Research Article

Investigating the Impacts of Teacher Metalinguistic Feedback vs. Collaborative Peer Feedback on Iranian EFL Learners' Writing Performance

Mehran Memari [1], Bita Asadi [2*]

[1] *English Department, Farhangian University, Ahvaz, Iran*
[2] *Department of English, Malard Branch, Islamic Azad University, Malard, Iran*
*Corresponding author: Asadibita99@iaumalard.ac.ir

Abstract

Corrective feedback refers to a teacher or student's reaction to a learner's target language production containing an actual or perceived error. The last three decades have witnessed a large amount of research on the impacts of various types of corrective feedback on students' written production. Along the same vein, the present study seeks to explore the effectiveness of providing teachers' metalinguistic feedback vs. peers' collaborative feedback on students' writing performance. In so doing, the present study adopted a pretest-posttest quasi-experimental design including three upper-intermediate groups (i.e., two experimental and one control). The participants of the study were a total of 62 English as a foreign language (EFL) freshman students from two public universities in Tehran, Iran. The writing tasks utilized in the present study were adopted from IELTS writing Task 2. The results of one-way between groups analysis of variance (ANOVA) revealed that students produced significantly more lexically diverse as well as grammatically accurate language as a result of both treatments. Moreover, it was observed that collaborative peer feedback led to significantly higher lexical diversity than those of other two groups. The findings of the present study suggest that L2 teachers can opt for a combination of corrective feedback strategies to help learners improve their writing performance.

Keywords: corrective feedback, form-focused instruction, lexical diversity, accuracy, metalinguistic

Introduction

Traditionally, second/foreign language (L2/FL) teaching focused on teaching discrete grammar points in line with a synthetic syllabus (Wilkins, 1976) where learners were supposed to assemble those points in order to employ in communication. The failure of synthetic approach to meet the communicative needs of the learners paved the way for the communicative approach. Inspired by Hymes' (1972) communicative competence theory, the proponents of communicative approach exposed learners to sufficient comprehensible input with the belief that sufficient exposure to comprehensible input can lead to language acquisition in the L2 (Krashen, 1985). However, this approach suffered from many problems. While learners developed a good command of communicative ability, their grammatical knowledge did not develop well (Swain, 1985). In other words, since learners' erroneous language usage did not cause communication breakdown, learners remained unaware of their errors.

Drawing on the dissatisfaction with purely grammatical as well as communicative approaches, form-focused instruction (FFI) was proposed as an alternative approach. In form-focused instruction (FFI), learners' attention is drawn to linguistic features of the input as they occur incidentally in communication-oriented language lessons (Long, 1991). Ellis (2001) defines FFI as "any planned or incidental instructional activity that is intended to induce language learners to pay attention to linguistic form" (pp. 1-2). Proponents of FFI are of the belief that teachers should design communicative instructional sequences in a way that specific linguistic forms (e.g., phonological or syntactic) are noticed by learners (Doughty, 1998; Long & Robinson, 1998).

Ellis (2001) categorized FFI into planned (i.e., inducing language learners to pay attention to pre-selected forms in a meaning-focused interaction) and incidental (i.e., inducing language learners to pay attention to a wide range of forms in a meaning-focused interaction) types. In planned FFI, the attention to a specific form occurs in interaction with a focus on meaning. What is important in planned FFI is that learners do not get informed about the specific forms to be studied so that they focus primarily on language use rather than language learning (Ellis, Basturkmen, & Loewen, 2002).

Incidental FFI, on the other hand, occurs rather spontaneously without any attempt by the teacher to pre-select linguistic forms. Incidental FFI, therefore, takes place either reactively (i.e., responding to learners' errors) or preemptively (i.e., predicting learners' errors). Reactive FFI, also known as corrective or negative feedback (Long, 1996), arises "when learners produce an utterance containing an actual or perceived error, which is then addressed usually by the teacher, but sometimes by another learner; thus, it supplies learners with negative evidence" (Ellis, Basturkmen, & Loewen, 2001b, p. 413). This means that the teacher perceives the learners' utterance as inappropriate in a context of meaning-focused activity and draws their attention to the produced error. Willis and Willis (2007, p. 121) listed three major characteristics of reactive FFI as (a) preventing fossilization, (b) motivating learners, and (c) providing useful feedback.

