The Role of Explicit Corrective Feedback Timing in Second Language Structure Accuracy

Soory Salajegheh[1], Ali Akbar Khomeijani Farahani[*2], Hassan Shahabi[3]

[1]Ph.D. student, English Department, Islamic Azad University, Kerman Branch, Iran
[2]Associate Professor, English Department, the University of Tehran, Iran
[3]Professor, English Department, Islamic Azad University, Kerman Branch, Iran

Abstract
This study examined the effects of explicit metalinguistic corrective feedback on the accurate use of English regular past tense structure. The main purpose was to investigate whether the immediate provision of metalinguistic feedback after writing task completion or its delayed provision after two days in the next classroom session could differentially impact the structure accuracy. One-hundred and five Iranian English as a foreign language (EFL) learners agreed to take part in this study and were assigned into three conditions: immediate metalinguistic feedback, delayed metalinguistic feedback, and control condition without any feedback. A repeated-measures ANCOVA was used to provide answers to the research question. Results revealed the superiority of the delayed metalinguistic feedback over both the immediate feedback and control conditions in the immediate post-test. And, in the delayed post-test, the immediate metalinguistic feedback outperformed the other groups. The implications of these findings and suggestions for further research are further discussed

*Keywords: Corrective feedback; Explicit; Metalinguistic; Immediate feedback; Delayed feedback*ype your keywords here, separated by semicolons;

1. Introduction

Learning a second or a foreign language is a complicated process where learners not only require exposure to adequate degree of input but also

---

need to be presented with an opportunity to use their acquired language (Khezrlou, 2020a, 2020b). Hence, after providing the learners with adequate comprehensible input (Krashen, 1987), learners need to be motivated to produce output. The process of transitioning from input to output inevitably makes learners commit errors in their language use. These errors need to be corrected in order to enhance the learner's inter-language development. Provided that these errors do not get corrected appropriately, they would be fossilized in the learner's interlanguage. In order to avoid this fossilization, language teachers are encouraged to provide their learners with different types of CF which they consider suitable for them.

Russell and Spada (2006) underline that corrective feedback (CF) refers to any feedback that is provided to a student, from any source, in response to any error of language form. Lyster and Mori (2006) declared that CF set up sensitive focus on form, attempting to draw learners' attention to language form during interaction. Lightbown (1998) drawn in Lyster and Mori (2006) stated that CF at the moment when students have something to say can be most effective, instead of postponing the focus on language until after the task has been completed. As CF creates a response to learners' erroneous production, it totally occurs in the output but can also take place in any phase of the presentation practice production (PPP) (Khezrlou, 2012a, 2012b). Thus, it becomes clear that oral or written corrective feedback (WCF) are particularly effective practices, which are both needed and essentially practiced in classroom teaching and should be introduced to the classroom syllabi (Khezrlou, 2021a, 2019a, 2019b). With growing evidence presented for the effectiveness of WCF in second language (L2) learning, researchers have sought to determine the most helpful strategies for providing feedback, as well as when teachers need to respond to written errors- i.e., feedback timing (Mao & Lee, 2020). Although both strategies and timing are essential considerations in WCF, of immediate concern, particularly for English as foreign language (EFL) writing teachers, is the provision of WCF at the best time and with the most effective strategy. In other words, writing teachers need to have clear ideas about what type of WCF (e.g., explicit or implicit) works best at what time of feedback provision (e.g., immediate or delayed). However, compared to the plethora of research that has been conducted on WCF types in various teaching and learning contexts, there is a paucity of research on the optimal combination of feedback type and timing and this issue has remained a conundrum. Consequently, the present study was motivated to investigate the relative

effectiveness of implicit and explicit WCF timing regarding Iranian adult EFL learners' grammatical accuracy in L2 writing.

