Novitas-ROYAL, 2008, Vol.: 2 (2), 120-137.

NOVITAS ROYAL
RESEARCH ON YOUTH AND LANGUAGE

ERROR CORRECTION: AN INDICATION OF CONSCIOUSNESS-RAISING

Jila NAEINI

Abstract: The aim of this study was to explore the effects of form-focused instruction and feedback type on learning. The learners in treatment group received corrective feedback in the form of prompts, including clarification requests, repetitions, elicitations, and meta-linguistic clues while the learners in the control group received the same instruction as the experimental group without any kind of feedback. The participants were assigned different tasks in order to use the aimed structures during the 15 treatment sessions (30 hours). The analysis of the data done through correlation coefficient and t-test indicated the outperformance of the participants in experimental group over the performance of the participants in control group.

Key words: Corrective feedback, prompt, teachability hypothesis, consciousness-raising.

Özet: Bu çalışmanın amacı yapı odaklı öğretimin ve dönüt türünün öğrenme üzerindeki etkilerini belirlemektir. Deney grubundaki öğrencilere hatalarına dair düzeltici dönütler verilmiştir. Bu dönütler; yönlendiriciler, ifadelerin daha netleştirilmesinin istenilmesi, tekrarlatmalar, öğrenciden cevabın alınması ve dilötesi ipuçları şeklinde sağlanmıştır. Ancak, kontrol grubuna aynı eğitim verilmesine rağmen, bu geribildirimlerin hiçbiri sağlanmamıştır. 15 oturumluk (30 saat) uygulama süresince, katılımcılara hedeflenen dil yapılarını kullanmaları için farklı sınıf içi görevler verilmiştir. Korelasyon katsayısı ve t-test aracılığı ile yapılan veri analizi sonuçları, deney grubundaki katılımcıların kontrol grubundakilere oranla daha başarılı olduğunu göstermektedir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Düzeltici dönüt, yönlendirici, öğretilebilirlik varsayımı, bilinç yükseltme.

1. INTRODUCTION

Research on second-language acquisition over the past two decades has been a proliferation of quasi-experimental and experimental studies that address the effectiveness of various instructional treatments in L2 classrooms as well as in library settings (Norris and Ortega, 2001). The question of whether or not grammar should be taught has been persistently debated in the fields of language pedagogy and second language acquisition. Moreover, the topic of error correction in the second language (L2) classroom tends to spark controversy among both language teachers and L2 acquisition researchers. Teachers may have very strong views about error correction, based on their own previous L2 learning experiences, or they may be more ambivalent, particularly if they have been following the debate among L2 researchers on the topic.

Regarding feedback as the indication of consciousness-raising, Long and Robinson (1998) emphasized on the role of creation of input salience. They explained that 'flagging' target items such as highlighting, underlining, and rule-giving can be some examples of consciousness-raising activities. They continued that in this way you can direct the learner's attention. However, they argue that attempting to correct errors may not result in consciousness-raising. Consciousness-raising shows some respect for the learner's internal syllabus, but the content of the external syllabus is still the L2, and the sequencing and timing problems with synthetic syllabi remain. They continued that focus on form, in the important sense of how the learner's attentional recourses are allocated at a particular moment, may be achieved pedagogically by materials designed by the teachers.

One of the important foci of current SLA research is the examination of cognitive processes in second language learning. To Mackey (2006) attention and awareness have been identified as two cognitive processes that mediate input and L2 development through interaction. Various sorts of interactions in second language classrooms are promoted by form-focused instruction. Focus on form has been defined by Long (1998 cited in Mackey 2006) as interactional moves directed at raising learner awareness of forms. Doughty and Williams (1998) express that form-focused techniques (in the forms of error correction and giving feedback) are likely to be the most useful. When the form in focus is an important carrier of the meaning in focus, learners do benefit from the dual focus on forms and meaning (Lightbown 1998, p. 192). Van Lier (1996) criticizes both behaviorist and nativist perspectives which ignore the concept and at the same time argues that awareness involves much more than the narrow kind of grammatical consciousness raising activities about which we have been hearing a lot lately. He contends that awareness entails a broader perspective on language, such as the role of language in society, language variation and linguistic tolerance and the relation between language and thought. Further and perhaps more importantly, awareness involves consciousness of the why and how of the learning process. As Krashen (1982) claims that formal instruction has little effect on SLA and the explicit knowledge for the accumulation of meta-linguistic knowledge cannot be converted into implicit knowledge. Nevertheless, consciousness-raising was advocated by Ellis (1994) as an alternative to practice for two reasons:

1) Consciousness-raising does not need to involve production by the learner.
2) It does not run up against teachability hypothesis because it is directed at explicit knowledge.

