participants were asked to write two essays as pretest and posttest based on two similar but not identical picture stories. The participants' writing was corrected in terms of the target structures, that is, past tense, punctuation, and capitalization. Independent samples t-tests, and one-way ANOVA were utilized.

Research Question of the Study

In order to tackle the problem of this study in a much consolidated way and legitimated manner it seems necessary to raise clear-cut research question as follows:

RQ1: Do feedbacks have any positive effect on EFL learners' attitude in second language acquisition?
RQ2: Do Iranian EFL learners benefit from written feedback (teacher's comments) more than oral feedback on their essay writing?
Hypotheses of the Study

In order to answer the above mentioned questions we formulated the following hypothesis:
H1: Iranian EFL learners benefit from written feedback (teacher's comments) more than oral feedback on their essay writing.
H2: Feedbacks have positive effect on EFL learners'attitude in second language acquisition?

METHODOLOGY

This study investigated the effects of two types of corrective feedback on Iranian EFL learners'essay writing (oral feedback vs. teacher's comments). To this end, the performance of the participants was measured based on oral feedback and teacher's comments feedback. The participants were seventy-five intermediate learners from Pouyesh Language Institute in Tonekabon, Iran. They were asked to write two essays as pretest and posttest based on two similar but not identical picture stories. The participants'writing was corrected in terms of the target structures, that is, punctuation, inflectional morphemes and coordinators. The results indicated that both types of oral feedback were effective in the posttest. Since feedback provides learners an opportunity to revise their essays one can consider its role as an effective one in learning and teaching English.

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The present study is going to be conducted to compare the learners'writing production before and after the treatment, i.e. learning writing with 2 types of feedbacks (Teacher comments, and oral feedback). The following research elements procedure will be included in carrying out to obtain the research objectives. Among several designs, the one which seemed to fit best for the purpose of the present research was two phase tests for two experimental groups. The statistical procedure used in the study is that of Match T-Test (In fact two Match T-Tests are used: one for pre-reading questioning group and the other for vocabulary group and then results are compared). The Design of this study is:

![Figure 2: The design of the study](image)

The study lasted for 16 sessions. The first session was devoted to the administration of pre-test, and the next 4 sessions, i.e., sessions 2-5 were the control condition in which the learners simply write an essay without any specific feedback. Session 6 was devoted to the post-test to examine the learners' writing gains in the control condition. Sessions 7-10 included the pre-writing activity of background knowledge after which at the eleventh session learners were administered the post-test to measure their reading performance. And, 12-15 sessions was
allocated to the use of inflectional morphemes, punctuation, coordinators building as a pre-writing activity. Finally, 16 sessions included the use of post-test to measure learners’ writing performance. Participants were given to types of feedbacks individually and the writing composition test in the irregular English lesson with their regular English teacher. In total there were three classes and a teacher, and then the post test was administered after the treatment.

**Participants**

In order to homogenize the participants, the Nelson Proficiency Test was administered to 75 students to form two groups of participants that had similar general language proficiency. When proficiency test administered, the first step in data analysis was to score the participants’ performances. The participants in the studied classes were considered to constitute a fairly homogeneous group in terms of their learning history and English proficiency as measured by the Nelson English Proficiency Test (NEPT). Three classes of EFL learners whose level of proficiency was in the intermediate category were excluded in the study. They were between 16 - 19 years old. The classes were composed of both male and female learners, with 75 males in each class. The participants of this study had learned their English more or less entirely in an instructed setting. None had ever been to an English-speaking country and they had had little opportunity to use English for communicative purposes outside the classroom.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Pseudonym</th>
<th>SL</th>
<th>TL</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>TL Competence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Persian</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>16-19</td>
<td>Limited</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 1. Characteristics Information of Participants**

**Instrumentation**

Following instruments were used by us to investigate the hypothesis of the study:

**Nelson Proficiency Test**

The Nelson proficiency test (series 400 B) was used to assess the subjects’ level of proficiency in English. It was used to assess the participants’ level of proficiency in English. This test comprised 30 multiple-choice vocabularies, grammar, and reading comprehension items. For ensuring the subjects homogeneity, having administered General English proficiency test, those subjects who placed between one standard deviation above and below the mean were considered as the main subjects for the purpose of this study.