2. Literature Review
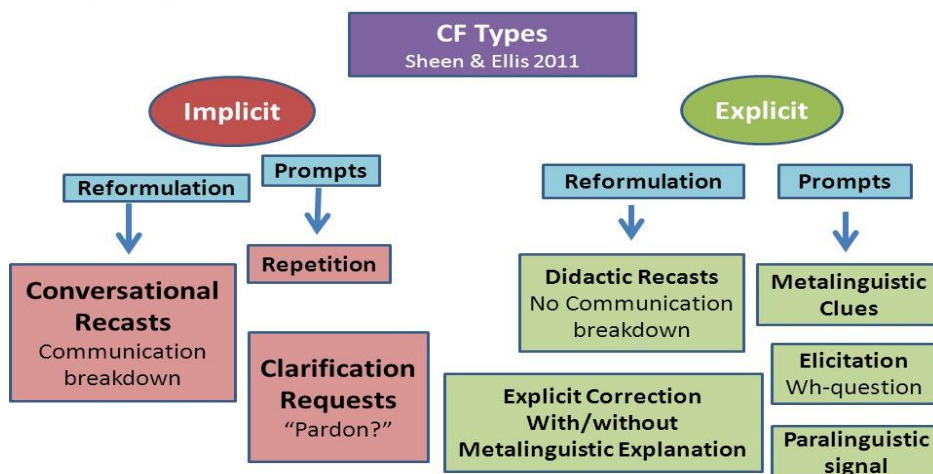### 2.1. Types of Corrective Feedback

Second language (L2) teachers have at their disposal different strategies to correct a learner's error. Lyster and Ranta (1997) identified from their immersion class transcripts six types of corrective feedback, namely, explicit correction (explicit provision of the correct form), recast (error-free reformulation of the erroneous utterance), clarification request (indication of misunderstanding or ill-formedness), metalinguistic feedback (comments on ill- or well formedness), elicitation (eliciting the correct form) and repetition (isolated repetition of the error). Lyster (1998, 2001, 2004) re-categorized the last four interactional moves as prompts since they are all more likely to push learners to self-correct by withholding the correct form.

Carroll and Swain (1993), Ellis, Loewen and Erlam (2006) and other researchers distinguish types of CF in terms of their implicitness. Recasts are usually categorized as implicit CF as they do not overtly indicate that there is an error, whereas explicit correction and metalinguistic feedback are considered to be explicit. The above two distinctions are both of theoretical significance. Cognitive interactionists argued for input-providing CF, considering input as the driving force of acquisition while skill-building theories favored output-prompting CF, regarding output as a key mechanism for proceduralization and automatization. As for the implicit-explicit distinction, Long (1996) proposed that implicit CF is an ideal form for acquisition as it does not interrupt the communicative flow and thus induces form-function mapping. However, explicit forms of correction are assumed to be more effective than implicit ones according to the Noticing Hypothesis (Schmidt, 1994; 2001). It is likely that explicit CF leads to explicit knowledge only (Krashen, 1987) and whether it contributes to acquisition of implicit knowledge is controversial. Ellis (2009) combined these two separate distinctions into a comprehensive taxonomy of CF (as shown in Table 1). This framework systematically accommodates different types of CF but, as Ellis acknowledged, fails to reflect the variation of a single type of CF. He took recasts as an example. Although recasts are described as "input providing, implicit" in the framework, they, in fact, vary in implicitness, for instance, depending on whether they are combined with other types of CF, whether there is an emphasis on the error, whether they involve declarative or interrogative intonation, and whether they occur in full or partial form.

Table 1. *A Classification of Corrective Feedback (Ellis, 2009, p. 8)*

	Implicit	Explicit
Input-providing	Recast	Explicit correction
Output-prompting	Repetition	Metalinguistic
	Clarification request	explanation
		Elicitation

Sheen and Ellis (2011) also proposed a category for corrective feedback types which is depicted in Figure 1. They recommend nine feedback types based on the six basic and well-known strategies that Lyster and Ranta (1997) have originally introduced. Sheen and Ellis separate their suggested strategies along two features: input-providing versus output-prompting and implicit versus explicit. The former makes a distinction between feedback which provides (input-providing) or elicits

(output-prompting) correction whereas the latter is concerned with the degree of the explicitness of the corrective feedback type.

Figure 1. Feedback types according to Sheen and Ellis (2011)

2.2. Timing of Corrective Feedback

Black and William (1998) mentioned that the main purpose of written or oral CF is to foster the learners' capacities, knowledge, and skills in a language skill or some content. There can be numerous CF approaches in obtaining this goal such as immediate/ delayed CF, form-oriented/ meaning-oriented CF, and etc. As a result, it can be argued that CF can be

understood to fulfill different functions or goals. Black and William (1998) proposed two types of feedback: explicit and implicit feedback. According to Black and William (1998), explicit feedback follows the purpose of depicting the learners what has been problematic and what needs to be fixed while implicit feedback only presents comments to facilitate learners' writing process in different stages such as writing, drafting, revisions and final drafting. It can be noted that explicit feedback presents more scaffolding and support using details compared to the implicit response.

The goal of CF can be modified based on its strategies. Brookhart (2008) identified that feedback's strategies can be modified with respect to four features of time, amount, mode, and audience. She maintained that the fundamental goal of presenting immediate or slightly delayed feedback is to help learners become aware of the answer and its use. Based on her beliefs in the power of immediate feedback, she stated that it is important to have students with the feedback while they are still considerate of the content, task, or performance. According to her suggestion, CF needs to come while learners still think of the learning goal as a learning goal, while they still have some reason to work on the learning target, something they are still struggling for, not something they already did. A general guideline for evaluating the time of feedback is putting ourselves in the learners' place. When do students want to hear your feedback? Of course, when they are still thinking about the work and can still do something about it.

