



The Effects of Direct Written Corrective Feedback (WCF) on Language Preparatory School Students` IELTS Independent Writing Section Score

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Abstract

A wealth of research has examined the effects of varied types of Written Corrective Feedback (WCF) in Academic Writing courses. However, there has been an ongoing discussion on adopting one of them. In this regard, this study investigated the effects of direct feedback on IELTS Academic Writing Section Score of Foundation English students` over 24 weeks using pre-test and post-test. Considering this aim, 40 students were separated into two groups as control or experimental group through systematic sampling method. Experimental group students were exposed to direct feedback, whereas control group students were engaged in metalinguistic feedback. Each student wrote 6 essays related to IELTS Writing Task 2 regardless of being in control or experimental group. Quantitative data were analyzed by IBM SPSS 23 through independent sample t test and paired sample t test. Independent sample t test and paired sample t test post test results were recorded as .001 respectively, indicating that there were highly significant differences in experimental group. On the other hand, control group progressed to an extent, but it was not as significant as the experimental group. Likewise, the questionnaire and interview analysis show that direct feedback was supported by more students when compared to metalinguistic feedback. Findings of this study may have some insightful points for educators who have been covering or managing Academic English courses at universities globally.

Keywords: Academic Writing, Written Corrective Feedback, Metalinguistic Feedback, Direct Feedback

Introduction

Writing skills are one of the most important domains of language learning process. However, a very limited time is devoted to improving language skills in many countries (Gilbert & Graham, 2009). Weigle (2002) asserts that linguistic, cultural, cognitive and social aspects of language learning should be reflected in writing courses. Writing skill is required at many stages of people`s lives such as writing responses in exams, sending e-

mails to colleagues, advisors, writing reports at universities or in a company, writing paragraphs or essays and having interviews to be employed. It is also suggested that language fluency should be accompanied by a written and spoken format to be a proficient learner of any language (Freed et al., 2003). They argue that language learning cannot take place if oral proficiency is not supported with written fluency. Likewise, they need to communicate with other people mostly in a written format on social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter or Instagram, so they can convert theoretical knowledge they learned in writing courses into practical knowledge. Additionally, improving writing skills lays the foundation for other skills which are reading, listening and speaking because good writers need to listen, read and speak on a regular basis. When all skills are interconnected in harmony, the progress in writing performance of the learners can be boosted in a positive way. Apart from these advantages, improved writing skill has other benefits for learners. Many scholars have the opinion that improved writing skill can increase learners' self-confidence, boost their intrinsic motivation, ensure personal growth and evoke their creativity (Hashemian & Heidari, 2013; Chuikova, 2015). There are numerous advantages of improved writing skill such as expressing someone's personality clearly, promoting communication, developing thinking skills, persuading others in a logical way, and finally preparing learners for a promising career (Sheronovna, 2021). Considering these perspectives, writing skill can be regarded as an indispensable part of language learning and teaching process.

Academic writing course is offered as a course at many universities globally. The stakeholders of education at universities emphasize that writing course will lay a foundation for other subjects in the following years. According to Zhu (2004), Academic Writing course has a significant role in enhancing learners' grammar and vocabulary knowledge. He argues that once grammatical rules and vocabulary are excelled, it requires less time to comprehend the topic and write quality essays. There are different techniques to be employed in an Academic Writing course, such as practicing on brainstorming, making an outline and writing cooperatively in class under the guidance of the instructors. Later, learners write their works by racing against time. Subsequently, the instructors collect them and offer valuable feedback in order to minimize the mistakes and increase the quality of their works in the following weeks. Finally, learners can be required to resubmit their works by considering their mistakes. These techniques can vary from one instructor to another one. However, these techniques are designed to raise the awareness of the learners in multiple ways and let them learn some lessons by each passing week. Additionally, these techniques can be quite essential to increase the number of deep writers and decrease the number of surface writers (Hussain, 2019). Deep writer refers to writing in-depth, while surface writer refers to writing superficially without mastering it. Thus Academic writing course offers a lot to students on the way of being a proficient writer of

English.

Academic writing course is equal to providing written corrective feedback to learners. Written corrective feedback (WCF) can be defined as analyzing students' writing performance and suggesting possible strategies to write more effectively in the upcoming weeks. In other words, WCF is employed to ensure continuous feedback between students and the feedback providers. It has been getting increasing attention since Sadler (1989) published *Giving Feedback Guidelines*. These guidelines have formed the basis of WCF and have been enriched with the contribution of new studies. Likewise, Tom et al. (2013) argue that regular feedback affects learners' progress in a positive way rather than hampering their progress. They postulate that feedback should be as encouraging, specific, understandable, constructive as possible. There are certain feedback strategies to employ. Ellis (2008) suggested six categories of error correction strategies, including electronic, reformulation, direct, indirect, metalinguistic, and focused or unfocused strategies. Each strategy involves the implementation of a different technique. Direct strategy is related to correcting students' mistakes immediately on the paper, while indirect strategy refers to noting some clues to find the mistakes by the students.

