

## The Effects of Direct and Indirect Focused Written Corrective Feedback on EFL Learners' Written Accuracy

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### **Abstract:**

*The role of corrective feedback (CF), the way it should be implemented and its instructional value have been among the most controversial issues in second language (L2) acquisition literature. The present study used a pretest-immediate posttest-delayed posttest design to investigate the overall effect of direct and indirect focused written CF on the accuracy development of EFL learners in both revision of the same narrative and two new narratives reconstructed in the immediate and delayed posttests. The analyses of the data obtained from the two experimental groups and one control group revealed that though the three groups were almost equal at the beginning of the study with regard to the targeted structure, i.e., the past simple, the experimental groups outperformed the control group in all three tests. Further analyses demonstrated that the direct focused written CF group outperformed the indirect focused written CF group in pretest and both immediate and delayed posttests. The study concludes that focused written CF is a useful instructional tool that leads to acquisition of the corrected forms and supports the provision of written CF in EFL classes.*

**Key Words:** Direct corrective feedback, Indirect corrective feedback, Focused feedback, Writing

### **1. Introduction**

Whether and how EFL/ESL learners' errors in writing should be corrected has been one of the hotly debated topics in the field of L2 acquisition. While some researchers (e.g., Truscott, 1996, 1999, 2004, 2007) have argued against CF in L2 acquisition, especially in writing, and claimed that error correction has no facilitative role in improving learner writing and may even be counterproductive, others (e.g., Ferris, 1999, 2002, 2004; Long, 2006) have argued for the use of written CF and believe that until some evidence is obtained from well-designed studies, such firm conclusions about (in)effectiveness of CF is premature. Ferris (1999, 2004) has also contended that error correction is necessary and useful because most students prefer, need and trust teachers' feedback. According to Truscott (cited in Van Beuningen, De Jong, & Kuiken, 2012), however, CF is not only ineffective but also has at least two harmful side effects. First,

since CF encourages learners to avoid situations in which they make errors, it leads to simplified writing. In fact, Truscott (2004, 2007) has argued that accuracy gains found in earlier correction studies might well be attributable to such avoidance and simplified writing instead of CF. Truscott's suggestions are in line with limited capacity models of attention that also predict a trade-off between accuracy and complexity (e.g., Skehan, 1998). Within these models, L2 performance is expected to become more complex when learners are willing to experiment with the target language. A focus on accuracy, on the other hand, "is seen to reflect a greater degree of conservatism" in which learners will try "to achieve greater control over more stable [interlanguage] elements" while avoiding extending their L2 repertoire (Skehan & Foster, 2001, p. 191, cited in Van Beuningen, et al., 2012). The second harmful side effect of CF identified by Truscott (1996, 2004) was the diversion of time and energy away from more productive aspects of writing instruction, such as sheer writing practice.

Another controversial issue in the field of L2 acquisition literature is whether CF should be direct or indirect (explicit or implicit). Explicit or direct CF involves explicitly drawing learner's attention to deviance with or without an explicit rule explanation. Panova and Lyster (2002, cited in Afshari, 2013) argue that explicit correction involves a clear indication to the learner that an utterance was ill-formed, and provides the correct form. Implicit or indirect correction, on the other hand, is indirect, i.e., it only indicates that an error has been made. The goal of both implicit and explicit techniques is to enable the learners to discern the gap between their interlanguage (IL) and the target language (TL) and to enable them to fill the gap. Some researchers (e.g., Long & Robinson 1998; Dekeyser, 2003) have argued that explicit instruction is more effective than implicit instruction. In their meta-analysis of experimental and quasi-experimental studies, Norris and Ortega (2000) provided some positive evidence for the superiority of explicit instruction over implicit instruction. Suzuki (2012) states that in a setting where students engage in written languaging on their understanding about the L2, direct correction may play an important role in ensuring that their reflections (i.e., languaging, self-explaining) remain adequate and on track, as it were. Without direct correction, students' languaging may come to inaccurate conclusions about certain possibilities in the target language. Owing to its inherent indirectness, implicit corrective feedback has been considered less effective than explicit corrective feedback to attract learners' attention. Dekeyser (2003) argues

that both Reger (1976, 1993) in cognitive psychology and Krashen (1982, 1994) in applied linguistics have repeatedly argued that implicit learning is particularly advantageous for complex structures.

