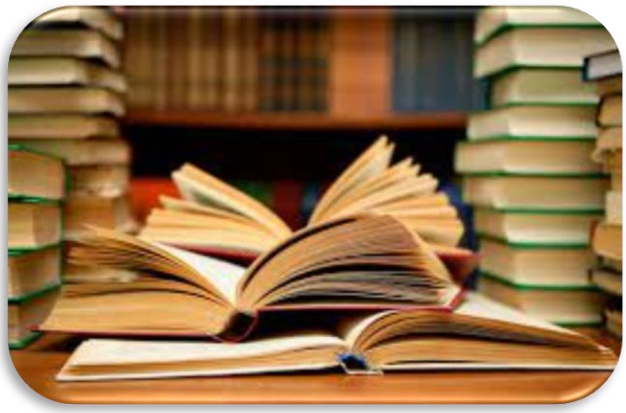
Journal of New Trends in English Language Learning (JNTELL)

Research Paper



Metalinguistic Feedback Use in Grammar Retention: A Case of Iranian High School Students

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Received: 07 February, 2023 **Accepted: 20 February, 2023**

ABSTRACT

This study aimed to determine the effectiveness of Explicit Oral Feedback (EOF) in the form of Metalinguistic Feedback (Explanation) on Iranian high school students' retention of grammatical structures. For this to achieve, the performance of the learners as a result of Explicit Oral Feedback, was studied. Sixty homogeneous Iranian EFL female high school students were randomly assigned to experimental and control groups. Afterward, a grammar test was administered to see the effect of corrective feedback. The statistical techniques employed to measure such effects, were a series of independent samples t-tests and two one-way ANOVAs. The results indicated a significant effect of oral metalinguistic feedback on grammar retention over time. It is hoped that this study can help teachers to use corrective feedback strategies effectively in the process of instruction for correcting EFL learners' grammatical errors as well as retaining grammatical structures overtime.

Keywords: Explicit feedback, grammatical structures, metalinguistic oral feedback, retention.

استفاده از بازخورد فرازبانی در به خاطرسپاری گرامر: موردی از دانش آموزان دبیرستانی ایرانی

این مطالعه با هدف تعیین اثربخشی بازخورد صریح شفاهی (EOF) در قالب بازخورد فرازبانی (توضیح) بر به خاطر سپاری ساختارهای دستوری دانش‌آموزان دبیرستانی ایرانی انجام شد. برای دستیابی به این هدف، عملکرد فراگیران در نتیجه بازخورد صریح شفاهی مورد بررسی قرار گرفت. شصت دانش آموز دختر دبیرستانی انگلیسی زبان انگلیسی به طور تصادفی در دو گروه آزمایش و گواه قرار گرفتند. پس از آن، یک آزمون گرامر برای مشاهده اثر بازخورد صریح شفاهی نجام شد. تکنیک‌های آماری مورد استفاده برای اندازه‌گیری چنین اثراتی، مجموعه‌ای از آزمون‌های تی مستقل و دو آنالیز واریانس یک‌طرفه بود. نتایج نشان داد که بازخورد صریح شفاهی تاثیر قابل توجهی در به خاطر سپاری ساختارهای دستوری داشته است. بکارگیری این نوع بازخورد در کلاسهای آموزش زبان انگلیسی جهت تقویت مهارت های زبان انگلیسی موثر خواهد بود.امید است که این مطالعه بتواند به معلمان کمک کند تا از راهبردهای بازخورد اصلاحی به طور موثر در فرآیند آموزش برای تصحیح اشتباهات گرامری زبان آموزان زبان انگلیسی و همچنین به خاطر سپاری ساختارهای گرامری با گذشت زمان استفاده کنند.

واژگان کلیدی: بازخورد صریح، ساختارهای دستوری، بازخورد شفاهی فرازبانی، به خاطر سپاری.