On the other hand, metalinguistic feedback necessitates that teachers will compose error correction codes and apply them on students' written works. Metalinguistic feedback is suggested to stimulate inquiry-based learning which is about learning by discovery and self-research instead of writing the correct form immediately. Additionally, focused or unfocused error correction strategies refer to focusing on the certain mistakes or making complete correction respectively based on the correcting certain mistakes or all mistakes respectively depending on the choice of the teacher. The fifth category is about electronic feedback which means placing hyperlinks for students to click and inquire more about their mistakes. Final category suggested by Ellis is that a native speaker will rewrite the same text as a part of reformulation to be more natural which aims to improve the intelligibility of the text.

Literature Review

Written Corrective Feedback has been placed at the center of Academic Writing course for long years (Ferris & Hedgecock, 2005). The role of Written Corrective Feedback has been investigated in many EFL and ESL books and articles by increasing number of researchers. These initiatives have surged since Truscott (1996) claimed that WCF has adverse effects on improving learners' writing skill.

Numerous studies have been documented to prove or disprove Truscott's claim. To name a few, Ashwell (2000) conducted a study on Japanese university students to compare metalinguistic feedback with indirect feedback. The results uncovered that

metalinguistic feedback based on assigning error correction codes increased students' success more than the other group which was exposed to indirect feedback based on underlining the mistakes. The students' comments showed that error correction based feedback was clearer and more beneficial than only underlining the mistakes. This result was in line with Harmer's (2007) idea which asserts that error correction codes give ample opportunity to the learners to realize their mistakes and self-edit. He also states that only underlining feedback can be confusing to distinguish the mistakes, however, error correction codes are easy to figure out the mistakes. Likewise, Chandler (2003) carried out a study on ESL learners in Hong Kong to compare direct feedback with indirect feedback. The results illustrated that the students who got direct feedback outperformed. The students argued that direct feedback was less time consuming and increased their enthusiasm and motivation in the upcoming weeks. Chandler argues that indirect feedback fails to meet students' need when they make complex mistakes. This confusion can demotivate learners, so the learners may channel their energy on other skills rather than writing course.

Another study was conducted by Ellis et al. (2008) to compare focused feedback with unfocused feedback. They conclude that focused feedback is more fruitful to increase students' success because focusing on specific items can yield better results rather than unfocused feedback. Unfocused feedback can cover many elements to correct, so it can be time consuming and exhausting for the learners. Additionally, Altamimi and Masood (2021) conducted a study on the effects of electronic feedback. Their study revealed that electronic feedback is more effective than indirect feedback. Furthermore, Sachs and Polio (2007) carried out a study to compare direct feedback with reformulation. They conceded that reformulation produced fruitful results, however, their progress was not as significant as direct feedback.

The Present Study

The aim of this study was to compare direct feedback with metalinguistic feedback on Foundation English freshman students who are studying at a prestigious private university in Erbil in 2021-2022 Academic Year. In this study, following questions are asked:

Is direct written corrective feedback more effective than metalinguistic written corrective feedback?

Do the students' perspectives change about direct feedback after completing the study?

Methodology

Research Design

Varied research designs can be used while conducting scientific studies. Migiro and Magangi (2011) concede that qualitative and quantitative research designs can be employed in social sciences studied as separately or simultaneously. However, the mixed method design has been used in this study as it offers flexibility to collect, analyze and integrate quantitative and qualitative data in an equal way rather than only considering numbers or comments (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2009). In this respect, this study employed a mixed methods design which required the learners to write an essay in a 4-week cycle spanning 24 weeks in total as a part of quantitative data and to respond items through a questionnaire and answer a single question by two open ended interview questions on learners` writing habits to gather qualitative data. Quantitative data were gathered by comparing results of each group spanning 24 weeks through independent samples t-test and paired samples t test in SPSS version 23, whereas qualitative data were obtained by analyzing the responses of participants in the questionnaire and explained in detail by employing content analysis method in the following sections.

Research Process

This study was carried out in 6 phases, all of which can be clearly seen in Figure 1 and will be explained in detail in the following sections.