To better explain the appropriate and inappropriate time of CF, Brookhart (2008) indicated the instances of good amounts of feedback as returning a test or project the next day, giving immediate oral responses to questions of fact and student misconceptions and giving flash cards (which provide immediate right/wrong feedback) for studying facts. Also, Brookhart (2008) declared the illustrations of bad amounts of feedback as returning a test or assignment two weeks after it is completed, ignoring errors (thereby suggesting acceptance) and checking up a test or assignment when the unit is over and there is no opportunity to show improvement. She stated that when the students are still careful about the results and can better use the feedback given to their papers will be a good time. Then, the teacher should score the test and return the results in appropriate time. In contrast, when the tests or assignments are returned with a long delay of time it will be a bad time. Therefore, delayed returning of papers causes feeling of frustration and leads the students to think that the teacher is ignoring them (Khezrlou, Ellis & Sadeghi, 2017; Sadeghi, Khezrlou, & Modirkhameneh, 2017).

A number of previous studies have subjected these suggestions to empirical tests. In the study by Nakata (2015), 98 Japanese college learners were asked to study 16 English-Japanese word pairs. Immediate feedback was provided immediately after each response, while delayed feedback was not provided until all target items were practiced. Learning was measured through the administration of post-tests immediately, one week, and four weeks after the treatment. It was found that when lag to test was controlled, feedback timing exerted no impact upon L2 vocabulary learning irrespective of the frequency of errors committed during learning. Li, Zhu and Ellis (2016) examined the influence of immediate and delayed corrective feedback on the English past passive structure learning of 120 Chinese EFL learners. Groups carried out two dictogloss tasks and received either immediate or delayed corrective feedback in the form of a prompt, followed by recasts of utterances entailing the errors in the use of the passive voice. Results did not show any effects for the corrective feedback on elicited imitation test scores, yet both the immediate and delayed feedback led to achievement in the grammaticality judgment test scores, with immediate feedback proving more effective.

Finally, Lee (2008) investigated the cooperation of CF through expert-to-beginner cooperative efforts. They worked on three different tasks including jigsaw, spot-the-differences and open-ended question. The novice members were supposed to write a thoughtful diary to report their attitudes and observations on online feedback negotiations and CF upon the conclusion of the project. When linguistic problems happened, the expert speakers were supposed to hold up by providing assistance to draw the learners' attention to focus on form. They found that text chats supported the focus-on-form procedure through collaborative engagement. The experts and learners both used L2 and L1 to negotiate L2 forms for both syntactic and lexical errors. The findings showed that the experts assisted their partners linguistically and cognitively in the process of feedback negotiation. The researcher concluded that it was not easy to provide CF and to attend to linguistic errors during the meaning-based interaction. In other words, focusing on meaning and form simultaneously is troublesome for language learners (Khezrlou, 2021c, 2021d). Also, focus-on-form is most important in computer-mediated communication (CMC) than in face-to-face interaction as the learner can read the errors visually, and the correct written text on the screen. The findings revealed that, the experts were able to call learners' attention to focus on non-target-like-forms that resulted in CF and, self-repair. Although, some learners accepted the significance of using the target

language, they did not find focus-on-form correction very helpful. Some of the learners were eager to take part in the meeting as a chance for communication rather than an opportunity to repair their grammatical errors. Also, they viewed online interaction as less stressful, which allowed them more time to reflect on linguistic forms. Moreover, the students were more motivated to indicate their linguistic problems and were truthful about expressing the need for help from the expert partners.

3. Method

The present study was carried out to investigate the effect of explicit corrective feedback with regard to timing in the written accuracy of the EFL learners. The target of corrective feedback was the regular past tense -ed structure which is a non-salient grammatical structure (see below) and therefore was deemed to need extra attention for its successful acquisition. Specifically, this work addressed the following research question:

1. To what extent do the immediate and delayed explicit corrective feedback affect Iranian EFL learners' grammatical accuracy in writing?

3.1. Design of the Study

The design of the present study is identified as quasi-experimental with providing treatment to intact classes and comparing the written accuracy before and after the treatment. The general design of the study consists of making use of meaning-based writing tasks and figuring out the errors in learners' writing pieces. It needs to be noted that the dependent variable in this study is learners' writing accuracy and the time of WCF is the independent variable. Based on a pre-test of grammar, a total of three conditions, namely two experimental conditions and a control condition, were selected. Afterwards, learners were asked to write on a topic in each session and they then received each corrective category across the time variable. The comparison was established among all of the groups, with intervention of independent variable (WCF timing) that plays a role in terms of predicting the changes in the dependent variable (writing accuracy).

3.2. Participants

A total of 90 male (N = 40) and female (N = 50) English as a foreign language Iranian learner were selected from ACECR Institute in Kerman. Participants' mean age was 19.46 and they were at the low-intermediate level of English language proficiency based on the rigorous placement test of the language institute. Furthermore, they were asked to answer the

grammar pre-test prior to the study to ensure their knowledge of the target structure. Participants were randomly assigned to two experimental groups and one control group: 1) immediate explicit WCF (N = 35), 2) delayed explicit WCF (N = 26), and 3) control group (N = 29). All participants agreed to take part in this study through oral consent.

