THE EFFICACY OF DIRECT CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK ON LEARNERS AT DIFFERENT PROFICIENCY LEVELS

**Farklı Dil Seviyelerinde Olan Öğrenciler Üzerinde Doğrudan
Düzeltilme Geribildirimlerinin Etkisi**

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Abstract

It can be straightforwardly asserted that Written Corrective Feedback (WCF) has gained popularity since its existence in language teaching. The study is hence designed to examine the errors of learners from different proficiency levels by giving direct and seemingly unfocused WCF to their errors (word missing), and to determine whether L2 student writers are competent enough not to conduct similar errors again in their further assignments within four weeks' time. To the present study, seven learners at elementary level and another seven learners at intermediate level were selected with convenience sampling method. They were asked to write their first writing tasks as pre-test, then the treatment was applied to both proficiency levels. Three weeks after the treatment, they submitted the second task (post-test) in the fourth week. Upon correcting the missing words in their two writing assignments via direct WCF and regarding the number of errors by applying quantitative research design and descriptive statistics, the findings were assessed according to direct (non) metalinguistic written error correction developed by Ellis (2009b). The result indicates that no significant benefit could be attained by two groups. However, the learners at intermediate group could achieve to reach higher success when compared with the elementary group referring to their number of errors. Suggestions for further related studies have also been provided for both researchers to consider and teachers to implement in their classes at the end of the study.

Keywords: different proficiency levels, direct written corrective feedback, (un) focused feedback to writing assignments

Öz

Doğrudan düzeltme geribildiriminin ortaya atıldığı günden bu yana dil öğretiminde popüler olduğu net bir şekilde ifade edilebilir. Bu nedenle bu çalışma, yabancı dili farklı seviyelerde olan öğrencilerin yazı hataları (eksik sözcük) üzerinde doğrudan fakat odaklanmış olduğu hissettirilmeyen düzeltme

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geribildiriminin etkisini incelemek ve dört haftalık deneme sürecinin ardından sonraki yazılarında benzer hataları tekrarlamayacak kadar yetkin bir hale gelip gelmediklerini saptamak amacıyla gerçekleştirilmiştir. Çalışmaya başlangıç düzeyinden ve orta dil seviyesinden yedişer öğrenci kolayda örneklem yöntemi kullanılarak seçilmiştir. Ön test olarak ilk yazı taslaklarını yazmaları istenmiş sonrasında uygulama her iki grup üzerinde tamamlanmıştır. Uygulamanın dördüncü haftasında son test olan ikinci yazı taslakları araştırmacı tarafından incelenmiştir. Nicel araştırma deseni ve betimsel istatistiklere göre doğrudan düzeltme geribildirimini kullanarak ve hata sayılarına bakarak her iki taslaktaki eksik sözcüklerin düzeltilmesinin ardından bulgular Ellis (2009b) tarafından geliştirilen doğrudan üst dil yazı hataları bildirim formuna göre değerlendirilmiştir. Sonuç olarak, doğrudan düzeltme geribildiriminin her iki gruptaki öğrenci yazıları üzerinde anlamlı bir farklılığı tespit edilememiştir. Ancak, orta seviyedeki öğrencilerin hata sayılarındaki azalmaya bakarak başlangıç düzeyindekilere göre daha yüksek bir başarı elde ettikleri ortaya çıkmıştır. Çalışmanın sonunda, ileri araştırmalar için araştırmacı ve öğretmenlere pratik öneriler sunulmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: farklı dil seviyeleri, doğrudan yazılı düzeltme geribildirimi, yazı ödevlerine verilen odaklan(ma)mış geri dönütler

INTRODUCTION

Being one of the productive skills, writing has always been regarded as a demanding process for student writers to delineate their ideas in a coherent and cohesive way. Besides that, teachers have also troubled in finding the best practice of providing feedback to their students as well as foreseeing their short and long term effects on L2 compositions. Though reasonable grounds of these matters have been sought over years in order to arrive at a resolution, and amend teaching writing skill in language classes, some controversial notions still subsist about how to give feedback to students' errors. Thus, the theoretical background of grammatical error correction in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and the importance of corrective feedback (Gas & Selinker, 2001; Lighthown & Spada, 1999) ought to be revised within writing context in the next part.