Research on CF has also focused on whether CF is only useful as an editing tool or it leads to learning. Ashwell (2000), Ferris (1997), and Ferris and Roberts (2001) have argued that CF is beneficial in improving accuracy of a particular writing. Truscott and Hsu (2008), however, argued that since these results are only based on the revision of the same texts, they do not let firm conclusions as to whether learners have really acquired the corrected forms. Therefore, researchers tried to investigate the effects of CF on new pieces of writing and came up with mixed results. Chandler (2003), for example, investigated the effects of CF on improving the accuracy of students' writing over time and concluded that CF is effective means of doing so. Polio, Fleck, and Leder (1998), on the other hand, failed to find such an effect for CF.

The present study was designed to shed some light on the aforementioned controversies surrounding the role of written CF, namely, whether CF is beneficial in developing writing accuracy of L2 learners, whether CF should be direct or indirect, and whether it is beneficial for revision purposes only or it can also lead to learning corrected forms in new pieces of writing. The study was guided by the following questions:

RQ1: Will direct and indirect focused written CF lead to improved accuracy in the use of the past simple during revision of the same text?

RQ2: Will direct and indirect focused written CF lead to improved accuracy in the use of the past simple in a new text?

RQ3: Is there a difference in the effect of direct and indirect focused written CF in the use of the past simple in revision and a new text?

RQ4: Is there a difference in the long-term effects of the direct and indirect focused written CF in the use of the past simple?

## **2. Literature Review**

## 2.1. Writing and CF

Since 1980s, many ESL/EFL writing teachers and researchers (e.g., Raimes, 1987; Perl, 1980; Zamel, 1976, 1982, 1983) have accepted and advocated the philosophy of process writing and also implemented the approaches associated with it. Judy (1980, cited in Zamel 1982, p. 206), contends that “form grows from content and is inseparable from it”, therefore, the issues of content and meaning must be addressed first, and “language is of concern only when the ideas to be communicated have been delineated” (Zamel 1983, p. 183).

Horowitz (1986a, 1986b), however, criticized the process concept, questioned the uncritical acceptance of it, and seemed to view the process concept as a single approach which had been “miscast as a complete theory of writing” (Horowitz, 1986a, p. 141). This criticism was supported by Tsang and Wong’s (1992) case studies of six Hong Kong students and their writing. Though substantial improvement was evident at the discourse level, i.e., the content and organization of their writing, no average gain in the sentence-level features of vocabulary, language use and mechanics was recorded, and little difference in terms of syntactic complexity was noted running counter to Judy’s belief that “form grows from content and is inseparable from it” (1980, cited in Zamel 1982, p. 206). Furthermore, Casanave’s (1994) study of a group of Japanese students’ language development and progress in English over three semesters of journal writing also demonstrated no noticeable improvement in grammatical accuracy.

Though there is a general agreement among researchers and practitioners that linguistic errors should not be focused at the beginning of the process of writing, it has been claimed that “attention to process is ... necessary but not sufficient” (Raimes 1985, p. 250). It has also been argued that a totally grammarless approach “can lead to the development of a broken, ungrammatical, pidginized form of the target language beyond which students rarely progress” (Celce-Murcia 1991, p. 462). While not downplaying the importance of process writing in writing instruction, researchers (e.g., Christie, 1985; Maclean, 1989) have recognized that language form is an important component in writing development as it reflects genre and writing purpose. According to Ardnt (1987), all L2 writers, no matter what their level of skill in writing, need to enrich their knowledge of linguistic resources in L2 acquisition process. Hence, it has

been argued that while engaging students in the process of composing, ESL/EFL composition teachers should not eliminate their obligation to improve their students' linguistic competencies.

