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The Effect of Corrective Feedback: A Study of EFL Classroom in Elementary Public School

Yasir Shfaqat

Lecturer English, Vital Group of Colleges, Wazirabad

Muhammad Rizwan

Lecturer English, Riphah International University, Punjab Pakistan

Corresponding Author: hafizrizwan158@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The present study investigates the effect of corrective feedback on the grammatical accuracy of elementary-level English as Foreign Language (EFL) learners in public schools of Central Punjab, Pakistan. Writing is considered one of the most challenging language skills because learners frequently commit grammatical and structural errors during second language acquisition. According to Stephen Pit Corder, learners' errors are a natural and significant part of language learning because they reflect the developmental process of acquiring a second language (Corder 167). Corrective feedback plays an essential role in helping learners recognize and minimize these errors. The study mainly focuses on two major types of written corrective feedback: direct corrective feedback and indirect corrective feedback. The purpose of the research was to determine which type of feedback is more effective for elementary students with low English language proficiency. The study employed a quantitative experimental research design. Fifty-four eighth-grade students from public schools were selected through purposive sampling and divided into experimental and control groups. The experimental group received direct corrective feedback, whereas the control group received indirect corrective feedback for one month. Data were collected through pretests, posttests, and delayed posttests and analyzed using paired sample t-tests through SPSS software. The findings reveal that direct corrective feedback significantly improves short-term grammatical accuracy among low-level EFL learners. However, both direct and indirect corrective feedback failed to ensure long-term grammatical retention. The study concludes that direct corrective feedback is more beneficial for immediate grammatical improvement in elementary EFL classrooms.

Keywords: Corrective Feedback, Direct Feedback, Indirect Feedback, Grammatical Accuracy, EFL Learners, Elementary Students

1. Introduction

English has emerged as a global language of communication, education, science, and technology. In many developing countries, including Pakistan, English is taught as a second or foreign language at different educational levels. Among the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing, the writing is considered the most difficult skill for learners to

master because it demands grammatical accuracy, vocabulary knowledge, sentence organization, and critical thinking abilities. Elementary-level learners often face difficulties in producing grammatically correct written texts due to limited exposure to English language structures and insufficient writing practice.

Errors are a natural part of second language acquisition. Learners commonly make grammatical, lexical, and syntactic errors while attempting to communicate their ideas in English. According to Stephen Pit Corder, learners' errors are significant because they demonstrate the process of language development and indicate learners' progress in acquiring the target language (Corder 167). Rather than considering errors as failures, modern language teaching approaches view them as opportunities for learning and improvement.

Corrective feedback has gained considerable importance in language classrooms because it helps learners identify and correct their errors. Corrective feedback refers to teachers' responses to learners' mistakes in written or spoken language. It guides students toward accurate language use and supports grammatical development. According to Rod Ellis, corrective feedback enables learners to notice the gap between their incorrect output and the target language form (Ellis 45). In writing classrooms, corrective feedback is especially important because learners can review their mistakes carefully and revise their written work accordingly.

Researchers have identified different forms of corrective feedback, but direct and indirect corrective feedback remains the most commonly discussed types. Direct corrective feedback occurs when teachers explicitly provide the correct form of an error. For example, if a student writes "She go to school," the teacher directly changes "go" into "goes." In contrast, indirect corrective feedback only indicates the presence of an error through underlining, circling, or highlighting without providing the correct answer. Learners are expected to identify and correct the mistake independently.

There has been an ongoing debate among researchers regarding the effectiveness of direct and indirect corrective feedback. Some scholars argue that direct feedback is more beneficial for low-proficiency learners because it provides immediate and explicit correction. Dana Ferris states that direct feedback is useful for beginner learners who may not possess sufficient grammatical knowledge to self-correct errors (Ferris 52). On the other hand, supporters of indirect corrective feedback believe that it promotes learner autonomy and cognitive engagement because students actively participate in the correction process. John Lalande argues that indirect feedback encourages learners to develop problem-solving skills and long-term grammatical awareness (Lalande 143).