Furthermore, teachers may be confronted with students' opinions about error correction since students are on the receiving end and often have their own views of if and how it should happen in the classroom. Given these widely varying views, what is a teacher to do?

Hence, based on the significance attributed to raising the learners' consciousness through error correction, the present paper tries to investigate the effects of prompts (as a kind of error correction) on the language learners' language ability specifically on their writing skills. To this end, a study research was conducted at a language school in Tehran. The initial population of the research was divided into two groups of experimental and control. The control group did not

receive any kinds of feedback. After reviewing the literature on the corrective feedback, the method of the research study, the results and the data analysis will be discussed. Finally, some pedagogical implications will be proposed.

2. FEEDBACK FOR LEARNING

Ellis (1994) emphasizes that in consciousness-raising activities the learners are not expected to produce the target structure, only to understand it by formulating some kind of cognitive representation of how it works. Practice is aimed at developing implicit knowledge of the rule. However, consciousness-raising is directed only at explicit knowledge. Rutherford (1984) argues that consciousness-raising provides a logical way of avoiding many of the pedagogical problems that arise from the teachability hypothesis. It is not surprising; therefore, that it has received considerable attention in language pedagogy.

One of the ways which has been found effective in consciousness-raising is error correction. According to Ellis (1994), feedback serves as a general cover term for the information provided by listeners on the reception and comprehension of messages. He points out that given the amount of research that has been devoted to error treatment; the lack of studies that have investigated its effect on acquisition is disappointing.

Effective learning can be seen, according to Askew and Lodge (2000), as a virtuous cycle, where effective learning promotes effective learning processes, the distinction between a process and an outcome decreases. Effective learning is usefully described in terms of its outcomes and its processes. Walter (2004) argues that effective learning involves processes such as:

- Making connections about what has been learnt in different contexts;
- reflecting on one's own learning and learning strategies;
- exploring how the learning contexts have played a part in making the learning effective;
- setting further learning goals; and
- engaging with others in learning.

Therefore, effective learning requires feedback, and the mere repetition of tasks by students is not likely to lead to improved skills. Learning often takes place best when students have opportunities to express ideas and get feedback from their peers. But for feedback to be most helpful to learners, it must consist of more than the provision of correct answers. Feedback ought to be analytical, to be suggestive, and to come at a time when students are interested in it. And then there must be time for students to reflect on the feedback they receive, to make adjustments and to try again.

3. HISTORY OF THE RESEARCH ON FEEDBACK IN SLA

Askew and Lodge (2000) note that the relationship between learning and teaching is being viewed as a dynamic process, rather than a one-way transmission of knowledge. They continue that learning is supported by a whole range of processes, one of which is feedback. Gipps (1995) emphasizes in Askew (2000) that feedback is a crucial feature of teaching and learning processes and it is one element in a repertoire of connected strategies to support learning. Lyster and Ranta (1997) developed an observational scheme which describes different types of feedback teachers give on errors and also examines student uptake—how students immediately respond to the feedback. This scheme was developed in French immersion classrooms where second language students learn the target language via subject-matter instruction. They developed their scheme by observing the different types of corrective feedback provided during interaction in four French immersion classrooms with 9-11 year-old students. Lyster and Ranta found that all teachers in the content-based French immersion classes they observed used recasts more than any other type of feedback. Indeed, recasts accounted for more than half of the total feedback provided in the four classes. Repetition of error was the least frequent feedback provided in the four classes. They also found that student uptake was least likely to occur after recasts and more likely to occur after clarification requests, meta-linguistic feedback, and repetitions. Furthermore, elicitations and meta-linguistic feedback not only resulted in more uptake, they were also more likely to lead to a corrected form of the original utterance. Since Lyster and Ranta reported their findings, several other observation studies of the type of corrective feedback provided in second or foreign language classrooms have been carried out. Some of them report similar results—that recasts are the most frequently occurring type of feedback provided by teachers and that they appear to go unnoticed by learners. However, others report that learners do notice recasts in the classroom.