The present study seeks to explore the differing impacts of teachers' metalinguistic feedback vs. peers' collaborative feedback on L2 students' writing performance in the classroom context. In the present study, metalinguistic feedback is defined as a teacher's identification and provision of comments or explanations to learners' errors without supplying the correct form (Heift, 2004; Lyster & Ranta. 1997). Collaborative feedback, on the other hand, is defined as students' reading, evaluating, and providing comments on their peers' writings. It is believed that the findings of the present study would help teachers opt for the most effective corrective feedback strategy in the classrooms.

Further evidence for FFI approach comes from *Input Hypothesis* (Krashen, 1985), *Interaction Hypothesis* (Long, 1996), *Comprehensible Output Hypothesis* (Swain, 1985, 1995), and *Noticing Hypothesis* (Schmidt, 1990, 2001).

Krashen's (1985, 1994) Input Hypothesis regards comprehensible input as the most essential element in successful language learning, believing that learners acquire language provided that they receive comprehensible input. Comprehensible input is defined as any instance of L2 input just one step beyond learners' current level of linguistic competence. Assuming comprehensible input as the most essential element in successful language learning, he contends that learners acquire language provided that they receive comprehensible input (Krashen, 1994). Krashen (1982)

distinguished between acquisition and learning; while the former refers to an implicit, subconscious process, the latter denotes an explicit, conscious process leading to metalinguistic knowledge. According to Krashen, input hypothesis is only related to acquisition (i.e., not learning) by maintaining that sufficient exposure to comprehensible input can lead to language acquisition in the L2, just similar to L1 acquisition.

Krashen's assumption that comprehensible input alone is sufficient for L2 development has been called into question by L2 researchers. For instance, Gass (1988) argued that it is *comprehended* input rather than *comprehensible* input which should matter in L2 development. Similarly, Ellis, Basturkmen, and Loewen (2001a) showed through being exposed to comprehensible input learners developed communicativeness and fluency rather than linguistic accuracy.

Long (1996) offered Interaction Hypothesis as a complement to Krashen's Input Hypothesis, arguing that comprehensible input is not sufficient for learning; rather, input must be complemented with interaction in making it comprehensible. The interaction hypothesis rests on the premise that modified input (i.e., oral interaction) where learners get the opportunity to negotiate their communication problems is critical for acquisition to occur (Ellis, 2008). In other words, the interaction hypothesis emphasizes the role of interactional modifications when a communication problem arises.

Long (1996) postulated that acquisition takes place as a result of negotiation for meaning, (corrective) feedback, and opportunity for modified output. He defined the feedback process as any "direct or indirect evidence of what is ungrammatical" (1996, p. 413). Long's interaction hypothesis has been supported by various L2 researchers (e.g., Han, 2002) arguing that learning is facilitated through modified input

Swain (1985, 1995), suggesting Comprehensible Output Hypothesis as a necessary complement to Krashen's Input Hypothesis, believes that provision of comprehensible input alone is not conducive to successful L2 learning. Swain asserts that learners must be provided ample opportunities to examine their hypotheses about the target language in order to notice gaps in their linguistic repertoire. She contended that "negotiating meaning needs to incorporate the notion of being pushed toward the delivery of a message

that is not only conveyed, but that is conveyed precisely, coherently, and appropriately" (1985, p. 248-249).