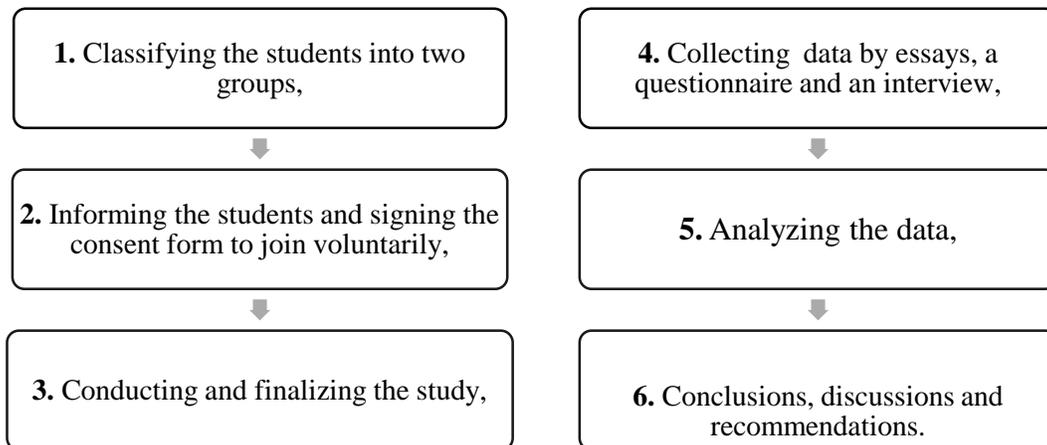


Figure 1: Stages of the study

Setting

This study was carried out at an international private university in Erbil, Iraq. There are around 5000 students who have been studying in 29 departments. The university has a reputation to require students to receive courses only in English which makes it different from many other universities in the region. Learning English by courses is students' ultimate goal, and most of the students prefer it by an ambition for this reason because they assert that they will have ample job opportunity once they have a degree from a university where medium of instruction is completely English.

Participants

40 freshman Foundation English course students were included in this study. The students were from different educational backgrounds. 80 % of the students studied in a public high school, whereas 20 % of the students studied in a private high school before being a student at this university. Additionally, their nationalities and ethnic groups were Kurdish, Arab, Turkmen, Iranian, Turkish and Assyrian which enriched the scope of the research by welcoming different segments of the society as much as possible. They were admitted to university based on their results in National (Wezary) Exam, conducted by ministry of education, or universally accepted SAT exam which implies a standardized test widely used for college admission in the USA and accepted in many countries around the world with varying regulations. Participants' ages ranged from 18 to 23. In terms of gender, 16 female students and 24 male students joined the study. Although they graduated from different high schools, one point was common for them which was to improve their English level. Except few students, no students had a prior experience about Academic Writing course which was so fundamental to be a successful student at this private international university. After being admitted to the university, all students had to take Proficiency Exam which was held by language preparatory school of the same university in a professional way by measuring 4 skills simultaneously in one exam. Based on the results of the proficiency exam, the students' marks chosen in this study were not satisfactory enough to adapt to lessons in English in their departments, so they were placed in Foundation English course spanning the whole year as a prerequisite. Otherwise, they cannot understand the instructions to be successful in their departments and the dropout rate may increase as experienced a lot in previous years. A student has to join 10 hours of instruction weekly, and an Academic Year lasts 24 weeks to allow students to get their self confidence in terms of speaking, writing, reading, and listening. Apart from Foundation English course, the students took all their courses in their departments.

Foundation English course students can be defined as the ones who took English lessons previously, but their level is not as satisfactory as expected. Their short term goal

is to be able to express themselves in a spoken and written format at the end of the year. On the other hand, their long term goal is to be a proficient writer and speaker of English, so they will employ their linguistic competence whenever they need during their professional career. In this regard, they demand from the administration of language preparatory school to hire the best instructors who can teach English in an engaging way by employing the latest proven language learning and teaching strategies. Their main motivation to choose mentioned university is that communicative competence is prioritized. In other words, they expect to have a communicative competence which includes linguistic, strategic, discourse and socio-linguistic competence in a single unit spanning the whole year. They hold the opinion that they will have a promising career once they graduate from the university because they will be equipped with necessary skills to carry out the given tasks and solve the problems by employing their critical thinking skills in a wise way.

Sampling Procedure

In this study, the population included all the students who enrolled in Foundation English course at private university in Erbil-Iraq in 2021-2022 Academic Year. There were 200 students who were classified in 10 classes. Systematic sampling method was preferred as it allows the researchers to choose sample from the population based on intervals in equal numbers as a type of probability sampling method (Elsayir, 2014). In this respect, students were chosen based on the interval of 5, so 40 students were chosen from the population which included 200 students in total. There were students from 15 different departments ranging from medical analysis to information technology. The common point about participants was to take a 10-hour weekly instruction by qualified instructors. The students in this study were classified in two separate classes, so the research could be conducted successfully, and necessary arrangements were made easily to finalize the research.

Data Collection Tools

In this study, writing an essay once in 4 weeks related to Task 2 in IELTS Academic Writing Section, responding to questionnaire and expressing ideas by the interview were the central points of collecting data.

