Islamic Azad University Shahreza Branch

Journal of LCT Language Culture & Translation

JOURNAL OF LANGUAGE, CULTURE, AND TRANSLATION

https://sanad.iau.ir/journal/lct

Journal of Language, Culture, and Translation (LCT), 6(1) (2023), 144–162

The Impact of Explicit and Implicit Corrective Feedback on the Writing Proficiency of Iranian Pre-intermediate EFL Learners

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Received: 25/08/2023 ***Revised: 10/11/2023*** ***Accepted: 25/12/2023***

Abstract

The main purpose of the study was to explore and describe the effect of explicit and implicit corrective feedback (CF) on students' writing ability. To achieve this end, the researchers adopted a quantitative method with a sample of 40 pre-intermediate female learners. A language proficiency test was administered at the beginning of the term to ensure that they had the same language background. Then, they were randomly assigned to two experimental groups (EG1 and EG2) and (20 Ss in each group). The next test was a pre-test which took place a day before the commencement of the treatment. The EG1 was given implicit CF on their written text, whereas the EG2 received explicit CF. The classes were held twice a week which was 40 minutes per session (12 sessions). At the end of each week, the students of both groups were asked to attend an immediate post-test. Since the study was done within three weeks, three immediate post-tests were administered to both groups. The received data revealed the importance of providing implicit corrective feedback in EFL settings where teacher's instruction and feedback are the most important ways through which learners can improve their language proficiency. The participants benefited more from implicit feedback than from explicit corrective feedback. The results of the study can help teachers to utilize the best way to teach writing courses.

Keywords: Corrective Feedback; Explicit Correction; Implicit Correction; Writing Proficiency; EFL Context

1. Introduction

Recently, the role of feedback in foreign language instruction has received much attention (Chen & Nassaji, 2018). Feedback is regarded

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as the teacher's responses to a student's ill-formed language utterances (Li, 2010). It is a kind of evaluation that enables instructors to involve students in critical thinking about special parts of their academic work through discussion. While feedback has been found to impact learning outcomes and learner progress, the extent to which this effect is exerted depends on how the feedback is presented (Yu et al., 2021). Feedback plays a dominating role in interactions and contributes to second/foreign learning either implicitly or explicitly. It provokes students' cognitive processes, attention, and noticing, regardless of continual dialogues engaged in interaction. Written feedback (WF), also known as error correction, is extensively used and appreciated by language teachers. It is a useful device to provide negative feedback and decrease students' writing errors (Aghdasi Khabisi et al., 2023). The effectiveness of written corrective feedback (WCF) on writing performance depends on learners' engagement with WCF and their motivational state. WCF also plays a significant role in writing classes (Rajasekhar, 2019).

Corrective Feedback (CF) is diversely acknowledged as a crucial method in second-language classrooms. It involves dealing with a learner's L2 production that does not resemble the target language while acquiring the second language. Several scholars (for example, Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Ferris, 2006; Bitchener & Knoch, 2008). Chandler (2003) has stated CF plays a crucial part in improving grammatical precision. Corrective feedback (CF) in language classrooms has been a topic of debate in second/foreign language research and teaching methodology. However, most research supports the usefulness of CF in improving language learners (Hamied & Emilia, 2020). Explicit feedback is a form of learning that gives a person explicit and direct information about their performance or behavior. It can be highly effective in promoting learning and skill development, as it increases motivation, self-awareness, and overall performance. Explicit feedback in educational settings is essential for guiding students toward their learning objectives and facilitating their success. Explicit correction entails providing learners with direct forms of feedback. Teachers can explicitly draw attention to learners' errors by stating that their utterances are incorrect (Ellis, Loewen, & Erlam, 2006). However, implicit feedback is not immediately obvious to the student and requires them to recognize and utilize it for their learning. In contrast, learners are offered indirect forms of feedback through implicit correction (Ellis, Loewen, & Erlam, 2006). It has always been a challenge to determine a suitable time and location to provide feedback, as L2 scholars do not agree.