Literature Review

In the second half of 20th century, the earliest language learning theory, behaviourism, considered errors as the guilt of students, and hence behaviourists intended to remove errors from student output in order not to impede L2 learning process. They opined that wrong inputs of students must be corrected by submitting feedback. However, Audio-Lingual Method (ALM) acknowledged that all errors were to be eliminated from students' interlanguage with repetition of correct forms and memorizations. Afterwards, Chomsky (1959, 1967) rendered language learning as an internal process, and set against incorporating any instructions or external feedback into that procedure, hence he put forward the notion of tacit knowledge which represented embedded L2 knowledge in memory through personal experience and implicit learning. Though it required unconscious cognition in L2 learning similar to implicit knowledge, the latter made an overwhelming impression regarding acquiring the target language fluently in SLA theory. In 1972, Hymes coined communicative competence in opposition to linguistic competence, since only through naturalistic process would language be obtained as supported by Krashen who explained the developmental sequences of L2 grammar under the name of Natural Order Hypothesis (1982). However, due to differences between acquisition of mother tongue and learning a second language, this notion would turn out to be futile in defining lexical, grammatical and syntactic developmental stages in L2.

Taking account of the cited attempts, it would be compatible to address that in fact Krashen (1982) concurred with Truscott (1996) in terms of the readiness of the students to accept feedback and then comprehend the stimuli as intake. These two scholars also touched upon the potential frustration to be appeared among language learners in the contrary case. In other words, Truscott (1996) referred that when instantaneous exposure of target L2 forms was entailed to students by means of teacher feedback, no language acquisition could occur. This claim might also evoke Pienemann's (1998) Processability Theory (PT), reconstructing interlanguage forms abiding by L2 structures on a stage based model, the learnability and teachability hypotheses which demanded being developmentally ready for grammar acquisition of the target language. Although Truscott (1996) appeared to be reinforced by some researchers with regards to so-called one-dimensional, simplified grammar correction, the catastrophic results of feedback and its time-consuming nature (Knoblauch & Brannon, 1981), he faced harsh criticism all over the world (Bitchener, 2008; Evans, Harthson, & Tuioti, 2010; Ferris, 1995, 1999, 2013; Ferris & Hedgecock, 2004; Hartshorn et al., 2010; Polio, 2012; Robinson, 1995, 2003; Skehan, 1998; van Beuningen, 2010; van Beuningen, DeJong, & Kuiken, 2012; van Pattern, 2004) upon his claim that giving WCF was harmful and this time span ought to be spent on contents of the language instead. As he was dwelled on basically the above mentioned SLA theories disregarding contemporary concerns in L2 writing classes, such as offering explicit knowledge to student writers so as to discern their deficiencies in the target language, restructure interlanguage and occupy themselves with gaining learning autonomy, Truscott can be asserted to fall behind the dynamic feedback system (Hartshorn & Evans, 2012).

Van Beuningen (2010) also attributed the underlying causes of holding WCF in L2 to valid grounds: Schmidt's Noticing Hypothesis (1990), Swain's Output Hypothesis (1985), and Long's Focus on Form Approach (1988). That is why, the concerns that learners might be overwhelmed with cognitive process, appeal to adopt some common grammar features rather than getting any risks of including different grammatical structures in their compositions and hence they may opt for a less systematic or comprehensive writing styles turned out to be rootless allegations in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) setting. In addition to theoretical framework, inconsistent results due to inaccurate research designs and negligence of some learner variables in studies brought about a disdainful attitude to reliability and validity of his studies, too. In other words, a lot of variables, such as the genre of the tasks or setting, demographic information (educational background, needs, motivation levels, expectations, attitudes, preferences, language levels or the success in L1 performance) of the target group should have been taken into account in order to make investigators interpret the outcome more reliably.