In this respect, quantitative data were collected through essay marks and converted into numerical values by SPSS 23 to measure whether there was a statistically significant difference between each group as pre-test and post-test. Essay topics were chosen based on the available topics on the internet related to IELTS. Essay marks were graded over 100 based on the rubric prepared by all the instructors in collaboration. Moreover, qualitative

data were collected through a questionnaire and an interview. The questionnaire included 10 items with a Likert scale, while the interview comprised two open ended questions. The questionnaire prepared to gather the data consists of 10 items with 5 Likert Scale. This tool was formed by the researcher by considering published articles and suggestions of experts in this field of study. Pallant (2001) states that Cronbach alpha should be higher than 0.7 to show internal consistency. In this study, internal reliability of the questionnaire was calculated as .81 by Cronbach`s alpha reliability which met internal consistency criteria. Randomly given writing topics to the students were as follows:

1. Are you in favor of or against internet?
2. What are the most important problems around the world?
3. Do you prefer taking a gap year after high school?
4. What can we do to protect the environment?
5. What are your predictions about 2050s?
6. Do you prefer living abroad or in your home country?

Data Collection Procedure

This study was conducted in 2021-2022 Academic Year and lasted 24 weeks. Each student took 3 hours of instruction weekly to sharpen their skills in writing. The students in this study joined some workshops about the basics of Academic Writing lessons in the beginning of the Academic Year and had a solid background about writing paragraphs or essays through brainstorming, making outline, organizing a complete written work, editing, racing against time, so the students were familiar with writing paragraphs and turning them into essays. Additionally, both groups were required to complete an online course offered by renowned academics about different feedback techniques with clear examples.

When the study was initiated, experimental group students` mistakes were corrected by direct feedback which meant to correct all mistakes, whereas control group students` mistakes were handled with metalinguistic feedback which meant to write error codes instead of correcting all the mistakes. An instructor who has experience in Academic Writing course for 10 years planned all the activities and finalized the study. A single instructor was chosen on purpose because different instructors could take varied initiatives and they may affect the results in a positive or negative way. On the other hand, the responsible instructor for the study had 5 common meetings with the other instructors who run Academic Writing course at the same university to pinpoint their progress and find some solutions if there were some chronic problems to be solved. Academic Writing Pool was created by the instructors through scanning IELTS Academic Task 2 writing topics. In the topic pool, there were 50 topics, and the students were informed about writing 6 of them spanning 24 weeks in total. After limiting the topics with 6, the instructor planned

the topics to cover once in 4 weeks. According to pre-defined plan, first week was organized to brainstorm, make an outline, write a sample with the help of the instructor on the smartboard as a whole class activity, analyze the written sample by considering thesis statement, topic sentence, reasons of support, examples, supporting details, conjunctions, coherence, relevancy etc. Also, worthy collocations were also emphasized to be a good role model for the students. If there were any unknown words, students helped each other to define or teacher explained in detail if needed. The instructor only revised these points because they had learnt them in detail during the first semester.

Second and third week were allocated to be more knowledgeable about the topics. They wanted to expand their knowledge to lay a foundation while writing. For instance, they visited some websites to have in-depth information about topics. Additionally, they read and analyzed some sample essays. Finally, they integrated video lessons including sample essays by different experts and highlighted key points to apply in their own essays.

When it was the fourth week, it was time to write the essays. Students wrote their essays within 40 minutes. The students wrote essays in the class including 5 paragraphs and at least 250 words and submitted to their instructors within the given time. There was no difference in terms of procedure until that moment. Later, the instructor managed the feedback process based on their groups. Experimental group students' each mistake was corrected and noted by the instructor as they followed direct feedback technique. On the other hand, control group's mistakes were marked with error codes and noted as it was in line with the metalinguistic error correction technique. The number of mistakes mattered a lot because the instructors wanted to see whether they were learning from their mistakes or not each passing week. After getting valuable feedback from the instructors, the students rewrote the topics and sent an email to their instructors one more time. The rationale to rewrite the topics was that students would learn from their mistakes and improve their writing skills considering the given feedback by the instructor. This 4-week cycle was repeated 6 times regularly, and the study was finalized accordingly.

Prior to main experiment, the students wrote a persuasive essay by the given topic which was about importance of computer literacy skills, and an independent committee graded them to measure whether current average of groups were the same or different. It was seen that there was not a considerable difference between means of each group. Control group's average was 57, whereas experimental group's average was recorded as 58. Considering these figures, the instructor was ready to conduct the study in a successful way.

Data Analysis

Collected quantitative data were analyzed by SPSS 23 in two different sets which

were independent samples t test and paired samples t test. Independent samples t test is used to compare means of two sets of data (Rasch & Guiard, 2007). In this study, control and experimental group`s pre-test and post-test results were compared to make some interpretations later. Likewise, paired samples t test is another test which is used to measure each group separately by comparing pre-test and post-test results (Ross & Willson, 2017). In other words, it is used to measure whether there was a significant difference in each group by comparing the results of pre-test and post-test.

Collected qualitative data in the questionnaire were analyzed by managing Likert scale and converting them into percentages with the help of IBM SPSS 23. The items were analyzed in detail when opinions of students were turned into percentages. Additionally, interview was recorded and recordings were analyzed by the committee. After thorough analysis, insightful ideas in interviews to pave way for other studies were uncovered.

Findings

The findings of the study were classified in 5 categories as the number of mistakes, common mistakes made by the students, analysis of the questionnaire, independent samples t test and paired samples t test. The detailed analysis can be seen below for each category. Total number of mistakes in experimental group was depicted in Table 1 as pre-test and post-test.