The effectiveness of explicit feedback in the EFL context has been a matter among researchers. Direct feedback is a useful method for language students, especially for lower proficiency levels since it provides explicit correction and reduces confusion. However, some researchers (Elashri, 2013; Ko & Hirvela, 2015) argue that direct feedback may be less practical as there is no opportunity for learners to engage in the error correction process. It requires only passive rewriting, which may not develop long-term learning or individual error revision. Whereas, implicit feedback is a process that pinpoints several errors without labeling these errors. Students in implicit feedback are challenged cognitively to correct the error regarding their background information. This sort of feedback expands students' engagement and improves their critical thinking abilities; the advantages of this feedback, uncovered that learners receiving indirect feedback and utilizing an error code significantly outperformed those who receive explicit feedback (Khodareza & Delvand, 2016). In the past few years, there has been an increasing fascination with CF, as multiple research studies have explored various forms of feedback, specifically implicit and explicit variations. On the implicit side, there is recast, which entails rephrasing a portion of the learner's erroneous statement. Differentiating between explicit and implicit teaching in foreign language writing classrooms can be challenging, especially under implicit teaching conditions.

Considering the above discussion, this study evaluated the potential beneficial influence of two different approaches to error correction (implicit & explicit) on the grammatical precision of learners. By taking into account both theoretical and pedagogical viewpoints on various forms of CF, this work addressed three inquiries followed by the null hypotheses:

1. Does providing explicit corrective feedback have any significant effect on the writing ability of Pre-intermediate EFL learners?
2. Does providing implicit corrective feedback have any significant effect on the writing ability of Iranian pre-intermediate learners?
3. Is there any significant difference between the effects of explicit and implicit corrective feedback on the writing ability of Iranian pre-intermediate learners?

$H0_1$: Providing explicit corrective feedback does not have any significant effect on the writing ability of Pre-intermediate EFL learners.

$H0_2$: Providing implicit corrective feedback does not have any significant effect on the writing ability of Iranian pre-intermediate learners.

$H0_3$: There is not any significant difference between the effects of explicit and implicit corrective feedback on the writing ability of Iranian pre-intermediate learners.

2. Literature Review

Rassaei and Moinzadeh (2011) analyzed the effect of three types of corrective feedback, namely recasts, metalinguistic feedback, and clarification requests, on the acquisition of English wh-question forms by Iranian EFL learners. The findings indicated that recast and metalinguistic feedback had a remarkable impact on the students' performance. That is to say, the participants of the recast group outperformed the clarification and control groups, but the metalinguistic group performed significantly better than the recast group. In another study, Ebadi and Seidi (2014) investigated the effect of two types of corrective feedback, i.e., clarification request as implicit feedback and metalinguistic feedback as explicit on lower-intermediate Iranian students. The results revealed that experimental groups who received feedback outperformed the control group who did not receive any feedback. The results also indicated that metalinguistic feedback was more effective than clarification requests.

Tavakoli and Zarrinabadi (2016) examined the effect of explicit and implicit corrective feedback on Iranian language learners' L2 willingness to communicate (WTC). Explicit and implicit corrective feedback was given to them to see their effectiveness in facilitating L2 WTC. The results of their research showed that implicit corrective feedback did not influence L2 WTC, whereas explicit corrective feedback increased it. The analysis of qualitative data highlighted that explicit corrective feedback enhanced language learners' L2 WTC by promoting their L2 self-confidence. In the same context, Afshinfar and Shokouhifar (2017) analyzed the effect of explicit and implicit corrective feedback on the narrative writing of advanced Iranian EFL learners. The results revealed the positive effects of giving written corrective feedback on the advanced EFL learners' writing. Furthermore, the results highlighted the superiority of giving explicit corrective feedback over the implicit one in written tasks. Another research carried out by Xhama (2018), involved different tools to help students improve their performance, attitude, and beliefs in writing activities in L2. He collected data using questionnaires and interviews. The main issues addressed were the effectiveness of corrective feedback in learning writing in L2 and how long the skills learned by corrective learning last. The study concluded that corrective feedback in writing skills is a very important tool. Moreover, the author

concluded that written corrective feedback can help teachers motivate, push, and help improve writing skills in their students, despite the negative misconception learners might have.