In the context of Pakistani public schools, students often experience difficulties in English writing due to traditional teaching methods, overcrowded classrooms, and limited language exposure. Teachers frequently correct students' errors, but the effectiveness of different feedback strategies remains unclear. Most previous studies on corrective feedback have focused on university students or advanced learners, whereas limited research has examined elementary-level learners in Pakistani public schools. Therefore, the present study aims to investigate whether direct or indirect corrective feedback is more effective in improving the grammatical accuracy of elementary EFL learners with low language proficiency.

The study is significant because it may help teachers adopt more effective feedback strategies in English writing classrooms. It may also assist curriculum designers in developing suitable

instructional materials for elementary learners. Furthermore, the findings may contribute to the existing literature on corrective feedback and second language writing in the Pakistani educational context.

Research Objectives:

1. To investigate the effect of direct corrective feedback on grammatical accuracy.
2. To examine the effect of indirect corrective feedback on grammatical accuracy.
3. To compare the effectiveness of direct and indirect corrective feedback among elementary EFL learners.
4. To determine whether corrective feedback ensures long-term grammatical accuracy.

Research Questions:

1. Does direct corrective feedback improve grammatical accuracy among elementary EFL learners?
2. Does indirect corrective feedback improve grammatical accuracy among elementary EFL learners?
3. Which type of corrective feedback is more effective for low-proficiency learners?
4. Does corrective feedback lead to long-term grammatical improvement?

Significance of the Study

The study is important for teachers, students, researchers, and curriculum developers. Teachers may use the findings to apply appropriate feedback techniques in writing classrooms. Students may benefit from improved grammatical instruction and enhanced writing skills. Curriculum designers may integrate effective corrective feedback strategies into English textbooks and classroom activities. Researchers may also use the study as a foundation for future research on second language writing and corrective feedback.

Scope of the Study

The study focuses on eighth-grade students studying in public schools of Central Punjab, Pakistan. It specifically investigates the effect of direct and indirect written corrective feedback on grammatical accuracy in English writing. The research is limited to elementary-level learners with low English proficiency.

2. Literature Review

Corrective feedback has remained one of the most debated areas in second language acquisition and English language teaching. Researchers have explored the role of feedback in improving learners' grammatical accuracy, fluency, and overall writing performance. In English as Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms, corrective feedback is considered an essential instructional tool because it enables learners to recognize their errors and improve their language competence. The present chapter reviews the relevant literature related to corrective feedback, grammatical accuracy, error analysis, and the effectiveness of direct and indirect feedback in second language writing.

Concept of Corrective Feedback

Corrective feedback refers to the responses provided by teachers to learners' linguistic errors in written or spoken language. It aims to guide learners toward accurate language use and reduce recurring mistakes. According to Rod Ellis, corrective feedback provides learners with information regarding the correctness or incorrectness of their language production and

facilitates second language development (Ellis 97). In writing classrooms, feedback helps students revise their written texts and improve grammatical structures.

Corrective feedback can be oral or written. Oral feedback occurs during classroom interaction, whereas written corrective feedback is provided on learners' written assignments. Written feedback is particularly important in EFL contexts because students often rely heavily on teacher guidance to improve their writing skills. Dana Ferris explains that written corrective feedback contributes significantly to learners' awareness of grammatical forms and writing accuracy (Ferris 81).

Errors in Second Language Learning

Errors are considered a natural phenomenon in second language acquisition. Language learners inevitably commit mistakes while attempting to use the target language. Traditionally, errors were viewed negatively and associated with ineffective teaching methods. However, modern linguistic theories recognize errors as evidence of language development.

According to Stephen Pit Corder, errors are meaningful because they provide insights into learners' language systems and learning processes (Corder 167). Corder distinguished between "errors" and "mistakes." Mistakes occur because of temporary lapses in performance, whereas errors reflect incomplete knowledge of language rules. Therefore, analyzing learners' errors can help teachers understand students' difficulties and select suitable teaching strategies.

Similarly, Larry Selinker introduced the concept of interlanguage, which refers to the transitional language system developed by learners during second language acquisition (Selinker 214). Interlanguage contains features of both the native language and the target language, resulting in grammatical deviations and errors.