There has been considerable interest in corrective feedback in SLA on both theoretical and pedagogical grounds. On the theoretical side, there has been a debate over whether corrective feedback, which is a type of 'negative evidence', is necessary, or even beneficial, for language acquisition. Krashen (1982) who argues against corrective feedback claims that positive evidence alone is sufficient for learners to acquire a second language and Truscott (1998) points out that negative evidence has no use and may even have a harmful effect on inter-language development. Those who advocate corrective feedback on the other hand, argue that negative evidence plays a facilitative and perhaps even crucial role in acquisition (Toth, 2006). Long's (1996) Interaction Hypothesis claims that implicit negative feedback, arising from negotiation for meaning, provides an opportunity for learners to attend to linguistic form. Schmidt's (1990) noticing hypothesis suggests that negative feedback helps learners to notice the gap between inter-language forms and target forms, and noticing the gap has been hypothesized to assist inter-language development. From the pedagogical standpoint, corrective feedback has been the focus of a number of inquiries into classroom teaching and learning (Lightbown, 2003). The earliest studies in the 1970s present purely descriptive findings of teachers' error treatment in a variety of classroom settings. One common finding among these earlier studies is that teachers' error correction occurs frequently, irrespective of pedagogical focus and classroom setting (Fanselow, 1977; Hendrickson 1978 cited in Sheen 2004). These studies, however, also reveal that teachers' provision of corrective feedback is often arbitrary, idiosyncratic, ambiguous and unsystematic,

which in turn invites the question as to whether error correction in the classroom is of much value.

Uptake is a term used to describe learners' responses to the provision of feedback after either an erroneous utterance or a query about a linguistic item within the context of meaning-focused language activities. Some researchers argue that uptake may contribute to second language acquisition by facilitating noticing and pushing learners to produce more accurate linguistic forms. Loewen (2004) investigated the occurrence of uptake in 32 hour of meaning-focused lessons in 12 English as a second language classes in Auckland. Loewen examined the characteristics of incidental focus on form predicted uptake and successful uptake. His research results indicated that incidental focus on form can result in the noticing of linguistic items and in the production of successful uptake during meaning-focused interaction; nonetheless, it remains to be seen whether uptake facilitates L2 learning.

Trofimovich and Gatbonton (2006) discuss the role of a repeated experience with L2 speech and an explicit focus on its form-related properties from information-processing and pedagogical perspectives. The results of their study indicated that both repetition and focus on form have measurable benefits for L2 speech processing, lending validity to those approaches to teaching pronunciation that include repetition and involve focus on form. They concluded that, the discussion of repetition and focus on form showed that one need not cast L2 pronunciation learning as a rote, meaningless, and largely teacher-driven process. Instead, as Ellis (2002) aptly put it, L2 pronunciation learning, and perhaps other aspects of L2 learning as well, can be conceptualized in the context of mindful repetition in an engaging communicative context by motivated learners.

Nassaji (2007) investigated the usefulness of two major types of interactional feedback (elicitation and reformulation) in dyadic interaction. The focus was on the different ways in which each feedback type is provided and their relationship with learner repair. The participants were 42 adult intermediate English as second language learners and two native English teachers performing dyadic task-based interactions. He chose six different reformulation subtypes and five different elicitation subtypes, differing from one another in feedback salience, and the degree to which they pushed the learner to respond to feedback. Analysis of data on output accuracy following feedback showed that both reformulation and elicitation resulted in higher rates of accurate repair when they were combined with explicit intonational or verbal prompts compared with less explicit prompts or no prompts. One of the main questions in this study concerned the relationship between feedback and learner repair. The results showed that learners successfully modified their output about one third of the time following reformulations and elicitations in general (34% and 31%, respectively). Nassaji focused that this rate of repair for reformulation is low. Gass, Mackey, Ross-Feldman, (2005) argue that within the context of SLA, negotiation for meaning and feedback facilitate language acquisition. They emphasize that the factors beneficial for L2 learners arising from interaction are said to include receiving comprehensible input and interactional feedback. The corrective feedback which was studied in the current research was

also evidenced and consequently confirmed Nassaji's results of higher rate of accurate repairs after verbal prompts which will be discussed in the following sections.