In a recent study, Yu (2022) compared implicit and explicit corrective feedback. The researcher stated that explicit CF is more desirable and advantageous for EFL students' L2 growth, especially in terms of L2 willingness to communicate (WTC), L2 speaking development, and L2 grammatical accuracy and awareness. Firstly, several linguistic theories are applied to demonstrate why explicit CF is more effective than implicit CF, and then the study critically reviews the previous research to explain how students provided with explicit CF outperformed those receiving implicit one in terms of L2 WTC, L2 speaking development, and L2 grammar awareness and accuracy. In addition, the more recent mixed-methods study by Rasouli et al. (2023) investigated the impact of different types of written corrective feedback (WCF) on the writing proficiency of high and low-anxiety language learners. The findings of the study revealed that direct corrective feedback (CF) had no significant effect on the writing proficiency of high-and low-anxiety learners. However, the low-anxiety indirect CF group performed better than the direct CF group in the writing posttest. Furthermore, low-anxiety students preferred receiving English comments and error correction, but high-anxiety learners preferred errors corrected with fewer comments. The results also indicated that structural and grammatical errors were preferred by students for feedback, whereas low anxiety learners preferred feedback on vocabulary, expression, content, and viewpoints.

3. Methodology

3.1. Study Design

The present part describes the research method employed to answer the research questions. The current study was an attempt to analyze the effect of explicit and implicit corrective feedback as an independent variable on the Iranian EFL learners' writing proficiency which is a dependent variable. To this end, the study followed a quasi-experimental design, and a quantitative method was chosen for analyzing data.

3.2. Participants

The project involved the participation of some high school students from Chabahar. That is to say, the investigation was conducted within two separate high school classes, each consisting of 20 students. The sample of the study was composed of 40 female students who were selected based on the convenience sampling method from two intact

classes. The researchers implemented the instructional interventions in these classes and directly administered the examinations. These students willingly took part in the project. They were all female students between the ages of 14 and 18. Initially, the researchers provided them with a concise written explanation of the project, ensuring that they understood what would occur on the day of the experiment. The students attended two English classes per week, each lasting 40 minutes.

3.3. Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

To achieve the objective, a group of 40 participants was meticulously chosen from a larger pool of 75 high school students who were studying in three distinct grades in Chabahar. Before initiating the experiment to ensure that the participants of the study were at almost the same level of English proficiency, every participant was obligated to complete a NELSON proficiency test which specifically targeted their writing skills. This measure was taken to guarantee that all participants possessed a comparable level as EFL learners and writers. The outcomes of the preliminary test revealed that all 40 students achieved scores at the pre-intermediate level, thereby affirming their suitability to partake in the study. The next test was the pre-test which took place a day before the commencement of the experiment, whereas the immediate post-tests were administered the day after the implementation of treatment was done. The delayed post-tests, on the other hand, were conducted two weeks later. The purpose of conducting post-tests immediately after the instruction period was to assess the progress of participants.

At the beginning of the study, all the participants were informed and agreed to take part in the experiment. They were taught by the same teacher and were at a similar level. Two intact classes were utilized, both of which had previously been provided with direct explanations of the identical materials. The experimental group (EG1) was given implicit CF on their written text, whereas the experimental group (EG2) received explicit feedback. The English classes were held twice a week, each lasting around 40 minutes. The classes spanned 45 days, consisting of 12 sessions in total. Before each writing class, the researchers would notify the students that their initial writing was not necessarily the final version, and they were encouraged to make any necessary modifications and improvements. Grammar was taught implicitly through activities such as completing sentences and unscrambling sentences. Implicit activities aimed to help learners recognize and acquire grammar structures through authentic use. These activities emphasized the importance of context and building schema before introducing the

grammar point. Authentic oral and written examples were provided, and students were encouraged to discover, discuss, compare, and self-correct before moving on to producing the structure in activities.

