

## **The Effect of Written Corrective Feedback on the Accuracy of Output Task and Learning of Target Form**

*Mohammad Reza Hasannejad<sup>1</sup>*

*Iranshahr Branch, Islamic Azad University, Iranshahr, Iran*

*Mohammad Reza Mollahosainy*

*Takestan Branch, Islamic Azad University, Takestan, Iran*

The effect of error feedback on the accuracy of output task types such as editing task, text reconstruction task, picture cued writing task, and dictogloss task, has not been clearly explored. Following arguments concerning that the combination of both corrective feedback and output makes it difficult to determine whether their effects were in combination or alone, the purpose of the present study is to document the role of teachers' feedback in improving the accuracy of linguistic form in output tasks and in acquiring target form. To this end, this study compared three groups of Iranian intermediate learners (N= 93), one with direct grammar feedback, the other one with indirect grammar feedback and the last one with no grammar feedback. In terms of the target form uptake from first to subsequent text reconstruction tasks, the analysis of the data obtained within ten treatment sessions indicated that the participants, who received written corrective feedback compared to those who did not, progressed significantly from the first to the subsequent output tasks. In terms of learning, the learners who had the opportunities for receiving feedback performed significantly better than those in non- feedback condition on the production and recognition post- tests although explicit feedback rather than implicit feedback led to greater learning of target form on the production test, but no

---

<sup>1</sup> Corresponding Author. Email: mohammadhassannejad@yahoo.com

significant differences were found in relative efficacy of the two written corrective feedback types as far as the result of the recognition test was concerned.

Keywords: Explicit Feedback, Implicit Feedback, Output

When we review the second language acquisition literature, we realize that lots of teachers and researchers have been concerned about the issue of grammar for a long time. Most of them have tried to find suitable methods and strategies in order to facilitate the acquisition of this challenging subject (Song & Suh, 2008). Lee (2007) states that the reaction against form – oriented instruction (grammar translation method, Audio-lingual method – total physical response), motivated teachers and researchers to consider new language teaching methods which mainly emphasize meaning. By the advent of these methods, Lee (2007) claims that language teachers have been encouraged to follow the objectives of communicative competence and fluency while grammar teaching goals which were not related to communication aims have been considered as "counterproductive"(p.88). Moreover, the immersion study clarified that only meaning focused instruction within the classrooms cannot help learners produce target language form accurately (Swain, 1995, 1998; Farokhi, 2005). Accordingly, researchers highlighted the role of focus on form in which we can draw learners' attention to a linguistic form in a meaningful context (Long & Robinson, 1998). Among many methods and strategies like input, enhanced input (Han, Park & Combs, 2008; Jensen & Vinther, 2003; Spada, Lightbrown & Rawnta, 1992) interaction enhancement, (Mackey, 2006; Muranoi, 2000), task repetition (Gass & Mackey, 1999) and processing instruction (VanPatten, 2002) which were designed in order to catch learners' attention to form, the impact of output in second language acquisition has also been considered recently. Several studies have been conducted which took into consideration the important role of output in noticing and acquisition (Izumi & Bigelow, 2000; Song & Suh, 2008) and emphasizing the role of output

"which

push

learners to produce texts while paying attention to grammatical accuracy" (Storch, 1998, p.291). For example, VanPatten (2002) states that "output may play a role as a focusing device that draws learners attention to something in the input as mismatch are noticed" (p.762). Sheen (2002) argues that focus on form represents the amount of similarity between first and second language acquisition and can be done through learners' exposure to the comprehensible input. He further argues that it is important to know that only exposure cannot be responsible for acquisition of second language grammar, and that we should try to focus learners' attention on grammatical features. In other words, we can prepare some activities which catch learner's attention to desired forms. In fact, focus on form is in contrast with focus on forms or traditional grammar instruction in which teachers teach grammar according to its linguistic complexity as discrete units (Ollerhead & Oosthuizen, 2005, Sheen, 2002). Ollerhead and Oosthuizen (2005) also state that it includes strategies that draw learners' attention to the structures of target language while they are performing activities within a meaningful framework.

Although some of the studies approved that output plays a key role in acquisition, in some cases, the research shows that learners repeat their errors within and after their productions. For example, Izumi and Bigelow (2000) assert that since all the learners do not discover their problems within output production, it leads them not to give their appropriate attention to the grammatical form within input to reprocess their output. Due to insufficiency of output opportunities to make students aware of their errors, different researchers emphasized the helpful role of feedback (Yoshida, 2008). In other words, by advent of a theory that emphasized the important role of focusing on the target form in language learning, researchers gave their attention to written corrective feedback more than before (Yoshida, 2008). As Pica (2000) recommends,

Learners must be given L2 input that is made meaningful and comprehensible. They must selectively attend to form of their

input as well as its meaning. They must produce L2 and be given feedback in order to modify their production toward greater comprehensibility, appropriateness and accuracy. (p. 7).

Swain (1995, 1998) claims that teachers can provide learners with feedback opportunity based on the content and grammar. Izumi and Bigelow (2000) also highlight the role of feedback, claiming that students' output production will formulate and test a hypothesis in order to put their next production based on it and change their incorrect hypothesis through feedback. Adams (2003) believes that when learners are engaged in the process of output production, they may realize that they can't communicate what they want. So, in this situation, teachers can give them corrective feedback. Then, the learners may notice their problems and understand to what extent they are different from their original outputs. Ellis (2003), regarding the design of different kinds of focused task, states that their application is not always effective. In order to solve this lack of efficacy, he suggests implicit and explicit (corrective feedback) ways of helping students to focus their attention on form. Havranek and Cesnik (2001) believe that in different classrooms, teachers use corrective feedback in order to grant and also to make their learners aware of some parts which do not match the target language form. Based on it, lots of research have been designed, concerning different kinds of feedback (Rahimi, 2009; Ferris and Roberts, 2001; Varnosfadrani & Basturkmen, 2009; Bitchener, Young, & Cameron, 2005), and factors affecting the efficiency of corrective feedback such as students' characteristics, types of error correction, context and form of error correction (Havranek & Cesnik, 2001) teachers' choice and learners' preferences regarding feedback (Yoshida, 2008), and learners' environment (Sheen, 2004).

