Effects of Written Corrective Feedback With/Without Revision on Perception of Past/Present Perfect Tenses

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Abstract

This study was an attempt to examine the effects of direct (DCF), indirect (ICF) and metalinguistic (MCF) written corrective feedback and the types of responses (i.e. + /– revision) on the perception of present/past perfect tenses by Iranian intermediate EFL learners. A pretest-posttest design was utilized to conduct the study with 210 intermediate EFL learners who were randomly selected based on their scores on Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT). They were assigned to 7 groups, each including 30 participants: DCF+ Revision, DCF – Revision, ICF + Revision, and ICF – Revision, MCF + Revision, and MCF – Revision, and a control group. All students were asked to take a multiple-choice test (i.e. perception test) as a pretest and a posttest. After administering the pretest and imparting the relevant treatment, the posttest was administered. Results indicated that all experimental groups improved their knowledge of past/present perfect tenses from the pretest to the posttest, the 'DCF + Revision' group outperformed all other groups, all of the groups doing revision (i.e. DCF / ICF / MCF + Revision) outperformed their counterparts without revision (i.e. DCF / ICF/ MCF – Revision), and the only groups whose scores were not significantly different were the 'ICF + Revision', 'DCF – Revision', and 'MCF – Revision' groups. The findings provide insights into new ways of helping students to improve their L2 writing skills in general and specifically teaching grammatical structures through effective combinations of written corrective feedback and follow-up revision.

Keywords: Written corrective feedback, direct corrective feedback, indirect corrective feedback, metalinguistic corrective feedback, revision

Introduction

No one could deny the profound and positive effect of feedback on students' perception and production, because second language learners require feedback on errors when it is impossible for them to recognize how their interlanguage differs from the target language (Ellis, 2009; Sheen, 2010). Feedback is defined as "all post-response information that is provided to a learner to inform the learner on his or her actual state of language or performance" (Narciss, 2008, p. 127). According to Kepner (1991), feedback is any procedure used to inform a learner whether an instructional response is right or wrong. Feedback, whether it comes from an instructor, peers, a tutor, or guided self-evaluation, is a critically important tool that focuses on the needs of individual student writing and their texts (Ferris, 2003). Corrective feedback has a predetermined goal to give or lead to a relatively positive change to the person or group to whom

it is aimed at. Regarding learning, and particularly in language context, corrective feedback is one of the efforts researchers and teachers alike make to solve the problems of learning language skills and components.

According to Hyland and Hyland (2006), written corrective feedback (WCF) has long been regarded as essential for the development of second language writing skill, both for its potential for learning and for students' motivation. They have then noted "while feedback is a central aspect of L2 writing programs across the world, the research literature has not been unequivocally positive about its role in writing development, the teachers have often a sense they are not making use of its full potential" (Hyland & Hyland, 2006, p. 83). Hence, many questions relating to feedback remain unanswered or partially addressed. Questions like: Does it make a difference to a students' writing? If so, in what areas? Or what kind of WCF is more effective?

Upon receiving written corrective feedback, learners could either revise what has been imparted through feedback or dispense with it/them. Revision is defined as the way students respond to the type of corrections provided. That is, the students' response to the corrections often takes the form of revision of the original draft. Whether or not the findings of studies on student revision after taking or receiving the related written CF are useful to understanding both the process of written CF and student writing development has been one of the biggest challenges or topics raised in studies on written CF (Ferris, 2002, 2014; Sachs & Polio, 2007; Truscott, 1996, 2007; Truscott & Hsu, 2008).

Telçeker and Akçan (2010) claimed that learners' grammar in L2 writings is positively affected by written corrective feedback, whereas the content of writing does not show any improvement. Other studies, such as Bitchener (2008), Evans, Hartshorn, McCollum and Wolfersberger (2010) and Koen, Bitzer, and Beets (2012) supported the view that feedback helps students improve their ability in writing and understand what to do after receiving the feedback. Still, there are some researchers who believe that feedback cannot largely influence students' writing. Truscott (2009) totally disagreed with the positive effect of grammar correction in L2 writing abilities. In addition, the results of a study by Ghabanchi (2011) showed that grammar correction is ineffective in writing classes. Alkhatib (2015) also found no considerable change on students' writing accuracy regarding feedback provision.