Types of Corrective Feedback

Researchers have identified different forms of corrective feedback, including direct feedback, indirect feedback, metalinguistic feedback, reformulation, and focused feedback. However, direct and indirect corrective feedback remains the most widely discussed categories in second language writing research.

Direct Corrective Feedback

Direct corrective feedback occurs when teachers explicitly identify and correct learners' errors. Teachers may rewrite incorrect words, add missing grammatical elements, or provide the correct form above the error. For example, if a learner writes "He play football," the teacher directly changes "play" into "plays."

According to Dana Ferris, direct feedback is particularly useful for beginner learners because it provides explicit guidance and reduces confusion (Ferris 63). Elementary-level students often lack sufficient grammatical knowledge to identify and correct their own errors. Therefore, direct correction helps them understand grammatical rules more effectively.

Research studies strongly support the effectiveness of direct corrective feedback. John Bitchener conducted experimental studies on ESL learners and found that direct corrective feedback significantly improved learners' accuracy in the use of articles and verb forms (Bitchener and Knoch 210). Similarly, Erel and Bulut reported that direct feedback produced better grammatical improvement among learners with low language proficiency (Erel and Bulut 401).

Despite its advantages, some researchers criticize direct corrective feedback because it may encourage learner dependency. Students may rely excessively on teachers' corrections instead of developing self-editing abilities. However, many scholars still consider direct feedback highly beneficial for elementary and low-level learners.

Indirect Corrective Feedback

Indirect corrective feedback refers to indicating the presence of an error without providing the correct form. Teachers may underline, circle, or highlight errors while leaving students responsible for correcting them independently. This type of feedback encourages learners to engage actively in the correction process.

John Lalande argues that indirect corrective feedback promotes learner autonomy and deeper cognitive processing because students must identify and solve grammatical problems themselves (Lalande 145). Learners become more conscious of language structures and gradually develop self-correction skills.

Indirect feedback is considered beneficial for advanced learners who possess stronger grammatical knowledge. However, elementary learners often face difficulties understanding their mistakes without explicit guidance. According to Ferris, indirect feedback may confuse low-proficiency learners because they may not know how to correct the identified errors accurately (Ferris 88).

Theoretical Framework

The present study is based on Error Analysis Theory proposed by Stephen Pit Corder. Error Analysis Theory emphasizes the significance of learners' errors in language acquisition. According to Corder, errors are systematic and reveal learners' developmental stages (Corder 170). Teachers can use error analysis to identify learners' difficulties and improve instructional practices.

The study is also linked with the Noticing Hypothesis introduced by Richard Schmidt. Schmidt argues that learners must consciously notice linguistic forms in order to acquire them successfully (Schmidt 140). Corrective feedback helps learners notice the gap between their incorrect output and the target language forms.

Another relevant theory is the Interaction Hypothesis proposed by Michael Long. According to Long, interaction and feedback facilitate language acquisition because they draw learners' attention toward grammatical structures and communication problems (Long 451).

Previous Studies on Corrective Feedback

Numerous researchers have investigated the impact of corrective feedback on second language writing. One of the most influential debates emerged between John Truscott and Ferris. Truscott argued that grammar correction is ineffective and should be abandoned because it fails to produce long-term improvement in learners' writing accuracy (Truscott 328). He claimed that excessive correction may discourage learners and create anxiety.

In contrast, Ferris strongly rejected Truscott's argument and maintained that corrective feedback is beneficial when applied appropriately (Ferris 90). She emphasized that students improve significantly when teachers provide clear and consistent feedback on grammatical errors.

Bitchener and Knoch conducted several studies investigating the effectiveness of written corrective feedback among ESL learners. Their findings revealed that direct corrective

feedback improved learners' grammatical accuracy more effectively than indirect feedback, especially in the use of articles and verb forms (Bitchener and Knoch 208).

Similarly, Chandler examined the role of corrective feedback in improving learners' fluency and accuracy. The study concluded that direct correction helped learners reduce grammatical errors more rapidly than indirect correction (Chandler 293).

In the Pakistani context, research on corrective feedback remains limited, particularly at the elementary level. Most studies have focused on university students or adult learners. Public school students in Pakistan often face challenges related to overcrowded classrooms, limited exposure to English, and insufficient writing practice. Therefore, there is a need to investigate effective feedback strategies for elementary EFL learners in Pakistani schools.