4. CONSCIOUNESS-RAISING AND L1 USE

Levin (2003) argues that using the L1 in the classroom may facilitate L2 acquisition. Given the need for a more informed understanding of the role of the L1 in L2 learning, Scutt and Fueute (2008) designed a study to examine how students use the L1 when they are asked to work collaboratively on form-focused tasks. The findings from this study indicated that learners use the L1 even when they appear to be operating exclusively in the L2. The students' reflections from the stimulated recall sessions indicated that when they are required to use the L2 during a collaborative consciousness-raising, form-focused task, they talk to themselves in the L1 as they translate the text, recall grammar rules, review the task, and plan what to say in the L2. In addition, the findings suggested that exclusive use of the L2 during consciousness-raising, form-focused tasks may impose cognitive demands on learners that may have a negative impact on the allocation of cognitive resources for the task. In particular, exclusive use of the L2 during this type of task appears to inhibit collaborative interaction, hinder the use of meta-talk, and impede natural learning strategies. By contrast, use of the L1 for these kinds of tasks may reduce cognitive overload, sustain collaborative interaction, and foster the development of meta-linguistic terminology. In fact, the use of the L1 appears to be a natural and spontaneous cognitive strategy, which suggests that it may be futile to prevent learners from using the L1 during consciousness-raising tasks. This study offers evidence that learners' two languages function in tandem to complete a consciousness-raising, form-focused task when they are permitted to use the L1.

5. CONTEXT FOR ERROR CORRECTION AND SOME KINDS OF COMMON FEEDBACK

Loewen (2007) emphasizes on the clarification of the context in which error correction occurs. Second language instruction can be conceptualized as falling into two broad categories: meaning-focused instruction and form-focused (Ellis, 2001).

Long (1996) points out that meaning-focused instruction is characterized by communicative language teaching and involves no direct, explicit attention to language form. The L2 is seen as a vehicle for learners to express their ideas. In contrast, form-focused instruction generally treats language as an object to be studied through discrete lessons targeting specific grammatical structures and rules. Long (1996) argues that such instruction can be called an isolated approach because attention to language form is isolated from a communicative context. Error correction in this context is often used to ensure that learners accurately use what they have just been taught; however, this is not the type of error correction currently receiving so much interest. Instead, the context for error correction that has received considerable attention during the past decade

involves an integrated approach to language instruction, incorporating attention to language structures within a meaning-focused activity or task. Loewen suggests a method for achieving an integrated approach to provide error correction while learners are using the language to communicate. Thus, learners' attention is drawn to the connection between language form and meaning at the crucial moments when they need to use the forms to convey their intended meaning. Doughty (2001) argues that such timing is optimal for learners to learn to use the language fluently and accurately. Generally,two kinds of feedback have been identified: Explicit corrective feedback, which according to Kim (no date) can prompt learners to notice the gap by directly and overtly drawing their attention to the incorrect form they have made; and implicit corrective feedback (e.g., confirmation checks, clarification requests, and recasts) which aims at inducing learners to detect the disparity between their inter-language and the target language. Different techniques are used in explicit and implicit feedback.

Recast, is a method that has received considerable attention recently. A recast, to Lightbown and Spada (2006), correctly reformulates a student's incorrect utterance while maintaining the central meaning of the utterance. The following example provided by Loewen (2007):
S: when I was soldier, I used to wear the balaclava
T: and why did you wear it,
S: for protection from the cold or for another reason
S: just wind, uh protection to wind and cold
T: protection from
S: uh, from wind and cold
T: right, okay, not for a disguise
Here, the teacher and student are talking about the student's army experiences. While doing so, the student uses the wrong preposition. The teacher provides the correct form (a recast), and the student repeats the correct form. After this brief attention to grammatical form, the conversation returns to the primary goal of communication. There are several reasons why recasts are favored by some researchers. First, they are relatively implicit and unobtrusive, and thus do not generally interrupt the flow of communication. In fact, recasts often serve the dual purpose of a clarification request and a correction, and thus fit quite naturally into the conversation. However, this unobtrusiveness, which is promoted by some, is said by others to be a disadvantage. Loewen (2007) believes that recasts are so implicit that learners often fail either to notice them or to perceive their corrective intent. Researchers who dislike recasts tend to favor prompts or elicitations as a type of feedback. In prompting, the teacher does not provide the correct form but rather attempts to get the student to self-correct. The following example shows how prompt is used for the purpose of corrective feedback:
S: yeah, in, in India she began to feel sick and she went to doctor said the doctor in India, but that doctor said it, it is not so serious
T: it, not it is, the doctor said it
S: doctor said, uh, it w-, it was not serious
T: mhm