Negative feedback, which may take place with varying degrees of explicitness or implicitness, may draw learners' attention to the language forms they have produced and help them to notice the gaps in their L2 knowledge or to become aware of specific linguistic forms in the subsequent input (Izumi & Bigelow, 2000; Gass, 1997, 2003; Long; Pica, 1994; Schmidt,

1995, 2001; Swain & Lapkin, 1995). The effect of learning under explicit and implicit conditions has long been a controversial matter in the field of psychology. Most experimental studies in this area (Reber, 1976, 1993; Reber & Allen, 1978; Zizak & Reber, 2004) show that learning demands burdensome process without conscious awareness. Most of these studies used non-natural speech in their tasks as stimuli. However, in the area of second language acquisition where natural languages are used, it is not obvious to what extent these findings can be applied. In second language acquisition literature, the main body of research has been conducted in response to Krashen's claim that learners are only able to learn through unconscious acquisition. Learning, he claims, which is conscious, does not lead to acquisition, which is unconscious, and acts only as a monitor.

It should be noticed that the main concern of language learning is not so much the distinction between conscious and unconscious learning. A more important and new issue here is whether corrective feedback after output tasks production leads to more effective language learning. As has been mentioned, the role of corrective feedback became more understandable when Swain (1995) proposes the output hypothesis, claiming that learners should be pushed to produce output. Many of the researchers believed that after learners' production, the teacher can give them feedback in order to modify their output. In other words, since the output tasks will provide a requirement for learners to make mistakes, there would be a need for teachers to give feedback on those mistakes (Campillo, 2006). Tsui (2001) states that one of the factors which is closely related to students output is teacher's feedback based on output production. In other words, the teacher will use corrective feedback strategy when he finds a difference between the input which has been exposed to the learners and the output which they produce. Ellis (2006) expresses two positions regarding feedback. One position is that the achievement of second language linguistic structures is wholly based on "positive evidence (i.e., input)" (p. 358). The second position is that "negative evidence" (p.338) (e.g., corrective feedback) not only plays a key role in making learners able to restructure their

interlanguage but also is essential for learning certain types of target language grammatical structures. Finally, Long and Robinson (1998) claim that feedback is considered a necessary means of making learners aware of cases where learners' language do not match the target language. Accordingly, opportunities for learners to modify their output in response to feedback may facilitate L2 development of some linguistic forms.

### Research Questions

In this study, the following research questions will be investigated:

1. Does written corrective feedback help students improve their output task accuracy from first to subsequent text reconstruction tasks? If so, which kind of feedback will be more effective?
2. Does written corrective feedback promote learning of target form? If so which kind of the feedback will be more effective?

### Method

#### *Design*

The study consisted of two independent variables (two techniques of focus on form, i.e., implicit focus on form through simple underlining, and explicit focus on form through explicit correction), based on output task errors. Dependent variable of the study involved the target form accuracy which was used to address the extent of target form uptake from first to subsequent output tasks and learning of past hypothetical conditional form induced by explicit and implicit error correction feedback. First research question was measured through assessment of students' achievement in accurate productions of target form from first to subsequent text reconstruction tasks during ten treatment sessions. After completing the treatment phase, in order to answer the second research question, students' learning was evaluated through conducting a pre- post recognition and production tests.

The following sequences were repeated during ten treatment sessions:

1. Participants in both experimental and control groups were given a short written passage (Input which contains many examples of past hypothetical conditional form). The EG and CG participants were asked to read the passage.
2. The input passage was collected. The EG and CG participants were then given a sheet of paper and they were asked to reconstruct the passage as accurately as possible (Output 1).
3. Output (1) sheets were collected. Based on student's output task errors, the teacher gave explicit feedback to the first experimental group and implicit feedback to the second experimental group. There was no opportunity for the control group to receive feedback.
4. After giving feedback, the EG and CG participants were asked to reconstruct the text as accurately as possible on another output sheet for the second time.

### *Participants*

The participants in the study were 93 Iranian male learners of English as a foreign language, aged 17-22. They shared the following characteristics a) they were studying English in the institution and b) their level of proficiency in English was intermediate. These participants were randomly selected from 150 students among two different institutes and all of them took part in TOEFL test of English proficiency. Among the participants in the final subject (N=93), 32 learners were in the first experimental group (EG1), 31 were in the second experimental group (EG2) and the remaining 30 were in the comparison group (CG).

### *Instruments*

In order to address the first research question, students were provided with a text reconstruction task. Learners were asked to reconstruct a passage two times in each session (before and after receiving feedback).

In order to address the second research question, the following tests were used:

The recognition tests were adopted from Izumi & Bigelow (2000) and Song and Suh (2008) studies and also were based on Understanding and Using English Grammar, and Grammar in Use, Intermediate Course Book. Each version consisted of 20 items, of which 16 served for target items and 4 used as detractors. Of the 16 sentences which included the target structure, 6 of them were correct and 10 incorrect. Seven of the target items began with if clauses and 9 with main clauses. The Participants were required to read the tests and to determine whether they were correct and, if incorrect, to underline the incorrect part and produce the correct form.

The production tests were also adopted from Izumi and Bigelow (2000) and Song and Suh (2006) studies and were also based on Understanding and Using English Grammar. Pre and post production tests consisted of 10 sets of situations which required the students to read them and to write one sentence in each context calling for the target structure. In order to motivate the students to use the desired target structure, a prompt (e.g., If, Reza, If my father), was also provided for each item.