Research Gap

Although extensive research has been conducted on corrective feedback, findings remain inconclusive regarding the superiority of direct or indirect feedback. Some studies favor direct feedback because of its explicit nature, while others support indirect feedback for promoting learner autonomy. Moreover, very few studies have explored the long-term effects of corrective feedback among elementary learners in Pakistani public schools.

The present study attempts to fill this gap by examining the comparative effectiveness of direct and indirect corrective feedback among eighth-grade EFL learners with low English proficiency in Central Punjab, Pakistan.

Chapter Summary

The literature review demonstrates that corrective feedback plays a significant role in improving grammatical accuracy in second language writing. Direct corrective feedback appears more effective for beginner learners because it provides explicit correction and guidance. Indirect feedback, however, encourages learner autonomy and cognitive engagement. Previous research findings remain mixed, particularly regarding long-term grammatical improvement. Therefore, the present study aims to investigate the effectiveness of direct and indirect corrective feedback among elementary EFL learners in Pakistani public schools.

3. Research Methodology

3. Methodology

This chapter explains the theoretical framework, classification of errors, research design, sampling, data collection procedures, research instruments, data analysis techniques, and ethical considerations. The study employed a quantitative quasi-experimental design to examine the effect of direct and indirect corrective feedback on the grammatical accuracy of elementary-level EFL learners in public schools of Central Punjab, Pakistan.

3.1 Theoretical Framework

Before the 1960s, behaviorist theories viewed errors as negative habits caused by faulty teaching methods. However, Noam Chomsky introduced the concept of Universal Grammar, arguing that humans possess an innate ability to acquire language. This shifted attention toward cognitive approaches where errors were considered signs of language development. Corrective feedback helps learners identify and improve grammatical weaknesses. Stephen Pit Corder argues that errors are important because they reflect learners' linguistic competence and developmental progress (Corder 167). Similarly, Larry Selinker states that

learners' errors are systematic and contribute to hypothesis formation during second language learning (Selinker 214).

The present study is based on Error Analysis Theory, which views errors as natural indicators of language learning and supports the role of corrective feedback in improving grammatical accuracy.

3.2 Error and Mistake

Stephen Pit Corder distinguishes between error and mistake. A mistake is a temporary performance slip caused by carelessness, while an error reflects incomplete knowledge of the target language (Corder 168).

Rod Ellis explains that if learners can self-correct, the deviation is a mistake; if they cannot, it is considered an error (Ellis 17).

3.3 Classification of Errors

Learners' errors are generally divided into two categories:

3.3.1 Inter-lingual Errors

Inter-lingual errors occur because of native language interference. Jack Richards states that learners transfer first-language structures into the target language, which causes grammatical inaccuracies (Richards 205).

3.3.2 Intra-lingual Errors

Intra-lingual errors result from incomplete knowledge of the target language. These errors occur because of overgeneralization, faulty rule application, and insufficient grammatical understanding (Richards 206).

3.4 Error Analysis Model

The study applied the error analysis model developed by Sibel Erel and Dilek Bulut (2007). The model classifies learners' errors into eighteen categories, including punctuation, capitalization, spelling, tense, subject-verb agreement, article usage, pronoun, and word order.

Examples:

- Incorrect: english is my favorite subject.
- Correct: English is my favorite subject.
- Incorrect: The city is crowd.
- Correct: The city is crowded.

3.5 Data Collection Procedure

Data collection consisted of teaching and feedback procedures.

3.5.1 Teaching Procedure

The researcher delivered six lectures on eighteen grammatical categories using the deductive teaching approach. Grammatical rules were explained first, followed by examples and practice activities. Both groups received grammatical instruction, while the control group was additionally trained in error correction codes.

3.5.2 Feedback Procedure

Students wrote an essay on "My School" as a pretest. During the treatment period, learners wrote descriptive paragraphs on different topics. The researcher corrected errors using Erel and Bulut's model.

- The experimental group received direct corrective feedback in which errors were corrected directly.

