

In The Name of
Origin of the Fate

127 E.

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Title:

**The Role of Explicit & Implicit Corrective
Feedback in Persian-Speaking Learners'
Awareness of English Grammar**

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To My Family

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Abstract

While various studies have investigated the effectiveness of certain types of error treatment methods, there has been little research conducted to examine the effect of different types of corrective feedback on EFL learners' grammar accuracy and grammar awareness through eliciting repeated performances. The current research was designed to investigate the effect of implicit and explicit corrective feedback on EFL learners' awareness and accuracy in English grammar.

Sixty pre-intermediate level students of Bahar institute participated in this study. The grammar of past and present simple tenses was taught to them, and then they were randomly divided into two groups namely *implicit* and *explicit*.

The results of the study indicated that both *implicit* and *explicit* groups improved regarding their grammar accuracy and awareness of English grammar. Between-groups comparison showed that there was no significant difference between E-group and I-group regarding their level of grammar awareness. But the most important and interesting finding of the study from the researcher view is that both *implicit* and *explicit* group improved in their accuracy in and awareness of English grammar.

The findings of this study suggest that using corrective feedback (both *explicit* and *implicit*) in English classes is beneficial and facilitates the process of learning the grammar of a new language.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Debate on the notion of errors and corrective feedback is a controversial issue and research in this area has a long history. One of the main reasons is that these two terms are ambiguous and have been defined in different ways. Another reason is that findings of the research on the effect of corrective feedback on the learning process have been conflicting, mainly due to the widely varying learner populations, types of writing and feedback types provided and various research designs used (Hyland, 2006). Over the last few years, the role played by corrective feedback in language acquisition has become a highly important issue. From an interactionist view, corrective feedback is an important means of establishing the significance of reader responses in shaping meanings and it is seen as an important developmental tool moving learners through multiple drafts towards the capability for effective self-expression (Probst, 1989).

It has long been assumed by teachers of a second or foreign language and by researchers working in the area of corrective feedback that corrective feedback provision by the teachers helps students to acquire correct linguistic forms and structures. As a result, they have been concerned with discovering the most effective ways of providing corrective feedback so that students improve the accuracy of their (written performance). Although so much research done in the field confirms the positive effects of corrective feedback, many others claim that the qualities of the research designs have not been so rich to lead to any strong conclusions.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

There is disagreement among second and foreign language researchers over the extent and the type of negative feedback that may be useful in second language acquisition. This study deals with the effect of implicit and explicit corrective feedback on learning and awareness of English grammar as a foreign language. Although a great body of research has been done on corrective feedback and its role on learning a new language, only a few studies have attempted to directly investigate whether learners who receive written corrective feedback (implicit and explicit) on their errors are able to improve accuracy of their writing compared with those who do not receive error feedback directly.

Direct or explicit corrective feedback occurs when the teacher identifies an error and provides the correct form, while indirect or implicit corrective feedback refers to situations when the teacher indicates that an error has occurred but does not provide the correct form of wrong structures and the learner himself/herself should diagnose the error and correct it. This study mainly deals with the effect of implicit and explicit corrective feedback on learners' improvement in learning and awareness of simple past and simple present tenses of English grammar as a foreign language.

1.3 Research Questions

The following research questions are investigated in this study:

1. Is there any effect for explicit corrective feedback on EFL learners' grammar accuracy?

2. Is there any effect for implicit corrective feedback on EFL learners' grammar accuracy?
3. Is there any effect for explicit corrective feedback on EFL learners' awareness of English grammar?
4. Is there any effect for implicit corrective feedback on EFL learners' awareness of English grammar?
5. Is there any difference between implicit group and explicit group regarding their level of awareness of English grammar?
6. Is there any difference between implicit group and explicit group regarding their grammar accuracy improvement?

1.4 Research Hypotheses

This study seeks to examine the following null hypotheses in order to identify the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of implicit and explicit corrective feedback on EFL learners' accuracy in and awareness of English grammar:

1. Teachers' explicit corrective feedback does not help learners improve their English grammar accuracy.
2. Teachers' implicit corrective feedback does not help learners improve their English grammar accuracy.
3. Teachers' explicit corrective feedback does not improve learners' awareness of English grammar.
4. Teachers' implicit corrective feedback does not improve learners' awareness of English grammar.