In short, respecting longitudinal analyses as would be discussed below, Truscott (1996) might be considered reasonable due to the decreasing power of feedback in the long run (Ellis, 2009b). Yet, in general terms errors cannot be regarded as prejudicial to language learning (Ferris, 2006). Thus, it is to be concluded that the critical point is not whether to give feedback to learners but to find the most effective methods of feedback provision (Ferris, 2007; Ferris et al., 2012).

Direct and Indirect Feedback

This hotly-debated issue in ELT has also gained popularity owing to WCF types applied in research. Direct feedback is resorted to signalize the error explicitly when the feedback provider notes down its correct form as well as explanations. Nevertheless, indirect WCF is just to mark errors without providing additional support to learners. Some researchers (Chandler, 2003; Kang & Han, 2015) qualified direct WCF as a solution of some failures in

L2 writing, such as experiencing a complicated error during composition and distraction among learners at low proficiencies. Furthermore, according to Chandler (2003), self-correction might not be so compatible in some language classes in spite of guiding learners to be independent. This is because they do not have mistakes but errors as distinguished by Corder (1967), hence they may not overcome this correction process on their own even if they were supplied with coding in order to make errors evident. Still, Bitchener and Knoch (2008) and Lalande (1982) treated indirect WCF as the correct form for L2 student writers at high proficiencies to gain independency. The discussion about the efficacy of direct and indirect feedback (Saito, 1994) also triggered what error types to be worked on and how long it would take effect on learners (Truscott & Hsu, 2008). In sober fact, Ellis et al. (2008) emphasized to bring direct feedback into the forefront in terms of long-term writing advancement with the exclamations that direct approach would sound reasonable when teachers aimed to stress one sort of specific errors or if learners were basic language users and call for helps from outside. On the other hand, Van Beuvingen et al. (2012) and Bitchener (2012) found out indirect feedback to be practical than direct feedback which might only be utilized for grammatical errors, since merely direct WCF may bring in longer gains of grammar whereas Hartshorn and Evans (2012) could not arrive at an exact answer about the productivity of (in) direct WCF in their studies. In other words, as to the superiority of direct WCF over indirect WCF or vice versa, no conclusive findings could be recorded to date.

Regarding the errors that WCF was aimed to correct, Ferris (1999) divided them into two categories as treatable errors (missing articles, subject-verb agreement or verb forms), and untreatable errors (missing words, word order, lexical errors or sentence structure). They were also called as grammatical accuracy (Bitchener & Knoch, 2008; Bitchener, Young, & Cameron, 2005; Ellis, 2009b, Shintani, Ellis & Suzuki, 2013) such as capitalization, punctuation, spelling (Heift & Rimrott, 2008), and idiomatic usage, respectively. By taking cultural norms and individual World Englishes (Kachru, 1997) of each student in class into consideration, handing edited papers including idiomatic usages back to L2 composers might prevent their yields and creativity, hence this should not be employed unless the errors block the comprehension of learners. Nevertheless, as conducting WCF only to learners' syntactic knowledge may also entail some points of no return in mine of their information and future learning, it seems that determining exact error types to be worked on will still be somehow contentious in ELT world.

Focused and Unfocused Feedback

Another conflict about WCF among academicians was whether to focus only some particular error forms or to target quite a few or all errors exhaustively. As Schmidt (1994) and Ellis (2005) also put forward, some researchers (Bitchener, 2012; Ellis, Sheen, Murakami, & Takashima, 2008; Sheen, 2007) favoured focused error correction because the learners would explicitly pinpoint their errors, and concentrate on how to overcome them, therefore its effect was to be in long-term run. However, due to identifying solely some specific errors confined in writing tasks and the need to analyse them in-depth, not many studies used to emerge based on focused WCF design. Moreover, Bruton (2009; 2010), Hartshon and Evans (2012), and Leki (1992) underlined avoiding strategies that learners might embrace in tasks in order to deceive teachers and make them believe that they did their best. Therefore, as Farrokhi and Sattarpour (2011) did, they negated researchers favouring focused WCF, and discredited focused feedback treatment by taking sides with unfocused WCF on account of the fact that WCF must promote students to take responsibility of learning, to find, and correct errors so as to internalize the process.