- The control group received indirect corrective feedback through error codes and underlining.

After four weeks, an immediate posttest was conducted, followed by a delayed posttest after two and a half months.

3.6 Sampling and Participants

The participants included 54 elementary-level EFL students from Government Elementary School Kalair. Purposive sampling was used to select learners from similar rural and socioeconomic backgrounds. Their ages ranged from 12 to 15 years.

3.7 Research Instrument

The study used pretests, immediate posttests, and delayed posttests as research instruments. Learners' grammatical accuracy was measured through essay and paragraph writing tasks.

3.8 Data Analysis Technique

Data from 162 writing samples were analyzed through SPSS software. Paired sample t-tests were applied to determine the effectiveness of direct and indirect corrective feedback on learners' grammatical accuracy.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Permission was obtained from the principal of Government Elementary School Kalair before conducting the study. Participants and teachers were informed about the purpose of the research, and confidentiality was ensured. Students participated voluntarily with parental permission and had the right to withdraw from the study at any stage.

4. Theoretical Analysis

The present study is theoretically grounded in Error Analysis Theory and Cognitive Learning Theory, which emphasize the importance of learners' errors in second language acquisition. The study investigates how direct and indirect corrective feedback influences the grammatical accuracy of elementary-level EFL learners in public schools of Central Punjab, Pakistan.

Before the emergence of cognitive theories, behaviorist scholars considered language learning a process of habit formation. According to behaviorism, errors were viewed negatively because they reflected faulty learning habits. However, this perspective changed after Noam Chomsky introduced the theory of Universal Grammar (UG). Chomsky (1965) argued that humans possess an innate ability to acquire language through internal cognitive processes rather than simple habit formation. This theory shifted attention from behaviorist repetition to learners' mental processing and hypothesis formation during language learning. The present study supports the cognitive perspective because learners' errors are treated as developmental signs of second language acquisition rather than failures. Stephen Pit Corder argues that learners' errors are systematic and meaningful because they reveal learners' current stage of linguistic competence (Corder 167). Errors help teachers and researchers understand how learners construct grammatical rules during second language learning.

Similarly, Larry Selinker introduced the concept of interlanguage, which refers to the transitional language system developed by second language learners. According to Selinker, learners create their own linguistic system that lies between the native language and the target language (Selinker 214). Therefore, grammatical errors are natural components of language development.

Corrective feedback plays an important role in improving learners' grammatical competence because it helps learners recognize and modify incorrect linguistic forms. In the present study,

direct corrective feedback proved more effective than indirect corrective feedback for elementary-level learners. This finding can be explained through Cognitive Load Theory because low-proficiency learners often struggle to identify grammatical errors independently. Direct corrective feedback reduces learners' cognitive burden by explicitly providing correct linguistic forms.

The findings also support the views of Dana Ferris, who argues that direct corrective feedback is particularly effective for beginner learners because it provides immediate and explicit grammatical guidance (Ferris 63). Since elementary-level learners possess limited grammatical awareness, they benefit more from teacher-provided corrections than from self-editing strategies.

In contrast, indirect corrective feedback requires learners to identify and correct errors independently through grammatical codes or underlining techniques. Although this approach promotes learner autonomy and critical thinking, it may not be suitable for learners with weak grammatical foundations. John Lalande suggests that indirect feedback encourages deeper cognitive engagement because learners actively participate in the correction process (Lalande 145). However, the present study found that elementary-level learners struggled to self-correct many grammatical errors due to limited language proficiency.

The findings of the delayed posttest further indicate that corrective feedback alone cannot ensure long-term grammatical accuracy. Although learners improved during the treatment period, many errors reappeared after two and a half months. This result supports the argument of John Truscott, who questions the long-term effectiveness of written corrective feedback and argues that language acquisition requires sustained exposure and repeated practice (Truscott 327).

The study therefore highlights the importance of continuous writing practice, repeated grammatical reinforcement, and teacher guidance in second language learning. Theoretical analysis suggests that corrective feedback is most effective when combined with regular writing activities, revision exercises, and meaningful language exposure.