INTRODUCTION

A considerable number of second language acquisition (SLA) research have been conducted on the role of classroom interaction in second language acquisition. It is envisioned that in the classroom interactions students are provided with comprehensible input, chances to negotiate for meaning, and opportunities to produce modified output (Andres & Villafuerte Holguín, 2022; Krashen & Mason, 2020; Lee, 2018; Patrick, 2019; Venditti, 2021). On the other hand, research shows that exposure to input alone, is not enough for students to acquire the target language elements to a high level of proficiency (e.g., Al Zoubi, 2018; Long, 1996; Norris & Ortega, 2000; Taguchi, 2018). This is particularly true for those elements which are semantically redundant, syntactically complex, and cognitively demanding. Corrective feedback is one of the techniques accepted to promote L2 development by providing learners with both positive and negative evidence ((Long, 1996). Positive evidence provides learners with the correct and target-like structure or what is acceptable in L2, while, negative evidence provides students with information concerning what is impossible in language. Corrective feedback is defined as a teacher's move that invites a learner to attend to the grammatical accuracy of the utterance which is produced by the learner (Sheen, 2007). However, feedback can be utilized in a large number of special functions such as working places, schools, etc. We cannot think about a classroom without giving any feedback. The students need to acquire feedback from their instructors, as well as, an instructor has to furnish meaningful and useful feedback in the classroom. Feedback assists learners to be motivated and encouraged in their studies and it can be presented in various forms and kinds.

In this regard, investigators classified corrective feedback (CF) into explicit and implicit corrective feedback. Explicit CF signifies an obvious linguistic signal for the correction of errors, whereas, implicit CF refers to providing the prompts or eliciting the information without any clear linguistic signals (Méndez & Cruz, 2012). Lyster and Ranta (1997) suggested six kinds of CF, among which recast, clarification request, repetition, and elicitation fall under the category of implicit feedback, whilst metalinguistic feedback and explicit correction are categorized as explicit feedback.

Metalinguistic feedback is the process of supplying a linguistic clue for the targeted error(s). This explanation can take the form of error codes, as Ellis (2009) maintains most often the case, or can come in the form of a longer and more detailed explanation. L2 investigators have gathered solid evidence that metalinguistic explanation increases the enhancement of explicit knowledge (e.g., Rassaei et al., 2012; Shintani & Ellis, 2013; Ferris & Roberts, 2001). In this case, metalinguistic feedback is essential and noticeable to L2 learners since it explicitly supplies them with a chance to recognize and find their ungrammatical utterances. Indeed, metalinguistic feedback can help L2 learners to notice the gap between their knowledge and the received metalinguistic feedback.

Besides, corrective feedback i.e., explicit and implicit, can take different forms of response (oral and written) to learners' ungrammatical utterances. Accordingly, Lyster et al. (2013) described that oral corrective feedback is generally considered as corrective feedback that emphasizes on teacher's immediate response to the learner's committed errors. Corrective feedback is regarded as oral corrective feedback since it is not only given feedback on students' written work but also given in orally whether a student creates an erroneous utterance. Whereas, written corrective feedback is provided by teachers or peers in a written form in the classrooms. Both oral corrective feedback (OCF) and written corrective feedback (WCF) have been depicted to be helpful to develop students' language learning (Ellis, 2009; Li

and Vuono, 2019). However, these two modes of feedback "have unique features and have been studied separately in the primary research" (Li and Vuono, 2019).

Some researchers are concerned about how to provide learners with those modes of corrective feedback that best lead to the retention of language features such as grammar over time (e.g., Al-Hazzani & Altalhab, 2018; Fan & Ma, 2018; Li &Vuono, 2019; Lyster & Saito, 2010b; Sheen, 2010; Zheng & Yu, 2018). Bahrick (1984) points out how well people remember and recall something that relies on how deeply they process it. As it is evident in the domain of grammar learning, the problem is not just in learning the grammar rules of the second language; but rather in recalling them.

The effectiveness of CF in the form of oral and written on L2 development has been the subject of much controversy over the past three decades (Bitchener and Knoch, 2008; Ellis, 2009; Ellis, Lowen & Erlam, 2006; Lochman, 2002; Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Lyster et al, 2013). Bitchener and Knoch (2008) compared direct corrective feedback, written and oral meta-linguistic explanation; direct corrective feedback, and written metalinguistic explanation; direct corrective feedback only; and no corrective feedback. The results indicated that learners who received written CF performed better than those who did not receive written CF, including those who received oral CF, and that they could retain the accuracy level for several weeks.