### *Procedure*

The experimental sequence of the study was carried out over a period of approximately 1 month. 93 intermediate learners were selected from 150 students in two English language institutions. Based on a TOEFL proficiency level test, they were randomly assigned to three groups: explicit feedback (EG1); implicit



feedback (EG2); non feedback (CG). One week prior to the first treatment session all the participants took part in the two pre tests which involved a recognition test and a production test. Then, the three groups underwent different treatments. The number of treatment sessions was ten. The tenth treatment session was followed by the post- tests which were again in a different version of recognition and production tests.

At the beginning of each treatment session, all participants were informed of the task that they were going to do. They were asked to read a text which contained many examples of past hypothetical conditionals. After reading and collecting the text, the reconstruction task was carried out by all the three groups. They were asked to reconstruct the input passage they had just read as accurately as possible on a sheet of paper. When three groups completed their tasks as an output activity, the selected grammar errors made by learners involved in the two experimental groups were then corrected by the researcher according to one of the two feedback types below:

A: Explicit feedback (The correct form will be provided)

B: Implicit feedback (Target form error will be underlined)

We should add that there was no opportunity for control group to receive feedback. After receiving feedback, there was another opportunity for the two experimental groups and even for the control group to reconstruct the same text for the second time. These processes of the working on output activity and receiving feedback were repeated again during ten treatment sessions and only the input texts needed for reconstruction were different.

Regarding the treatment, its condition differed in terms of whether the teacher will provide learners with written corrective feedback; explicit feedback (EG1), implicit feedback, (EG2), or no feedback opportunity (CG). The output task which was carried out in this study by the students was a text reconstruction. The types of grammar errors are illustrated below:

E.g., If Jack *had joined* the Navy in 1989; he *would have gone* to the Gulf War.

Error type	Example
<b><i>If-clause</i></b>	
[past]	<i>If Jack joins</i>
[perfect]	<i>If Jack joined</i>
[past participle]	<i>If Jack had go</i>
<b><i>Main clause</i></b>	
[modal]	<i>Jack had gone</i>
[past]	<i>Jack joins</i>
[perfect]	<i>Jack would go</i>
[past participle]	<i>Jack would have go</i>
[+extra element]	<i>Jack would have been gone</i>

#### *Scoring procedures*

- *Coding of scores during treatment (Text reconstruction task Scoring)*

The researcher considered one point for each correct use of past hypothetical conditional form during text reconstruction task. The maximum score for each if-clause and main clause was 5, and the maximum score for both was 10.

- *Coding of recognition tests score*

The recognition test items were scored as either correct or incorrect. All the test items that were not answered were excluded from the scoring. A half point was given when the learners made a correct judgment about a sentence was correct and underlined the incorrect part, but did not make correction. Zero point was given

when the learners made a correct judgment on each sentence but did not underline the incorrect part of the sentence.

- *Coding of production test scores*

The production test was scored based on the accuracy of the targetlike use analysis. We gave 1 point for each targetlike production of the conditional form. As there were ten target items in the production tests, the maximum score for each if-clause and main clause was 10, and the maximum score for both was 20.

## Results

### *Statistical analysis of first to subsequent text reconstruction tasks accuracy*

Our first research question asked whether feedback types would improve students' output task accuracy from the first to the subsequent tasks. Since this first research question implies process (the researcher consider time (1st output vs. 2nd output) as the within subjects factor) and interpretation of the result is not based on a post- test, there was no need to have a pre- test or post- test. So, in order to address the first research question, scores obtained during the first and second output task of three groups (EG1, EG2, CG) were compared. For this purpose, repeated measures ANOVAS were chosen to address the research question. In this analysis, the researcher considered feedback as the between subjects grouping factor and time (1st output vs. 2nd output) as the within subjects factor. Significant main effects were found for group ( $F(2, 92) = 25.534, P = .000$ ) and time, ( $F(2, 92) = 821.735, P = .000$ ) but there was no significant interaction between time and group ( $F(2, 92) = 62.144, P = .245$ ). A post hoc Scheffé revealed that the main effect for group was due to differences existed among EG1, EG2 ( $P = .004$ ), EG2 and CG ( $P = .001$ ) and between EG1 and CG ( $P = .000$ ). A post hoc Scheffé revealed that the main effect for group was due to differences existed among EG1, EG2 ( $P = .004$ ), EG2 and CG ( $P = .001$ ) and between EG1 and CG ( $P = .000$ ). As you can see, Figure1 illustrates the result.

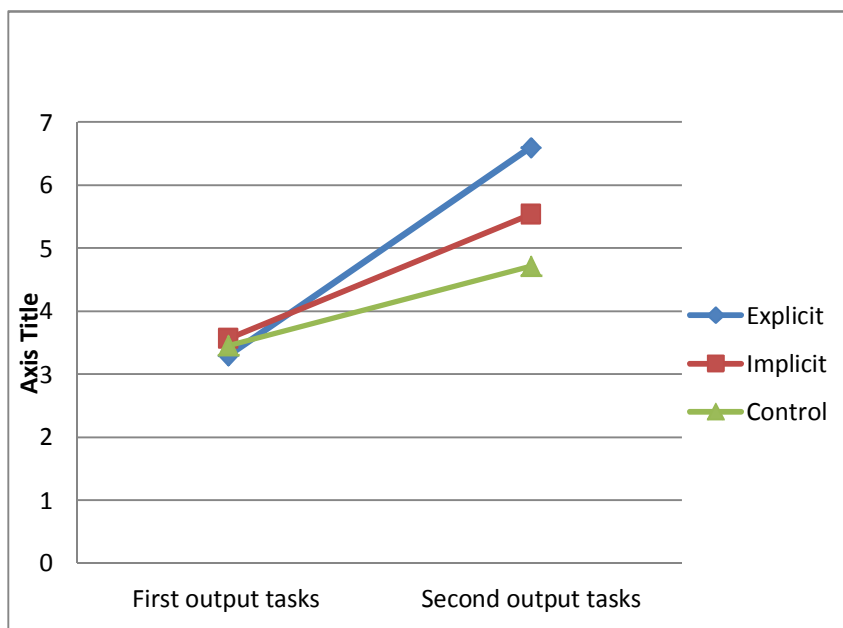


Figure. 1. Mean scores graph of targetlike use of the past hypothetical conditional by the three groups

It should be mentioned that the first and second output illustrated in the figure1-1 refers to the overall first and second output tasks which have been done by 3 groups in the all ten treatment sessions. Concerning figure 1 which shows the targetlike use of past hypothetical conditional graphically, the trend seems to be for the two experimental groups to improve more than the control group in the target like structures in the ten treatment sessions.