Swain (1995) suggested the following three main functions of output: (a) noticing function of output, (b) hypothesis-testing function of output, and (c) meta-linguistic function of output. Swain (1995) claims that while striving for producing the target language, learners may realize that they lack sufficient proficiency to communicate effectively, that is to say, the meaning-orientation nature of communication in L2 may direct learners' attention to their problematic linguistic repertoire. Therefore, they may consciously focus their attention on relevant input in order to stimulate cognitive processes required for generating linguistic knowledge (Swain & Lapkin, 1995). The output also provides the learners with opportunities to test their current hypotheses. Swain maintains that output is a way for L2 learners to "try out new language forms and structures as they stretch their inter-language to meet communicative needs or just to see what works and what does not work" (p. 132). The third function of output, according to Swain (1995), is that L2 learners can reflect about the language they are learning. In other words, the opportunity for output prompts learners to focus on their expanding linguistic knowledge. In classroom contexts, teachers' reactions (i.e., corrective feedback) to learners' problematic linguistic forms can give rise to learners' endeavor to amend their linguistic errors. Such a pushed output situation is of paramount value as it leads learners to process language both syntactically and semantically.

Schmidt's (1990) Noticing Hypothesis, as opposed to Krashen's Input Hypothesis, looks on language acquisition as a conscious process. As such, Schmidt contends that "noticing" and "noticing-the-gap" are essential processes required for language learning. While the former refers to registering formal features of the input, the latter refers to identifying the mismatch between the input and the output the learner is currently able to generate. Schmidt (1994) viewed noticing as "the necessary and sufficient condition for the conversion of input to intake for learning" (p. 17).

Loewen (2004) is of the belief that form-focused instruction (i.e., feedback) triggers learners to notice specific linguistic features (e.g., phonological or syntactic) of the input. in other words, he contends that form-focused instruction prompts learners to 'notice the gap' in their current

language proficiency (i.e., interlanguage). In fact, noticing the difference between the target form and the output the learner is currently able to generate can give rise to cognitive processes which are capable of reinforcing or developing learners' interlanguage.

The positive impacts of feedback on improving students' writing performance have been widely cited in the literature (e.g., Bitchener, 2008; Bitchener & Knoch, 2008; Tai, Lin, & Yang, 2015). For instance, Bitchener (2008) sought to explore the impacts of providing written corrective feedback to international ESL learners. He found that the students receiving written corrective feedback produced more accurate writings than those in the control group. Similarly, Tai et al. (2015) investigated the effectiveness of providing a combination of teacher-led feedback and peer review on writing performance of undergraduate nursing students. They concluded that teachers' provision of written feedback can significantly improve learners' holistic writing skills in terms of content, organization, grammar, mechanics, and style.

The last three decades have witnessed a substantial number of studies on the impacts of various types of corrective feedback on students' written production. It has generally been demonstrated that explicit corrective feedback strategies contribute to more substantial learner improvement compared to implicit ones (Ellis, Loewen, & Erlam, 2006; Norris & Ortega, 2000; Radwan, 2005; Sheen, 2007, 2010). Sheen (2010), for instance, explored the difference between providing oral and written corrective feedback in terms of their impact on learners' English articles usage. She observed that the degree of explicitness of both oral and written corrective feedback is of paramount importance influencing its effectiveness.

It has largely been demonstrated that metalinguistic feedback is far more effective than other feedback types (e.g., Bitchener, 2008; Bitchener & Knoch, 2008; Hashemian & Farhang-Ju, 2018; Rezazadeh, Tavakoli, & Eslami Rasekh, 2015; Sheen, 2007; Shintani & Ellis, 2013). For instance, Shintani and Ellis (2013) found that metalinguistic feedback was more effective compared to direct feedback in promoting ESL learners' grammatical knowledge. Hashemian and Farhang-Ju (2018) investigated the differential effects of metalinguistic feedback on 52 Iranian L2 learners'

grammatical accuracy (English indefinite and definite articles). Their findings indicated that the metalinguistic feedback significantly led to the learners' grammatical accuracy improvement in the experimental groups. Rezazadeh, Tavakoli, and Eslami Rasekh (2015) sought to explore the impacts of direct corrective feedback and metalinguistic explanation on Iranian EFL learners' implicit and explicit knowledge of English articles (i.e., both definite and indefinite articles). They observed that metalinguistic explanation leads to long-lasting effects than the direct corrective feedback.