Another strand of research focusing on the area of error correction, the provision of CF was considered an indispensable part of EFL classes by teachers and investigators until Truscott (1996) accentuated the inadequacy of any firm evidence supporting the unquestioned belief that CF is effective in developing learners' second language acquisition. Since Truscott (1996) made his claims that CF is not beneficial to develop different second language acquisition, in a series of debates and dialogues, several studies have endeavored to argue for or against the efficacy of CF (Bitchener & Knoch, 2009; Bruton, 2010; Chandler, 2009; Nassaji & Fotos, 2004; Truscott, 1999; Xu, 2009). Contemporary literature indicates that most of the previous studies have been done on the general effectiveness of CF on L2 development, but much less research has investigated the effect of explicit oal corrective feedback on the retention of the linguistic features over time in the EFL context, especially at the high school level.

In Iran, as an EFL context, CF has not been applied efficiently in teaching foreign languages (Zhang & Rahimi, 2014). While different forms of CF can contribute to language learning, the impact of oral CF on grammar retention of Iranian EFL high school students has been under-researched. The current research, therefore, attempted to bridge this gap by means of examining the effectiveness of oral metalinguistic feedback classified as "explicit feedback" on the grammar retention over time.

LITRATURE REVIEW

In the last two decades, there has been a burgeoning interest in studying various aspects of corrective feedback (Alajmi, 2014; Alharbi, 2016; Ferris, 2004; Karim & Nassaji, 2013; Sheen, 2007). It seems that corrective feedback strategies can lead to more retention of grammatical structures. (Rahimi, 2015; Lyster &Saito, 2010; Sadat, Zarifi, Sadat, & Malekzadeh, 2015; Tayebipour, 2019). In this respect, many types of research have been carried out on the effect of corrective feedback on language features. Yu (2022) conducted a meta-analysis in which he investigated previous studies for determining the rate of effectiveness of explicit and implicit corrective feedback on students' willingness to communicate, L2

speaking development, and L2 grammatical accuracy and awareness. The results indicated that explicit CF is more effective than implicit CF in developing linguistic features.

Likewise, Lyster and Saito (2010) carried out a meta-analysis to examine the impact of oral CF on the development of the target language, and 15 classroom-based studies (exclusively quasi-experimental studies) were included. The analyses took into consideration a variety of independent and dependent variables employed in earlier studies (i.e., CF kinds, immediate vs. delayed post-test results, and kinds of outcome measurements) and compared the relative effectiveness of CF in L2 classrooms with contextual factors (i.e., second language [SL] vs. foreign language [FL] settings), length of treatment, and the age of students (i.e., child vs. young adult vs. adult learners). The results showed that oral CF had significant and long-lasting effects (long retention) on developing the target language.

In another study, Rahimi (2015) investigated the extent to which individual differences of L2 learners affect their retention of a teacher's written CF in the short and long run. The results depicted a strong relationship between individual differences and the students' successful retention of corrections in the subsequent writings. Similarly, Storch and Wigglesworth (2010) looked into how well students processed, assimilated, and remembered feedback on their writing. The results showed that a variety of linguistic and affective factors, such as the mistakes that students make when writing and, more importantly, students' attitudes, beliefs, and goals, may impact uptake and retention.

The results of recasts and metalinguistic feedback on the accession of implicit and explicit knowledge were also examined by Rassaei, Moinzadeh, and Youhanaee (2012). The findings revealed a distinct advantage of the metalinguistic feedback over recast in both post and delayed posttests and its contribution to the acquisition of L2 knowledge. Moreover, the effects of metalinguistic feedback were shown to be more invariant than those of recasts.