#### *Results of production test scores on the explicit, implicit, and no correction*

To address the second research question concerning the effect of written corrective feedback (explicit VS implicit), on the learning of target form, a one – way ANOVA test performed on pre – test scores revealed no significant differences among the

groups,  $F(2, 92) = .478$ ,  $P = .622$  for production test. The above mentioned results are illustrated in the Table 1.

Table 1

*Statistical Analysis of One-Way ANOVA of Pretest*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
<i>Between Groups</i>	1.558	2	.779	.478	.622
<i>Within Groups</i>	146.722	90	1.630		
<i>Total</i>	148.280	92			

Therefore, based on this comparison, any differences on the post – test found for the experimental groups can be attributed to the treatment effects rather than to pre – existing differences. The ANOVA indicated that there was a significant effect for feedback on the post- test ( $F(2, 92) = 22.068$ , ( $p = .000$ )). Table 2 shows the result.

Table 2

*Statistical Analysis of One-Way ANOVA of Posttest*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
<i>Between Groups</i>	134.440	2	67.220	22.068	.000
<i>Within Groups</i>	274.141	90	3.046		
<i>Total</i>	408.581	92			

In order to determine where the differences existed among the three groups' production post- test scores, a post- hoc Scheffe test was administrated. It revealed that in the post- test, there were differences among EG1 and CG ( $P = .000$ ), EG2 and CG ( $P = .001$ )

and between EG1 and EG2 ( $P = .032$ ). Table 3 and Figure 2 illustrate the results.

Table 3  
*Multiple Comparisons*

(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Explicit	implicit	1.17742*	.43983	.032	.0827	2.2722
	control	2.93333*	.44353	.000	1.8294	4.0373
Implicit	explicit	-1.17742*	.43983	.032	-2.2722	-.0827
	control	1.75591*	.44698	.001	.6434	2.8685
Control	explicit	-2.93333*	.44353	.000	-4.0373	-1.8294
	implicit	-1.75591*	.44698	.001	-2.8685	-.6434

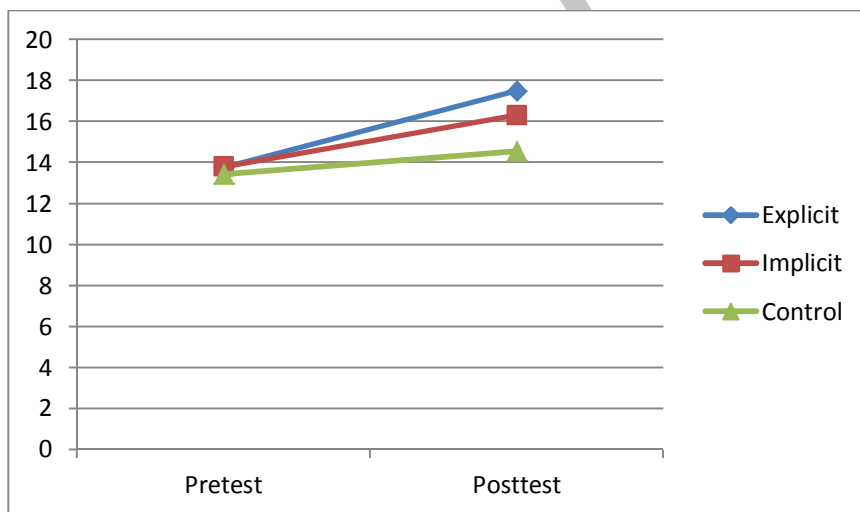


Figure 2. Mean scores graph of production test by the three groups.

Concerning Figure 2 which shows the targetlike use of past hypothetical conditional graphically, the trend seems to be for the two experimental groups to improve more than the control group in the target like use. In other words, the findings from the

statistical analysis suggest that the two experimental groups improved and made more gains from the pre-test to the post-test.

*Results of recognition test scores on the explicit, implicit, and no correction*

To address the second research question concerning the effect of written corrective feedback (explicit VS implicit), on the learning of target form, a one – way ANOVA test on recognition pre – test scores revealed no significant differences among the groups, ( $F(2, 92) = .504, P = .606$ ) for recognition test.

Table 4  
*Statistical Analysis of One-Way ANOVA of Pretest*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.179	2	.590	.504	.606
Within Groups	105.278	90	1.170		
Total	106.457	92			

Table 5  
*Statistical Analysis of One-Way ANOVA of Posttest*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	165.908	2	82.954	42.812	.000
Within Groups	174.388	90	1.938		
Total	340.296	92			

Therefore, based on this result, any differences on the post – test found for experimental groups can be attributed to treatment effects rather than to pre – existing differences. The ANOVA indicated that there was a significant effect for feedback on the post- treatment production test ( $F(2, 92) = 42.812, (p = .000)$ ). Table 5 shows the statistical analysis of one- way ANOVA of the posttest.

In order to determine where the differences existed among the three groups' recognition post- test scores, a post- hoc Scheffe test was administrated. It revealed that that the differences existed

between EG1 and CG ( $P = .000$ ), and between EG2 and CG ( $P = .000$ ), but no significant difference was revealed between EG1 and EG2 ( $P = .787$ ). Table 6 and Figure 3 show the results.