Dominating most past and present research on written commentary is the assumption that feedback on the students' compositions has a profound and positive effect on students' revisions (Burke & Pietrick, 2010), but the major question is 'What type(s) of feedback is/are more effective?' According to a typology provided by Ellis (2009), there are six different options for written corrective feedback:

1) Direct CF: The teacher provides the student with the correct form;
2) Indirect CF: The teacher indicates that an error exists but does not provide the correction;
3) Metalinguistic CF: The teacher provides some kind of metalinguistic clue as to the nature of the error;
4) The focus of the feedback: This concerns whether the teacher attempts to correct all (or most) of the students' errors or selects one or two specific types of errors to correct;
5) Electronic CF: The teacher indicates an error and provides a hyperlink to a concordance file that provides examples of correct usage;
6) Reformulation: This consists of a native speaker's reworking of the students' entire text to make the language seem as native-like as possible while keeping the content of the original intact.

At the same time, another typology has been provided by Sheen (2011) with different categorization, though the contents in both classifications are the same. According to Sheen, there are seven types of written corrective feedback: direct non-metalinguistic written correction, direct metalinguistic written correction, indirect written correction (non-located error), indirect written correction (located error), indirect written correction using error codes, indirect metalinguistic written correction and reformulation.

Studies conducted on different types of feedback have presented mixed results. A study by Sheen (2007) showed that in enhancing acquisition of specific grammatical features, direct corrective feedback (DCF) can be very effective. In a study which set out to determine the effectiveness of feedback on L2 writing, Liu (2008) found both direct and indirect feedback assist students to revise their own composition. Tootkaboni and Khatib (2014) also advocated the usefulness of feedback, although no significant differences were reported between direct and indirect feedback. Mahmud (2016) also found that teachers believed that the most useful types were direct, metalinguistic and indirect CF. Meanwhile, DCF happened to be the most common corrective feedback type teachers practice in the classroom. In a study which set out to determine the potential of comprehensive corrective feedback forms in second language writing class, Bonilla López, Van Steendam, Speelman, and Buyse (2018) found that a long-term advantage (i.e., 4 weeks after feedback provision) was only evident for direct corrections. A study by Benson and Dekeyser (2018) aimed to examine the effectiveness of different forms of CF on errors simple past and present perfect tenses. They concluded that providing feedback on syntactic structures causes better learning.

An essential feature of WCF is how the student responds to the feedback provided. In addition to the provision of feedback by teachers or peers, giving students enough opportunities to revise their own writing and respond to the teacher's/peer's feedback seems to have a remarkable contribution to L2 learning. Chandler (2003) compared indirect corrective feedback plus the opportunity to revise with indirect corrective feedback without any opportunity to revise. The study consisted of an experimental group who were exposed to corrective feedback on both lexical and grammatical errors and were required to underline and correct the errors before writing the next paper, while participants in the control group, whose writing errors were also underlined, were asked to correct their writings at the end of the semester. The results of Chandler's study revealed that students' writing accuracy showed a great improvement from the first to the fifth writing significantly more in the group that was demanded to revise their errors than in the group that merely received feedback on their errors.

While there has been considerable research on the benefits of WCF, the authors of the present study could not find any study conducted to investigate the effect of direct corrective feedback (DCF) +/ – revision, indirect corrective feedback (ICF) +/ – revision, and metalinguistic corrective feedback (MCF) +/ – revision on the perception of present perfect and past perfect tenses among Iranian intermediate EFL learners. Therefore, this shortcoming called for a thorough investigation of how effective applying different types of WCF would be in learning present/past perfect tenses. Accordingly, the following research questions were addressed in the study:

RQ1. Do 'DCF + Revision', 'ICF + Revision', and 'MCF + Revision' have any significant effects on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' perception of present / past perfect tenses?

RQ2. Do 'DCF – Revision', 'ICF – Revision', and 'MCF – Revision' have any significant effects on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' perception of present / past perfect tenses?

RQ3. Are there any significant differences between the experimental groups (i.e. 'DCF + Revision', 'DCF – Revision', 'ICF + Revision', 'ICF – Revision', 'MCF + Revision' and 'MCF – Revision') and the control group with regard to their perception of present / past perfect tenses?