3.3. The Target Structure

The regular past tense –ed structure was opted for as the target structure in the present study due to a number of reasons. First, even though EFL learners are exposed to this structure early in their language learning journey, they still encounter challenges in its mastery even at higher levels of acquisition (Ellis et al., 2006). Regular English past tense forms are considered a rule-based structure because there is an obvious general rule: Add -ed to the base form of a regular verb. Thus, regular past tense forms are low in their degree of structure saliency due to a voiceless -ed, and the communicative value is also lower than the irregular past tense -ed (DeKeyser, 1998; Ellis, 2005). Altogether, these features make regular past tense -ed problematic and hard for the foreign language learners.

3.4. Instruments
3.4.1. Pre-test

The pre-test consisted of 20 multiple-choice and fill-in-the-blanks items which was developed by the researcher for the purpose of this study. This test was aimed at measuring participants' knowledge of the regular past tense structure. The results of Cronbach's alpha indicate a high level of consistency for this test ($\alpha = .82$).

3.4.2. Writing Tasks

Three descriptive writing tasks were used during the treatment process. These tasks were homogenized with respect to the number of words needed (about 70-100), planning time (about 10-15 minutes), prior knowledge (only requiring general knowledge), individual work only, paper-based and were performed inside the classroom. The following topics were used for each task elicited from the learners' textbook:
1. Describe a day or an evening out that you enjoyed. Give details about the place, time, the things you did, people, the food and drinks there.
2. Describe the last vacation and the place that you stayed in.
3. Describe the best present that you received.

Participants enacted the first task in the first session as the pre-test task, the second task was administered to the learners after they received WCF

on their first writing and acted as the immediate post-test and finally the last task was the delayed post-test administered after two weeks. Due to the participants' low level of proficiency, these topics were translated to Farsi to avoid comprehension problems. Participants had at most 15 min to complete each writing task which was determined based on the results of a pilot study with a similar cohort of learners. Lastly, the inter-rater reliability of the writing tasks was measured through Pearson Correlation Test (pre-test (r = 1.00), immediate post-test (r = 1.00), and delayed post-test (r = .89).

3.5. Procedures

This study was a classroom-based study conducted in a language institute. In each year, there is roughly 5-6 semesters in the institute and each semester lasts for 6-8 weeks. The syllabus in this institute is based on American English File's books (starter, 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5). Starter's book was taught for the participants of the current study at the time of data collection. The study reported here took place in 3 sessions with each lasting about 10-15 minutes.

After orally consenting their agreement to participate in this study and their right to withdraw when they wanted, learners in six intact classes (i.e., two for each condition) were chosen according to the placement test of the language institute as well as the grammar pre-test. Each group received different treatments: 1) immediate explicit correction, 2) delayed explicit correction, and 4) a control group with no WCF at all. In the immediate explicit condition, after the writings were done, the teacher immediately acted to provide correction by giving learners the accurate form together with the metalinguistic explanation of the rule related to this form. In contrast, in the delayed explicit WCF condition, when learners committed an error, the teacher waited until the learners' endeavor to writing the text was completed. In fact, the teacher inhibited any WCF when learners were engaged in the writing process and WCF was presented after two days of essay completion. The teacher only monitored the errors made by the learners by circulating in the classroom while the learners were involved in their writing process. The correction was performed explicitly through the metalinguistic explanations of their errors. It is well worth highlighting here that accuracy, as was in Yuan and Ellis (2003), was measured based on 'correct verb forms'. The correct verb forms refer to the percent of the correctly used verbs according to the past tense.

3.6. Data Analysis

The data was analyzed using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) (21) and the significance level was set at .05. To answer the research question, a repeated measures ANCOVA was run with time (immediate post-test, delayed post-test) as a within-subject variable, group (immediate metalinguistic, delayed metalinguistic, control) as a between-subject variable, structure accuracy as the dependent variable, and pre-test as the co-variate. Furthermore, to examine whether each group improved their accuracy performance over time, a number of paired samples t-tests were run. Prior to the conduction of tests, the Kolmogorov Smirnoff test was run and the results assured the normal distribution of the data ($p > .05$)). Additionally, the homogeneity of variance as measured by Levene's test ($p > .05$), the assumptions of Sphericity using Mauchly's test, $\chi2(3) = 10.06$, $p = .44$, were all met. The effect sizes were interpreted based on Cohen (1988) such that the *ηp2* values of .01, .06, and .14 and *d* values of .20, .50, and .80 were considered small, medium, and large.

4. Results

To answer the research question, a repeated measures ANCOVA was conducted. The results of descriptive statistics are reported and depicted in Table 2 and Figure 2 respectively.

Table 2. *Descriptive Statistics for Groups' Structure Accuracy over Time*

	Groups	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Pre-test	immediate metalinguistic	.40	.65	35
	delayed metalinguistic	.53	.98	26
	control	.34	.55	29
Immediate post-test	immediate metalinguistic	.57	.91	35
	delayed metalinguistic	1.19	.93	26
	control	.24	.43	29
Delayed post-test	immediate metalinguistic	1.05	1.10	35
	delayed metalinguistic	.46	.64	26
	control	.24	.43	29

As the means and standard deviations in Table 2 show, in the immediate post-test, the delayed metalinguistic group achieved the highest mean (*M* = 1.19, *SD* = .93) and in the delayed post-test, the immediate metalinguistic group performed better (*M* = 1.05, *SD* = 1.10). Results of ANCOVA are reported in Table 3.