## 2.2. Direct and Indirect CF

One of the controversies to be solved in the L2 acquisition literature is whether CF should be direct (explicit) or indirect (indirect). What distinguishes direct and indirect CF, according to Van Beuningen (2010), is the learner's involvement in the correction process. In direct CF, there is an indication of the error and the corresponding correct linguistic form. Indirect CF, however, indicates that an error has been made, but providing the target form is left to the learner. Indirect correction methods can take different forms that vary in their explicitness (e.g., underlining of errors, coding of errors). With regard to the relative effectiveness of direct and indirect CF various hypotheses have been put forward, some in favor of direct CF, others supporting the indirect CF. Those supporting indirect CF (e.g., Ferris, 1995; Lalande, 1982) believe that learners will benefit more from indirect CF because it requires a more profound form of language processing when learners are self-editing their writing. Bitchener and Knoch (2008) have attributed the value of the indirect approach to the fact that it "requires pupils to engage in guided learning and problem solving and, as a result, promotes the type of reflection that is more likely to foster long-term acquisition" (p. 415). Those advocating direct CF (e.g., Chandler, 2003), on the other hand, have claimed that since indirect CF provides learners with insufficient information to resolve complex errors (e.g., syntactic errors), it might fail. Chandler (2003) argues that, while direct CF enables learners to instantly internalize the correct form as provided by their teacher, learners whose errors are corrected indirectly do not know if their own hypothesized corrections are indeed accurate. This delay in access to the target form might level out the potential advantage of the additional cognitive effort associated with indirect CF. Furthermore, Bitchener and Knoch (2010b) suggested that only direct CF offers learners the kind of explicit information that is needed for testing hypotheses about the target language.

Seedhouse (1997, cited in Kim, 2004) argues that teachers were unwilling to tell learners directly when they made an error, and this eventually confused the learners as to when they were being corrected. Seedhouse suggested the provision of more direct and overt corrective feedback in order to benefit the learner. Kim (2004) summarized some early studies regarding the superiority

of the explicit focus on form to implicit focus on form (e.g., Carrol & Swain, 1993; Chaudron, 1988; Chaudron, 1997; Fanselow, 1997). They all suggest that corrective feedback needs to be explicit enough for learners to notice it as correction without any ambiguities.

According to Van Beuningen, et al. (2012), clear empirical evidence on the differential effects of direct and indirect CF on accuracy development is lacking, as research on the issue has produced conflicting results. Some researchers have found no differences between the two CF types (e.g., Frantzen, 1995; Robb, Ross, & Shortreed, 1986), others have reported an advantage for indirect CF (e.g., Ferris, 2006; Lalande, 1982), and yet others have found direct correction to be most effective in their comparisons (e.g., Bitchener & Knoch, 2010b; Chandler, 2003; Van Beuningen, De Jong, & Kuiken, 2008).

### **2.3. Focused and Unfocused CF**

The difference between focused and unfocused CF is directly related to the degree of comprehensiveness of CF methodologies. In the unfocused or comprehensive CF, all errors in a learner's writing are corrected not just one type of error. In focused or selective CF, on the other hand, correction is limited to specific error(s) type(s) (e.g., errors in the use of English articles) and other types of errors are not corrected.

There have been arguments for and against these two types of CF. Some (e.g., Bitchener, 2008; Ellis, Sheen, Murakami, Takashima, 2008; Sheen, 2007) have argued that focused CF is more beneficial than unfocused CF for accuracy development. They believe that the learners' need to notice and understand corrections in order to acquire them and this assertion is in line with Schmidt's (1994) Noticing Hypothesis. Another reason for the use of focused CF is L2 learners' limited processing capacity. In unfocused CF, in which wide range of errors are corrected, there is a risk of cognitive overload and learners' may not be able to process CF. Nevertheless, other researcher (e.g., Bruton, 2009; Ferris, 2010), have questioned the usefulness of focused CF. They have argued that focused CF is more like explicit grammar instruction than focus-on-form intervention making it difficult for learners to transfer newly learned forms from CF to new writing situations. Furthermore, it has been claimed that focusing on some errors and ignoring others may confuse the learners.

Only a few studies have compared the effects of focused and unfocused written CF. The study conducted by Ellis et al. (2008) to determine the two CF types found no significant difference between the two groups receiving focused and unfocused CF. Sheen, Wright, and Moldawa (2009), however, found that the focused CF was more beneficial than unfocused CF, though the authors themselves acknowledged that the CF received by the unfocused group was unsystematic.

### **3. Method**

#### **3.1. Participants**

Three intact classes ( $N = 38$ ) from a private language institute in Khoy city, West Azerbaijan Province, Iran, participated in this study. They were randomly assigned into two experimental groups ( $N = 26$ ) and one control group ( $N = 12$ ). The participants were all male and at low-intermediate level of language proficiency according to the institute's placement policy. Their age ranged between 16 and 22 years old, and they all shared Azeri Turkish as their mother tongue.