Overall, the theoretical findings demonstrate that direct corrective feedback is more suitable for elementary-level EFL learners because it aligns with learners' cognitive needs and proficiency levels. The study also confirms that learners' errors are natural developmental features of second language acquisition and should be treated as opportunities for learning rather than signs of failure.

5. Discussion and Analysis

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of the data collected through pretests, immediate posttests, and delayed posttests. The study aimed to investigate the effect of direct corrective feedback (DCF) and indirect corrective feedback (ICF) on the grammatical accuracy of elementary-level EFL learners. The data were analyzed through paired sample t-tests using SPSS software.

4.1 Pretest Analysis

The pretest was conducted before the treatment to examine learners' initial grammatical competence and ensure that both groups were homogeneous. Students from the experimental and control groups wrote an essay on "My School," which was evaluated according to eighteen grammatical categories identified by Sibel Erel and Dilek Bulut (2007).

The results of the pretest showed that there was no significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental and control groups. Both groups demonstrated weak grammatical accuracy because learners frequently committed errors related to punctuation, capitalization, spelling, tense, subject-verb agreement, article usage, and word order.

The findings indicate that elementary-level EFL learners in rural public schools of Pakistan possess limited grammatical competence in English writing. This weakness may result from insufficient exposure to English writing practice and reliance on traditional Grammar Translation Method (GTM) instruction.

4.2 Immediate Posttest Analysis

After four weeks of treatment, an immediate posttest was conducted to measure the effect of corrective feedback on learners' grammatical accuracy.

The experimental group received direct corrective feedback in which the teacher directly corrected learners' grammatical errors. In contrast, the control group received indirect corrective feedback through underlining and error codes.

The paired sample t-test results revealed significant improvement in the experimental group compared to the control group. Learners who received direct corrective feedback showed noticeable reduction in grammatical errors, particularly in:

- Subject-verb agreement
- Tense usage
- Article usage
- Spelling
- Word formation
- Punctuation

The findings suggest that direct corrective feedback is more effective for low-proficiency learners because it provides explicit correction and immediate awareness of grammatical forms. These results support the views of Dana Ferris, who argues that direct corrective feedback is beneficial for beginner learners because it reduces confusion and provides accurate linguistic input (Ferris 63).

On the other hand, the control group also demonstrated slight improvement; however, the progress was less significant compared to the experimental group. Many learners in the indirect feedback group struggled to identify and self-correct grammatical errors independently. This finding indicates that elementary-level learners may lack sufficient grammatical awareness to benefit fully from indirect corrective feedback.

4.3 Delayed Posttest Analysis

A delayed posttest was conducted after two and a half months to examine the long-term effectiveness of corrective feedback.

The results revealed that both groups showed decline in grammatical accuracy compared to the immediate posttest. Although the experimental group still performed slightly better than the control group, many previously corrected errors reappeared in learners' writing.

The findings indicate that direct corrective feedback is effective mainly for short-term grammatical improvement rather than long-term retention. Similarly, indirect corrective feedback also failed to achieve lasting grammatical accuracy.

One possible reason for this decline is the limited exposure to continuous writing practice after the treatment period. Since the school remained closed during summer vacation,

learners had fewer opportunities to revise grammatical concepts and apply corrective feedback in writing tasks.

The results support the argument of John Truscott, who questions the long-term effectiveness of written corrective feedback and argues that grammatical accuracy improvement may not remain stable over time (Truscott 327).

4.4 Comparative Analysis of Direct and Indirect Corrective Feedback

The comparison between direct and indirect corrective feedback demonstrates that direct corrective feedback produced better immediate results among elementary-level EFL learners.

Direct Corrective Feedback

- Provided explicit correction
- Reduced learners' confusion
- Improved grammatical accuracy quickly
- Beneficial for low-proficiency learners

Indirect Corrective Feedback

- Encouraged learner autonomy
- Required self-correction ability
- Produced slower improvement
- Less effective for elementary learners

The findings suggest that elementary-level learners need explicit grammatical guidance because they possess limited linguistic competence and cannot independently recognize many grammatical errors.