Finally, Karim and Nassaji (2018) who explored the short-term and delayed effects (after a two-week interval) of comprehensive direct CF and two types of indirect CF, involving underlining only and the other underlining+metalinguistic cues on L2 learners' revision accuracy and writing text found that all the three feedback types significantly improved the revised texts. However, the accuracy improvements on new writing text, which was found for DCF and underlining+metalinguistic feedback types were non-significant.

It has long been assumed by instructors of a second or foreign language and by investigators studying in the field of corrective feedback that providing corrective feedback by the instructors helps students to acquire suitable linguistic forms and structures (Nassaji, 2009; Rassaei, 2015; Sheen, 2004, 2008; Zhang & Rahimi, 2014). As a result, they sought to find the most effective strategies for providing corrective feedback so that students could develop the accuracy of their written performance. Language teachers mostly employ traditional ways to teach grammar and correct learners' errors. There are still complaints about learners' writing ability. Therefore, the use of specific types of corrective feedback can help them to overcome these concerns.

Although these investigations have dealt with various issues on corrective feedback, the effect of oral metalinguistic feedback use on grammar retention has received less attention and therefore calls for more research. The following research question served as a guide for this study:

1. Does the teacher's explicit oral feedback lead to an improvement in the retention of grammatical structures?

METHODOLOGY

Design of the Study

This study adopted a qusi-experimental design; a pretest was followed immediately by a posttest after the treatment to find out the effectiveness of metalinguistic corrective feedback. Then a delayed posttest was used to measure the effectiveness of EOF under metalinguistic feedback (explanation) on the retention of the participants' grammatical structures.

Participants

Sixty pre-intermediate Iranian female EFL students selected through non-random convenience sampling from a high school in Dahdasht, Iran took part in this study. The participants were assigned to two experimental and control groups. They were majoring in Mathematics and Experimental Science. These students were to begin the first semester of the Iranian school year. All the students at this level make the preparations to take part in the entrance examination for universities in Iran. Therefore, they were pursuing their studies with high motivation and great enthusiasm. The age limit of the participants was 17-18. The participants were all native speakers of Persian and voluntarily opted into the study.

Noteworthy to mention is that the consent of all the participants was obtained. Moreover, for the subjects under the age of 18, their assent and the permission of their parents were obtained for participation in the study.

Instruments

The instruments used for this study included: Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT), and a grammar test as a pretest, a posttest, and a delayed posttest. Likewise, some writing tasks on the assigned topics that were interesting to the learners, suitable for pre-intermediate level students, and related to the topics of the students' textbook taught in the class were used.

Data Collection

This study included a quasi-experimental design (a pretest, an immediate posttest, and a delayed posttest), which took about nine weeks (18 sessions of the first semester). After getting the participants' consent at the outset of the study, the first aim of the researchers was to select a homogenous group of participants. For this purpose, before the experiment, the proficiency test was administered to 92 participants. After getting the participants' scores and analyzing the test's results, 60 students who scored one standard deviation below and above the mean were classified as pre-intermediate students for the present study. Participants were randomly assigned into two experimental and control groups and each of the two groups included 30 participants.

After establishing the homogeneity of the learners in terms of general knowledge of English through the proficiency test in the pretesting phase, another test (grammar test) as a pretest consisting of 40 items was administered to the groups in which students were required to answer the items in 40 minutes. The results of the pretest were used for comparing them with those of the posttest and delayed-posttest to examine if the learners' progress in reducing grammatical errors and retention of grammar was due to the treatment they went through. The results of the pretest were also used for determining the

grammatical levels of the learners of both groups. Learners' pretests were corrected and scored (on a scale ranging from zero to 20), and they were not given back to the participants.

The treatment process in this study was done as follows: In the first session of the treatment, the experimental groups were introduced to further explicit corrective feedback and precisely the metalinguistic CF types (error code and explanation). Metalinguistic feedback provided L2 learners with some forms of explicit comment about the nature of the errors they have made (Ellis, 2009). The explicit comment could take two forms. One was the use of error codes that consist of abbreviated labels for different kinds of errors. The labels could be placed over the location of the error in the text or the margin. L2 learners should work out the correction needed from the clue provided (Ellis, 2009).