Still, when focused WCF started to gain a growing interest in the research paradigm, Ellis et al. (2008) and van Beuningen et al. (2012) decided to carry out a probe on nearly 300 English as a Second Language (ESL) students by comparing the impact of focused and unfocused WCF. Even though both groups' success rates were far better than control groups, because of inadequate experiments about this issue, focused WCF was admitted to be more productive than unfocused WCF, which also leaves the door ajar for further related studies.

The last point to be touched upon is though ESL population in language schools or at universities has comprised the target group of most analyses as can be seen in the analyses above, EFL does not appear to be covered in WCF studies (Lalande, 1982; Semke, 1984) enough, due to the fact that these learners are mostly exposed to formal grammar instructions and explicit feedback. Considering this shortcoming of previous studies particularly in EFL context, and the mystery behind finding the best WCF practices to be administered in L2 classes, this probe has evolved to address the effect of direct WCF on one of the treatable errors, missing words, from EFL learners' writing tasks within a quantitative research design.

Short and Long-Term Efficiency of WCF

The most prominent analyses with regard to short and long-term impact of WCF on students must be of Ferris (1995) and Van Beuningen (2010) who thoroughly concentrated on this variable while working on their performance, and revealed that WCF has improved learners' written accuracy in the long-run. Ferris (2006) also conducted research and found out that feedback obtained by teachers would help students' writing both in short and long terms. Yet, Hartshorn and Evans (2012) and van Beuningen et al. (2012) could not arrive at a conclusive result in the end. As is seen, there is a lack of checking the short and long term effects of WCF in the field, thus this research has attempted to incorporate this aspect into the domain, too.

In short, on the basis of the statements in SLA history, WCF has always been debated on L2 errors, their types, reasons, explanation and the consequences on students' writing ability. The current analysis endeavours to investigate direct and seemingly unfocused effect of WCF on L2 writers whose explications in compositions were not intelligible enough in the target language due to their proficiency levels. Hence, the research has originated from identifying the correct WCF type in EFL setting peculiar to this group of students without impeding their potential creativity in target language writing skill referring to former studies, if there are any, totally addressing the aforementioned variables in ELT.

Research Question

1- What are the effects of direct and seemingly unfocused WCF on the missing words in L2 writing assignments created by adult Turkish learners of English at elementary and intermediate levels in the long-term?

METHODOLOGY

Participants and Setting

The participants were fourteen EFL Turkish learners at two different proficiency levels. Seven, A1 level (elementary) and seven, B1 level (intermediate) learners over the age of eighteen voluntarily attended to this study. These purposely selected subjects were adolescents taking English courses by paying some amount of money in the language school of a state university in the capital city of Turkey, Ankara. In view of the fact that their proficiency levels were tested via oral and written exams at the beginning of each class, no other placement tests were administered again.

In this language school, the courses are monthly scheduled covering 40 hours of English lessons in total. Besides that, the subjects are to take English lessons with the same instructor in a month. This is because the instructors will not normally change from one course period to another. This was also the case for this investigation. The same instructor, the researcher of this study, maintained lecturing to the same group for two months. It means that the subjects did not encounter with a new teacher in data collection process.

The selection of the participants was based on convenience sampling method. Nevertheless, they did not even feel that they were under the treatment. This is because they were already running the course with writing tasks every week. Depending on the learners who handed in their assignments to the researcher, they automatically became the participants of the probe. In elementary class, there were fourteen L2 learners, whereas the number was ten at intermediate group. Nonetheless, of all these subjects, only seven students from each class pulled their weight of writing papers and accordingly, they determined the number of the participants for the research of the current study.