The EG1 was given the option to have their errors underlined, either by code or by underlining the entire word, to indicate the type of error they made. This meant that only the errors in their writing were highlighted. The researchers then provided written feedback to the students giving a general explanation of their errors and asking them to revise their compositions while being mindful of their mistakes. Since the errors were not rectified, the students were advised to consult a grammar book or utilize the internet to comprehend the reasoning behind the underlining of a particular word or phrase. The feedback primarily focused on grammatical and lexical errors. In contrast, implicit correction offered learners feedback in indirect ways. Conversely, the EG2 received identical materials through formal classroom instruction. The learners were provided with ample time to reflect on the rules and subsequently put them into practice. They then concentrated on the structure and significance of particular language patterns in the input. Teachers explicitly drew attention to the learners' mistakes by acknowledging that their utterances were incorrect.

Three immediate post-tests were administered every two weeks to all participants to assess the influence of implicit CF treatment. All the quantitative data were gathered and were performed using Excel and SPSS software version 24. That is to say, both descriptive and inferential data were used to analyze the effectiveness of explicit and implicit corrective on the Iranian EFL learners' writing. A couple of paired sample t-tests and independent sample t-tests were used to analyze the data collected in the study.

4. Results

As mentioned earlier, this study involved a total of 40 pre-intermediate Iranian students, with 20 students assigned to the explicit CF group and another 20 students assigned to the implicit CF group. Data analysis of the students' performance in both groups was done and the results are shown in the following tables.

4.1. Data Analysis of Writing Proficiency Pre-test of Groups

The results of writing pre-tests can be seen in Table 1. The mean writing ability in the EG2 was estimated to be 16.83, with a standard deviation of 3.63. Conversely, the EG1 had an estimated mean of 16.50 and a standard deviation of 3.22.

Table 1. *Descriptive statistics of writing pre-test of the groups*

Groups	N	Mean	SD	SE
EG2	20	16.83	3.63	.82
EG1	20	16.50	3.22	.74

To check whether the observed differences between the groups were significantly different or not, an independent sample t-test was run. Before running the independent sample t-test, all required assumptions for running an independent sample t-test, including normality of the data, and lack of significant outliers were checked and fulfilled.

Table 2. *Independent samples t-test for writing pre-test of groups*

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Writing Pre-test of EG2 and EG1	Equal variances assumed	1.491	.227	2.735	38	.097	.33	3.972	.418	12.039
	Equal variances not assumed			2.735	33.47	.097	.33	3.97	.418	12.041

As Table 2 indicates, the statistical analysis of the data reveals that the difference between the two groups' performances on the writing pre-test is not significant (t (38) = 2.735, p = 0.097). It is inferred that the participants were homogeneous and comparable at the beginning of the study.

4.2. Data Analysis of the Pre-test and Posttest of the Groups

Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics of the writing proficiency scores for both the EG1 and EG2 groups, before and after the intervention. The EG2 consisted of 20 participants, who had an average score of 16.50 (SD = 3.52) on the pre-test. After the intervention, their average score increased to 17.50 (SD = 3.02) on the post-test. This

change suggests a modest improvement in writing proficiency, as evidenced by the increase in the mean score. The standard deviation indicates a slight decrease in score variability post-intervention, implying a more consistent performance among participants.

Table 3. *Results of the pre-test and post-test of the groups*

Tests	**N**	**Mean**	**SD**	**SE**
Pre-test (EG2)	20	16.50	3.52	.81
Post-test (EG2)	20	17.50	3.02	.84
Pretest (EG1)	20	16.83	3.63	.82
Posttest (EG1)	20	18.65	3.19	.71

In contrast, the EG1 also consisted of 20 participants, whose average score on the pre-test was 16.83 (SD = 3.63). Following the intervention, their average score increased significantly to 18.65 (SD = 3.19) on the post-test. The improvement in mean scores for the EG1 was more pronounced than that of the EG2, indicating that the EG1 treatment had a more substantial impact on enhancing the writing proficiency of the participants. The standard deviation decreased post-intervention, suggesting a reduction in score variability and indicating that the participants' writing performances became more uniform after the treatment.