Table 3. *Results of Repeated Measures ANCOVA*

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Intercept	50.37	1	50.37	73.93	.000	.46
Pre-test	.05	1	.05	.07	.78	.001
groups	12.95	2	6.47	9.50	.000	.18
time	.03	1	.03	.051	.82	.001
time*groups	10.68	2	5.34	8.41	.000	.16
Error	54.60	86	.63			

The results of repeated measures ANCOVA revealed non-significant effects for pre-test, $F (1, 86) = .07$, $p = .78$, $\eta p2 = .001$, and time, $F (1, 86) = .05$, $p = .82$, $\eta p2 = .001$. However, significant effects were found for group, $F (2, 86) = 9.50$, $p = .000$, $\eta p2 = .18$, and time × group interaction, $F (2, 86) = .8.41$, $p = .000$, $\eta p2 = .16$. The post-hoc Tukey analysis was further conducted to locate the points of differences among the three groups. Results of the Tukey test (see Table 4) represents the clear superiority of the delayed metalinguistic group over the immediate metalinguistic ($p = .01$, $d = .67$) and the control ($p = .000$, $d = 1.31$) group in the immediate post-test. Furthermore, the immediate metalinguistic condition performed similar to the control group ($p = .23$, $d = .46$). In the delayed post-test, on the other hand, the immediate metalinguistic condition performed better than both the delayed metalinguistic ($p = .01$, $d = .65$) and control ($p = .000$, $d = .96$) groups. And, there was a non-significant difference between the control and delayed metalinguistic conditions ($p = .57$, $d = .40$).

Table 4. *Results of Post-hoc Tukey Test*

Dependent Variable	(I) groups	(J) groups	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Immediate posttest	immediate explicit	delayed explicit	-.62*	.20	.01	-1.11	-.12
		control	.33	.20	.23	-.15	.81
	delayed explicit	immediate explicit	.62*	.20	.01	.12	1.11
		control	.95*	.21	.000	.43	1.46
	control	immediate explicit	-.33	.20	.23	-.81	.15
		delayed explicit	-.95*	.21	.000	-1.46	-.43
Delayed posttest	immediate explicit	delayed explicit	.59*	.21	.01	.09	1.09
		control	.81*	.20	.000	.32	1.30
	delayed explicit	immediate explicit	-.59*	.21	.01	-1.09	-.09
		control	.22	.21	.57	-.30	.74
	control	immediate explicit	-.81*	.20	.000	-1.30	-.32
		delayed explicit	-.22	.21	.57	-.74	.30

Note: The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

To examine whether each group improved their accuracy performance over time, a number of paired samples t-tests were run. It was found that the immediate metalinguistic group could significantly enhance their pre-test performance to the delayed post-test ($p = .004$, $d = .71$), with a non-significant difference between the pre-test and immediate post-test ($p = .31$, $d = .21$). Performance on the delayed post-test was also better than that on the immediate post-test ($p = .04$, $d = .47$). With regard to the delayed metalinguistic feedback group, the immediate post-test performance was better than the performance on the pre-test ($p = .02$, $d = .69$) and delayed post-test ($p = .000$, $d = .91$). Learners' pre-test performance, however, was not different from their delayed post-test performance ($p = .75$, $d = .08$). Lastly, there were no significant improvements in the performance of the control group over time
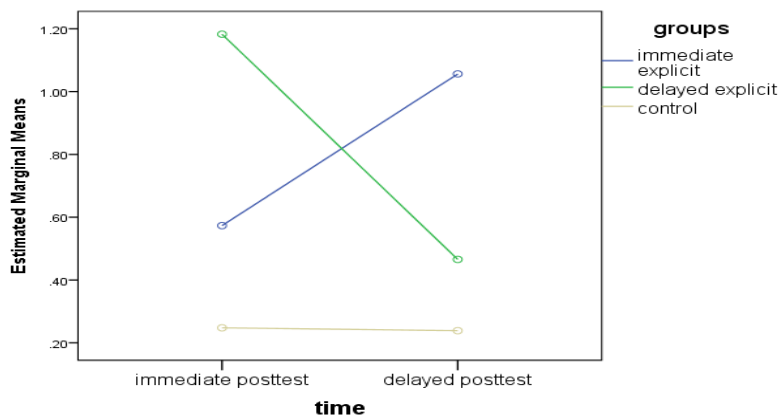
Figure 2. **Groups' performance over time**