Furthermore, as students were voluntarily enrolled to English language courses in the language school of a state university in Turkey, the investigation was distinguished from the others mostly run at primary school, secondary school, high school or universities in terms of its particular setting.

Data Collection

Originally, the study was to address the sentences with the errors of simple present tense and past tense. Still, the researcher discerned that there were not enough errors in intermediate group. Provided that she had not applied any changes in research design, and put the first plan into practice, there would be two different error types to be corrected with seemingly unfocused approach instead of one structure to aim at (Shintani et al., 2013). Furthermore, if solely the errors of simple present tense were investigated, then it could not have been a reliable test in terms of the mean rank (Kang & Han, 2015).

Upon clarifying the design flaw in the research, the data were gathered in two-phased process. As a pre-test, seven writing assignments from each group were collected in the first week of the course. Their edited papers were handed them back on the next day of the lesson, which was the first stage of the treatment.

The intermediate group was assigned to write an informal letter to one of their friends assuming that they were students in another town or in a foreign country. A model was

also stated in the course-book so that they could take it as an example. Even though there was just one aim expected from learners to gain within this probe, not solely the missing words but all errors in their works were corrected by using direct WCF. The reason was not to have them feel uncomfortable or under-pressure by focusing on only one aspect of their work. In the following three weeks, any different techniques were not adopted to submit feedback nor were they asked to continue writing tasks related to the research. As to the main course-book utilized by all teachers in this institution, New Headway fourth edition series have been taught in the lessons according to the levels of target students. The first class using New Headway intermediate learners' book (Soars & Maris, 2009) wrote about the first unit's task which matched with the syllabus, and thus no extra-curricular activity was carried out. Similarly, the second class who practiced New Headway elementary (Soars & Maris, 2011) described a place upon learning relative pronouns which, who, where. This was the subject matter of 9th unit in that book. Therefore, they were asked to cover their favourite places in L2 compositions by building sentences with relative clauses.

After three weeks, they completed the second writing tasks related to new topics. The intermediate group put 'my cause for concern' down on paper, which was in the 5th unit. Although 4th unit's writing topic, writing a biography, could have also been dealt, it would not thought to take their interest. That is why, the theme of next unit was intentionally opted. As to the elementary group, the teacher had to identify the scope of their project on her own, since unit 12 in the course-book comprised only poems and the practices of adding verses to complete all lines, which was incompatible with the current study. Moreover, unit 11 in the book was about a holiday description in postcard format, yet this was quite similar to their first task of describing a place. Thus, the last alternative would be to analyse writing part in unit 10. Finally, the researcher planned to contain that unit due to its content and the linking words but, however, although that had already been discussed by comparing and contrasting two people in previous lessons.

Having read and combined the sentences with the conjunctions, the subjects completed a text, filling the blanks exercise, as a receptive learning activity to practice the linking words. Then, they were to compare two people in their families or friends by using similar expressions and linking words. Eventually, both classes received an immediate, direct and seemingly unfocused WCF to their second task next day. They were also encouraged to ask for their errors if they could not understand the corrections or the explanations. Finally, after the treatment, the teacher carried out a post-test to display the development in each group by entailing participants to study on a new writing topic three weeks later. Table 1 indicates the order that the experiment was run accordingly during data collection.

Table 1. *The Flow of Research Design*

Table 2. *The Analysis of Pre-test*

The participants	The number of errors in the 1st week	The number of errors in the 4th week	Language levels
P1	8	3	Elementary
P2	1	4	Elementary
P3	3	2	Elementary
P4	2	4	Elementary
P5	1	0	Elementary
P6	0	4	Elementary
P7	4	1	Elementary
P8	1	2	Intermediate
P9	0	10	Intermediate
P10	1	4	Intermediate

P11	5	5	Intermediate
P12	0	0	Intermediate
P13	1	4	Intermediate
P14	1	0	Intermediate

Data Analysis

That probe was arranged within the framework of the taxonomy developed by Ellis (2009a), and redesigned by Sheen (2011) including different forms of WCF as is seen below.