#### **3.2. Materials and Procedure**

Three narratives with the same length and level of difficulty were used in the study. Prior to the introduction of the treatments for the experimental groups, all three groups reconstructed the first narrative. The result of the first reconstructed narrative was used as the pretest in order to determine the participants' knowledge of the structure in question, i.e., the past simple, at the beginning of the study. The second narrative was used as the immediate post test to measure the short term effects of the treatments on the learner's writing accuracy development. The third narrative was used three weeks later as the delayed posttest in order to measure the long-term effects of the treatments on the participants' writing accuracy.

The three intact classes were randomly assigned into two experimental groups, i. e., direct and indirect focused written CF groups, and one control group. In order to determine their knowledge of the structure in question at the beginning of the study, the participants in all three groups were instructed to read the first narrative containing the targeted structure carefully and reconstruct it in the first session. They were given the meanings of some difficult words so that they could

focus on the content. They were then asked to reconstruct the text individually without making use of their notes or consulting their teacher or classmates. The reconstructed narratives were collected and later returned to the three groups with direct and indirect focused written CF for the experimental groups and no CF for the control group in the second session. In direct focused CF group, the participants' errors on the targeted structure were identified and the corresponding correct forms were provided. In indirect focused group, on the other hand, it was indicated that an error has been made, i. e., the error was underlined, the correction, however, was left to the learners. The direct and indirect CF treatments were given by one of the researchers of the study. For ethical reasons, the control group received some comments for the organization of their texts. In the second session, the learners were asked to revise their narratives again based on the CFs they had received. Their performance, that is, their correct use of the past simple, in both reconstructed and revised texts was measured. A new narrative was introduced in the third session and the participants in the three groups went through the same procedures, i.e., they were asked to read the text and reconstruct it individually. The reconstructed texts, which were considered as the immediate posttest, were then gathered and scored for the correct use of the past simple. Three weeks later, in the fourth session, the third narrative which served as the delayed posttest was introduced and the participants were asked to read and reconstruct it. The participants' performance on this test was used to determine the long-term effects of the treatments on the groups' written accuracy development.

#### **4. Data Analyses and Findings**

In order to provide appropriate answers to the research questions concerning the overall effects of two types of focused written CF on the participants' accuracy development in the use of the targeted structure in their writings – both revision and new narratives (RQ 1& 2), the relative efficacy of the two types of CF in the pretest and immediate posttest (RQ 3), and the efficacy of two types of CF relative to each other in delayed posttest (RQ 4), ANOVAs and post-hoc analyses were run. First, the effects of direct and indirect focused written CF on the accuracy development of the participants in the pretest, i.e., the first narrative, and revision of the same text was investigated. Table 1, which demonstrates the descriptive statistics of the three groups on the three tests, reveals that the means of the three groups on pretest (6.91, 7.21, 8.16) are very close suggesting that the three groups were equal at the beginning of the study in the use of the

focused structure. In the revision of the same text, however, the means of the three groups are different with the control group (8.08) much lower than that of the direct focused written CF group (14.64) and indirect focused written CF (11.66) group.

To determine whether this difference was statistically significant, the ANOVA for the three groups on the pretest and revision was needed. Table 2 clearly demonstrates that though there was no significant difference between the groups in the pretest ( $p > .05$ ) with  $F$ -observed less than  $F$ -critical, there was statistically significant difference among them in the revision ( $p < .05$ ) with  $F$ -observed more than  $F$ -critical.

**Table: 1**

**Descriptive Statistics for Pretest and Revision**

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Pretest	CG	12	6.916	1.564	.451
	DCFG	14	7.214	1.761	.470
	IDCFG	12	8.166	1.337	.385
	Total	38	7.421	1.621	.263
Revision	CG	12	8.083	1.443	.416
	DCFG	14	14.642	1.736	.464
	IDCFG	12	11.666	2.146	.619
	Total	38	11.631	3.250	.527
Posttest1	CG	12	8.000	1.044	.30151
	DCFG	14	13.071	1.817	.48567
	IDCFG	12	10.916	1.240	.35799
	Total	38	10.789	2.537	.41170
Posttest2	CG	12	8.083	1.443	.41667
	DCFG	14	12.928	1.384	.37009
	IDCFG	12	11.000	1.044	.30151
	Total	38	10.789	2.395	.38860

Note: CG = Control group, DCFG = Direct CF group, IDCFG = Indirect CF group

This means that the treatments, that is, direct and indirect focused written CF, were effective in developing the accuracy gains of the participants in the revision of the same text.