Table 1. Number of mistakes under 11 categories in experimental group

Error Code and Types		Pre-test	Post-test	Numerical	Differences Percentage
A	Article	50	45	5	11 %
D	Delete	63	60	3	5 %
IS	Incomplete Sent.	180	190	10	-5 %
/	Missing Word	151	135	16	12 %
PU	Punctuation	173	145	28	19 %
RO	Run-on	148	115	33	29 %
SP	Spelling	212	180	32	18 %
SV	Subj Verb Agr.	77	62	15	24 %
T	Tense	172	156	16	10 %
WW	Wrong Word	88	90	2	-2 %
?	Unclear Meaning	72	60	12	20 %
Total	All	1386	1238	148	13 %

When Table 1 was analyzed in detail, the number of students' mistakes in experimental group can be figured out instantly. Based on the figures given in the table, it can be concluded that the students decreased their mistakes except wrong word and incomplete sentence categories. It is figured out that further efforts will be needed to eliminate these mistakes. Furthermore, the number of mistakes reduced to 1238 which was 1386 at first. There was a 13 % increase to reduce students' mistakes which was also confirmed by independent samples t-test and paired samples t- test results. Considering these figures, we can easily conclude that experimental group's number of mistakes reduced sharply.

Total number of mistakes in control group was depicted in Table 2 as pre-test and post-test.

Table 2. Number of mistakes under 11 categories in control group

Error Code and Types	Pre-test	Post-test	Numerical	Differences	
					Percentage
A Article	55	53	2		4 %
D Delete	65	61	4		7 %
IS Incomplete Sent.	170	162	8		5 %
/ Missing Word	155	148	7		5 %
PU Punctuation	180	190	10		-5 %
RO Run-on	150	170	20		-12
SP Spelling	210	190	20		11 %
SV Subj Verb Agr.	75	78	3		-4
T Tense	170	200	30		15 %
WW Wrong Word	90	83	7		8 %
? Unclear Meaning	70	66	4		6 %
Total All	1390	1401	11		-1

When Table 2 was analyzed in detail, the number of students' mistakes in experimental group can be figured out instantly. Based on the figures given in the table, it can be concluded that tense, spelling, punctuation and run-on sentences were the most chronic problems, whereas article, delete, unclear meaning were the least troublesome problems for students in control group. Additionally, the number of total mistakes was higher based on the post-test results. Their mistakes increased to 1401 which was 11 more compared to pre-test results. Likewise, there was a negative trend in terms of punctuation, run-on, subject verb agreement and tense related mistakes. Although there was some improvement in some areas, it was not significant enough to raise students' performance.

Considering these figures, we can easily conclude that control group`s mistakes increased slightly, so a positive trend could not be noticed to increase students` motivation to get higher marks. This data was also confirmed by paired and independent samples t- test.

Some Mistakes Made by the Students Frequently During the Study

Article Mistakes – Error Correction Code –A-

Incorrect Sentence(s): It is crucial to have strong internet connection at home to study and have fun.

Corrected Form: It is crucial to have **a** strong internet connection at home to study and have fun.

As seen clearly, article mistakes were prevalent in these sentences. Article mistakes reduced the intelligibility of the essay, and the readers got confused about the real meaning of the sentences.

Delete Mistakes – Error Correction Code –Del-

Incorrect Sentence(s): Air pollution **it** is a serious threat for mankind. Additionally, soil pollution **it** is another serious threat for people.

Corrected Form: Air pollution is a serious threat for mankind. Additionally, soil pollution is another serious threat for people.

Once the mistakes were examined, it was observed that the students needed to study more about the sequence of grammatically correct sentences. When they write unnecessary subjects in the sentences as in these ones, the raters are likely to think that their English levels are not satisfactory enough to master.

Incomplete Sentence Mistakes – Error Correction Code –Is-

Incorrect Sentence(s): Natural disasters such as earthquake, tsunami, flood and sandstorms.

Corrected Form: Natural disasters such as earthquake, tsunami, flood and sandstorms affected the environment and people badly.

Once the mistakes were analyzed in detail, it was figured out that the students need to study more about completing the sentences accurately. Otherwise, incomplete sentences can reduce the quality of their works.

Missing Word – Error Correction Code –/-

Incorrect Sentence(s): I want to gap year after high school because I to learn foreign language, play instrument and be athlete.

Corrected Form: I want to **take** a gap year after high school because I **need** to learn a foreign language, play an instrument and be an athlete.

Once the mistakes were examined in detail, the students need to triple check the order of grammatically correct sentences. Missing verbs, adjectives, nouns can be seen as

fatal mistakes in academic writing circles.