Furthermore, the positive impacts of peer-correction on students' written production have recently been investigated in the literature (e.g., Akbarzadeh, Saeidi, & Chehreh, 2014; Ganji, 2009; Ramírez Balderas & Guillén Cuamatzi, 2018). For instance, Ganji (2009) sought to explore the impacts of three types of correction (i.e., teacher-correction, peer-correction, and self-correction) on Iranian advanced EFL students' performance in IELTS writing task. He observed that the effects of peer-correction and self-correction outperformed that of traditional teacher-correction. He concluded that peer-correction is the most effective types of correction. Similarly, Akbarzadeh, Saeidi, and Chehreh (2014) investigated the impact of providing oral interactive feedback on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' writing quality. They observed that learners' accuracy and complexity improved significantly as a result of oral interactive feedback.

The review of the literature above shows that both metalinguistic feedback and peer-correction are conducive to students' improved writing performance. What is missing in the literature, however, is a study to show which feedback strategy is more effective (Tai 2015). Therefore, the present study is an attempt to compare the impacts of providing teacher's metalinguistic feedback vs. collaborative peer feedback on L2 students' writing performance in the classroom context. To do so, the following research question is formulated:

RQ: Is there any significant difference between providing teachers' metalinguistic feedback vs. collaborative peer feedback on L2 students' writing performance?

Method

Participants

To answer the research question, a pretest-posttest quasi-experimental design was adopted. It included two levels of corrective feedback (i.e., teacher's metalinguistic feedback and peers' collaborative feedback). The participants consisted of 62 English as a foreign language (EFL) freshman students from two public universities in Tehran, Iran. The students' ages ranged from 18 to 21. As for their language proficiency, the participants were considered upper-intermediate, which was demonstrated by the results of a researcher-developed proficiency test.

The students had already been grouped into three groups by the university; so, the design of the study was intact-group. All three groups were required to pass a four-credit English structure and writing course. The groups were, however, randomly assigned to one of the treatment groups by the researchers. The teachers were free to choose their own textbooks. The study took place from September 2019 to January 2020.

A male and a female teacher, who were both doing their PhD in Applied Linguistics, took part in this study. The male teacher, being responsible for both experimental groups, was briefed on the objectives of the study at the beginning of semester. He was 32 years old with 8 years of teaching experience. The female teacher who was conducting the control group was 36 years old with 12 years of teaching experience.

Instrumentation

In order to assure the comparability of the groups in terms of their general proficiency, a researcher-developed test was administered. The test included 100 multiple-choice questions- 60 vocabularies and 40 structure items- to be answered in 90 minutes. Two experts holding PhD in Applied Linguistics were asked to check the content validity of the test. As for the reliability of the test, it was measured through Cronbach's alpha. The reliability of the test was found to be 0.84.

As for the tasks utilized in the present study, IELTS writing Task 2 of Cambridge Practice Tests for IELTS (1996-2017) were utilized. A total 7 writing tasks were adopted (i.e., 1 for the pretest, 1 for the posttest, and 5 for the treatment). In IELTS writing task 2 students are given a writing topic

where they are asked to write at least 205 words about the particular topic for 40 minutes. A sample writing task is given below, which is adopted form Cambridge Practice Tests for IELTS (1996-2017).

WRITING TASK 2

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task.
Write about the following topic:

> *Some people prefer to spend their lives doing the same things and avoiding change. Others, however, think that change is always a good thing.*
> *Discuss both these views and give your own opinion.*

Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience.
Write at least 250 words.

All students' writing task performances were collected and subjected to scoring procedure based on IELTS writing band descriptors (n.d.) published by University of Cambridge. The components included task achievement (TA), coherence and cohesion (CC), lexical resource (LR), and grammatical range and accuracy (GRA). The scores ranged from a score of 0 to 9. The four components used in the present study were defined as follows:

- Task achievement (TA): The ability to fully address all parts of the task and present a fully developed position in answer to the question with relevant, fully extended and well supported ideas.
- Coherence and cohesion (CC): The ability to skillfully manage paragraphing and use cohesion in such a way that it attracts no attention.
- Lexical resource (LR): The ability to use a wide range of vocabulary with very natural and sophisticated control of lexical features.
- Grammatical range and accuracy (GRA): The ability to use a wide range of structures with full flexibility and accuracy.