Table 4. *Paired Samples t-test for the writing pre-test and post-test of the groups*

	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
				95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper			
EG2 writing pre-test an post-test	-1	1.41300	3.41163	-11.08190	-.31810	-3.032	19	.021
EG1 writing pre-test an post-test	-1.82	1.10024	2.63144	-11.08190	-.31810	-2.240	19	.001

Table 4 provides the results of the paired samples t-test, which was conducted to examine the significance of the differences in writing proficiency scores between the pre-test and post-test for both groups. For the EG2 group, the mean difference between the pre-test and post-test scores was -1.00, and the significance level was .021. The negative t-value and the p-value less than .05 indicate a statistically significant improvement in writing proficiency within the group.

For the EG1 group, the mean difference between the pre-test and post-test scores was -1.82, and the significance level was .001. The negative t-value and the highly significant p-value ($p < .01$) suggest a significant improvement in writing proficiency within the group.

The comparison of the mean differences and significance levels indicates that both groups showed improvements in writing proficiency; however, the EG1 group exhibited a more significant enhancement. This finding underscores the effectiveness of the intervention applied to the EG1 group, confirming that implicit corrective feedback (CF) had a positive impact on the EFL learners' writing skills.

4.3. Data Analysis of the Immediate Post-Tests and Overall Writing Post-Test Performance

This section examines the performance of participants from the explicit corrective feedback (EG2) and implicit corrective feedback (EG1) groups across three immediate post-tests, as well as their overall performance in the final writing post-test. The aim is to assess the differential impact of the two feedback types on learners' writing proficiency. Ensuring that the collected data fulfilled the assumptions of parametric inferential statistics, the data were analyzed using independent samples t-tests to compare the mean scores of the two groups.

4.3.1. Results of the Immediate Post-Tests

Table 5 summarizes the group statistics for the three immediate post-tests, including the mean scores, standard deviations, and standard errors for both the explicit CF group (EG2) and the implicit CF group (EG1).

Table 5. *Group Statistics for the Immediate Post-Tests*

Test	**Group**	**N**	**Mean**	**SD**	**SE Mean**
First Immediate Post-Test	EG2	20	4.65	0.875	0.196
	EG1	20	7.65	1.137	0.254
Second Immediate Post-Test	EG2	20	4.30	0.688	0.154
	EG1	20	7.90	0.973	0.218
Third Immediate Post-Test	EG2	20	4.55	0.851	0.190
	EG1	20	7.78	1.040	0.233

The data in Table 5 demonstrate a consistent pattern wherein the implicit CF group (EG1) outperformed the explicit CF group (EG2) across all three immediate post-tests. The mean scores for EG1 were significantly higher than those for EG2, indicating a greater

improvement in writing proficiency. This pattern suggests that the implicit CF may have been more effective in facilitating the learners' writing skills development.

Table 6. *Independent samples t-tests for immediate post-tests*

	Leven's test for equality of variances		**T-test**		
	F	**Sig**	**T**	**df**	**Sig.(2-tailed)**
First Immediate Post-Test	.932	.340	9.352	38	.000
Second Immediate Post-Test	.380	.541	13.130	38	.000
Third Immediate Post-Test	1.085	.304	10.318	38	.000

As shown in Table 6, the results of the independent samples t-tests for all three immediate post-tests indicate significant differences between the explicit CF group (EG2) and the implicit CF group (EG1). The t-values are large, and the p-values are all less than .001, suggesting that the differences in mean scores are highly significant. These findings confirm that the implicit CF group significantly outperformed the explicit CF group, providing strong evidence for the superior efficacy of implicit feedback in enhancing learners' writing skills.

4.3.2. Overall Participants' Performance in the Writing Post-Test

Table 7 presents the overall writing post-test scores for both groups, while Table 8 provides the independent samples t-test results for these scores.

Table 7. *Overall Results of the Groups' Writing Post-Tests*

Group	**N**	**Mean**	**SD**	**SE**
EG2	20	17.50	3.02	0.84
EG1	20	20.65	3.23	0.78

The data in Table 7 reveal a notable difference in the overall post-test performance between the groups. The implicit CF group (EG1) achieved a higher mean score (M = 20.65) compared to the explicit CF group (EG2) (M = 17.50), with a smaller standard error, indicating a more consistent performance among EG1 participants. This substantial

difference in means suggests that implicit corrective feedback had a more pronounced effect on improving the writing skills of the participants.