Methodology

Research Design

The present study was a quantitative quasi-experimental one, with a pretest-posttest design. The type of written corrective feedback (i.e. direct corrective feedback (DCF) + Revision, direct corrective feedback (DCF) – Revision, indirect corrective feedback (ICF) + Revision, indirect corrective feedback (ICF) – Revision, metalinguistic corrective feedback (MCF) + Revision, and metalinguistic corrective feedback (MCF) – Revision, and the placebo for the control group) was regarded as the independent variable of the study, and the students' perception of English present/past perfect tenses after the treatment period was considered to be the dependent variable.

Participants

Two hundred and ten Iranian intermediate EFL learners participated in the study. They were randomly selected from among 260 intermediate EFL learners in three different language institutes in Babol, Iran. All participants aged between 14 and 16 years. The participants were assigned into six experimental groups and one control group:
●Direct Corrective Feedback (DCF) + Revision,
●Direct Corrective Feedback (DCF) – Revision,
●Indirect Corrective Feedback (ICF) + Revision,
●Indirect Corrective Feedback (ICF) – Revision,
●Metalinguistic Corrective Feedback (MCF) + Revision,
●Metalinguistic Corrective Feedback (MCF) – Revision, and
●Control group with no corrective feedback (NCF) – a combination of the usual instruction and classroom discussions.

Each group included 30 intermediate EFL learners. Although the learners were assigned to the intermediate level of proficiency based on the standards of the institute, the researchers also administered the OQPT to all participants before the treatment period in order to ensure they were homogeneous.

Instruments

In the present study, the Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT) and a multiple-choice test were used, the details of which are given below.

Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT)

To ensure that all participants enjoyed the same level of general English proficiency level prior to the treatment, the Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT) was administered as a homogenizing test. Based on the criteria of the OQPT, the learners whose scores were between 40-47 were considered as the intermediate learners. Table 3 below represents the score bands based on the rubric of the OQPT:

Table 1
Scoring Rubric for the OQPT

Score	0-17	18-29	30-39	40-47	48-54	55-60

Level	Beginning	High Beginning	Low Intermediate	Intermediate	High Intermediate	Advanced

Multiple-Choice (MC) Test (Perception Test)

Before commencing the treatment, a 30-item multiple-choice test (i.e. 15 items for the present perfect and 15 items for the past perfect) was administered to the participants in the study to test their perception of the present/past perfect tenses. The test also included 20 distracter/filler items (i.e. items not related to present/past perfect tense) so that students did not get conscious about the focus of the test. The reliability and the validity of the test were established as a pilot test prior to the main phase of the study. To test the reliability of the newly developed test, 30 students similar to target participants were asked to take the test. The Chronbach's Alpha coefficient was 0.78. Furthermore, to establish the validity of the test, it was given to two specialists in English Language Teaching (ELT), who ascertained that it was qualified as a valid test. The posttest was a parallel test with the same number of items but different stems. The same number of fillers was included in the posttest and the same scoring procedure was followed.

Materials

Different types of treatment were used to teach present/past perfect tenses to the participants in the 6 experimental groups: (1) DCF + Revision, (2) DCF – Revision, (3) ICF + Revision, (4) ICF – Revision, (5) MCF + Revision, and (6) MCF – Revision. The treatment lasted for four sessions, and four texts including present perfect tense and four texts including past perfect tense were used for teaching the two tenses through writing. The teachers employed the dicto-comp technique for teaching the two tenses in the six experimental groups, in which learners summarized a text including the two target structures. First, the teachers prepared a text that included examples of the present/past perfect tenses. The teachers then read the text to the learners at normal speed, while they took notes. Learners then prepared a summary of the text using present perfect and past perfect tenses. This technique encouraged learners to focus on the forms of two tenses while summarizing the texts.

The teachers then employed different combinations of 'direct/indirect/ metalinguistic feedback +/– revision' to teach the two target tenses. As for the groups who were not required to revise their writings (i.e. DCF – Revision, ICF – Revision, MCF – Revision), the teachers just got the students' writing after the students finished the dictogloss. However, for the three groups who were required to revise their texts (i.e. DCF+ Revision, ICF+ Revision, and MCF + Revision), the teachers took the students' writings home, corrected the tenses as required, returned the writings to the students in the next session, and required them to revise the texts before giving their finalized writings to the teacher. For the 'DCF+ Revision' group, the incorrect present/past perfect tenses were shown by writing the correct tense above them. For the 'ICF + Revision' group, the tenses written inaccurately were circled or underlined. For the 'MCF+ Revision' group, each error was first indicated with a number. Notes for each numbered error were given at the bottom of a learner's sheet. The notes indicated what was wrong, using metalinguistic information, and also provided the correct form.