Table 6  
*Multiple Comparisons*

(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
explicit	implicit	.24294	.35079	.787	-.6302	1.1161
	control	2.96875*	.35375	.000	2.0882	3.8493
implicit	explicit	-.24294	.35079	.787	-1.1161	.6302
	control	2.72581*	.35650	.000	1.8385	3.6132
control	explicit	-2.96875*	.35375	.000	-3.8493	-2.0882
	implicit	-2.72581*	.35650	.000	-3.6132	-1.8385

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

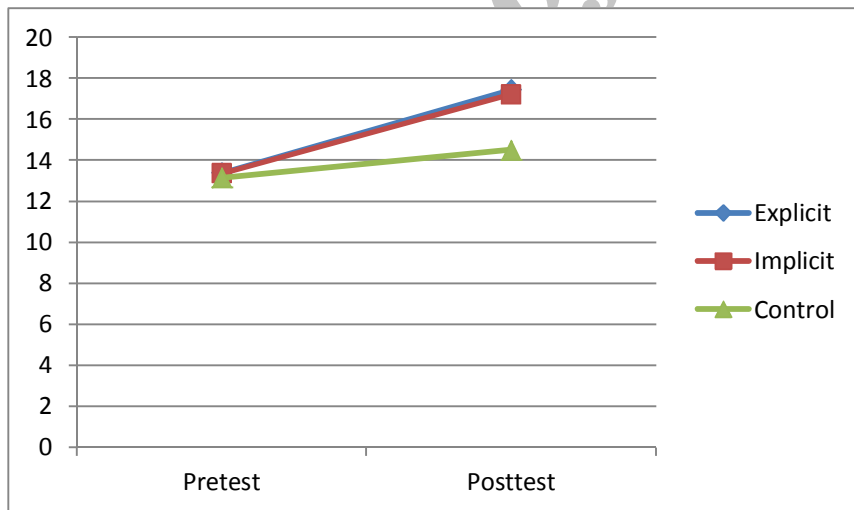


Figure 3. Mean scores graph of recognition test by the three groups

## Discussion

In general terms, the findings of this study are consistent with those of Swain, (1995), Izumi and Bigelow (2000), Pica,



(2000), Willis and Willis, (2001), Adams, (2003), and Han, (2002) who emphasized the helpful role of feedback in modifying an oral or written output. As Tsui (2001) states, teacher's feedback is one of the factors which closely related to students' output. Chandler (2003) claims that when students realize that their errors have been corrected, they will get the correct forms. In summary, the findings from the present study are in line with Ammar's and Spada's (2006) account of the role of embedding corrective feedback strategies within tasks. Regarding the superiority of the explicit correction method, we can claim that the findings are in line with Chandler's (2003) results, arguing that actually students are able to correct significantly more of their errors on their revisions after explicit feedback than after teachers' responses either describing the type or noting the location of errors made, or both.

The findings of this study also approved the better performance which is achieved through the explicit feedback (Lyster, 1998; Chandler, 2003). Bitchener, Young and Cameron (2005) also find that providing students with explicit corrective feedback and individual conference feedback will result in a greater accuracy of students' writing. Varnosfadrani and Basturkmen (2009) express several reasons for relative effectiveness of explicit corrective feedback; they believe that one possible factor can be related to the vital role of attention. They state that one probable suggestion for improved performance through the explicit corrective feedback may be due to the fact that it was more successful in increasing learners' consciousness of corrected forms in the their productions. Adams (2003) states that we can raise students' noticing of corrected form by providing feedback opportunities and helping them to realize how their first output productions do not meet target language structures and requirements. Varnosfadrani and Basturkmen (2009) also add that explicit feedback can help learners to realize the differences between the target forms and their current interlanguage, resulting in a significantly greater modification. Finally, they refer to clear scope of explicit feedback. They state that "learners most likely perceive explicit corrections as corrective feedback requiring them to correct their errors. This is because of the nature of the

feedback. Explicit feedback involves meta- discourse, whereas implicit feedback may not be perceived as corrective" (p.92). Bitchener and Knoch (2008) also suggest that those who prefer direct feedback consider its role as a helpful factor because of a number of reasons: (1) it will reduce the kinds of confusion in different aspects, (2) it will give them enough information to overcome complex errors, and (3) it will provide learners with immediate feedback based on the hypotheses which have been made by them. Chandler (2003) also states that students prefer explicit or direct feedback because it will be considered as the fastest and easiest method of accurate revision production. Kim (2004) also asserts that due to unclear nature and characteristics of implicit feedback, it has been imagined to be less successful than explicit feedback to catch learners' attention. Ellis (2008) claims that "Direct corrective feedback has the advantage that it provides learners with explicit guidance about how to correct their errors" (p.99). He also adds that it will be more effective when learners are not able to self correct themselves. Rahimi (2008) argues that underlining and coding of the errors may help learners recognize that they had made an error, but when the correct target form was not available for them, in some cases they are not able to replace the wrong form with an appropriate one.

The results of this study can also be explained in terms of hypothesis testing model. According to this model, students will try to make a hypothesis for target language forms and the production will provide them with the opportunities to test it (Swain, 1995). One of the ways for learners to modify their hypothesis can be negative feedback in the form of explicit correction (Varnosfadrani & Basturkmen, 2009). Keshavarz (2000) states that feedback will be given to the errors communicated by learners and it will play an important role to help students to test hypothesis which has been shaped for target language forms. Takimoto (2006) also argues that without corrective feedback, learners cannot be aware of their incorrect processing of forms which in turn does not lead them to change their approaches. Doughty and Williams (1998) assert that the teacher should help learners to focus on specific features of target language in order to

examine and compare them with their current target language knowledge, and to repair the "developing IL"(Doughty & Williams, 1998, p.205) for further well-organized production. Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005) also explain that when learners produce language, they will realize their problems. Based on it, they will try to test their hypothesis concerning the language forms. For example, it can be done through receiving negative feedback related to learner's language production which can lead to modified output. They also add that this act of production through output tasks can help them to complete their partial knowledge of language forms.