- i. Direct non-metalinguistic written correction
- ii. Direct metalinguistic error correction
- iii. Indirect error correction
- iv. Indirect written correction
- v. Indirect error correction using error codes
- vi. Indirect metalinguistic written correction
- vii. Reformulation

Upon regarding students at elementary level and not making them feel that they were in an experiment, the researcher handled first two principles in that typology. Not only did she correct their all errors explicitly but added explanations of potential reasons behind these errors as well. It means that both metalinguistic feedback which was of significance so that it would indicate the cues of the teachers about the origin of the errors either with codes or grammatical explanations (Ellis, 2009a) to promote learners' uptake, non-metalinguistic feedback was also resorted. Inasmuch as the explications could also be illustrated with examples, the researcher intended learners to elicit their former knowledge through the labels or other clues. It was also conducted so as to improve their awareness, have them self-question, and in parallel reach higher cognitive thinking skills.

To assess the efficiency of direct feedback according to language proficiency of the participants, reach solid evidence about the investigation and to interpret it thoroughly, Mann Whitney U test was utilized. This test type was developed to arrive at conclusion whether or not constant assessment between two different groups would indicate statistically significant difference (Pallant, 2001). After it categorized the scores of two groups, the test also checked whether the ranks between the rates altered. Due to the fact that the scores were converted into the ranks, the distribution of real grades was ignored (Büyükoztürk, 2006).

During the data analysis, regardless of the points of two groups, initially ordinal numbers were given to represent the participants. As the minimal value in ordinal numbers, 1 symbolized the lowest point, and the others were arranged in an ascending order. This analysis was based on the total score of ordinal numbers of both groups. The obtained rank sum was divided into the size of the group and the mean of rank was calculated (Büyükoztürk, 2006).

Table 3. *The Results of Mann Whitney U Test according to Writing Skills*

Group	N	The Mean of Rank	Rank Sum	U	p
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Elementary	7	8.71	61.00	16.00	.273
Intermediate	7	6.29	44.00		

As is seen in table 3, no significant difference can be recorded ($U=16$, $p>.05$) between the error numbers of intermediate and elementary groups who wrote two tasks in the first week and the fourth weeks of the course. It means that the feedback submitted to each participant after their first writing assignment did not make a statistically significant difference in numbers of errors for the second task. Still, when the mean of rank was considered, it would be probable to allege that the number of the errors in elementary group was higher than the ones in intermediate group.

Results and Discussion

The results of the study deduced in view of writing assignments of the participants were examined in accordance with the research question: 'What are the effects of direct and seemingly unfocused WCF on the missing words in L2 writing assignments created by adult Turkish learners of English at elementary and intermediate levels in long-term?'

Firstly, the errors in the first group, the intermediate, was classified in order to indicate the results in table 4.

Table 4. *The Error Analysis of Intermediate Group*

The participants	Missing words (1 st week)	Missing words (4 th week)
P8	like (sampling)	to be (as the copula verb) on (lack of a preposition)
P9	-----	to be (as the copula verb) x2 the (in definitions) it's a (half sentence) bad (adjectives in description) but (the lack of linking word) from (lack of use with benefit) that (as a relative clause) shows that...(no connectors) have (as the lack of main verb)
P10	to be (as the copula verb)	on (no preposition with depend) the (in definitions) to be (as the copula verb) of (the lack of possession)
P11	to be (as the copula verb) a/an (in definitions) the (in definitions) of (lack of a preposition) it's a (half sentence)	to be (as the copula verb) that are (as a relative clause) will (no verb tenses) them (the lack of pronoun) the (in definitions)
P12	-----	-----
P13	a missing word (skill)	in (lack of a preposition) affectS (verb tenses) preventS (verb tenses)

		a/an (in definitions)
P14	in (lack of a preposition)	-----

This table demonstrates that the subjects in general seemed to perform worse contrary to expectations. During the first week, their errors were corrected directly by adopting seemingly unfocused approach. Yet, all errors on the paper were stated comprehensively without merely marking the missing words so as not to have them feel that they were in an experiment. Still, in the end, only missing word errors were aimed and investigated as is seen in Table 4.