Procedure and Analysis

The current study principally set out to investigate the effectiveness of teacher's metalinguistic feedback vs. peers' collaborative feedback on

Iranian L2 students' writing performance in the classroom context. To achieve these aims and to collect relevant data, the students initially sat for an IELTS Writing Test (i.e., task 2) in their classrooms prior to the treatment, the findings of which acted as the pre-test of the study. The pre-test writings were collected and subjected to scoring on the basis of IELTS writing band descriptors explained above.

After taking the pre-test, the participants who were taught by the male teacher were randomly assigned to one of the experimental groups. The participants taught by the female teacher were assigned to the control group. The treatments were given for 12 sessions during the regular 16-session semester of the universities, which lasted for about three months. Each session lasted about three hours. The treatments took about 90 minutes during each session. It is noteworthy that the other half of each session time was devoted to English language structure practice.

In the experimental group receiving teacher's metalinguistic feedback, the teacher collected students' writings and identified their errors. The following session, he provided comments or explanations to learners' errors without offering the correct form. The teacher's comments revolved around whether the composition was related to the topic, whether the paragraphs were coherent enough, whether the composition was lexically rich, and whether the composition was grammatically accurate. The following session the teacher handed their writings in with metalinguistic feedback and students were supposed to revise their writings in the class in accordance with the teacher's comments. The teacher collected their revised drafts and scored them. A total of five writings with metalinguistic feedback were practiced during the semester.

In the experimental group receiving peers' collaborative feedback, the teacher collected students' essays and distributed randomly among their peers and asked them to read, evaluate, and provide comments on their peers' writings. Later, they were asked to take turn discussing the most salient errors committed by their peers. Having collected all writings including peer comments, the teacher checked the comments to make sure they focus the discussions on task achievement (TA), coherence and cohesion (CC), lexical resource (LR), and grammatical range and accuracy

(GRA). The following session the teacher handed their writings and grouped the students in pairs to revise their writings in terms of their peers' notes in class. The pair work activity was deemed to help them further clarify the comments. The teacher collected their revised drafts and scored them. A total of five writings with peers' collaborative feedback were practiced during the semester.

In the control group, on the other hand, the students were given the same IELTS writing tasks; however, there were no metalinguistic or collaborative peer feedback; rather, the teacher collected students' written compositions and scored them without giving any specific feedback on their writings.

Following the completion of the aforementioned treatments, a post-test was administered at the end of the semester to all three groups to evaluate the effectiveness of teacher's metalinguistic feedback vs. peers' collaborative feedback. The post-test questions were parallel with the pre-test ones utilizing IELTS writing practice tests. The data were then entered into SPSS (version 20) and a one-way between-groups analysis of variance (ANOVA) was run to find significant effects of the treatments. Furthermore, to assess the inter-rater reliability of the scoring procedure, a professor holding PhD in Applied Linguistics was asked to score 50 percent of the data, which yielded a correlation coefficient of .86 indicating the reliability of the scoring procedure.

Results

The research question of the study is addressed in this section and the results are presented. However, before proceeding with the research question, the results of the pre-test are presented. As for ascertaining the homogeneity of the groups in terms of their writing proficiency, the students were given an IELTS writing task (part 2) each as the pre-test of the study. The descriptive results of the pre-test are given in Table1.

Table 1
Descriptive Results of the Pre-test

	Group Statistics			
	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pretest	Group 1	22	6.54	.50
	Group 2	19	6.51	.54
	Group 3	21	6.61	.41

As can be seen in Table 1, the means of the three groups are very close. It seems that the difference between the means of the groups at the outset of the study was not statistically significant. To ascertain the lack of significant difference between the groups and to assure their comparability, an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was run. The results of the analysis revealed that there was no significant difference between the groups with regards to their writing proficiency at the beginning of the study, $F (2, 59) = .226$, $p= .799$ (two-tailed). Thus, it would be possible to attribute any differences at the end of the study to the effects of the treatments.