**Table: 2****ANOVA for the three groups on pretest and revision**

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Pretest	Between Groups	10.323	2	5.161	2.078	.140
	Within Groups	86.940	35	2.484		
	Total	97.263	37			
Revision	Between Groups	278.044	2	139.022	43.137	.000
	Within Groups	112.798	35	3.223		
	Total	390.842	37			

Table 3 also reveals that the three groups performed differently on the revision of the first narrative and this difference was statistically meaningful ( $p < .05$ ). Table 1, which shows the means of the groups on the three tests, reveals that the mean of the control group (8.08) was

**Table: 3****Post-hoc for the Revision of the First Narrative**

	(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Revision	CG	DCFG	-6.55952*	.70623	.000
		IDCFG	-3.58333*	.73289	.000
	DCFG	CG	6.55952*	.70623	.000
		IDCFG	2.97619*	.70623	.001
	IDCFG	CG	3.58333*	.73289	.000
		DCFG	-2.97619*	.70623	.001

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

much lower than that of the focused written CF groups, and between CF groups it was the direct CF group (14.64) which performed better than indirect CF group (11.66). These results suggest that though both CF treatments were effective in enabling the participants to develop their knowledge of the targeted structure in the revision task and both outperformed the control group, the direct focused CF was more effective than the indirect focused CF.

To determine whether the treatments were also effective in enabling the participants to use the targeted structure correctly in new texts, the performances of the three groups on the new narratives, i.e., posttest1 and posttest2 were compared. As is shown in table 1, the means of the

three groups have increased from pretest (6.91, 7.21, 8.16) to posttest1 (8, 13, 10.91) and posttest2 (8.08, 12.92, 11).

**Table: 4**

**ANOVA for the pretest, posttest1, and posttest2**

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Pretest	Between Groups	10.323	2	5.161	2.078	.140
	Within Groups	86.940	35	2.484		
	Total	97.263	37			
Posttest1	Between Groups	166.471	2	83.235	40.549	.000
	Within Groups	71.845	35	2.053		
	Total	238.316	37			
Posttest2	Between Groups	152.471	2	76.235	44.586	.000
	Within Groups	59.845	35	1.710		
	Total	212.316	37			

The results of the ANOVA analyses demonstrate that there was a statistically significant difference in the performance of the three groups between pretest and posttests 1 and 2 meaning that the direct and indirect CF treatments were not only effective for the revision of the same text, but also for the new narratives in the immediate and delayed posttests.

**Table: 5**

**Post-hoc for the posttest1 and posttest2**

	(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Posttest1	CG	DCFG	-5.07143*	.56363	.000
		IDCFG	-2.91667*	.58491	.000
	DCFG	CG	5.07143*	.56363	.000
		IDCFG	2.15476*	.56363	.002
	IDCFG	CG	2.91667*	.58491	.000
		DCFG	-2.15476*	.56363	.002
Posttest2	CG	DCFG	-4.84524*	.51441	.000
		IDCFG	-2.91667*	.53383	.000
	DCFG	CG	4.84524*	.51441	.000
		IDCFG	1.92857*	.51441	.003
	IDCFG	CG	2.91667*	.53383	.000
		DCFG	-1.92857*	.51441	.003

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

Post-hoc analyses also demonstrated that the performances of all three groups were different in these tests, i.e., there was a meaningful difference between control and focused written CF groups and also between the CF groups. As is evident in the post-hoc analyses (table 5) and the means of the three groups on the three tests (table 1) the direct focused written CF group outperformed the indirect focused written CF group in both pretest1 (immediate posttest) and posttest2 (delayed posttest) and both direct and indirect focused written CF groups outperforming the control group.

## **5. Discussion**

The present study set out to investigate the effects of focused written CF on the accuracy development of the participants with regard to the past simple in their revision of the same reconstructed narrative and also two new narratives. In L2 acquisition literature, there is a lack of consensus as to whether or not CF should be used, how CF should be implemented, and whether or not CF leads to learning. This study was designed to tackle some of these controversies surrounding the role of CF in L2 acquisition, especially in writing. The first question asked about the overall effect of the focused written CF on the revision of the first narrative which also functioned as the pretest to measure the participants' knowledge of the structure in question at the beginning of the study. The findings revealed that the participants' knowledge of the past simple at the beginning of the study, as measured by the pretest, was equal and there was no statistically significant difference among the three groups. Their performance after the treatments, however, was different and statistically meaningful. The direct and indirect focused written CF groups both outperformed the control group in the revision task meaning that the treatments were effective. This finding is in line with the results of earlier studies (e.g., Chandler, 2000; Ferris, 1995, 1997, 2006; Lalande, 1982) which reported improvements in grammatical accuracy following CF. Truscott and Hsu (2008), however, cast doubt on these findings on the grounds that they did not have a control group, and it cannot be claimed that CF is effective as it is always possible that improvement would have taken place without any CF. Other studies (e.g. Ashwell, 2000; Fathman & Whalley, 1990; Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Sachs & Polio, 2007), which included a control study, claimed that CF helps learners to achieve greater grammatical accuracy in a second draft (revision) of the written composition that had been corrected; nevertheless, they did not investigate the effect of CF on new pieces of writing. In order to avoid these