Procedure

The aim of this study was to examine the effects of three types of corrective feedback (i.e. DCF, ICF, and MCF) as well as two types of students' response (i.e. + revision or – revision) on the perception of present perfect and past perfect tenses. To achieve the goals of the study, the following steps were taken:

− Administering the OQPT and selecting intermediate EFL learners from among the initial cohort of learners.

− Dividing the learners into 7 groups ((1) DCF + Revision, (2) DCF − Revision, (3) ICF + Revision, (4) ICF − Revision, (5) MCF + Revision, (6) MCF − Revision, and (7) No Corrective Feedback (NCF) or the control group).

− Administering the 50-item multiple-choice pre-test (i.e. 30 main items, and 20 distracters/fillers) to the participants.

− Exposing the learners to the required treatment

     The control group received no specific instruction, but when they had any questions regarding the correct forms of present and past perfect tenses, the teachers answered their questions with no specific attention drawn to the two structures.

− Administering the 50-item MC posttest (i.e. 30 main items, and 20 distracters/fillers) to the participants.

Data Analysis

     Data analysis procedures consisted of descriptive and inferential statistical analyses for the participants' scores on OQPT and MC pre-tests and posttests. As for the inferential statistics, a series of paired-samples t-tests, and an analysis of variance (ANOVA) were run to investigate the effect of three types of WCF (i.e. DCF, ICF, and MCF) as well as two types of students' revision types (+/− revision) on learners' perception of the present/past perfect tenses. Moreover, a series of post-hoc Scheffe tests were conducted to locate where the differences among the 7 experimental/control groups lied.

Results

Results of the Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT)

     Based on the results of the Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT), 210 intermediate EFL learners were selected from among an initial population of 260 EFL learners. Table 2 represents the number of participants at each proficiency level as well as the mean and the standard deviation of all participants' scores. Participants who got scores between 40-47 were selected for the present study.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics for the Participants' Scores

Level	Score range	N	Mean	SD
Beginning	0-17	5	10.93	3.24
High Beginning	18-29	12	22.27	4.78
Low Intermediate	30-39	17	34.68	6.22
Intermediate	**40-47**	**210**	**45.23**	**9.74**
High Intermediate	48-54	22	50.19	12.55
Advanced	55-60	4	57.33	14.94
TOTAL		260	46.19	9.48

Effect of 'DCF/ ICF/ MCF + Revision' on Learners' Perception

     The first research question examined if 'DCF + Revision', 'ICF + Revision', and 'MCF + Revision' had any significant effects on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' perception of

present/past perfect tenses. The descriptive statistics (i.e. mean and standard deviation) for the pretest and posttest scores of 'DCF/ICF/MCF + Revision' groups on the multiple-choice test are shown in Table 3 below:

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics for the Scores of 'DCF/ ICF/ MCF + Revision' Groups on Pretest and Posttest of the Multiple-Choice Test

		N	Mean	SD
DCF + Revision	Pretest	30	43.53	2.27
	Posttest	30	46.92	1.27
ICF + Revision	Pretest	30	43.80	1.97
	Posttest	30	45.40	1.30
MCF + Revision	Pretest	30	43.53	1.96
	Posttest	30	46.02	1.12

As illustrated in Table 4, a set of paired-samples t-tests were conducted to compare the pretest and posttest scores of the 'DCF+ Revision', 'ICF+ Revision', and 'MCF + Revision' groups in order to measure the effect of each method on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' perception of past/present perfect tenses. The results show that the learners' perception of past/present perfect tenses in the 'DCF+ Revision' group significantly improved from the pretest ($M = 45.53$, $SD = 2.27$) to posttest ($M = 46.92$, $SD = 1.27$), $t (29) = -7.26$, $p <.00$. The learners' knowledge of past/present perfect tenses in the 'ICF+ Revision' group also significantly improved from the pretest ($M = 43.80$, $SD = 1.97$) to posttest ($M = 45.40$, $SD = 1.30$), $t (29) = -5.44$, $p <.00$. Similarly, the 'MCF+ Revision' method significantly improved the learners' knowledge from the pretest ($M = 45.53$, $SD = 1.96$) to posttest ($M = 46.02$, $SD = 1.12$), $t(29) = - 8.05$, $p <.00$. Overall, the results of all three groups on the MC test suggest that 'DCF+ Revision', 'ICF+ Revision', and 'MCF + Revision' significantly developed learners' knowledge of past/present perfect tenses.