Accordingly, during the treatment process, experimental group received explicit oral corrective feedback in the form of metalinguistic CF. Every session, as part of their homework, they were supposed to do a piece of writing with a common topic and submitted it to the teacher at the next session. The teacher did not only score the writings as the final product. Instead, he provided the form of explicit corrective feedback under metalinguistic feedback (explanation) on students' grammatical errors (target structures) and returned the corrected writings to the students in the following session. In the explanation CF as an explicit CF, the teacher numbered errors in text and wrote a grammatical description for each numbered error at the bottom of the text. The students were required to study the comments and applied them in their subsequent writings (Ellis, 2009). In the case of explicit oral feedback, the participants' written sentences were read one by one by the teacher, and oral metalinguistic explanations were given to each student in a face-to-face manner (Ellis, 2009). The students were advised to review their corrected assignments of the last week and write their new writings. This process continued for eight consecutive sessions (two sessions every week), whereas the control group was not given EOF and continued the correction of their grammatical error via traditional way.

One week after the last treatment session, for determining the treatment effects, a posttest was administered to the participants. Finally, four weeks after taking the posttest, to find out the possible effects of the treatment on the retention of grammatical points over time, a delayed posttest was administered to the students of both experimental and control groups. The learners' posttest and delayed posttest were also corrected and scored on a scale ranging from zero to 20.

Inferential statistics was used to analyze quantitative data. Three independent t-tests were used to estimate the significance of the EOF effect on correction and retention of grammatical structures and also two one-way ANOVAs were conducted.

RESULTS

The results are delineated in more details on the research question posed earlier. Before that, the normality of the distributions was checked to run inferential statistics using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test of normality, whose result indicated that the data was normally distributed. Moreover, the magnitude of the differences between the means, i.e. the effect size, was calculated for each t-test using the eta-squared formula for independent and paired–samples t-tests (Pallant, 2013).

By comparing the mean scores of the groups in the pretest, the grammatical homogeneity of participants was examined. Table 1 and Table 2 show the results of the comparison between the pretest of both groups on the grammatical test.

Table 1

Sample Means and Standard Deviations for the Grammatical Test of Experimental and Control Groups

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
experimental Group	30	11.02	0.86
control Group	30	11.27	1.06

Table 2

Independent Samples t-Test for the Pretests of Experimental and Control Groups

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
	F	Sig	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pretests	0.995	0.323	1.53	58	0.131

As Table 1 shows, the mean scores of the experimental and control groups were 11.02 and 11.27 respectively. Table 2 indicates that the p-value equals .131 which is more than 0.05. It can be claimed that there was not any significant difference between the two groups' mean scores on the grammatical test. Thus, they were homogenous in terms of their grammatical knowledge before the administration of the treatment for the experimental group.

The data collected from the pretest, posttest, and delayed- posttest in both groups were analyzed to check whether there was any gain score in the experimental group as a result of the specific type of feedback. This was carried out by comparing the mean score of the participants in each group from the pretest to the delayed-posttest using independent samples t-test and one-way ANOVA.

Research Question

To answer the research question, first, an independent samples t-test was run to compare the mean scores of the participants on the posttests of the experimental and control groups to compare the mean scores of both groups and also determine the effectiveness of EOF on the correction of grammatical structures.

It is shown in Table 3 that the mean scores for the posttest of experimental and control groups were 16.41 and 14.36, respectively. Accordingly, the experimental group outperformed the control group in the posttest. Table 4 shows the results of the independent t-test of the posttests for experimental and control groups.

Table 3

The Comparative Data of Posttests in Experimental and Control Groups

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
posttest E	30	16.41	1.11
Posttest C	30	14.36	1.12

Table 4

Independent Samples T-Test for Experimental and Control Groups

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
	F	Sig	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
PosttestE-posttestC	0.059	0.809	3.63	58	0.001

As can be seen in Table 4, the probability of t (3.63) had the P <.001 which is lower than the significance level of .05, and the effect size between the posttest of experimental and control groups was calculated to be .31 which is considered as appropriate (Pallant, 2013). It is concluded that there was a significant difference between the mean scores of posttest for the two groups, and the experimental group outperformed the control group in terms of the overall performance of the correction of grammatical structures after the treatment.