Table 8. *Independent Samples t-tests for overall results of the groups' writing post-tests*

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
EG2 and EG1 Groups	Equal variances assumed	1.491	.227	6.26	38	.000	-3.15	3.972	.418	12.039
	Equal variances not assumed			6.26	33.478	.000	-3.15	3.97	.418	12.041

The independent samples t-test results, presented in Table 8, show a significant mean difference of -3.15 between the groups, with a t-value of 6.26 and a p-value of .000. This result indicates a statistically significant difference in the overall writing post-test scores between the explicit CF group and the implicit CF group. The negative mean difference suggests that the implicit CF group performed better, supporting the hypothesis that implicit feedback is more effective than explicit feedback in improving EFL learners' writing proficiency.

5. Discussion

The primary objective of this study was to examine the differential impact of explicit and implicit corrective feedback (CF) on the writing proficiency of Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners. The findings of this research provide significant insights into the effectiveness of these two feedback approaches, contributing to the broader understanding of corrective feedback in second language acquisition (SLA).

The first research question aimed to evaluate the effect of explicit corrective feedback on the participants' writing ability. The data analysis revealed a significant improvement in the writing scores of the explicit CF group (EG2) from the pre-test to the post-test. The statistical evidence from the independent samples t-test indicated a noteworthy difference in mean scores, leading to the rejection of the first null hypothesis. This suggests that explicit corrective feedback positively

influenced the writing proficiency of the participants. The explicit nature of the feedback provided learners with clear and direct information about their errors, enabling them to understand and correct their mistakes effectively. This finding aligns with previous research that has underscored the value of explicit feedback in language learning (Lyster & Ranta, 1997). The explicit guidance helps learners internalize correct language forms, thus enhancing their linguistic accuracy and writing skills over time.

The second research question addressed the influence of implicit corrective feedback on the writing ability of the participants. The analysis demonstrated that the implicit CF group (EG1) also showed significant improvement in their writing scores from the pre-test to the post-test. The substantial increase in mean scores and the statistical significance of the results support the rejection of the second null hypothesis. This outcome indicates that implicit corrective feedback was effective in improving the participants' writing proficiency. Implicit CF, which subtly highlights errors without overt correction, may encourage learners to engage in self-correction and foster a deeper understanding of language rules. These findings are consistent with studies that have highlighted the benefits of implicit feedback in promoting long-term language retention and learner autonomy (Long, 2014).

The third research question sought to compare the effectiveness of explicit and implicit corrective feedback. The immediate post-test results and the overall writing post-test scores revealed that the implicit CF group outperformed the explicit CF group, indicating a more pronounced improvement in writing proficiency. The analysis showed that the implicit CF group consistently achieved higher mean scores across all tests, with statistically significant differences confirmed by independent samples t-tests. These results suggest that implicit corrective feedback may be more effective than explicit feedback in enhancing the writing skills of EFL learners.

The superior performance of the implicit CF group can be attributed to several factors. Implicit feedback may encourage learners to develop metalinguistic awareness and self-monitoring strategies, which are crucial for effective language learning (Schmidt, 2012). Additionally, the less intrusive nature of implicit feedback may reduce anxiety and enhance learner engagement, leading to better outcomes (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2022).