Table 4
Paired-Samples T-Test for Comparing the Means of Pretest and Posttest of 'DCF/ICF/MCF+ Revision' Groups on the Multiple-Choice Test

Group	Mean	*Std.* Deviation	*t*	*df*	*Sig.* (2-tailed)
DCF + Revision	2.00	1.50	-7.26	29	.00
ICF + Revision	1.60	1.61	-5.44	29	.00
MCF + Revision	2.43	1.65	-8.05	29	.00

Effect of 'DCF/ ICF/ MCF – Revision' on Learners' Perception
The second research question investigated if 'DCF – Revision', 'ICF – Revision', and 'MCF – Revision' had any significant effects on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' perception of present/past perfect tenses. Prior to conducting the relevant inferential statistics, the descriptive statistics for the pretest and posttest scores of 'DCF/ICF/MCF – Revision' groups on the multiple-choice test are presented in Table 5 in the following:

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics for the Scores of 'DCF/ ICF/ MCF – Revision' Groups on Pretest and Posttest of the Multiple-Choice Test

		N	Mean	*SD*
DCF – Revision	Pretest	30	43.70	2.01
	Posttest	30	45.46	.83
ICF – Revision	Pretest	30	43.90	1.95
	Posttest	30	44.52	1.34
MCF – Revision	Pretest	30	43.83	2.10
	Posttest	30	45.24	1.04

As shown in Table 6 below, a series of paired-samples t-tests were run to compare the pretest and posttest scores of each of the three groups in order to measure the impact of each type of feedback on learners' perception of past/present perfect tenses. The results indicate that the learners' perception of past/present perfect tenses in the 'DCF – Revision' group significantly improved from the pretest ($M = 43.70$, $SD = 2.01$) to posttest ($M = 45.46$, $SD = .83$), $t (29) = -7.02$, $p <.00$. The learners' knowledge of past/present perfect tenses in the 'ICF– Revision' group also significantly improved from the pretest ($M = 43.90$, $SD = 1.95$) to posttest ($M = 44.52$, $SD = 1.34$), $t (29) = -8.43$, $p <.00$. Similarly, the 'MCF – Revision' method significantly improved the learners' knowledge from the pretest ($M = 43.83$, $SD = 2.10$) to posttest ($M = 45.24$, $SD = 1.04$), $t (29) = - 8.55$, $p <.00$. Overall, the results of the three groups on the MC test suggest that all of them significantly developed their knowledge of past/present perfect tenses.

Table 6

Paired-Samples T-Test for Comparing the Means of Pretest and Posttest of 'DCF/ICF/MCF – Revision' Groups on the Multiple-Choice Test

Group	Mean	*Std.* Deviation	*t*	*df*	*Sig.* (2-tailed)
DCF – Revision	-2.60	2.02	-7.02	29	.00
ICF – Revision	-1.50	.97	-8.43	29	.00
MCF – Revision	-2.23	1.43	-8.55	29	.00

Comparative effect of 'DCF/ ICF/ MCF +/– Revision' and the Control Groups on Learners' Perception

The third research question examined if there were any significant differences among the experimental groups (i.e. 'DCF + Revision', 'DCF – Revision', 'ICF + Revision', 'ICF – Revision', 'MCF + Revision' and 'MCF – Revision') and the control group (i.e. NCF) with regard to their perception of present / past perfect tenses. Figure 1 in the following summarizes the data related to the pretest and posttest scores of all seven groups on the MC test:

Figure 1

Pretest and Posttest Scores of the Experimental and Control Groups
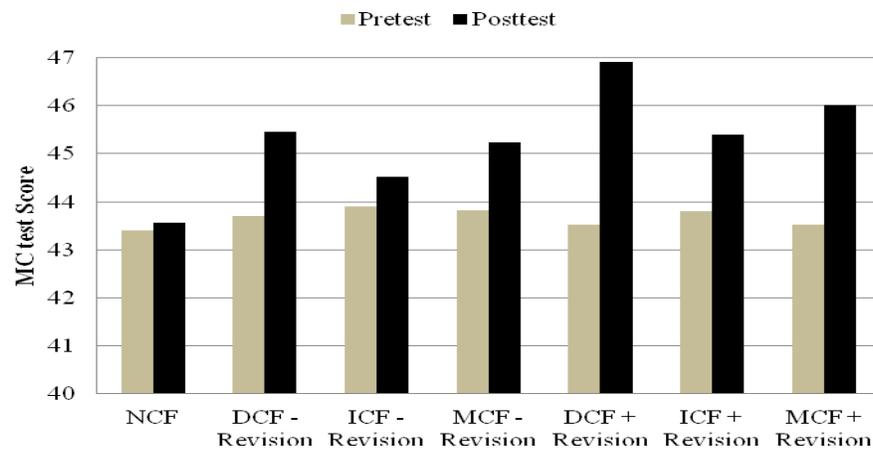
As shown in Figure 1, the pretest scores of all groups were nearly equal before the treatment sessions. However, the posttest scores indicate that the 'DCF + Revision' group outperformed all other groups. Moreover, all of the groups doing revision (i.e. DCF + Revision, ICF + Revision, and MCF + Revision) outperformed the correspondent groups without revision (i.e. DCF − Revision, ICF − Revision, and MCF − Revision). In order to check all of the results obtained through descriptive statistics, a set of inferential statistics were used to establish the facts more rigorously.

In order to check if there were differences among the seven groups on the MC pretest, a one-way between-groups analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used. As illustrated in Table 7 in the following, there is no statistically significant difference at the $p < .05$ level among all the groups: $F(6, 203) = 1.97$, $p = .17$.

Table 7

One-way Between-Groups ANOVA Comparing the Pretest Scores of the Groups

	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	6	30.23	1.97	.17
Within Groups	203	10.23		
Total	209			

Another one-way between-groups analysis of variance (ANOVA) was run to compare the posttest scores of all seven groups on the MC test. Table 8 in the following indicates that there is a statistically significant difference at the $p < .05$ level among the seven groups: $F(6, 203) = 2.74$, $p = .01$.

Table 8

One-way Between-Groups ANOVA Comparing the Posttest Scores of the Groups

	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	6	32.53	2.74	.01
Within Groups	203	11.87		
Total	209			

Since a significant difference was observed in the one-way between-groups ANOVA result, a post-hoc Scheffe test was conducted to pinpoint exactly where the differences among the posttest scores of the seven groups occurred. The results are displayed in Table 9 below. Looking down Table 9, the column labeled *Mean Difference*, we could see asterisks (*) next to some of the values listed. This means that the seven groups being compared are significantly different from one another at the $p < .05$ level. The exact significance value is given in the column labeled *Sig*.

Post-hoc comparisons using the Scheffe test indicated that the experimental groups doing revision (i.e. DCF + Revision, ICF + Revision, and MCF + Revision) differed significantly from the correspondent groups without revision (i.e. DCF − Revision, ICF − Revision, and MCF − Revision). Moreover, the only groups which were not significantly different in terms of the development of their knowledge of past/present perfect tenses were the 'ICF + Revision', 'DCF − Revision', and 'MCF − Revision' groups ($p > 0.05$), which are highlighted in Table 9.

Table 9
Post-Hoc Scheffe Test Indicating the Point of Difference Among the Posttest Scores of the Seven Groups

		Mean Difference	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval Lower Bound	Upper Bound
DCF + Revision	DCF − Revision	6.63*	2.87	.01	.11	6.49
	ICF + Revision	-5.30*	2.87	.02	-1.72	4.66
	ICF − Revision	7.16*	2.87	.01	-.86	5.52
	MCF + Revision	4.57*	2.87	.04	-1.56	4.82
	MCF − Revision	-6.73*	2.87	.01	-1.69	4.69
	NCF	8.63*	2.87	.00	-2.29	4.09
DCF − Revision	DCF + Revision	6.63*	2.87	.01	-1.36	5.02
	ICF + Revision	1.23	2.87	.07	-2.32	4.06
	ICF − Revision	5.37*	2.87	.01	-3.02	3.36
	MCF + Revision	-5.73*	2.87	.01	-4.66	1.72
	MCF − Revision	.55	2.87	.09	-3.16	3.22
	NCF	5.96*	2.87	.00	-3.76	2.62
ICF + Revision	DCF + Revision	-5.30*	2.87	.02	-1.39	4.99
	DCF − Revision	1.23	2.87	.07	-3.22	3.16
	ICF − Revision	-4.39*	2.87	.02	-2.36	4.02
	MCF + Revision	2.89*	2.87	.04	-3.06	3.32
	MCF − Revision	.39	2.87	.11	-4.69	1.69
	NCF	3.67*	2.87	.03	-3.79	2.59
ICF − Revision	DCF + Revision	7.16*	2.87	.01	-2.22	4.16
	DCF − Revision	5.37*	2.87	.01	-4.06	2.32
	ICF + Revision	-4.39*	2.87	.02	-3.89	2.49
	MCF + Revision	6.18*	2.87	.01	-5.52	.86
	MCF − Revision	4.46*	2.87	.03	-4.02	2.36
	NCF	2.97*	2.87	.04	-4.62	1.76
MCF + Revision	DCF + Revision	4.57*	2.87	.04	-.79	5.59
	DCF − Revision	-5.73*	2.87	.01	-2.62	3.76
	ICF + Revision	2.89*	2.87	.04	-1.76	4.62