Then, other independent samples t-test was also run to compare the mean scores of the participants on the delayed-posttests of the experimental and control groups and also explores the effectiveness of treatment on the retention of grammatical points.

It is shown in Table 5 that the mean scores for the delayed-posttest of experimental and control groups were 16.24 and 12.31, respectively. Table 6 shows the results of the independent t-test of the delayed-posttests for experimental and control groups.

Table 5

The Comparative Data of Delayed Posttests in Experimental and Control Groups

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Delayed-posttestE	30	16.24	0.764
Delayed-posttestC	30	12.31	1.0007

Table 6

Independent Samples t-Test for Experimental and Control Groups

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
	F	Sig	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
PosttestE-posttestC	0.423	0.518	1.66	58	0.042

Table 6 shows p-value equals .101 which is less than a = 0.5. Besides, the effect size between the delayed posttest of experimental and control groups was calculated to be .31 which is considered as appropriate (Pallant, 2013). Accordingly, there was a statistically significant difference between the mean performances of the experimental and control groups in the delayed posttests and there had been a significant difference in the retention of the two groups. In other words, metalinguistic oral feedback as an explicit CF led to an increase in the grammar retention over time. Moreover, for examining the

grammar retention and providing more pieces of evidence for answering the research question, two one-way ANOVAs were also employed. One-way ANOVA number one compared the mean of the experimental group on its pretest, posttest, and delayed-posttest, to explore the possible impact of EOF on grammar retention. One-way ANOVA number two compared the mean of the control group on its pretest, posttest, and delayed-posttest, to explore the possible impact of grammar correction and retention as follows:

Descriptive Statistics Results

In terms of mean and standard deviation, Table 7 lists the characteristics of the experimental group in the pretest, posttest, and delayed posttest. The experimental group's pre-test, post-test, and delayed post-test mean scores are 11.02, 16.41, and 16.24, respectively, as shown in Table 7.

Table 7

Descriptive Statistics of Experimental Groups' Performance on Pretest, Posttest, and Delayed Posttest

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Pretest-E	11.0233	.86785	30
Posttest-E	16.4167	1.11482	30
Delayedtest -E	16.2433	0.76489	30

Multivariate Tests Result

Several comparisons were made using multivariate testing to examine the variations among the tests administered in this study. The results of the multivariate tests: $p<0.05$, effect size = 0.799, which were deemed appropriate, showed there is a significant difference between various test types, and learners perform better when they received explicit oral feedback.

To examine the research question (if there is any statistically significant difference among the experimental groups' performance on the pretest, posttest, and delayed posttest), a one-way ANOVA (Pairwise Comparisons) was run between the three tests. Table 8 shows the comparison of pretest vs. posttest, posttest vs. delayed posttest, and pretest vs. delayed posttest ($p<0.5$). Thus, it can be concluded that the mean differences are significant at the 0.05 level. In other words, oral explicit corrective feedback under metalinguistic feedback resulted in an improvement in the retention of grammatical structures over time.

Table 8

Pairwise Comparisons between Experimental Groups' Performance on Pretest, Posttest, and Delayed Posttest

(I) time	(J) time	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.[a]
1	2	-5.39*	0.247	0.000

	3	-5.22*	0.223	0.041
2	1	5.39*	0.247	0.000
	3	0.17*	0.191	0.065

Descriptive Statistics Results

On the pretest, posttest, and delayed posttest, the control group's mean scores were 11.27, 14.36, and 12.31, respectively, according to Table 9. Hence, these results revealed that there is no significant difference among the performance of the three mentioned tests.

Table 9

Descriptive Statistics of Control Groups' Performance on Pretest, Posttest, and Delayed Posttest

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Pretest-C	11.27	1.06188	30
Posttest-C	14.36	1.12137	30
Delayed posttest -C	12.31	1.00072	30

Multivariate Tests Result

Multivariate Tests comparison was run to compare the results of pretest, posttest, and delayed posttest of the control group and also to check how well learners perform with grammar retention. According to the results of the Multivariate Tests ($p>0.05$). Hence, there was no a significant difference between the various test types.