As for the effectiveness of teacher's metalinguistic feedback vs. peers' collaborative feedback on Iranian L2 students' writing performance, Tables 2 presents the descriptive results of the three groups.

Table 2
Descriptive Results of the Post-test

Group Statistics				
Components	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Task achievement	Metalinguistic	22	6.81	.328
	Peer Collaboration	19	6.89	.393
	Control	21	6.71	.405
Coherence and cohesion	Metalinguistic	22	6.88	.510
	Peer Collaboration	19	6.81	.415
	Control	21	6.64	.231
Lexical resource	Metalinguistic	22	7.45	.433
	Peer Collaboration	19	7.86	.402
	Control	21	6.90	.374
Grammatical range and accuracy	Metalinguistic	22	7.90	.503
	Peer Collaboration	19	7.71	.608
	Control	21	7.14	.231

As can be seen in Table 2, the means of three groups are very close for the first and second components (i.e., task achievement, and coherence and

cohesion). However, there seems to be a statistical difference between the third and fourth components (i.e., lexical resource, and grammatical range and accuracy). To assure that the significant difference between the means of the four components, a one-way between-groups analysis of variance (ANOVA) was run in SPSS.

Table 3
The Results of ANOVA

ANOVA						
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Task achievement	Between Groups	.330	2	.165	1.164	.319
	Within Groups	8.34	59	.141		
	Total	8.67	61			
Coherence and cohesion	Between Groups	.668	2	.334	2.043	.139
	Within Groups	9.64	59	.163		
	Total	10.31	61			
Lexical resource	Between Groups	9.38	2	4.69	28.581	.000
	Within Groups	9.68	59	.164		
	Total	19.06	61			
Grammatical range and accuracy	Between Groups	6.71	2	3.35	15.181	.000
	Within Groups	13.04	59	.221		
	Total	19.76	61			

As illustrated in Table 3, there is no statistical difference for the first and second components, $F(2, 59) = 1.164$, $p = .319$ and $F(2, 59) = 2.043$, $p = .139$, respectively. However, there is a statistically significant difference for the third and four components: $F(2, 59) = 28.581$, $p = .000$ and $F(2, 59) = 15.181$, $p = .000$, respectively. Post-hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test (Table 4) showed that both teacher's metalinguistic feedback and peers' collaborative feedback had a significant impact on the students' lexical resource in their writings. Also, it was revealed that grammatical range and accuracy of the participants in the teacher metalinguistic and collaborative peer groups were significantly better than those of the control group participants, but the difference was not significant.

Table 4
The Results of Post-hoc test

Tukey HSD

			Mean Difference	Std. Error	Sig.
Lexical resource	Meta	Peer	-.41	.12	.005
		Control	.54	.12	.000
	Peer	Meta	.41	.12	.005
		Control	.96	.12	.000
	Control	Meta	-.54	.12	.000
		Peer	-.96	.12	.000
Grammatical range and accuracy	Meta	Peer	.19	.14	.375
		Control	.76	.14	.000
	Peer	Meta	-.19	.14	.375
		Control	.56	.14	.001
	Control	Meta	-.76	.14	.000
		Peer	-.56	.14	.001

Discussion

The principal aim of the current study was to explore the impacts of teachers' metalinguistic feedback vs. peers' collaborative feedback on L2 students' writing performance in the classroom context. It was found that students produced significantly more lexically diverse as well as more grammatically accurate language as a result of both treatments. Also, it was found that students receiving peers' collaborative feedback outperformed those in other two groups in terms of lexical diversity of their writings.

The findings of the present study are in line with those of Bitchener (2008), Bitchener and Knoch (2008), Hashemian and Farhang-Ju (2018), Rezazadeh, Tavakoli, and Eslami Rasekh (2015), Sheen (2007), and Shintani and Ellis (2013) in that teachers' metalinguistic feedback has positive impacts on learners' writing accuracy. For instance, Sheen (2007) explored the impacts of written corrective feedback on the acquisition of articles by adult intermediate ESL learners. The findings of the study showed that metalinguistic feedback is of significant effectiveness in terms of learners' writing accuracy provided that it focuses on a single linguistic feature.