Despite that well-designed treatment process, in the fourth week, they did not seem to have dealt with their errors successfully. The most definite reason might stem from the fact that different from other categories, such as present simple tense -s forms, relative clauses or to be as the auxiliary verb in sentences which all have quite limited scope of application, missing word includes several error types ranging from prepositions to conjunctions. Furthermore, since the subjects did not concentrate on just one topic, yet they found out the renewed ones in their following assignments, this strategy increased the error numbers though it might have blocked the replica.

Table 5. *The Error Analysis of Elementary Group*

The participants	Missing words (1 st week)	Missing words (4 th week)
P1	the (in definitions) biggest (no adj. in comparative) with (the lack of preposition) it (no subjects in sentences) x2 to be (as the copula verb) x2 (half of the sentence is missing)	the (in definitions) learners (no subjects is stated) do (as the lack of main verb)
P2	a/an (in definitions)	the (in definitions) and (the lack of linking word) at (lack of preposition) x2
P3	a/an (in definitions) to be (as the auxiliary verb) as (no preposition with known)	each (lack of use with other) too...(without much)
P4	to be (as the copula verb) the (in definitions)	to be (as the copula verb) they (no subject in the sentence) a/an (in definitions) x2
P5	a/an (in definitions)	-----
P6	-----	to (no preposition with go) with (no preposition with play) more (no reinforcer with angry) too (at the end of the sentence)
P7	the (in definitions) It (no subject in the sentence) visit(no main verbs in sentence) to be (as the copula verb)	more (in numbers with comparatives)

As regards to the other group, elementary students, a similar result with the same explications can be inferred from Table 5. Nevertheless, displaying the improvement of two classes within tables provided the opportunity of comparing them in the light of direct WCF. Respecting all these quasi correlations between two groups, learners at elementary level can be recorded to attain less accomplishment than the intermediate class when their errors and correction forms were revised. In other words, despite this nuance in results, it would be compatible to proclaim in reference to what Mann Whitney U test indicated that in fact no significant difference can be noticed in both groups when direct and seemingly unfocused WCF was considered. These results do correlate the findings of former analyses (Bitchener, 2008; Bitchener, 2012; Bitchener & Knoch, 2008; Ellis, 2009a, Ellis, et al. 2008; Parreño, 2014; Sheen, 2007) which sought the efficacy of focused WCF on the tasks of L2 composers at low proficiency levels, and found its positive impact on this group. In the same vein, as learners appeared to obtain only unfocused feedback, nonetheless their errors were investigated under the light of focused WCF, the intermediate group, could attain higher success rates than the elementary, which indicates that the more proficient the class is, the less potential they will be prone to commit an error via unfocused WCF. Due to unfocused WCF, the researcher could record decreasing errors only in limited numbers in elementary class (Rank sum 61.00). Still, if it were through direct focused WCF, the elementary group might have utilized it more and made less errors in their second writing, which is in contrast with Bruton (2009; 2010), Farrokhi and Sattarpour (2011); Ferris (2004); Hartshon and Evans (2012), and Leki (1992) who favour indirect WCF. Moreover, the findings of Ellis (2005), Schmidt (1994) and Van Beuningen et al. (2012) could overlap with our analysis, whereas it contradicts with Lalande (1982) since the first three studies have asserted that direct WCF is much better to be adopted for grammatical errors. In addition, the subjects were also checked in terms of short and long-term effects of WCF in fourth weeks' time, yet they could not appear to reflect the influence of WCF to their tasks unlike in the studies of Ferris (1995, 1996) and Van Beuningen (2010). Finally, it would not be amiss to claim that the declarations of Truscott (1996) did contradict with this research context as well.