**Essay Writing (Pre-Test/ Post-Test)**

To investigate the effect of feedback using computer-based feedback we made a composition writing task that was designed based on the practiced topics in the classroom. Two writing tasks in the form of picture story, and each with eight sections, were used as instruments to measure the participants’ essay writing. The pictures were related to one theme. One of the picture stories was used for the pretest and the other one was used for the post-test. The structure of the test was on the grammatical field, in which students were asked to identify and errors in the text and write their correct forms. This test took 15 minutes to be done by the participants of the study. The reliability of test ranged 0.76 by five TEFL faculty members. This test was used both for pre-test and post-test with the same structure and level of difficulty with different types of questions.

**Interview Form**

Interview is widely used in social studies research because it helps us to get data about participants' personal information, beliefs, attitudes and opinion. It is regarded as a directed conversation between an investigator and individual or group of individuals in order to gather information. In order to complete the achieved results for proving the hypothesis of the present investigation, the structured interview had used for data collection. This instrument in type of structured interview including 5 related questions to the main topic of the study in order to help us find out the teachers’ point of view about the choosing of prior kind of feedbacks for acquiring grammatical points and linguistic features in order to focus on their writing and oral proficiencies. Next they were requested to choose the effective modern teaching instrument. Then they were requested if their method of teaching has any influence on students learning and better production by them or not. In the same question to clarify which feedback is more influential on second language acquisition, they were asked to write feedbacks or strategies which affect on their teaching which influence on learners’ production. By then at the end of previous question they were asked why they chose their arbitrary items.
Reliability of the Test

The reliability of the test was verified through the test/retest method on a group of fifteen EFL Iranian students of the Eleventh grade outside the sample of the study. The time span between the two tests was two weeks. The reliability coefficient for the test was 0.89 which was suitable for the purpose of the study.

DATA COLLECTION

The present study is an experimental research. The following research activities were performed in the data collection:

Selecting research subjects and giving the selected subjects an orientation, including the explanation of the research objectives.

Administering the pre-test to the 75 students who were assigned into 3 similar groups of 20 students. The pre-test aims at measuring the subjects' reading comprehension ability before receiving the designated treatment.

Giving treatment (teaching reading comprehension) to the 75 subjects selected. They are all receiving the same lessons. They were divided into 3 groups to receive a specific feedback. Then, we had the first group learning writing feedback with his comments (teacher written feedback). The implementing the oral feedback, which is given to the second group, on the other hand, we asks some question about writing subject and participants had to express their ideas.

Giving a reading comprehension test after the treatment, the post-test.

Carrying out the data collecting and statistical data analysis following by reporting the research results, writing the summary of the findings and discussion.

Procedure

As mentioned in the previous sections, three groups of students with the same range of language proficiency were selected from Pouyesh English Language institute, Tonekabon branch. These three groups were randomly assigned into two experimental and a control groups. The experimental group received treatment, while the control group didn't; the treatment consisted of two different types of feedbacks (a) teacher comments (b) oral feedback. There was also a control condition, in which there was no feedback. The students who took part in this study attended 18 instructional sessions in the writing production oral production class for a whole semester. At the beginning of the term, we explained the benefits of feedbacks and computer-based instruction and instructed the students indirectly on the way their erroneous written and oral language productions will be corrected by the teacher using restatements of their faulty written output. During other instructional sessions, the students had to write an essay on pre-specified topics. This was done with the aim of strengthening essay writing and grammar learning. Also they were asked to write more than 8 essays with different given topics during the term. It's better to say in here that we taught them how to categorize and make their own works. Also at the start of each program it was the duty of us to teach about the subject, make power point and give lecture based on the specific topics in order to use power point ourselves and then guide learners to do their own. In addition for writing drill and grammar rehearsal we focused on this important in our PPT’s. By then students were all requested to fix their program based on the topic and don't enter to the related participants directly. The questionnaires were completed by the sample at the end of the semester. In student-centered classes, students manage the class. The participants had the permission to give correct form of feedbacks and we as a teacher just checked the accuracy of their points. When it was possible to give any feedback, first we asked the participants to give their idea and then we turned to review the practicing program without having the correct answer. There after the students have to think and review their background knowledge of that session and could comprehend and analyze the information in a better manner. Finally if all were disabled to give a correct form of feedback or answer the question we gave the complete form of feedback in which learners comprehended our words for remembering in the future situation. This procedure had happened in both types of data collection. In this way unconsciously all the participants enter to the discussion and motivated to try out themselves. At the end of the experiment a post-test on writing composition was administered to both groups. It was aimed at measuring the reading performance of the participants to see if the treatment had made any difference in the writing performance of the two experimental groups. The results obtained through post-test were to be analyzed and interpreted statistically by T-test. Post-test was composed of two booklets each including two texts with 20 comprehension questions, one of the booklets including pre-reading section. The means of the post-test obtained scores were compared through the T-test statistical procedure to help determine how confident we can be that the differences are not due to chance.
METHODS OF ANALYZING DATA