The teacher, instead of providing the correct form in a recast, draws attention to the error and then attempts to elicit the correct form. In this instance, the student is able to self-correct and provides the correct verb form. Loewen continues that proponents of prompting argue that in this way more attention may be drawn to the linguistic form and, therefore, the possibility of learners noticing the correction becomes greater. In addition, Lightbown and Spada (2006) argue that trying to get students to correct themselves involves them in deeper mental processing and thus may have a greater impact on learning. While such a claim may be true, it is also necessary for learners to have some latent knowledge of the structure for them to be able to self-correct. If the grammatical structure is entirely new or the vocabulary word is unknown, no amount of prompting will draw out the structure. Another type of error correction is the provision of meta-linguistic information regarding the error.

S: uh didn't work well, it must be rippded
T: so you need a noun now
S: it must be rippded
T: it must be a rip off
S: it must be a rip off

The student makes an error; the teacher tells the student what type of word is needed. The student repeats the error and this time the teacher provides a recast, which is then adopted by the student. Several recent studies have found that such explicit attention to form can be beneficial for learning. With this method it is more certain that the learners will notice the correction; however, there is also the risk that the communicative nature of the class will be disrupted. While the previous paragraphs have considered the teacher's response to a student's error, it is also important to consider the student's response to the feedback, often called uptake. Again, perhaps not surprisingly, there is controversy regarding the importance of uptake. Some researchers argue that it is not important for students to produce the correct forms themselves once they have been corrected. In fact, in the case of recasts, they argue that such uptake may be mere parroting of the form provided by the teacher. Others, drawing on Swain's (1995 cited in Leowen 2007) Output Hypothesis, argue that it is beneficial for students to be stretched to produce language that is somewhat beyond their current ability. Furthermore, uptake may be an indication that the teacher's correction has been noticed by the learner. Additionally, some error correction methods, such as prompting, make uptake a very necessary and essential component of the interaction. Loewen (2005) found that successful uptake was one of the main predictors of students' subsequent accurate test scores. Thus, it seemed that students benefited from producing the correct forms.

Second language acquisition researchers have claimed that feedback provided during conversational interaction facilitates second language acquisition. A number of experimental studies have supported this claim, connecting interactional feedback with L2 development. Researchers have suggested that interactional feedback is associated with L2 learning because it prompts learners to notice L2 forms. Mackey (2006) explored the relationships between feedback, instructed ESL learners' noticing of L2 form during classroom interactions and their subsequent L2 development. Interactional feedback was provided to learners in response to their

production problems with questions, plurals, and past tense forms. He assessed the learners' noticing through on-line learning journals, introspective comments while viewing classroom videotapes, and questionnaire responses. This research has suggested there may be an association between noticing and learning for one of the forms under investigation, and has pointed to the role of noticing as a potential mediator in the feedback-learning relationship. In particular, this study has provided evidence that noticing and L2 development may be connected in terms of development of question forms. It should be kept in mind, however, that this does not imply that other forms of more explicit instruction are less or equally beneficial.

6. The study

Given the importance of giving feedback and raising the learners' consciousness and the outcomes in language learning, the following research question was raised:

- Does corrective feedback in the form of prompt affect the linguistic accuracy of Iranian EFL learners' writing ability at the upper-intermediate level of language proficiency, comparing with another group receiving no feedback?

In order to investigate and answer the question, the researcher conducted a study. The subjects were 32 female Iranian EFL learners, who were studying at upper-intermediate level, at Kish language school in Tehran. The subjects were initially put into two groups of experimental and control. Prior to the onset of the experiment the subjects took the placement test and they were at about the same level of proficiency. The study was carried out during the regular class hours at the language school with the regular and common materials for both groups.

6.1. Instruments

To explore the answer to the research question the researcher applied the following instruments:

1. Nelson proficiency test (Fowler and Coe, 1976) for advanced level in which the two structures of *as if / as though* and *non-defining relative clauses* were inserted.
2. Pre/post tests of writing ability to investigate the learners' improvement after receiving feedback.
3. Some pictures for the learners to describe in order to use the selected forms.