### Conclusion

Research question one attempted to determine whether written corrective feedback will influence students' output task accuracy from first to subsequent output task. The answer was 'yes'. Written corrective feedback which was provided based on students' output task errors was successful to draw learner attention to form and during the treatment sessions. It helped students to achieve greater accuracy in their second text reconstruction tasks. We also found that in terms of first research question, explicit feedback group outperformed both implicit and the control groups. Research question two examined whether these opportunities for receiving feedback will also result in learning of target form on the post recognition and production tests. The result indicated that correction had an effect on the two types of tests which have been completed by them. We found that in production post- test, both of the experimental groups outperformed the control group. For the recognition post- test, the analysis of the data revealed better performance for the two experimental groups rather than the control group. However, in terms of relative efficacy we found no difference between the first and second experimental groups. In general terms we realized the more successfulness of explicit correction over the implicit feedback. The findings of this study corroborate a growing body of research that has recently shown that written corrective feedback on targeted errors will help learners to improve their accuracy. In

other words, this study represented that in order to achieve accuracy in second language learning we should encourage students to produce output, to test their hypothesis and modify it through receiving feedback.

### Suggestions for further Research

Some of the issues remaining to be studied include the following. First, long term effects of the feedback treatment need to be examined. Second, subsequent studies can examine other target form to investigate the relationship between feedback treatment and the specific types of target form. It is also important to consider the cognitive processing vital for learners based on the formal complexity and functional importance related to a given form (Izumi, 2002). It is also interesting to use feedback and output combination in order to assess learners' noticing and attention related to target forms through think- aloud or stimulated recalls techniques. Considering the fact that this study was limited to only two techniques of focus on form, we suggest that similar studies can be conducted with other techniques of focus on form. Since the present study focused on only one structure in English, similar studies could examine the accuracy gains in terms of other structures in English or any other languages.

### The Authors

**Mohammad Reza Hasannejad** is a full time faculty member at the Islamic Azad University, Iranshahr branch, Iran. His research interests include reading comprehension, affective factors in second language acquisition and error feedback to second language learners.

**Mohammad Reza Mollahosainy** holds an M.A (TEFL) from Takestan Azad University. He currently works as a teacher in different Language Institutions. His research interests are issues in reading comprehension, discourse analysis, and written error correction.

## References

- Ammar, A & Spada, N. (2006). One size fits all? Recasts, Prompts, and L2 Learning. *SSLA*, 28, 543–574.
- Adams, R. (2003). L2 output, reformulation and noticing: implications for IL development. *Language Teaching Research*, 7, 347–76.
- Bitchener, J & Knoch, U. (2009). The Contribution of Written Corrective Feedback to Language Development: A Ten Month Investigation. *Applied Linguistics*, 18, 1–22.
- Bichener, J., & Knoch, U. (2008). The value of written corrective feedback for migrant and international students. *Language Teaching Research*, 12, 409- 419.
- Bitchener, j, Young, S & Cameron, D. (2005). The effect of different types of corrective feedback on ESL student writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 14, 191–205.
- Campillo, P. (2006). Focus on form tasks and the provision of corrective feedback. *IBERICA*, 1, 123-138.
- Chandler, J. (2003). The efficacy of various kinds of error feedback form improvement in the accuracy and fluency of L2 student writing. *System*, 12, 267-296.
- Doughty, C., & Williams, J. (1998). Pedagogical choices in focus on form. In C. Doughty, & J.Williams(Eds.), *Focus on form in classroom second language acquisition* (pp.197-261). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Ellis, R. (2008). A typology of written corrective feedback types. *ELT Journal*, 63, 97- 107.
- Ellis, R, & Sheen, Y. (2006). Reexamining the role of recasts in second language acquisition. *SSLA*, 28, 575–600.
- Ellis, R. Editorial. (2006). *Language Teaching Research*, 10, 357-360.
- Elis, R& Barkhuizen, G. (2005). *Analyzing Learner Language*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University press.
- Ellis, R. (2005). Measuring implicit and explicit knowledge of a second language. *SSLA*, 27,141-172.
- Ellis, R. (2005). Principles of instructed language learning. *System*, 33, 209–224.

- Ellis, R. (2003). *Task- based Language Learning and Teaching*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University press
- Farokhi, F. (2005). A practical Step towards Focus on Form and Focus on Meaning. *Journal of Faculty of Letters and Humanities*, 49, 99- 148.
- Gass, S. (2003). Input and interaction. In C. Doughty & M. H. Long (Eds.), *Handbook of second language acquisition* (pp, 224–255). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Gass, S(1997) *Input, interaction, and the second language learner*, Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Han, Z., Park, E., & Combos, C. (2008). Textual enhancement of input: issues and possibilities. *Applied Linguistics*, 29, 597-618.
- Han, Z. (2002). *A Study of the Impact of Recasts on Tense Consistency in L2 Output*. *TESOL Quarterly*, 36, 573- 596.
- Havranek, G., & Cesnik, H.( 2001). Factors affecting the success of corrective feedback. In: Foster-Cohen, S. & Nizegorodzew, A. (Eds.), *EUROSLA Yearbook*, 1, 99–122.
- Izumi, S.(2002). Output, input enhancement, and the Noticing Hypothesis: an experimental study on ESL relativization. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 24, 541–77.
- Izumi, S. and Bigelow, M.(2000). Does output promote noticing and second language acquisition? *TESOL Quarterly*, 34, 239–78.
- Jensen, E & Vinther, T.(2003). Exact Repetition as Input Enhancement in Second Language Acquisition. *Language Learning*, 53, 373–428
- Kim, Y. (2006). Effects of input elaboration on vocabulary acquisition through reading by Korean learners of English as a foreign language. *TESOL Quarterly*, 40, 520- 540.
- Kim, J. H. (2004). Issues of corrective feedback in second language acquisition. Working Papers in TESOL & Applied Linguistics. Teachers College, Columbia University. Volume 4/ Issue 2/ 2004. Retrieved January 30, 2005, from <http://www.tc.columbia.edu/academic/tesol/Webjournal/>
- Lee, S. ( 2007). Effects of Textual Enhancement and Topic Familiarity on Korean EFL Students' Reading Comprehension and Learning of Passive Form. *Language Learning*, 57, 87–118.