shortcomings, the present study did include a control group and examined the effects of the focused written CF on the participants' knowledge of the targeted structure not only on revision of the same narrative, but also on new narratives. The analyses of the data obtained from the present study regarding the effect of direct and indirect focused written CF on the participants' use of the past simple, pertaining to the second question of the study, demonstrated that the treatments were both effective in promoting their accuracy development in the new narrative meaning that the written focused CF was effective not only in revision of the same text but also in the new narrative, i. e., immediate posttest. Therefore, this finding runs counter to Truscott's (1996, 1999, 2004, 2007) claims that CF does not lead to learning and functions only as a revision tool.

The third question asked about the relative efficacy of the direct and indirect focused written CF on the participants' use of the past simple in the revision and immediate posttest. The results clearly demonstrate that the direct focused written CF group outperformed the indirect focused written CF group. This finding can be considered as a supportive evidence for Chandler's (2003) argument that while direct CF enables learners to instantly internalize the correct form as provided by their teacher, learners whose errors are corrected indirectly do not know if their own hypothesized corrections are indeed accurate. This delay in access to the target form might level out the potential advantage of the additional cognitive effort associated with indirect CF. According to Chandler, since indirect CF provides learners with insufficient information to resolve complex errors (e.g., syntactic errors), it might fail. Furthermore, this finding provides support to Bitchener and Knoch's (2010b) argument that only direct CF offers learners the kind of explicit information that is needed for testing hypotheses about the target language. Besides, it aligns with Seedhouse's (1997) suggestion for the provision of more direct and overt CF in order to benefit the learner.

The last question investigated the long-term effects of the two focused written CFs. When the participants were asked to reconstruct the third narrative three weeks later in order to measure the long-term effects of the CF treatments, it was again the direct focused written CF group that outperformed the indirect focused written CF group. Though Ferris (1995) and Lalande (1982) have stressed the importance of indirect CF due to its potential role of engaging learners in a more profound form of language processing, guided learning, and problem solving which

promotes the type of reflection that is more likely to foster long-term acquisition, the findings of the present study run counter to their claims as the direct CF group performed better than indirect CF group on the delayed posttest and this difference in their performance was statistically significant, once again supporting Bitchener and Knoch (2010b), Chandler (2003), and Seedhouse's (1997) claims for the direct CF.

## **6. Conclusion**

Overall, the findings of this study provide clear evidence in support of focused written CF and contradict the claims made by some researchers (e.g., Krashen, 1982; Truscott, 1996) that error correction is unable to lead to accuracy development and that CF can be detrimental to the process of L2 acquisition and may be counterproductive. Their arguments are based on the studies that have examined the effects of CF on the learners' accuracy development, however, were deficient with respect to their design. They aptly argue that the studies that reported the positive effects of CF either did not have a control group or concluded based on the revision of the same text and did not examine its effects on new pieces of writing. This study, however, included a control group which did not show evidence of progress on revision, immediate pretest and delayed posttest while the CF groups demonstrated accuracy development on the three tests. Moreover, the study examined the effects of the CF treatments on the new pieces of writing in immediate and delayed posttests with both groups retaining their accuracy development from revision to the posttests indicating that CF does lead to the acquisition of the corrected forms lending support to the claims made by researchers (e.g. Ellis, 2005; Ellis et al., 2008; Schmidt, 1994) who have argued for the focused CF suggesting that it has a great potential to impact accuracy development. Another important finding of the study is that though both direct and indirect focused written CF lead to improvements in the three tests, it is the direct CF which produces better short-term and long-term results lending support to the studies (e.g., Bitchener & Knoch, 2010b; Chandler, 2003; Van Beuningen et al., 2008) reporting the superiority of direct CF over indirect CF.

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