5. Discussion

The present study was conducted to examine the effects of immediate and delayed metalinguistic feedback on Iranian EFL learners' accurate use of the regular past tense structure. Results demonstrated that learners who received WCF significantly enhanced their accuracy in using the target structure. This finding gives support to those of several previous studies (Ashwell, 2000; Bitchener, 2008; Bitchener et al., 2005; Fathman & Whalley, 1990; Ferris & Roberts, 2001, Sheen, 2006) and therefore presents further evidence for a rebuttal of Truscott's (1996) claim that corrective feedback is ineffective. The results in this study attested the effectiveness of a single WCF treatment in enabling learners to foster the accuracy of their writing and that the benefits of immediate metalinguistic feedback were retained over time. Given that this study used only one delayed post-test, more research is now needed to specify whether learners can carry over the level of accuracy they obtained from WCF over a longer period of time. In fact, metalinguistic feedback explicitly warns learners against their incorrect language uses and hence advances noticing of target structures and concurrently promotes learners' comprehension of the forms by offering metalinguistic information (Sheen, 2007). Numerous studies have provided evidence that prompts such as metalinguistic feedback are more effective than recasts (e.g., Ammar, 2008; Khezrlou, 2021b; Rassaei, 2013; Ellis, Loewen, & Erlam, 2006; Lyster, 2004;

Sheen, 2007). However, since this study did not examine other WCF types, more research is needed to provide answers to this issue.

The other finding of this study was that in the short-term, delayed WCF was effective and in the long-term, the immediate WCF proved more useful. As Long (2015) argued, immediate feedback is needed for the acquisition of linguistic features through providing a number of advantages: It (a) is contextualized and motivating since it is the learner's meaning or linguistic performance that is at stake, (b) is contingent and corresponds to the learner's internal syllabus, (c) points out the error and the correct form in juxtaposition so the learner immediately notices the gap, (d) relieves the learner's processing burden and promotes the opportunities for an effective focus on form, and (e) "capitalizes on a symbiotic relationship between explicit and implicit learning, instruction, and knowledge" (p. 317). This is in line with some previous studies. For instance, Holley and King (1971) found that delayed correction helped learners self-correct and benefit more from the correction that teachers provided. In spite of the limited attention to the timing of CF in the contemporary SLA literature, the findings of studies on types of CF suggest that delayed CF, like immediate CF, facilitates L2 development. In addition, results of the few studies that have explored the developmental impacts of the timing of CF (Farahani & Khezrlou, 2009; Hunter, 2011; Sheen, 2012; Siyarri, 2005; Varnosfadrani, 2006) are in contrast to the conclusion by Doughty (2001) that L2 development from CF is limited to CF that is provided immediately. The findings from these studies, therefore, provide evidence that delayed CF is effective and probably even as effective as immediately-provided CF. Considering that CF which is provided during communicative practice fosters the development of L2 grammatical knowledge, it seems that delayed CF would also do so. In addition, delayed CF would cultivate the development of L2 grammatical knowledge because the corrective intent of CF that is presented following a meaningful activity is clear to learners.

A note of caution, however, is in order here: the evidence that written delayed CF is helpful in L2 development does not mean that delayed oral CF also develops L2 development; rather, one needs to take into account the differences between writing and speaking. Written CF offers a lasting record that learners can reflect upon whenever and as often as they want to do so, on the other hand, oral CF is much more fleeting (Williams, 2012). Although Sheen (2010) indicated no modality-based distinctions in her comparison of written and oral metalinguistic CF, she revealed that written reformulation treatments performed significantly better than the orally-provided recasts. Moreover, as Bitchener (2012) highlights, the

amount of time that written CF lets learners attend to and respond to CF may result in deeper processing, and may even make written CF more effective than oral CF. One last point worth highlighting is that although delayed feedback was effective in the short-term in the present study, it failed to be effective in the long-term. This result, then, lends some credence to the pedagogic position that delaying feedback until learners have completed a task is favorable (see Long, 1996). Nonetheless, the fact that the impacts of the delayed feedback were not maintained in the delayed post-test suggests that the learning that results from delayed feedback was superficial and that the declarative representations of the past tense structure that the feedback generated quickly faded away. It might be argued that the larger effects of delayed feedback at the time of the immediate posttest could have been because of the closer time proximity between the treatment and the test. This finding has also been attested in some previous studies as well (e.g., Li, Ellis & Zhu, 2016).

6. Conclusion and Implications

The substantial implication of this study is that teachers in the context of communicative activities need not be afraid of using explicit WCF (i.e., providing metalinguistic information). If the right opportunity emerges, teachers are encouraged to provide learners with metalinguistic feedback on their errors. In order to better make sense of the appropriate moment for correcting errors explicitly is, a number of conditions under which the successful explicit CF can be provided to the learners are listed. These conditions include: (1) corrective feedback occurs in meaningful interactive contexts, (2) corrective feedback occurs in response to the learners' output, (3) corrective feedback needs to be provided as briefly as possible, and (4) corrective feedback is better to be adapted to the individualistic needs of learners. Nevertheless, explicit correction included the provision of metalinguistic feedback which is absent from the implicit correction. It can be presumed, as a result, that the effectiveness of explicit correction stems from the interaction of the prior four conditions and the metalinguistic feedback. This study bears another important implication for teachers encouraging them not to overlook immediate WCF in favor of delayed WCF in the same way as they should not neglect delayed WCF in favor of immediate WCF. Concerning the results of this study, teachers are motivated to implement both types of WCF depending on their goals of teaching and learners' appreciation.