CONCLUSION

The researcher outlined this probe upon checking the general views towards WCF in literature (Bitchener, 2012; Ellis, 2005; Ellis, Sheen, Murakami, & Takashima, 2008; Schmidt, 1994; Sheen, 2007) and respecting the results of studies (Bitchener & Knoch, 2008; Chandler, 2003; Kang & Han, 2015; Lalande, 1982) prior to operationalizing any of its steps. Having disclosed the well-accepted standpoints, and probable misconceptions about WCF in the light of highly charged discussions, she specified the study and narrowed its scope to direct and seemingly unfocused WCF. Then, this analysis scrutinized 'word missing' errors in L2 compositions of intermediate and elementary students, and thereafter they obtained feedback though clearly edited versions of papers with some explanations on the same page; even so, the learners did not seem to attain recovery thoroughly. This would remind us the interpretation of Ellis et al. (2008) that both focused and unfocused WCF may be effective depending on the study.

Limitations

First of all, the participants did not write the tasks in the lessons, and thus they regarded them only as assignments. Though the researcher had given the caveat that they should not refer to dictionary in the time they wrote, every now and then they might have adopted, not adapted, the model to some extent in the course-book, which may have had an impact

on the reliability of the instrument. This concern came out while the teacher was assessing the papers. Due to the fact that she was giving lectures to these two groups over a month, she was familiar enough how well they could fulfil their duties. Moreover, in reference to writing, she would render a verdict about whether they could brainstorm ideas, create drafts or present their own profiles in practice. This knowledge was quite essential, since some of them may have intentionally avoided using their fossilized errors in compositions. For instance, P5 always had forgotten the use of 'to be' as copular verb in the utterances of his writing; however, any kind of such an error was not encountered in his papers. It disclosed the reality behind the study that these were its failing parts.

Another shortcoming might be the absence of a control group. If a control group were incorporated, it would have been more probable to reach valid results via examining three groups in contrast (Bitchener & Knoch, 2008; Shintani et al., 2013; Kang & Han, 2015; Ellis, 2009a, 2009b). In other words, it would have been quite certain to allege that checking the errors made learners acquire the target language patterns.

In addition, the probe could have also been assessed with regards to inter-rater reliability to see the correlation between two raters.

Finally, due to EFL context the study was implemented in, it would not be ethical to generalize the results into ESL context as well.

Suggestions for Further Studies

The instruments in the research can be increased in number to discover more about the subjects, and demographics in order to compare their answers via these different tools and to find out the consistency. In line with this purpose, an interview or a questionnaire may be inserted in data collection process for further studies. Thus, both quantitative and qualitative methods will be utilized to corroborate the outcome influentially.

Though one of the most crucial and remarked concern to the researcher is not to threaten the subjects by making them feel that they are under investigation, this could also be achieved through a different way in this analysis. For example, as a post-test, their compositions may be assessed in the final exam. By this way, they will have to pay utmost attention to tasks, and write in the face of the teacher.

A small sample size of data (N=14) has been used to collect data, which might evoke the misperception that overgeneralizations are produced about WCF. Still, it was an in-depth investigation and the subjects were examined only by one aspect of variable. In spite of that, other researchers may also scrutinize the study with a lot more participants. Besides, instead of only one specific grammatical feature, at least two syntactic items could be aimed to be investigated among all errors of L2 students writers in EFL context.

Although not all but just 'word missing' errors have been taken into account in assessment, the teacher might have students understand it via direct focused WCF only for missing words. Thus, the claims of Bruton (2009; 2010), Hartshon and Evans (2012), Leki (1992) and van Beuningen (2010) about learners' avoiding strategies will be tested as well.

In addition, one other group at elementary or intermediate level may be included to control the effect of indirect focused WCF with the direct focused WCF.

Last but certainly not least, the research might be conducted by a colleague, not the teacher who is the researcher of the study as well (Ferris et al., 2012). The reason is that a good researcher should not administer the data collection indeed.

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