	ICF – Revision	6.18*	2.87	.01	-2.46	3.92
	MCF – Revision	3.54*	2.87	.03	-4.09	2.29
	NCF	5.12*	2.87	.02	-2.59	3.79
MCF – Revision	DCF + Revision	-6.73*	2.87	.01	-1.52	4.86
	DCF – Revision	.55	2.87	.09	-3.36	3.02
	ICF + Revision	.39	2.87	.11	-2.49	3.89
	ICF – Revision	4.46*	2.87	.03	-4.82	1.56
	MCF + Revision	3.54*	2.87	.03	-3.32	3.06
	NCF	-2.83*	2.87	.03	-3.92	2.46
NCF (No corrective Feedback control group)	DCF + Revision	8.63*	2.87	.00	-5.02	1.36
	DCF – Revision	5.96*	2.87	.00	-4.16	2.22
	=ICF + Revision	3.67*	2.87	.03	-4.86	1.52
	ICF – Revision	2.97*	2.87	.04	-6.49	-.11
	MCF + Revision	5.12*	2.87	.02	-4.99	1.39
	MCF – Revision	-2.83*	2.87	.03	-5.59	.79

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

Discussion

The main concern of the study was to examine the effect of different combinations of written corrective feedback (WCF) and responses (i.e. + / − revision) on the perception of present/past perfect tenses by Iranian intermediate EFL learners. Regarding the findings of the first research question, it turned out that 'DCF/ICF/MCF + revision' had significant effect on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' perception of present / past perfect tenses. Concerning the results of the second research question, it was found that 'DCF/ICF/MCF − revision' had also significant effect on the learners' perception of present/past perfect tenses.

Comparing the results of the descriptive statistics of all groups revealed that the 'DCF + Revision' group outperformed other experimental groups, and the groups doing revisions outperformed the groups receiving feedback without any elicited revisions. Concerning the role of DCF, the results confirmed Sheen's (2007) and Liu's (2008) assertion that direct corrective feedback (DCF) can be very effective in enhancing acquisition of specific grammatical features. Mahmud (2016) also found that DCF is the most common corrective feedback teachers practice in their classes.

Based on the inferential statistics, all experimental groups involved in the first and second research questions improved from the pretest to the posttest as a result of the corrective feedback they were exposed to. The results of the first and second research questions are in line with the findings by Ferris (2002), Bitchener (2008), Burk & Pietrck (2010), Telçeker and Akçan (2010), Evans, Hartshorn, McCollum and Wolfersberger (2010), Koen, Bitzer, and Beets (2012), and Benson and Dekeyser (2018), suggesting that feedback helped L2 learners improve their grammar in L2 writing. Ferris (2003) argued that responding to recurrent patterns of errors in a focused manner, especially ruled governed items (e.g. verb tense), may be more beneficial than responding to all types of errors in an unfocused manner. However, the results stand against those obtained by Truscott (2009), Ghabanchi (2011), and Alkhatib (2015), who found no considerable impact on students' writing accuracy regarding feedback provision. Additionally, with respect to the role of revision, the results of the study are consistent with the results of Chandler's (2003) study, implying that students' grammatical accuracy improved more significantly from the pretest to the posttest in groups that were demanded to revise their errors (i.e. DCF + Revision, ICF +

Revision, and MCF + Revision) than in groups that merely received feedback on their errors (i.e. DCF – Revision, ICF – Revision, and MCF – Revision).