5. There is no significant difference between implicit and explicit groups on awareness of English grammar.

6. There is no significant difference between implicit and explicit groups on improvement in English grammar accuracy.

1.5 Purpose of the Study

Since corrective feedback has long been regarded as an essential strategy for the development of a second or foreign language learning skills, this study is aimed at investigating the role of implicit and explicit corrective feedback on EFL learners' grammatical accuracy in and their awareness of certain grammatical points of English (present and past simple tenses). In other words, this study is to investigate whether or not there is a positive role for two different methods of error correction (implicit and explicit) on learners' accuracy improvement in and awareness of certain English structures.

1.6 Significance of the Study

Making errors by EFL learners is inevitable and consequently teachers cannot neglect their duties regarding correcting these errors. If teachers can identify the effective strategies to provide learners with corrective feedback, learners will acquire the correct forms of new language structures in the best way and the class time and energy will be spent more usefully. Thus, choosing an effective way of providing corrective feedback creates benefits for both language teachers and learners

simultaneously. Up to now, there has been little research conducted to examine the effectiveness of particular styles of error treatment in teaching circumstances. Therefore, this study will contribute a new implication to the area of foreign language learning and error treatment. It will also provide a great opportunity for language teachers to review and consider effective ways of offering feedback to learners' various written grammatical errors.

Finally, the findings of this study, based on the effectiveness of specific types of error treatment can maximize the benefits of the teachers' treatment of learners' written grammatical errors.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

The key terms used in this study are: grammatical errors, corrective feedback, explicit corrective feedback, implicit corrective feedback and learners' awareness.

Grammatical Errors: A grammatical error can be defined as a deviation from the standard written English, in other words, the standard written English dialect is generally chosen as the norm in English language classrooms, and any deviation from this standard is regarded as an error (Ellis, 1994).

Corrective Feedback: Generally, the term corrective feedback means various types of classroom interactions to learners' performance from the teachers or peers. Simply, in this study it refers to teachers' responses to learners' errors.

Explicit (Direct) Corrective Feedback: Direct corrective feedback is defined as the provision of the correct linguistic forms or structures and indication of the exact location of the error by the teacher.

Implicit (Indirect) Corrective Feedback: Implicit corrective feedback is that kind of feedback which indicates in some way that an error has occurred. This may be in the form of underlining or circling the error, using a code to show the occurrence of an error, etc. In this case, rather than the teacher providing an explicit correction, learners are left to self-correct their errors which have been indicated by their teachers.

Learners' Awareness: In this study, learners' awareness means explicit formation of underlying rules of structures and is assessed by learners' ability to identify erroneous structure and mention why they are wrong. More details on these terms have been presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 2
Literature
Review

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the previous studies on corrective feedback and its role in learners' accuracy of performance and their improvement are presented. The subsections of the chapter are as follows: Definition of the notions of error and corrective feedback from different standpoints, arguments against corrective feedback, arguments for corrective feedback, what errors should be corrected first and implicit and explicit corrective feedback strategies.

2.2 Error and Corrective Feedback from Different Standpoints

The most common terms used in the second language acquisition field to refer to errors and corrective feedback are: corrective feedback, negative evidence and negative feedback. Here, we review some definitions presented by some researchers in the field:

Ellis (1994) states that the standard written English dialect is generally chosen as the norm in language classrooms; therefore, an 'error' means a deviation from this standard. Corder (1967) points out that learners' errors can be classified as competence errors and performance errors and they should be named "errors" and "mistakes" respectively. He mentions that an error is a deviation that occurs because of the lack of knowledge of the correct rules, while a mistake is a deviation that occurs when language learners have not acquired how to use the target language structures correctly.

Generally, the term "feedback" means various types of classroom interactions to learners' performance from the teachers or peers. Dulay (1982) terms 'feedback' as the listener or readers' response provided to the learners' spoken or written production. Keh