The collected data was quantitatively analyzed. The statistical analysis was performed on two sets of data, as described below, comprehension test taken before and after the treatment, the pre-test and post-test scores were computed to determine means, standard deviation, percentages, and difference between means or pre-and post-tests of each group. The difference between means of the first group was further compared with those of the second group to determine the significance difference between the two groups. Like the scores on reading comprehension test, the scores obtained from the questionnaire administered to the two subject groups were statistically analyzed to determine means, SD, percentages, differences between means between the two subject groups. The values obtained were subsequently interpreted for their satisfaction level.

Data Analysis and Findings

The limitations of naturalistic approaches to SLA and the renewed emphasis on the role of awareness in SLA spawned numerous studies on the effectiveness of different forms of CF (e.g., [15, 16, and 17]). In order to achieve the writing ability of the students, a pre-test was administered to the participants of the three groups; in addition, the participants in both the control and the experimental groups were similar in the structure and number of tests but different in type of given test. To analyze the collected data, the SPSS software (version 18) was used and descriptive statistic such as mean, standard deviation, and variance were calculated. Moreover, inferential statistics such as independent samples t-tests, was employed to analyze the data and to find out whether the corrective feedback was effective in essay writing or not, and if so, which of them was more effective.

Investigating the First Research Hypothesis

The first hypothesis of this study was arranged based on this question: Do feedbacks have any positive effect on EFL learners’ attitude in second language acquisition. To answer this question, we mentioned to have the pre-test from the students of whole three groups. In order to examine the difference between the three groups, when the pre-test was administered, the first step was to score the participants’ performances. Table 3 shows descriptive statistics of pre-test for three groups of the study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std.</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exp.1. (Oral)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>15.200</td>
<td>2.50749</td>
<td>.64743</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exp.2. (Written)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>15.850</td>
<td>1.24212</td>
<td>.32071</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>15.033</td>
<td>1.56943</td>
<td>.40522</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table indicated the mean made by the first experimental group was 15.200 and 15.850 for the second experimental group, whereas mean made by the control group was 15.033. According to these results, the two groups had almost the same mean. After the pre-test, the experimental group of the students was instructed for 18 sessions. The first experimental group received 18 sessions of oral feedback where as the second experimental group was taught with written feedback in their descriptive writing practicing. Also, it’s better to mention here that no types of feedback were used in writing practice of control group. They just received different descriptive essays (related pictures for description and writing practicing) without any especial comments. After 18 sessions of instruction, both groups were given the post-test in order to examine the possible progress of the experimental participants at the end of 18sessions of instruction. To see the difference in results between the two experimental groups in writing pre-test, we used T-Test in this research.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nelson Variance</th>
<th>Test for Equality of</th>
<th>T-Test for equality of Means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Variance</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Sig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variance assumed</td>
<td>1.8273</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variance not assumed</td>
<td>1.421</td>
<td>26.60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As mentioned in previous sections, the learners were divided into 2 groups of experimental and control groups in order to reply the writing pre-test. According to the T-Test as it is shown in table 4.2 the sig (2-tailed) of the experimental group was .163 and the sig (2-tailed) for control .165 there is a significant difference between the experimental and control groups in this study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error M</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exp. 1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16.700</td>
<td>1.37646</td>
<td>.35540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exp. 2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>17.500</td>
<td>1.67705</td>
<td>.43301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15.250</td>
<td>1.74233</td>
<td>.44987</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This table showed the mean made by the first experimental group was 16.700 and the mean which was made by the second experimental group was 17.500 whereas mean made by the control group was 15.250. According to these results, the three groups had almost different means and the mean of the experimental group was significantly more than the control group.