- Long, M.H., & Robinson, P. (1998). Focus on form: Theory, research, and practice. In C. Doughty, & J. Williams (Eds), *Focus on form in classroom second language acquisition* (pp.15-41). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Lyster, R. (1998). Negotiation of form, recast and explicit correction in relation to error types and learner repair in immersion classroom. *Language learning*, 48, 183-218.
- Lyster, R., & Ranta, L. (1997). Corrective feedback and learner uptake. *SSLA*, 20, 37-66.
- Mackey, A. (2006). Feedback, Noticing and Instructed Second Language Learning. *Applied Linguistics*, 27, 405-430
- Mackey, A., & Gass, S. (2005). *Second language research*. Library of Congress
- Muranoi, H. (2000). Focus on Form Through Interaction Enhancement: Integrating Formal Instruction Into a Communicative Task in EFL Classrooms. *Language Learning*, 50, 617-673.
- Mackey, A. (1999). Input, interaction, and second language development. *SSLA*, 21, 557-587.
- Pica, T. (2000). Tradition and transition in English language teaching methodology. *System*, 28, 1-18.
- Pica, T. (1994). Research on negotiation: What does it reveal about second-language learning conditions, processes, and outcomes? *Language Learning*, 44, 493-527.
- Ollerhead, S & Oosthuizen, J. (2005). Meaning-focused vs. Form-focused L2 Instruction: Implications for Writing Educational Materials for South African Learners of English. *Stellenbosch Papers in Linguistics*, 36, 59-84.
- Rahimi, M. (2008). The role of teacher's corrective feedback in improving Iranian EFL learners' writing accuracy over time: is learner's mother tongue relevant? *Springer Science Business Media B.V* 22, 219-243.
- Reber, A.S. (1993). *Implicit Learning and Tacit Knowledge: An Essay of the Cognitive Unconscious*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

- Reber, A.S., Allen, R.(1978). Analogy and abstraction strategies in synthetic grammar learning: *a functional interpretation*. *Cognition*, 6, 189-221.
- Reber, A.S. (1976). Implicit learning of synthetic learners: the role of instructional set. *Journal of Experimental Psychology, Human Learning and Memory* 6, 88–94.
- Song, M., & Suh, B. (2008). The effects of output task types on noticing and learning of the English past counterfactual conditional. *System*, 36, 295–312.
- Sheen, Y.(2008). Recasts, Language Anxiety, Modified Output, and L2 Learning. *Language Learning*, 58, 220- 235.
- Sheen, Y. (2007). The Effect of Focused Written Corrective Feedback and Language Aptitude on ESL Learners' Acquisition of Articles. *TESOL Quarterly*, 41, 250- 270.
- Sachs, R., & Polio, C. (2007). Learners use of two types of written corrective feedback on L2 writing revision task. *SSLA*, 29, 67-100.
- Sheen, Y. (2004). Corrective feedback and learner uptake in communicative classrooms across instructional settings. *Language Teaching Research*, 8, 263–300.
- Swain, M. (1995) Three functions of output in second language learning. In G. Cook and B. Seidlhofer (Eds.), *Principles and practice in the study of language: Studies in honor of H.G. Widdowson* (pp. 125–144). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Swain, M., & Lapkin, S. (1995). Problems in output and the cognitive processes they generate: A step towards second language learning. *Applied Linguistics*, 16, 371–191.
- Schmidt, R. (1995). Consciousness and foreign language learning: A tutorial on the role of attention and awareness in learning, In R, Schmidt ~Ed., *Attention and awareness in foreign language learning* (Tech, Rep, No. 9, pp. 1–63). Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Spada, L, Lightbrown, P & Ranta, L. (1991). Input enhancement and L2 Question Formation. *Applied Linguistics*, 12, 83- 98.
- Sheen, R. (2002). FOCUS ON FORM AND FOCUS ON FORMS. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 10, 161–184.
- Storch, N. (2001). Comparing ESL learners' attention to grammar on three different classroom tasks. *RELIC journal*, 32, 104- 110.



- Schmidt, R. (2001). Attention. In P. Robinson ~Ed., *Cognition and second language instruction* (pp.3–32). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Swain, M. (1999). Integrating Language and Content Teaching through Collaborative Task.
- Swain, M. (1998). Focus on form through conscious refrelection" in Doughly & Williams (eds.), (Eds.), *Focus on form in classroom second language acquisition* (pp. 64–81). New York: Cambridge University Press. 64-82.
- Storch, N.(1998). A classroom–based study: Insights form a collaborative text reconstruction task. *ELT Journal*, 52, 291- 307.
- Takimoto, M. (2007). The effects of input- based tasks on the development of learners pragmatic proficiency. *Applied Linguistics*, 30, 1-25.
- Takimoto, M.(2006). The effects of explicit feedback on the development of pragmatic proficiency. *Language Teaching Research*, 10, 393- 410.
- Tsui, A. (2001). Classroom interaction. In Carter, R., & Nunan, D (Eds), *Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Varnosfadrani, A., & Basturkmen, H. (2009). The effectiveness of implicit and explicit error correctionon learners' performance. *System* ,37, 82–98.
- VanPatten, B.(2002). Processing the Content of Input-Processing and Processing Instruction Research: A Response to DeKeyser, Salaberry, Robinson, and Harrington. *Language Learning* ,52, 825–831.
- Willis, D. and J. Willis. (2001). 'Task-based anguage learning'.In R. Carter and D. Nunan (Eds.): *The Cambridge Guide to Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Yoshida, R. (2008). Teachers' Choice and Learners' Preference of Corrective Feedback Types. *Language Awareness*, 17, 78- 93.
- Zacharias, N.(2007). Teacher and Student Attitudes toward Teacher Feedback. *RELIC Journal*, 38, 38-52.