Finally, the third research question investigated if there were any significant differences among the experimental groups (i.e. 'DCF + Revision', 'DCF – Revision', 'ICF + Revision', 'ICF – Revision', 'MCF + Revision' and 'MCF – Revision') and the control group with regard to their perception of present/past perfect tenses. All groups differed from each other, but the only groups which did not significantly differ in terms of the development of their knowledge of past/present perfect tenses were the 'ICF + Revision', 'DCF – Revision', and 'MCF – Revision' groups. An interesting point about this finding is that indirect feedback, even when supported with revision, has nearly the same effect as the direct feedback and metalinguistic feedback without any revisions. This could imply the low effect of indirect feedback in learning grammatical items in L2 writing in comparison with the high impact of direct and metalinguistic written corrective feedback, which could be due to the preferences of both teachers and learners for imparting and receiving DCF and MCF rather than ICF.

Conclusions

The study departed from the literature by investigating the combinatory effect of direct (DCF), indirect (ICF) and metalinguistic (MCF) corrective feedback and response types (i.e. +/– revision) on the perception of present/past perfect tenses by Iranian intermediate EFL learners. The six experimental groups representing different combinations of written corrective feedback and revision included DCF + Revision, DCF – Revision, and ICF + Revision, ICF – Revision, MCF + Revision, and MCF – Revision. The main findings of the study revealed that (i) all experimental groups improved their knowledge of past/present perfect tenses as a result of exposure to the relevant treatment types, (ii) the 'DCF + Revision' group outperformed all other groups, (iii) all of the groups doing revision (i.e. DCF/ ICF / MCF + Revision) outperformed the correspondent groups without revision (i.e. DCF / ICF / MCF– Revision), and (iv) the only groups whose scores were not significantly different were the 'ICF + Revision', 'DCF – Revision', and 'MCF – Revision' groups.

Taking the intermediate proficiency level of the participants into consideration, an important point is that learners' autonomy will undoubtedly increase if they are encouraged to achieve awareness and criticize themselves to become self-confident and self-reliant learners. Ferris (2002) maintained that unfocused WCF may suit advanced learners who do not make a lot of errors in their writing tasks. Therefore, understanding how different methods of providing WCF work effectively for a specific proficiency level may inform teachers of the most effective yet manageable CF types that are influential for their classroom practices. For most L2 learners, however, teachers should choose a few error patterns based on students' needs and instructional objectives, and help students develop written accuracy in a focused manner. This exactly corresponds to the findings of the present study.

In light of the findings of the present study, there are some pedagogical implications for teachers and syllabus designers. Providing direct corrective feedback (DCF) for lower-proficiency learners causes lower anxiety and makes them be highly self-confident. After all, when students are provided with information about their performance, they will be motivated to apply their teacher's feedback more meticulously. This could also be of high benefit to those students with low ambiguity tolerance, as low cognitive load is imposed on the learners' mind for processing errors. Moreover, using WCF motivates learners to attend to their errors and revise their own writing, which then transfers some responsibility from teachers to learners, which in turn encourages learners to self-monitor. Syllabus designers could also include writing tasks with focused

grammatical structures in their materials, asking learners to write on a topic involving specific grammatical structures.

Although the study has introduced some educational evidence regarding the positive effect of WCF on L2 grammar learning, some limitations have to be acknowledged. First, allocating more sessions to provide the learners with the relevant types of treatment was impossible due to the institutional constraints the teachers encountered in their classes. Second, the participants' gender was considered as a control variable, which may interfere more or less in the results of the study. Third, the teachers could not cover other grammatical/morphological errors due to time limitation. Fourth, the different types of WCF and response types were only examined with intermediate EFL learners. Finally, some minor considerations such as the teachers' previous educational and professional training as well as teaching experiences were not addressed in this study.

Future studies are needed, as this study represented only a small step towards discovering more about the effectiveness of WCF on the perception of some verb tenses. Since this study examined only two types of verb tenses (i.e. present and past perfect tenses), future studies could pursue a closer examination of the effect of WCF on learning other types of English tenses, with learners of different proficiency levels, with different types of treatment materials. Moreover, in addition to the examination of the effect of WCF on the *perception* of grammatical structures, future studies could focus on the effect of WCF on the *production* of grammatical structures. Besides, doing a qualitative study to figure out the learners' and teachers' preferences and attitudes towards the value and effectiveness of different types of WCF could be insightful for teachers, teacher trainers, and syllabus designers.

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