**Table5. The Mean Difference of Post-Test Writing between Two Experimental Groups (Independent Sample Test)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nelson’s Test T-TEST for Equality of Mean for variance</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Sig.(2-tailed)</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>Std. Difference</th>
<th>Error 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Equal Variances Assumed</td>
<td>2.998</td>
<td>.092</td>
<td>5.115</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>.012</td>
<td>1.1237</td>
<td>.2263</td>
<td>.57878</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal Variances not assumed</td>
<td>5.115</td>
<td>32.616</td>
<td>.015</td>
<td>1.1058</td>
<td>.2263</td>
<td>.54656</td>
<td>1.5223</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to independent sample t-test results in this table, T- Test showed that there is a significance difference between the experimental groups and control group in this study. The results presented in table 5 reveal that the treatment (writing achievement via error correction and grammar test) has been effective for the learners, because the results from the post-test scores showed that there is a crucial difference between the learners' performances in their post-test. Based on the foundation of the above data analysis it has been proved that feedbacks have positive effects on EFL learners' writing performance. The result indicates that from the pretest to the posttest and, the improvement in learning occurred more significantly in the experimental groups than in the control group. In addition, the experimental group performed significantly better than the control group by showing significantly higher gain scores from the pretest to the posttest. In present research, based on the type of data, many techniques including: t-test, Independent Sample T- Test, and the main statistical procedure used to compare the output of the two tests (Pre-and Post- tests) were T-Test. It was expected that the participants could learn from the feedback provided. The feedback, as expected, would refresh their understanding or knowledge about aspects of English grammar that they might have learned before. The point was that some grammatical factors could have been forgotten because of infrequent usage. One of the advantages of this training was that it improved language competency and self-confidence in writing. On the basis of the data we have presented in this part of our research and some data which for reasons of space has not been presented, the following claims can be made: There is a high and essential effect available in giving computer-based feedback in second language acquisition classes. This is reflected in a high feedback usage score for Experimental group and in the fact that the feedback usage share shows an undeniable decrease for the learners.

**Investigating the Second Hypothesis of the Study**

In order to distinguish the difference among two types of feedbacks (Oral Feedback, Written Feedback (teacher’s comments), as it has indicated in the previous sections we focused about this complexity in two EFL classes with different types of feedbacks. As it has been shown in section 4.2.1 the findings showed that there was a highly significant difference between the experimental and control groups in the posttest-pretest total gain scores (t=5.115, p<.001). Figure4.1 shows pre and post-tests means of the experimental groups of this study.
However it is essential to have both kinds of feedbacks (oral/written feedback) together in order to have increase in the level of performance among EFL learners but we tried to study about the difference amount of these types individually. As it is shown in figure 4.1 it is obvious that oral feedback has more influential effect on EFL learners writing performance and also in their grammar usage in writing. According to the foundation, the result indicates the higher effect of oral feedback and we can prove the second hypothesis of this study. Although there is always a need for feedback there is a special need for it in early learners' language acquisition. We presuppose that a significant part of learning how to handle feedback signaling in a new language is to learn to structurally position the feedback expressions in a larger utterance. However in acquiring a second or third language vitally depends on the learners and his/her confidence of doing the learning program within focusing in each part of acquisition process but, the way which teachers follows to motivate him/her during this process is undeniable. It has been proved that if the teacher is not capable in how and when to give feedback, he/she would have bad influence on learner and instead of motivating the learner, he/she would make a dissatisfaction of learning. So its better that we focus on teaching strategies to could have a good result of our practicing.

EFL experts, teachers and instructors believe that eliciting the information and choosing specific examples are the most effective strategies. However they believe that depends on the teaching situation, learners' characters and level of education, they use different types of feedback strategies but they usually face to using this kind. Also some of the experts emphasized that as they have the necessary equipments for computer-based teaching they are using three or four types of these strategies together in which they would have the capability of simplifying the complex section of lessons. In the interviews, four teachers mentioned the need to teach their students about feedbacks. In terms of the frequency with which feedback was provided, the interview findings were varied. Some said that they only had to give linguistic feedback in the early and later stages in order to ‘set the standard’ or ‘help the student polish up the writing before examination’. 