Table 10

Pairwise Comparisons between Control Groups' Performance on Pretest, Posttest, and Delayed Posttest

(I) time	(J) time	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.[a]
1	2	-3.09*	0.302	0.056
	3	-1.04*	0.262	0.061
2	1	3.09*	0.302	0.056
	3	2.05*	0.084	0.057

A one-way ANOVA (Pairwise Comparisons) was conducted between the three administered tests to answer the research question. Table 10 indicates the comparison of pretest vs. posttest, posttest vs. delayed posttest, and pretest vs. delayed posttest ($p>0.5$). Thus, it can be concluded that the mean differences are not significant in the three tests after the treatment and over time comparing with experimental group performance.

DISCUSSION

The discussion of the above results is elaborated more in conjunction with the findings of previous studies reviewed. The results of research question show that the explicit oral feedback was effective in the

correction and retention of grammatical structures. This is due to the fact that during the oral metalinguistic session, the teacher had the chance to interact with the learners. Therefore, the input (teacher's comments) was interactionally modified, and modified input is understood more readily by the students. This notion appears to be well substantiated by Long's (1985) interaction theory which shows that corrective feedback has an important role in language learning (Bitchener 2012). According to this theory, the interaction between more fluent and less fluent speakers and, in the case of classrooms, between teacher and students can boost language learning. Through interaction, input is modified and modified input is more comprehensible and more available for learning (Long 1985). This result is also supported by Clarke (2003) who pointed out that oral feedback is a powerful and interactive force for students' development. The previously mentioned result is in line with Bitchner and Knoch (2008) who found that explicit feedback did help learners clarify the points for themselves by making the presented learning input salient, thereby assisting them to remove any possible doubts or misunderstandings of the input. Likewise, they said that explicit oral feedback did help learners to notice issues containing grammar, assisting them with their hypothesis making and testing. Similarly, the result of the study partly echoes the studies of Lyster et al (2013, p. 20), who found out that oral CF is significantly more fruitful than no CF and also reveals a tendency for learners receiving prompts or explicit oral correction to depict more gains on some measures than students receiving recasts and also Bitchener et al. (2005) took into account oral metalinguistic feedback. They found out that those in the first group who were given direct error correction and oral metalinguistic explanation performed better than dual groups two and three for the past simple tense and the definite article but explored no such effect for prepositions. They suggested that the addition of oral metalinguistic explanations may have been a crucial factor in facilitating increased accuracy.

Moreover, the results indicated that explicit oral feedback in the form of metalinguistic feedback significantly affected the retention of grammatical points on the delayed-posttest. This finding supports the results of the study by Lyster and Saito (2010), who investigated the impact of different kinds of oral CF on learners' oral errors and discovered that CF plays a facilitative role for L2 development and that its effect is sustained at least until delayed posttests. Likewise, Li (2010) conducted a study in which the results depicted that oral CF had significant and durable effects (long retention) on the progress of the target language. In the same vein, Bitchener and Knoch (2010) concluded that written and oral metalinguistic feedback functioned well in assisting students to retain grammar knowledge over time.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

According to the results of the study, explicit oral CF was useful in raising the learners' awareness to reduce the grammatical errors and write correctly in their subsequent writing and also result in a long-term effect. In other words, explicit oral feedback could be significant in the correction of grammatical structures and retention of grammar since during the oral metalinguistic session the teacher had the chance to interact with the learners. Therefore, the input (teacher's comments) was interactionally modified, and the modified input was understood more readily by the students. Taking all these into consideration, the achieved results may encourage teachers to apply more explicit oral CF techniques to their instruction processes. The results may also encourage syllabus and curriculum designers and also

material developers to design books and materials in which corrective feedback techniques are incorporated. However, the outcomes of this study may have been affected by a number of limitations. This study only considered four grammatical structures. Future research can take into consideration the impact of CF on the retention of more grammatical structures and investigate the effect of implicit CF.

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