Zizak, D.M., Reber, A.S.(2004). The structural mere exposure effect: the dual role of familiarity. *Consciousness and Cognition*, 13, 336–362.

## Appendices

### *Appendix A: Recognition test (Sample questions from the pre-/post-test)*

1. If I had not gone to the party yesterday, Tom would have been very upset.

**YES/NO**

2. I would have had time to eat breakfast this morning if my alarm clock rings at 6:30

**YES/NO**

3.If I had not been so nervous, I would have do better in the interview.

**YES/NO**

### *Appendix B: Production test (Sample questions from the pre-/post-test)*

1. Reza gave up entering college because her parents passed away when she was in the third grade of high school.

If his parents-----.

2. Recently Jane was offered a job with a computer company closer to home. She wanted to accept it, but the salary was too low.

If the salary-----

*Appendix C: Sample Text Reconstruction Tasks*

**Note:** The following sentences are all related to the past hypothetical /counterfactual conditional. Put the verbs into the correct form.

1. When I was young, I wanted to buy old cars, but the truth is that I just did not have enough time. If I have time, I restore all of the old cars. Those old cars were great and really beautiful. I buy the oldest car for my family if I be a millionaire. Also my wife be angry if she drives that car. She told me if we use an old car in the street, we put other drivers in trouble. But I thought that if I own some of them, I be the happiest man in the world.

*Appendix D: Sample input passages***Telephone Invention**

Alexander Graham Bell, a teacher of the deaf in Boston, invented the first telephone. If he had not attempted to create a machine which could carry voices, it would have been harder for people to communicate with each other. One day in 1875, while running a test on his latest attempt to create a machine, he accidentally spilled acid on his coat. Naturally, he called for his assistant, Tomas A. Watson, who was in another room. Bell said, "Mr. Watson, come here. I want you". In fact this was the beginning of an important discovery. They would not have realized that their experiments had at last been successful, if Watson had not heard Bells words coming from the machine. He rushed excitedly into the room to tell Bell that he had heard his words over the machine. After Bell had successfully tested it again and again, he confidently announced his invention to the world. But people did not consider it an important revolution. In other words, if general public had believed the telephone was not a toy with little practical application, they would have paid more attention to Bells announcement. They might have appreciated his accomplishment if they had understood the nature of Bells invention. If Bell had not spent his time to make a way to rapidly communicate over long distance, it would have been hard for

people to find each other. In fact telephone had changed their society after its invention and they became aware of the fact that if they had not had telephones, then communication that was quick and reliable would have been difficult over long distances

*Appendix (E): Some examples of how the recognition test items were coded.*

*Learner A (1 point)*

I would be on time for class yesterday if I had caught the bus.

**YES/NO** → have been

*Learner B (0.5 point)*

I would be on time for class yesterday if I had caught the bus.

**YES/NO** → had been

*Learner C (0 point)*

I would be on time for class yesterday if I had caught the bus.

**YES/NO**

*Learner D (0 point)*

I would be on time for class yesterday if I had caught the bus.

**YES/NO**

## تاثیر بازخوردهای اصلاحی نوشتاری بر روی صحت دستوری فعالیت های برون دادی و یادگیری فرم زبان هدف

محمدرضا حسین نژاد

دانشگاه آزاد اسلامی واحد ایرانشهر

محمد رضا ملاحسینی

دانشگاه آزاد اسلامی واحد تاکستان

تاثیر بازخوردهای اصلاحی بروی صحت ساختاری فعالیت های برون دادی از قبیل بازسازی متون، فعالیت های ویرایشی، نوشتار با کمک تصاویر و غیره بدرستی انجام نگرفته است. بر اساس نظراتی مانند اینکه با استفاده از فعالیت های برون دادی و بازخوردهای اصلاحی به عنوان دو متغیر مستقل در یک تحقیق، محقق قادر نمی باشد تا نتایج حاصله از تحقیق را به یکی از آن دو نسبت دهد، این پژوهش سعی دارد تا تاثیر بازخوردهای اصلاحی نوشتاری را بروی صحت دستوری فعالیت های برون دادی در طول تحقیق و همچنین تاثیر کلی آنان را در یادگیری ساختار دستوری مورد نظر از طریق دو تست بسنجد. بدین منظور 93 نفر از زبان آموزان سطح متوسط از طریق تست تاقل انتخاب و به سه گروه تقسیم شدند. به گروه اول نوع بازخورد اصلاحی مستقیم، گروه دوم بازخورد اصلاحی غیر مستقیم، و به گروه کنترل هیچ بازخورد اصلاحی داده نشد. با توجه به سوال اول تحقیق که سعی داشت میزان پیشرفت زبان آموزان را از نخستین فعالیت برون دادی به دومین فعالیت در طی ده جلسه بسنجد، بررسی این فعالیت ها نشان داد که زبان آموزانی که فرصت دریافت بازخوردهای اصلاحی مستقیم یا غیر مستقیم به آنها داده شده است، رشد چشمگیری از نظر دستوری داشته اند. به منظور پاسخ به سوال دوم این تحقیق که موضوع یادگیری ساختار را از طریق دو تست مورد بررسی قرار می داد، بار دیگر نتایج بیانگر این مهم بود که عملکرد دو گروه هدف که بازخورد اصلاحی دریافت کرده اند موفق تر بوده است. گفتنی است که از بین این دو بازخورد اصلاحی نوشتاری، بازخورد اصلاحی مستقیم نسبت به نوع غیر مستقیم در آزمون تولیدی نتیجه بهتری بهمراه داشته است اما در خصوص آزمون بازشناختی تفاوت چشمگیری بین تاثیر این دو بازخورد اصلاحی نبوده است.

کلیدواژه ها: بازخورد مستقیم، بازخورد غیرمستقیم، برون داد