Punctuation Mistakes – Error Correction Code –Pu-

Incorrect Sentence(s): Taking a gap year is a controversial topic However I like working restaurant sleep weekdays and weekend take up a new hobby different country

Corrected Form: Taking a gap year is a controversial topic. However, I like working at a restaurant, sleep on weekdays and at the weekend, take up a new hobby in different country. Once the mistakes were analyzed in detail, punctuation mistakes matter a lot to convey the meaning clearly. Otherwise, some confusions will be inevitable.

Run-On Sentence Mistakes – Error Correction Code –Ro-

Incorrect Sentence(s): When we prefer renewable energy resources rather non-renewable ones, when we buy electric cars, when we drive less, when we consume less food, oil, we can save the environment.

Corrected Form: When we prefer renewable energy resources rather non-renewable ones, **we can change the negative course. Additionally,** when we buy electric cars, **we will not pollute the air as gasoline- powered cars.** Moreover, when we drive less, **we will not release toxic gases by our exhausts.** Finally, when we consume less food, oil, **shipping rate will reduce, and less pollution will take place.**

Once the mistakes were analyzed in detail, it was figured out that connecting many different sentences can be problematic, so it is advised to finalize sentences and start new ones to prevent confusion.

Spelling Mistakes – Error Correction Code –Sp-

Incorrect Sentence(s): Having electrical has an important place in our lives. When we buy electricity cars, it will help us to reduce pollution. My father runs an electricity store. I prefer renewable energi resorces.

Corrected Form: Having **electricity** has an important place in our lives. When we buy **electric** cars, it will help us to reduce pollution. My father runs an **electrical** store. I prefer renewable **energy resources**.

Once the mistakes were analyzed in detail, it was figured out that spelling mistakes can affect learners` marks adversely.

Tense Related Mistakes – Error Correction Code –T-

Incorrect Sentence(s): In the last 5 years, I took part in many initiatives to save the planet. I travelling to Sweden to launch a campaign about environmental awareness today.

Corrected Form: In the last 5 years, I **have** taken part in many initiatives to save the planet. I **am** travelling to Sweden to launch a campaign about environmental awareness today.

Once the mistakes were analyzed in detail, it was figured out that tense related mistakes can fail to convey the meaning accurately.

Wrong Word Mistakes – Error Correction Code –Ww-

Incorrect Sentence(s): Producing energy by wind or soler power is so significance. Additionally, carpooling is so reason to save the Earth.

Corrected Form: Producing energy by wind or solar power is so significant. Additionally, carpooling is so reasonable to save the Earth.

Once the mistakes were analyzed in detail, wrong word choice can deceive the readers and reduce the accuracy of learners` works considerably.

Unclear Meaning – Error Correction Code –?-

Incorrect Sentence(s): I have a son and a nephew. I care so much for him.

Corrected Form: I have a son and a nephew. I care so much **for each of them.**

Once the mistakes were analyzed in detail, unclear meaning mistakes can fail to point at the correct person, so it is advised to clarify the meaning, so they will be as clear as possible.

Analysis of the Questionnaire

Students` responses through questionnaire were analyzed in Table 3.

Table 3: The analysis of the questionnaire

ITEMS	Mean	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
		%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f
1. Writing reflects learners` overall language learning ability.	3,82	45%	18	20%	8	17%	7	8%	3	10%	4
2. Instructor`s dedication increased my motivation.	4,40	63%	25	15%	6	22%	9	0%	0	0%	0
3. In my opinion, analyzing the mistakes by direct feedback is a fruitful process	4,77	77%	31	23%	9	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
4. I think that, metalinguistic feedback is so useful to learn from our mistakes.	3,12	30%	12	15%	6	15%	6	17%	7	23%	9
5. I prefer getting direct feedback to metalinguistic feedback.	4,75	80%	32	15%	6	5%	2	0%	0	0%	0
6. I would rather get metalinguistic feedback than direct feedback.	3,20	35%	14	12%	5	10%	4	23%	9	20%	8
7. After getting direct feedback, I reduced my mistakes significantly.	4,62	75%	30	13%	5	12%	5	0%	0	0%	0
8. Metalinguistic feedback helped me to reduce my mistakes after being a part of this study.	3,00	30%	12	15%	6	8%	3	20%	8	27%	11
9. I would opt in direct feedback if a new chance was offered to me.	4,60	75%	30	13%	5	10%	4	2%	1	0%	0
10. I would opt in metalinguistic feedback if a new opportunity arose.	3,35	43%	17	10%	4	5%	2	25%	10	17%	7

When Item 1 was analyzed, mean score was recorded as 3,82 which was not significant. 45 % (18 students) of the respondents chose strongly agree, while %20 (8 students), % 17 (7 students), 8% (3 students) and 10 % (4 students) of the respondents chose agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree respectively. It clearly showed that writing is not considered as a skill for most of the students to reflect the competence in other skills.

When Item 2 was analyzed, mean score was recorded as 4,40 which was highly significant. 63 % (25 students) of the respondents chose strongly agree, while 15 % (6 students) and 22% (9 students) of the respondents chose agree or neutral respectively. On the other hand, no student chose disagree or strongly disagree. It clearly depicted that the instructor`s effort was appreciated by many students.