6.2. Procedure

Initially to make sure that subjects were not familiar with the selected structures, all of them (both experimental and control groups) took the Nelson proficiency test. Due to the fact that the researcher intended to investigate the effects of feedback on the learners' writing ability, a pretest of writing was taken. The subjects were assigned to write about a picture given to them. They were asked to use the above mentioned structures. Their writing papers were corrected by three raters including the researcher. All class interactions in experimental class were audio-taped. In

both classes, the subjects were taught the same materials the only difference was that control class didn't receive any kinds of feedback.

The first lesson was about describing pictures in which the subjects were supposed to use the structures: Look + adjectives, look like + nouns, and look as if / though + a clause. After giving instructions they started to practice. The subjects were all given pictures of different painters to describe. In case of any mistakes, different kinds of corrective feedback in the form of prompts including: Clarification, requests, repetition, elicitation and meta-lingual clues were given. Some parts of the interactions between the teacher and the students were transcribed:
T: Sara, please describe your picture.
S: In my picture there is a girl she looks as if poor….
T: (the teacher interrupts her), what do we use after look as if, Sara?
S: Oh sorry, yes, a clause, …the little girl looks as if she is a poor girl…..
T: Very good. Go on.
The researcher used a meta-lingual clue in order to help the learner to correct her sentence. Different kinds of prompts were used by the researcher:
T: Now, you Maryam talk about your picture.
S: My picture is about a couple in the boat in the sea. …..they look happy couple….
T: (the teacher interrupted her) Sorry, look..?
S: Yes… they look happy…
T: Good, go on.

Classroom interactions in the experimental class all went on in this way and they were all audio-recorded. In control class, the subjects were given the same pictures and tasks but the only difference was that they did not receive feedback on their mistakes or errors. At the end of the treatment the learners in both groups were assigned to write about the topic given to them and were asked to use the selected structures. The writing papers were corrected by the same three raters.

7. DATA ANALYSIS

To investigate the research question that whether corrective feedback in the form of prompt affects the linguistic accuracy of Iranian EFL learners' writing ability at the upper-intermediate level of language proficiency, comparing with another group receiving no feedback, the researcher conducted a study at a language school with 16 female learners in experimental group and 16 female learners in control group. The writing pretest was taken and to make sure that their scores were reliable indication of their ability in writing, three raters including the researcher corrected the papers. To assure that the subjects' scores in writing pretest and post test are reliable estimate of their ability and to explore the consistency of the scores the inter-rater reliability of the scores was assessed through Cronbach Alpha and correlation of the scores of the three raters was estimated by Pearson correlation through SPSS. The raters' scores were

significantly correlated at the 0.01 level. Table 1 shows the results of the inter-rater reliability of the raters' scores for the pre and post tests in experimental and control groups.

Table 1. Inter-rater reliability of the raters' scores in pretest and posttest of writing in experimental and control groups.

Raters	Reliability Cronbach Alpha (Pre test)	Reliability Cronbach Alpha (Post test)
Rater 1 & 2	**.96**	**.95**
Rater 2 & 3	**.97**	**.94**
Rater 1 & 3	**.97**	**.93**

As table 1 shows, the inter rater reliability assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, ranged between .93-.97, and it indicates high agreement between the raters' scores.

The treatment started by giving students in experimental group different kinds of prompts while working on their regular materials in regular class hours. However, the learners in control group didn't receive any kinds of corrective feedbacks. After the treatment the subjects in both groups were assigned a writing test and they were asked to use the selected structures. The writing posttests were corrected by the same three raters. The inter-rater reliability of the scores was estimated and the results are also shown in table 1.

In order to compare the subjects' scores in experimental and control groups after the treatment, a T-test was applied. Since every subject had three scores, the mean score for each subject was calculated and they were used in the T-test. The T-test applied to compare the subjects' performance before and after the treatment results in significant and high correlations of the scores. The results were shown in table 2.