The positive impacts of teachers' metalinguistic feedback in the present study may be interpreted in light of Schmidt's (1990) Noticing Hypothesis. Schmidt argued that language acquisition is a conscious process and that "noticing" and "noticing-the-gap" are essential processes required for language learning. It has been suggested by Williams (2005) that despite its cognitive commitment, 'noticing a gap' may result in improved accuracy since the learners' interlanguage must be restructured; however, activities prompting noticing (e.g. a lexical item), even though easier to construct, are less cognitively demanding since comparison with the learners' current interlanguage is not required. Through metalinguistic feedback, teachers can direct learners' attention to the targeted forms or features in the input so that the learner will develop explicit knowledge of them.

Moreover, the findings of the present study corroborate those of Akbarzadeh, Saeidi, and Chehreh (2014), Ganji (2009), and Ramírez Balderas and Guillén Cuamatzi (2018) in that feedback is far more effective when it is provided by the peers in classroom. For instance, Ganji (2009) sought to explore the effectiveness of teacher-correction, peer-correction, and self-correction on Iranian advanced students IELTS writing test performance. The researcher concluded that peer-correction and self-correction have positive impacts on students' performances compared to correction provided by the teacher.

One of the interesting findings of the present study was that collaborative peer feedback, as an innovative method of providing feedback and error treatment during the writing process (Sheen, 2010; Tai, 2015), led to significantly improved lexical diversity and grammatical accuracy on the part of learners. This finding can be interpreted in light of Long's (1996) Interaction Hypothesis. Long contends that the provision of negative evidence (i.e., corrective feedback) and opportunities for modified output contributes to acquisition. In other word, engaging in oral interaction where learners get the opportunity to negotiate their communication problems is critical for acquisition to occur (Ellis, 2008). Along the same vein, Nassaji (2007, 2011) argues that negotiated feedback affords learners the opportunity to spot and correct their L2 writing errors.

The positive impacts of peers' collaborative feedback can also be interpreted in light of Vygotsky's (1978) concept of zone of proximal

development (ZPD), which is defined as the difference between students' independent performance and their collaborative performance with someone more expert (Johnson, 2009). Vygotsky contended that collaboration with peers and other more experts (i.e., teacher) would lead to higher-level cognitive development. In the present study, the peers highlighted students' errors and through negotiation in class, with the role of teacher as a moderator, they were given opportunity to reconsider their writings.

The present study reported that none of the treatment conditions (i.e., teacher's metalinguistic feedback vs. peers' collaborative feedback) impacted on students' writing performance in terms of task achievement, coherence and cohesion. It may be contended that since corrective feedback is customarily provided on specific language items in grammar-oriented syllabi (Ellis et al., 2006), students may not be accustomed to receiving unfocused feedback, namely feedback on broad range of components (Wahyuni, 2017).

The findings of the current study have important implications for L2 teachers who can utilize a combination of corrective feedback strategies used in the present study to help language learners improve their writing performance. The findings of the present study also have implications for material developers who are responsible for providing and sequencing the content of teaching materials. By becoming cognizant of the potentials of corrective feedback in general and metalinguistic as well as collaborative feedback in particular, material developers can design appropriate task sequences which would cater for timely linguistic support/scaffolding for L2 learners during meaning-focused activities. The current study calls for further investigations in the field to examine the effectiveness of corrective feedback strategies at different proficiency levels, with different age ranges, or in other contexts which might result in different findings from the ones reported in this study.

Declaration of interest: none

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Biodata

Mehran Memari is assistant professor at Farhangian University. Having 32 years of experience in teaching and now a teacher trainer, he is the head of English Department and also interested in Applied Linguistics. He is the author of 18 books, 25 articles on Teaching skills and Teacher education. And here as a Scientific Chair of the NTLL1 Conference.

Bita Asadi is assistant professor at Malard Azad University. Her favorite field of study is applied linguistics. She is the author of 3 books and 8 articles in her favorite field. She has been the Head of LTTL International Conference, and the executive manager of LDP international Conference. Bita is now busy holding NTLL International Conference.