When Item 3 was analyzed, mean score was recorded as 4,77 which was highly significant. 77 % (31 students) of the respondents chose strongly agree, while 23% (9 students) chose agree. On the other hand, no student chose neutral, disagree or strongly disagree. It clearly uncovered that the direct feedback was considered as the most convenient and fruitful method by most of the students.

When item 4 analysis was completed, means score was 3,12 which was not significant. 30 % of the respondents chose strongly agree, while 15% of the students chose agree. On the other hand, 15%, 17% and 23 % of the respondents chose neutral, disagree and strongly disagree respectively. It clearly unfolded that the metalinguistic feedback was not a fruitful process to pinpoint chronic mistakes and drive students to research more about their mistakes.

When item 5 analysis was completed, means score was 4,75 which was highly significant. 80 % of the respondents chose strongly agree, while 15% and 5% of the respondents chose agree, neutral respectively. On the other hand, no student opted in neither disagree nor strongly disagree. It clearly presented that the direct feedback was preferred by most of the students. They want to learn their mistakes instantly with the help of direct feedback.

When item 6 analysis was completed, means score was 3.20 which was not significant. 35 % of the respondents chose strongly agree, while 12%, 10%, 23% and 20 % of the respondents chose agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree respectively. It clearly illustrated that metalinguistic feedback was not preferred by most of the students. In other words, they want to learn their mistakes directly.

When item 7 analysis was completed, means score was 4,62 which was highly significant. 75 % of the respondents chose strongly agree, while 13 % and 12% of the respondents chose agree, neutral respectively. On the other hand, no student opted in neither disagree nor strongly disagree. It clearly revealed that the direct feedback yielded satisfactory results. The students` attitude was mostly positive.

When item 8 analysis was completed, means score was 3,00 which was insignificant. Only 30% of the respondents chose strongly agree, while 15%, 8%, 20% and 27 % of the respondents chose agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree respectively. It clearly showed that metalinguistic feedback did not yield expected results.

When item 9 analysis was completed, means score was 4,60 which was significant. 75 % of the respondents chose strongly agree, while 13%, 10%, 2 % and 0 % of the respondents chose agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree respectively. It clearly displays that the students are eager to be a part of study in the future which employs direct feedback. The students` attitude was mostly positive.

When item 10 analysis was completed, means score was 3,35 which was not significant. 43 % of the respondents chose strongly agree, while 10 %, 5 %, 25 % and 17 % of the respondents chose agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree respectively. It clearly uncovered that most of the students were against metalinguistic feedback. The students ` attitude was mostly negative.

When all items were analyzed thoroughly, it was noticed that item 3, 5, 7 and 9 were chosen by the highest number of students with strongly agree options, whereas 4, 6, 8 and 10 were chosen by the least number of students with strongly agree options. These results were in line with the hypothesis of the study which claims that direct feedback yields better results than metalinguistic feedback.

Independent samples t test analysis was illustrated in Table 4.

Independent Sample T Test Analysis

Table 4: Independent Sample T Test analysis

Variables	Groups	N	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig
Pre-test	Experimental Group	20	59.50	3.940	-1.011	38	.318
Pre-test	Control Group	20	61.25	6.664			
Post-test	Experimental Group	20	76	6.996	5.158	38	.001
Post-test	Control Group	20	65.50	5.826			

Note. $P < 0.05$

As shown in Table 4, $P < 0.05$ for all pairs, so the model is significant at 95 % in this study. When the p values were analyzed in terms of pre-test results, there was no significant difference between each group because it was measured as .318 which was

greater than 0.05. In this respect, there was no significant difference between control and experimental group at first. On the other hand, when the p value was analyzed in terms of post-test results, it was measured as .001 which was highly significant. Alternative hypothesis which stated that there was a significant difference between each group in terms of variables was accepted. There was a significant difference, and the progress in experimental group was greater than the control group.

Paired sample t test analysis in experimental group was illustrated in Table 5.

Paired Sample T Test Analysis in Each Group

Table 5: Paired Sample T Test Analysis in experimental group

Paired Samples Test								
	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Experimental Group Pre- test Post-test	-16.500	8.127	1.817	-20.304	-12.696	-9.079	19	.001

Paired samples test was run to measure whether there was a significant difference in each group separately by comparing means of pre-test and post-test. Based on the observed values in experimental group, p value was measured as .001 which was less than 0.05, so there was a highly significant difference between each treatment. Additionally, mean score, standard deviation, standard error mean, t value and df were observed as 16.500, 8.127, 1.817, -9.079 and 19 respectively. These figures were also in line with observed significant difference between pre-test and post-test in terms of experimental group.

Paired samples t test analysis in control group was illustrated in Table 6.