There are a number of limitations in this study. Firstly, this study did not make any comparisons between the explicit WCF and other more implicit WCF types. Thus, further research can compare the timing effect

against the type of correction. Secondly, this study was conducted with low proficiency learners with a less complex structure. More studies are needed with more advanced level learners and with complicated structures such as the passive voice and conditional structure. In addition, the results would have been more valid if learners' and teachers' views about the timing of CF could also be considered. Lastly, longitudinal studies spreading over a longer period of time are encouraged to better understand the role of CF and it's timing in L2 written accuracy.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

References

Ammar, A. (2008). Prompts and recasts: differential effects on second language morphosyntax. *Language Teaching Research, 12*, 183-210.

Ashwell, T. (2000). Patterns of teacher response to student writing in a multi-draft composition classroom: Is content feedback followed by form feedback the best method? *Journal of Second Language Writing, 9*(3), 227–257.

Bitchener, J. (2008). Evidence in support of written corrective feedback. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 35,* 12-30.

Bitchener, J. (2012). A reflection on 'the language learning potential' of written CF. *Journal of Second Language Writing 21*, 348-363.

Bitchener, J., Young, S., & Cameron, D. (2005). The effect of different types of corrective feedback on ESL student writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 9*, 227–258.

Black, P., & William, D. (1998). Assessment and classroom learning. *Assessment in Education, 5*(1), 7–74.

Brookhart, S. M. (2008). *How to give effective feedback to your students*. Virginia, VA: Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development.

Carroll, S., & Swain, M. (1993). Explicit and implicit negative feedback. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 15*, 357-386

DeKeyser, R. M. (1998). Beyond focus on form: Cognitive perspective on learning and practicing second language grammar. In C. Doughty & J. Williams (Eds.), *Focus on form in classroom second language acquisition* (pp. 42-63). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ellis, N. (2005). At the interface: Dynamic interactions of explicit and implicit knowledge. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, *27*, 305–352.

Ellis, R. (2009). A typology of written corrective feedback types. *ELT Journal, 63*(2), 97-107.

Ellis, R., Loewen, S., & Erlam, R. (2006). Implicit and explicit corrective feedback and the acquisition of L2 grammar. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 28*, 339-368.

Farahani, A. A., & Khezrlou, S. (2009). On-task versus off-task self-assessments among Iranian elementary students studying English. *Journal of Teaching English as a Foreign Language and Literature, 1*(3), 39-52.

Fathman, A., & Whalley, E. (1990). Teacher response to student writing: Focus on form versus content. In B. Kroll (Ed.), *Second language writing: Research insights for the classroom* (pp. 178–190). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ferris, D. R., & Roberts, B. (2001). Error feedback in L2 writing classes: How explicit does it need to be? *Journal of Second Language Writing*, *10*, 161–184.

Fu, M., & Li, S. (2020). The effects of immediate and delayed corrective feedback on L2 development. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition,* 1-33.

Holley, F. M., & King, J. K. (1971). Imitation and correction in foreign language learning. *The Modern Language Journal, 55*(8), 494-498.

Hunter, J. D. (2011). *A multi-method investigation of the effectiveness and utility of delayed corrective feedback in second language oral production*. Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation (Module 3), University of Birmingham, UK.

Khezrlou, S. (2021a). Effects of timing and availability of isolated FFI on learners' written accuracy and fluency through task repetition. *The Language Learning Journal, 49*(5), 568-580.

Khezrlou, S. (2021b). Effects of task repetition with written corrective feedback on the knowledge and written accuracy of learners with different prior knowledge of the structure. *Spanish Journal of Applied Linguistics*, *34*(2), 464-493.

Khezrlou, S. (2021c). Focus on form in task repetition through oral and written task modelling. *International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching.* Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1515/iral-2020-0125

Khezrlou, S. (2021d). Explicit instruction through task repetition: Effects on explicit and implicit knowledge development. *Language Awareness, 30*(1), 62-83.

Khezrlou, S. (2020a). Training planning in second language narrative writing. *ELT Journal, 74*(1), 49-62.

Khezrlou, S. (2020b). The role of task repetition with direct written corrective feedback in L2 writing complexity, accuracy and fluency. *Journal of Second Language Studies*, *3*(1), 31-54.

Khezrlou, S. (2019a). Task repetition and corrective feedback: The role of feedback types and structure saliency. *English Teaching and Learning, 43*(2), 213-233.

Khezrlou, S. (2019b). Form-focused instruction in CALL: What do learners think? *RELC*, *50*(2), 235-251.

Khezrlou, S. (2012a). Cognitive strategy training: Improving reading comprehension in the language classroom. *Journal of Teaching Language Skills*, *3*(4), 77-98.