Table 2. T-test comparing the means of experimental and control group writing posttest.

group	N	mean	SD	SEM	df	T O	TC	SIG.
control	16	69.8125	6.5331	1.6333	30	3.745	2	.000
experimental	16	79.1667	7.5591	1.8898				

To answer the research question, we can refer to the results shown in table 2. As it is shown in the table, the mean score of the control group is 69.81 and that of the experimental group is 79.16 which indicate the out performance of the writing test scores of the experimental group after the treatment. The observed t-value, according to data analysis shown in table 2, is more than the T-critical. Consequently, there is a significant relationship between the control and experimental groups. That is, the writing scores in post tests in two groups have significant difference after the treatment and the mean in experimental group is significantly bigger than the mean of control group. This confirms the impact of using prompts as the corrective feedback in experimental group. (See appendix A for the graphs)

8. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

By no means implicit and explicit choice of the learner or the language to be taught as the starting point in course design remains one of the most critical. To Long and Robinson (1998) L2 is broken down into words and collocations, grammatical rules, phonemes, intonation and stress patterns, structures, notions, or functions. These items are sequenced for presentation as models to learners in linear, additive fashion according to frequency, valence, and difficulty. Synthetic syllabi, according to Long and Robinson (1998), are still used in most classrooms. The learners' role is to synthesize the piece for use in communication. Synthetic syllabi together with the corresponding materials, methodology and classroom pedagogy lead to lessons with a focus on forms. Therefore, form-focused instructions according to the literature and the results of the present study are of significant value and effective in language classes.

Schmidth (1990) in the exploring the role of consciousness in L2 learning adopts the view that the importance of unconscious learning (Krashen's acquisition) has been exaggerated. He argues, instead, learners have to pay some kind of attention to language forms in order for acquisition of accuracy. Consciousness-raising is one term, according to Andrews (2007), which has come to the fore in relation to reassessment of the role of consciousness-raising and explicit knowledge of grammar in L2 acquisition. Rutherford and Sharwood Smith (1985) believe that consciousness-raising activities are activities which are on a continuum range from the intensive promotion of conscious awareness via the articulation of pedagogical rules through to simply exposing the learner to special grammatical phenomena. Regarding the subjects' satisfaction with being informed of their mistakes observed by the researcher in this study, language teachers are suggested to try to increase the learners' attention to any kinds of the forms which will definitely improve their fluency and accuracy.

Andrews (2007) confirm that consciousness-raising or indeed any structuring of language input for pedagogical purposes places significant demands on the L2 teacher's language awareness. Accordingly, consciousness-raising tasks are designed to cater primarily to explicit learning. In other words, they are intended to develop awareness at the level of understanding (Ellis 2003, p. 162). Thus, the designed outcome of a consciousness-raising task is awareness of how some linguistic features work. He points out that the rational for the use of consciousness-raising tasks

draws on the role of explicit knowledge as a facilitator for the acquisition of implicit knowledge. Ellis (2003) continues that implicit methodological techniques involve providing feedback. There have been found different ways of providing feedback. According to the current study results any kinds of corrective feedback is effective. However, the language instructors might be responsive to the learners' personality traits and attempt to adjust their feedback kinds with the language learners.

In the present study, the researcher studied feedback given in the form of prompts. The researcher applied different techniques to correct the learners' errors. During the treatment the students expressed their feelings that they enjoyed being corrected and they were extremely satisfied with the treatment. The results and statistical analysis of this study revealed the significant effects of feedback in the forms of prompts on language ability which in this research had been realized on the subjects' writing skill. In control group the class material was the same but the subjects did not receive any corrective feedback. Since the system in that language school is not based on explicit error-correction, the researcher was not in trouble and didn't do the research by breaking the ethical rules. However, the results of this current research or many others might be a good indication of probable changes in the current instructional methods in this and other language schools.

Actually, the current study examined teacher feedback and learner uptake and the learners' subsequent repairs. One common finding among all studies on corrective feedback and so this study is the emphasis on correction as an indication of consciousness-raising. Given the results of the current research, teachers are to help learners to do their best and this requires the teachers to provide the learners with form-focused instruction and feedback on errors. In case of errors which are frequently shared among the learners in a class, it is of value to draw the learners' attention to those errors and bring them to their attention. This study confirms Lightbown (1998)'s emphasis on the beneficial results of stopping the communicative activity in a class for a few seconds and make the focus on form quite explicitly and draw the learners' attention on forms not meaning in this situation. It can be helpful to suggest that noticing the mismatch between learner utterances and target utterances can be a step toward acquisition.

REFERENCES

Andrews, S. (2007). *Teacher language awareness.* Cambridge: CUP.

Askew, S., & Lodge, C.(2000). Gifts, ping-pong and loops-linking feedback and learning. In S. Askew (Ed.) (pp. 1-17). *Feedback for learning.* London: Routledge / Falmer.