Figure 3. Pre and Post-Test Means of Two groups of the study

Figure 4. Teachers and Instructors Points on View about Applying Feedback Techniques
GENERAL DISCUSSION

Feedback is a vital concept in most theories of learning and is closely related to motivation. Behavioral theories tend to focus on extrinsic motivation such as rewards (Weiner, 1990). In language learning and teaching, varying types of feedback can be provided to students. As in other disciplines, feedback that motivates students’ language learning should receive particular attention. On practical grounds, feedback for motivation and language correction are a key concern for language educators. Feedback can be defined from various perspectives. Based on Hattie and Timperley’s (2007) work, feedback can be defined as “information provided by an agent with respect to one’s performance or understanding” (p. 81). However, feedback also encompasses the consequences of performance. Hattie and Timperley (2007) explained further: A teacher or parent can provide corrective information; a peer can provide an alternative strategy, a book can provide information to clarify ideas, a parent can provide encouragement, and a learner can look up the answer to evaluate the correctness of a response. (p. 81). In teaching schemes, feedback should provide information specifically relating to the learning process so as to assist learners in understanding what they are learning and what they have just learned. Winne and Butler (1994) stated that “Feedback is information with which a learner can confirm, add to, overwrite, tune, or restructure information in memory, whether that information is domain knowledge, meta-cognitive knowledge, beliefs about self and tasks, or cognitive tactics and strategies” (p. 40-57). Based on research results, some researchers postulate that feedback in learning and teaching is beneficial for learners (Bitchener, 2008; Evan, Hartshorn, & Strong-Krause, 2011; Leki, 1991). Giving effective feedback is a crucial concern for teachers. Feedback affects the learners’ motivation in many different ways. Learners can receive feedback both in the form of rewards such as stickers and awards as contingencies to activities (Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 1999). With respect to learning theories, behavioral theory tends to focus on extrinsic motivation such as feedback and rewards (Weiner, 1990). Receiving a reward or feedback for an action usually increases the likelihood that the action will be repeated. Feedback can help shape students’ learning and performance. Learners who succeed at a task and continue to work hard are likely to expect future success and be motivated to expand their effort. Contrary to a behaviorists’ argument, feedback can potentially also have a negative effect on learning. Learners who do not work hard and perform poorly on a task may not benefit from feedback (Chaudron, 1988). By understanding the effects of feedback on students’ language learning, the theoretical aspects and related research studies are discussed. The results are, to some extent, in line with those of Ferris and Roberts (2001) in that their study showed that word choice and sentence structure were the most problematic grammatical elements in writing for L2 learners. The results of the verbal protocol analysis confirm the above justifications to some extent. The majority of the students stated that they had a strong preference for comments on transitional words since their teachers always emphasize that an essay with appropriate transitional words is more comprehensible and coherent and looks more sophisticated. In addition, they believed that errors in sentence structure would usually lead to ambiguity and miscomprehension, or worse, lack of comprehension on the part of the reader. As for the correction of spelling and prepositions, they mostly believed that spelling mistakes do not generally block communication of ideas and do not influence the clarity of the text. Interestingly, they stated that their teachers do not usually correct their spelling mistakes. It seems that teachers’ instructions and the errors they usually correct have a strong impact on the students’ opinion about the importance of errors. As Liu and Hansen (2005) argue, there are some factors that affect the students’ ideas about what the right feedback is. One of them is the students’ educational background. In effect, the teacher’s emphasis on certain aspects of writing would affect the students’ perception of what is important and what is not. Of course, it must be noted that even spelling, the least important error in the view of the students, enjoys the positive attitude of 50% of the students. Thus, it can be concluded that, in general, students have positive attitudes to their teacher’s correction of their surface-level errors. Similar to previous findings in L2 contexts (Enginarlar, 1993; Ferris, 1995; Leki, 1991; Radecki & Swales; 1988; Saito, 1994; Schulz, 1996; 2001), the EFL students in this study revealed a great concern with accuracy and error-free writing, in spite of the research evidence arguing that surface-level error correction is ineffective. Nevertheless, it is essential to consider whether students who report benefiting from such correction actually need it and improve because of it (Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1994; Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1996; Radecki & Swales, 1988). Few research studies have investigated the relationship between students’ preferences to different types of feedback and the improvement and development of their writing ability; investigations of this type are crucial before any conclusions can be made as to whether students’ need or desire for the correction of surface-level errors is indicative of the effectiveness of such feedback on the development of their writing skills. In addition, the EFL students in this study generally equated the importance of various features of their writing such as grammar, spelling, vocabulary choice, organization, writing style, and content; most students, however, chose comments on the writing style and on the ideas expressed in the paper as the most important teacher marks they look at, while few students chose comments on spelling and punctuation. Moreover, the EFL students in this study
did not generally differentiate between responding to various writing features on a first draft as opposed to a final draft. On the other hand, the students‘ preferences for teachers‘ techniques in pointing out errors did seem to differ regarding first and final drafts. More specifically, most students chose the correction technique showing where the error is and giving a clue about how to correct it as the best teacher feedback technique in response to a first draft, while concerning a final draft, most students chose crossing out an error and writing the correction as the best teacher feedback technique. Findings also revealed that, students‘ preferences for teacher techniques in pointing out errors on first and final drafts generally correspond to what students perceive as actual teacher practice. Since an interdependent relationship exists between teachers‘ behaviors and students‘ views (Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1994, 1996), this finding may indicate that teachers seem to be behaving according to students‘ preferences or, perhaps just as likely, that student‘ preferences for teacher feedback reflect instructional practices. Regarding students‘ preferences for the amount of feedback/marks on their papers, most students stated that they would prefer their teacher to correct all errors, especially when responding to a final draft. Considering that in most cases a final draft includes a final grade for the paper, this finding is encouraging; these students seem to care about having their written errors corrected, for reasons beyond that of obtaining a good grade on the paper. Another positive finding is that most of these students would rather receive a clue about correcting errors on their first drafts rather than the correction itself, even though the latter would presumably make it “easier” to revise the draft. Such a preference for “clues” in teacher feedback was also found among the ESL students surveyed in Leki’s (1991) study. Concerning students‘ beliefs about the importance of various features of their writing, many of the students chose comments on the writing style and ideas/content as the most important teacher marks they look at; slightly fewer students chose organization, vocabulary choice, and grammar, while less than half chose marks indicating errors in spelling and punctuation. Thus, even though the students indicated a preference for having every error corrected, it is encouraging that most of them also emphasized the importance of comments on the writing style and content, rather than only surface-level errors. Finally, it is worth mentioning that findings revealed strikingly similar responses to those provided by the ESL students in Leki’s (1991) survey regarding the last item in the questionnaire, which consists of various teacher marks/correction of an error and asks for students‘ evaluation of each mark. On the whole, the results of the study indicate that the students had a strong desire for receiving feedback on their grammatical errors. The results, in this respect, support the studies that have investigated the EFL/ESL students‘ attitude to the correction of grammatical errors by their teacher (Radecki & Swales, 1988; Leki, 1991; Satio, 1994; Ferris, 1995; Komura, 1999; Ferris & Robert, 2001; Gram, 2005; Zacharias, 2007). Overall, this study showed that learners made an improvement in essay writing according to the written feedback they received and the learners‘ performance in the posttest. Therefore, it is concluded that oral feedback is more effective than teacher’s comments or written feedback. Furthermore, one may come up with the conclusion that oral feedback may be essential for essay writing.