The findings of this study align with previous research that has demonstrated the effectiveness of both explicit and implicit corrective

feedback. For example, Rasouli et al. (2023) found that different types of written corrective feedback had varying impacts on learners' writing proficiency, depending on their anxiety levels. However, they noted that explicit CF did not significantly affect the writing proficiency of high- and low-anxiety learners, which contrasts with our findings. Similarly, Xhama (2018) emphasized the importance of corrective feedback in developing writing skills in L2 learners, supporting the notion that feedback, regardless of its type, plays a crucial role in language learning. Conversely, some studies have reported different results. For instance, Yu (2022) concluded that explicit corrective feedback is more beneficial for L2 learners, particularly in enhancing grammatical accuracy and willingness to communicate (WTC). This discrepancy may be due to differences in study design, learner characteristics, or instructional contexts. Furthermore, Afshinfar and Shokouhifar (2017) found that explicit CF was more effective than implicit CF in improving written tasks among advanced Iranian EFL learners. Tavakoli and Zarrinabadi (2016) also suggested that explicit CF positively influenced L2 WTC, while implicit CF did not. These contrasting findings highlight the complexity of CF effectiveness and underscore the need for further research to explore the contextual factors that influence the efficacy of different feedback types.

6. Conclusion

The present study provides robust evidence for the effectiveness of both explicit and implicit corrective feedback (CF) in enhancing the writing proficiency of Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners. The findings underscore that implicit corrective feedback, in particular, plays a crucial role in fostering students' writing skills. This form of feedback encourages learners to engage in self-correction and deeper processing of linguistic structures, thereby facilitating better comprehension and retention of grammatical rules. The study revealed that participants in the experimental group, who received implicit CF, demonstrated significant improvements in their writing proficiency compared to those in the EG2 group, who did not receive any form of corrective feedback. This improvement can be attributed to the opportunity implicit CF provides for learners to revise their drafts and internalize correct language use.

In contrast, while explicit corrective feedback also contributed to learners' writing development, its impact was less pronounced. Explicit CF often involves direct correction of errors by the teacher, which can sometimes lead to a passive learning experience where students rely on

the teacher's corrections rather than actively engaging with the material. This finding aligns with previous research suggesting that explicit feedback, though informative, may not foster the same level of cognitive engagement and retention as implicit feedback (Ellis, 2009; Nassaji & Kartchava, 2021). The results of this study confirm that providing students with feedback that requires them to actively process and correct their errors leads to better long-term retention and understanding of grammatical structures, as suggested by Bitchener and Knoch (2010).

Furthermore, the study's findings highlight that the efficacy of corrective feedback is context-dependent and varies according to the type of errors targeted. Implicit CF was particularly effective in addressing grammatical errors, which aligns with the hypothesis that implicit feedback mechanisms support the development of implicit linguistic knowledge and automaticity in language use. This suggests that language instructors should consider the specific learning outcomes and the nature of the target structures when selecting the type of corrective feedback to employ in their teaching practices.

In summary, the research demonstrates that both implicit and explicit corrective feedback can significantly enhance EFL learners' writing accuracy. However, implicit CF appears to offer greater benefits in terms of engaging learners in the cognitive processes necessary for language acquisition, such as noticing and hypothesis testing. These results challenge some earlier studies that reported limited or negative effects of corrective feedback on language development, thereby contributing to the ongoing debate on the optimal methods for language instruction.

7. Implications

The implications of this study extend to various stakeholders in the field of English language teaching (ELT), including teachers, materials developers, and curriculum designers. For ELT teachers, the findings underscore the importance of incorporating corrective feedback into writing instruction. Teachers are encouraged to utilize both implicit and explicit feedback strategies, adapting them according to the specific needs and proficiency levels of their students. The evidence suggests that while explicit CF may be beneficial for initial error awareness, implicit CF should be emphasized to promote deeper cognitive engagement and long-term language retention.

Materials developers and curriculum designers should consider these findings when creating instructional materials and textbooks. The study suggests that materials should include opportunities for learners to receive and reflect on both types of feedback. Textbooks and other

educational resources should integrate real-life scenarios and authentic themes that encourage students to apply language skills in practical contexts, thereby enhancing their ability to use English effectively in various situations.

Moreover, the results advocate for the inclusion of teacher training programs focused on effective feedback delivery. These programs should equip teachers with the skills necessary to balance explicit and implicit feedback and to tailor their instructional approaches to meet the diverse needs of their students. Finally, this study highlights the need for further research into the nuanced effects of different types of corrective feedback on various language skills, which can inform more targeted and effective language teaching practices.

Funding: This research received no external funding from any agency.
Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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