Khezrlou, S. (2012b). The relationship between cognitive and metacognitive strategies, age and level of education. *The Reading Matrix, 12*(1), 50-61.

Khezrlou, S., Ellis, R., & Sadeghi, K. (2017). Effects of computer-assisted glosses on EFL learners' vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension in three learning conditions. *System, 65*, 104-116.

Krashen, S. D. (1987). *Principles and practice in second language acquisition*. Prentice-Hall International.

Lee, I. (2008). Error correction in L2 secondary writing classrooms: The case of Hong Kong. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 13*, 285-312.

Li, S., Zhu, Y., & Ellis, R. (2016). The effects of the timing of corrective feedback on the acquisition of a new linguistic structure. *Modern Language Journal, 100* (1), 276-295.

Long, M. H. (1996). The role of linguistic environment in second language acquisition. In W. C. Ritchie & T. K. Bhatia (Eds.), *Handbook of second language acquisition* San Diego: Academic Press.

Long, M. H. (2015). *Second language acquisition and task-based language teaching*. Malden, MA: Wiley–Blackwell.

Lyster, R. (1998). Recasts, repetition, and ambiguity in l2 classroom discourse. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 20*(01), 51-81.

Lyster, R. (2001). Negotiation of form, recasts and explicit correction in relation to error types and learner repair in immersion classrooms. *Language Learning, 51*(1), 265-301.

Lyster, R. (2004). Differential effects of prompts and recasts in form-focused instruction. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 26*(03), 399-432.

Lyster, R., & Mori, H. (2006). Interactional feedback and instructional counterbalance. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 28*(02), 269-300.

Lyster, R., & Ranta, L. (1997). Corrective feedback and learner uptake. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 19*(1), 37-66.

Mao, Z., & Lee, I. (2020). Feedback scope in written corrective feedback: Analysis of empirical research in L2 contexts. *Assessing Writing, 45*, 1-14.

Nakata, T. (2015). Effects of feedback timing on second language vocabulary learning: Does delaying feedback increase learning? *Language Teaching Research, 19*(4), 416-434.

Rassaei, E. (2013). Corrective feedback, learners' perceptions, and second language development. *System, 41*, 472-483.

Russell, J., & Spada, N. (2006). The effectiveness of corrective feedback for the acquisition of L2 grammar. In J. M. Norris & L. Ortega (Eds.), *Synthesizing research on language learning and teaching* (pp. 133-164). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Sadeghi, K., & Khezrlou, S. (2014). Burnout among English language teachers in Iran: Do socio-demographic characteristics matter? *Procedia- Social and Behavioral Sciences, 98,* 1590-1598.

Sadeghi, K., & Khezrlou, S. (2016). The experience of burnout among English language teachers in Iran: Self and other determinants. *Teacher Development, 20*(5), 1-17.

Sadeghi, K., Khezrlou, S., & Modirkhameneh, S. (2017). CALLing Iranian learners of L2 English: Effect of gloss type on lexical retention and academic reading performance under different learning conditions. *Journal of Research in Reading*, *40*(1), 66-86.

Schmidt, R. (1994). Deconstructing consciousness in search of useful definitions for applied linguistics. *AILA Review, 11*, 11-26.

Schmidt, R. (2001). Attention. In P. Robinson (Ed.), *Cognition and second language instruction* (pp. 3-32). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sheen, Y. (2006). *Corrective feedback, individual differences, and the acquisition of English articles by second language learners.* Unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Nottingham.

Sheen, Y. (2007). The effect of focused written corrective feedback and language aptitude on ESL learners' acquisition of articles. *TESOL Quarterly, 41*, 255-283

Sheen, Y. (2010). Differential effects of oral and written corrective feedback in the ESL classroom *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 32*, 203-234.

Sheen, Y. (2012). The timing of corrective feedback and L2 learning. Paper presentation at the Second Language Research Forum, Carnegie Mellon University, U.S.A.

Sheen, Y., & Ellis R. (2011). Corrective feedback in language teaching. In E. Hinkel (Ed.), *Handbook of research in second language teaching and learning* (pp. 593-610). New York: Routledge.

Siyyari, M. (2005). *A comparative study of the effect of implicit and delayed, explicit focus on form on Iranian EFL learners' accuracy of oral production*. Unpublished MA thesis, Iran University of Science and Technology.

Truscott, J. (1996). The case against grammar correction in L2 writing classes. *Language Learning*, *46*, 327–369.

Varnosfadrani, A. D. (2006). *A comparison of the effects of implicit/ explicit and immediate/delayed corrective feedback on learners' performance in tailor-made tests*. Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Auckland.

Williams, J. (2012). The potential role(s) of writing in second language development. *Journal of Second Language Writing 21*, 321-331.

Yuan, F., & Ellis, R. (2003). The effects of pretask planning and on-line planning on fluency, complexity, and accuracy in L2 monologic oral production. *Applied Linguistics, 24*, 1-27.