Table 6: Paired Sample T Test Analysis in control group

Paired Sample Test									
		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Control	Pre-test Post-test	-4.250	9.072	2.029	-8.496	-.004	-2.095	19	.050

The same procedure was conducted in control group as well. P value was measured as .050 which was higher than 0.05. The gathered data show that there was no significant difference between pre-test and post in terms of control group. Moreover, mean score, standard deviation, standard error mean, t value and df were noted as -4.250, 9.072, 2.029, -2.095, 19 respectively. These figures also support the data about not having a considerable difference between each treatment in terms of control group.

Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

This study aimed to compare two written corrective feedback techniques which were direct feedback and metalinguistic feedback. In this respect, multiple instruments were employed. Based on the gathered data, it was measured that the students who were exposed to direct feedback outperformed the students who were engaged in metalinguistic feedback process. Experimental group's overall change was recorded as 13 %, whereas it was -1 % in control group. These results were in line with previous studies conducted in this area (Rassaei, Moeinzadeh, & Youhannaee, 2012; Ellis, 2008). In regard to these results, some interpretations can be made. Also, it was seen that the atmosphere to speak and write only English fostered all students' learning considerably (Celik & Yildiz, 2019). Once they urged themselves to speak English rather than their mother tongue, it was natural to improve their competence in English as being exposed to foreign language increased their enthusiasm.

Direct feedback yielded far better results in terms of reducing common mistakes and increasing their overall marks. The observed positive trend was confirmed by statistical analysis through independent samples t-test and paired samples t-test as well. Additionally, the students who joined the study in experimental group also changed their attitudes towards direct feedback technique. They asserted that direct feedback was so helpful to

learn from their mistakes and eliminate them in the upcoming weeks. They also conceded that they would opt in being a member of direct group if the same study is repeated in the future again. On the other hand, the same success could not be achieved in control group students who received metalinguistic feedback technique. Their mistakes increased which reduced students' motivation sharply. In addition, their overall average did not increase significantly. Based on this negative trend, the students in control group did not have positive attitudes towards metalinguistic feedback. Likewise, they do not want to be a part of the study which employs metalinguistic feedback in the future.

Once the interviews were deciphered and analyzed, most students appreciated direct feedback to improve their levels academically in terms of writing, whereas only few students had positive attitudes towards metalinguistic feedback technique. Some of the comments by students can be examined below:

Direct feedback technique was so time-saving for me. Although inquiry based learning is the best, I do not have enough time to discover my mistakes and fix my chronic problems. My instructor corrected my mistakes instantly, and I grasped all details in order not to repeat again. I am so glad to be a part of this study. (Student P)

I wish I had joined this program earlier. Being a student to get direct feedback was an awesome experience. Once we learned our mistakes immediately, we discussed them with our friends to employ peer- learning which was so helpful. After a thorough analysis, we minimized our mistakes in the weeks to come, so we increased our success rate in general. (Student Q)

When I was a high school student, I did not know how to sharpen my writing skill. Now, I know many strategies to develop good habits towards writing thanks to my devoted instructor and getting direct feedback. I did not think that direct feedback would support my learning in a positive way, but I overcame my prejudice thanks to this study. (Student Z)

I was in a group where I received metalinguistic feedback. Although it activates learning by inquiry, I do not have enough time to learn by inquiry due to my tight schedule as a freshman student at university, so I did not take advantage of this study as expected. I wish I had joined the study in another group where I would get direct feedback and learn my mistakes immediately without losing any time. My friends in the other group sharpened their writing skills dramatically, but I could not improve it as much as I expect (Student E)

This study had some limitations as well. The first point was that males were higher than female students. It could be equalized to represent the population well. Moreover, departments of the students varied. More reliable results could be reached if they studied in the same department. Also, only 40 students were included to represent the population. More students could be integrated into this study.

Some recommendations can be made related to this study to the stakeholders of

education. Academic Writing instructors, administrators of language learning and teaching centers can consider integrating metalinguistic feedback into their curriculum. Additionally, instructors can guide students on how to discover their mistakes through error codes. Once students are motivated to research more by internet or Academic Writing books, their learning can be more long-lasting. Also, students break the monotony in writing when they figured out their mistakes on the internet. They expand their vocabulary, learn different collocations, transition words and see more sample essays written by different students or teachers. They do not learn only from one channel, so they may have different perspectives to be more open-minded and visionary.

Finally, some recommendations can be made for researchers. This study was conducted on language preparatory school students within 24 weeks. Further studies can be conducted by extending the time on sophomore, junior and senior students at a university. Additionally, only IELTS Academic Writing Task 2 Writing topics were included. New studies can be conducted on TOEFL IBT, PTE or SAT writing section. Furthermore, only certain error correction codes were employed in this study. More error correction codes can be integrated to measure their effects. Also, the instructor was the only grader and feedback provider in a traditional format in this study. More studies can be done to employ peer- grading through online platforms such as Padlet, Google Form, Microsoft Team etc. The results can be more satisfactory once traditional and online peer feedback have been combined in harmony.

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