4.5 Major Findings of the Study

The major findings of the study are as follows:

1. Both direct and indirect corrective feedback improved learners' grammatical accuracy to some extent.
2. Direct corrective feedback was more effective than indirect corrective feedback in the immediate posttest.
3. Elementary-level EFL learners benefited more from explicit grammatical correction.
4. Long-term retention of grammatical accuracy remained weak in both groups.
5. Continuous writing practice and regular feedback are necessary for sustained grammatical improvement.

4.6 Discussion of Findings

The findings of the present study are consistent with previous studies emphasizing the effectiveness of direct corrective feedback for low-proficiency learners. Dana Ferris and John Bitchener argue that direct feedback provides learners with clear grammatical input and facilitates language development (Ferris 63; Bitchener 108).

The results also support Error Analysis Theory proposed by Stephen Pit Corder, which views learners' errors as developmental features of language acquisition. Corrective feedback helps learners recognize grammatical weaknesses and improve writing performance.

However, the delayed posttest findings reveal that corrective feedback alone cannot ensure permanent grammatical accuracy. Learners require regular reinforcement, continuous practice, and repeated exposure to grammatical structures to achieve long-term improvement.

The study therefore concludes that direct corrective feedback is more suitable for elementary-level EFL learners in public schools of Pakistan, especially for short-term grammatical development.

6. Conclusion

The present study investigated the effect of direct and indirect corrective feedback on the grammatical accuracy of elementary-level EFL learners in public schools of Central Punjab, Pakistan. The research aimed to determine which type of corrective feedback is more effective for learners with low English language proficiency.

The findings of the study revealed that both direct corrective feedback (DCF) and indirect corrective feedback (ICF) contributed to improving learners' grammatical accuracy. However, direct corrective feedback proved more effective in the immediate posttest because learners who received explicit corrections showed greater improvement in grammatical structures such as tense, subject-verb agreement, punctuation, spelling, and article usage.

The results support the argument of Dana Ferris that direct corrective feedback is particularly beneficial for low-proficiency learners because it provides clear and explicit grammatical guidance (Ferris 63). Similarly, John Bitchener states that written corrective feedback helps learners improve grammatical accuracy when feedback is direct and focused (Bitchener 108). The study also supports the views of Stephen Pit Corder, who considers learners' errors natural and developmental features of second language acquisition (Corder 167). Through corrective feedback, learners become aware of their grammatical weaknesses and gradually improve their writing performance.

Although both groups improved during the treatment period, the delayed posttest indicated that long-term grammatical accuracy was not maintained effectively. Many previously corrected errors reappeared after two and a half months. This finding suggests that corrective feedback alone cannot guarantee permanent grammatical improvement without continuous writing practice and reinforcement.

The results are partly consistent with John Truscott, who argues that written corrective feedback may have limited long-term effects on language acquisition (Truscott 327). The decline in learners' grammatical performance after the delayed posttest indicates that sustained improvement requires repeated exposure to grammatical structures and continuous feedback.

The study concludes that direct corrective feedback is more effective than indirect corrective feedback for elementary-level EFL learners, particularly in short-term grammatical development. Since beginner learners possess limited grammatical awareness, they benefit more from explicit correction than from self-correction strategies.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. English teachers should use direct corrective feedback more frequently with elementary-level EFL learners because explicit correction helps learners understand grammatical forms more effectively.
2. Learners should be provided with regular writing practice to strengthen grammatical accuracy and long-term retention.
3. Teachers should combine corrective feedback with revision activities so that learners can review and apply corrected grammatical structures repeatedly.

4. Curriculum developers should include guided writing activities and feedback strategies in English textbooks used in public schools.
5. Teacher training programs should focus on effective corrective feedback techniques to improve classroom writing instruction.
6. Future researchers may investigate the effect of corrective feedback on other language skills such as speaking, reading, and listening.
7. Further studies may also examine corrective feedback at secondary, college, and university levels to compare learners' responses across different proficiency levels.

In conclusion, corrective feedback plays an important role in improving grammatical accuracy in second language writing. Among the two approaches examined in the present study, direct corrective feedback proved more beneficial for elementary-level learners in rural public schools of Central Punjab, Pakistan. However, long-term grammatical development requires continuous practice, reinforcement, and sustained exposure to accurate language use.

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