Variables

**Independent variable**

The research variables in the present study refer to the teaching writing performance with 2 types of feedback, oral feedback, and written feedback (teacher’s comments).

**Dependent variables**

The dependent variables in the present study consisted of scores sought from a type of instrument; essay writing test.

**CONCLUSION**

Feedback is crucial for a writer to learn about the strengths and weaknesses of his/her writing so that he/she can go about revising his/her work to make it more effective. Feedback should address both the meaning and form of the written work, although not necessarily at the same time, depending on students needs. Effective feedback enables students to develop awareness of good writing and to improve the quality not only of their current piece of writing but also subsequent pieces. Therefore, teachers should consider the advantages and disadvantages of the different modes of teacher feedback delivery. Likewise, they should take into account real-world constraints such as the number of students they teach and students’ preference for modes of feedback delivery may vary extensively depending on their personality, cultural expectations, or learning style. However, identifying the most effective mode of feedback remains an open and important question that is yet to be explored empirically and investigated thoroughly within the classroom context. Computer-based feedback plays a crucial role in SLA as it additionally helps in the formation of scholarly identities by directing them to become “particular
kinds of knowing subjects, with particular capacities, identities, and subjectivities. Truscott (1996) rejects every possible positive written feedback but this study accurately showed the effect of feedback in SLA. In our opinion there is just one item which can affect the result which was achieved by Truscott, the disability of teacher in students motivating was the reason of feedback effect less in his research. Also the disability of the teacher in using feedbacks strategies can be the other proof for ineffective of feedbacks among second language learners.

REFERENCES