Doughty, C. (2001). Cognitive underpinning of focus on form. In P. Robinson (Ed.), *Cognition and second language acquisition* (pp. 206-257). Cambridge: CUP.

Ellis, N. C. (2002). Frequency effects in language processing: A review with implications for theories of implicit and explicit language acquisition. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 24*, 143– 188.

Ellis, R. (2003). *Task-based language learning and teaching.* Oxford: OUP.

Ellis, R. (2001). Investigating form-focused instruction. In R. Ellis (Ed.), *Form-focused instruction and second language learning* (pp.1-46). New York: Blackwell.

Ellis, R. (1994). *The study of second language acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Fowler, W. S., & Coe, N. (1976). *Nelson English language tests*. London: Thomas Nelson and Sons LTD.

Gass, S., Mackey, A., & Ross-Feldmann, L. (2005). Task-based interactions in classroom and laboratory settings. *Language Learning, 55* (4), 575-611.

Kim, J. H. (no date). Issues of corrective feedback in SLA. *Working Papers in TESOL & Applied Linguistics, 4* (2), 1-24.

Krashen, S. D. (1982). *Second language acquisition and second language learning.* New York: Prentice Hall.

Levine, G. S. (2003). Student and instructor beliefs and attitudes about target language use, first language use, and anxiety: Report of a questionnaire study. *Modern Language Journal, 87*, 343–364.

Lightbown, P. M. (1998). The importance of timing in focus on form. In C. Doughty & J. Williams (Eds.), *Focus on form in classroom second language acquisition* (pp. 177-195). Cambridge: CUP.

Lightbown, P. M. (2003). SLA research in the classroom/SLA research for \the classroom. *Language Learning 28*, 4-13.

Lightbown, P. M., & Spada, N. (2006). *How languages are learned.* Oxford: OUP.

Loewen, S. (2007). Error correction in second language acquisition. *Clear News, 11* (2), 1-7.

Loewen, S. (2004). Uptake in incidental focus on form in meaning-focused ESL lessons. *Language Learning, 54* (1), 153-188.

Long, M. (1996). The role of the linguistic environment in second language acquisition. In W. R. & T. J. Bhatia (Eds.), *Handbook of second language acquisition* (pp. 413-468). San Diego : Academic Press.

Long, M. H., & Robinson, P. (1998). Focus on forms: Theory, research, and practice. In C. Doughty & J. Williams (Eds.), *Focus on form in classroom second language acquisition* (pp. 15-42). Cambridge: CUP.

Lyster, R., & Ranta, L. (1997). Corrective feedback and learner uptake: Negotiation of form in communicative classrooms. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition. 19* (1), 399-432.

Mackey, A. (2006). Feedback, noticing, and instructed second language learning. *Applied Linguistics, 27* (3). 405-430.

Nassaji, H. (2007). Elicitation and reformulation and their relationship with learner repair in dyadic interaction. *Language Learning, 57* (4), 511-548.

Norris, J. M., & Ortega, L. (2001). Does type of instruction make a difference? Substantive findings from a meta-analytic review. In R. Ellis (Ed.), *Form-focused instruction and second language learning* (pp. 157-213). New York: Blackwell.

Rutherford, W. (1984). *Language universals and second language acquisition.* Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamin Publishing Company.

Rutherford, W., & SharWood Smith, M. (1985). Consciousness-raising and universal grammar. *Applied Linguistics, 6* (3), 274-282.

Schmidt, R. (1990). The role of consciousness in second language learning. *Applied Linguistics, 11,* 17-46.

Scutt, V. M., & Fueute, M. J. (2008). What's the problem? L2 learners' use of the L1 during consciousness-raising, form-focused tasks. *The Modern language journal, 92* (1), 100-113.

Sheen, Y. H. (2004). Classrooms across instructional settings: Corrective feedback and learner uptake in communicative. *Language Teaching Research. 8* (3), 263-300.

Toth, P.D. (2006). Processing instruction and a role for output in second language acquisition. *Language Learning, 56* (2), 319-385.

Trofimovich, P., & Gatbonton, E. (2006). Repetition and focus on form in processing L2 Spanish words: Implications for pronunciation instruction. *The Modern Language Learning, 90* (4), 519-535.

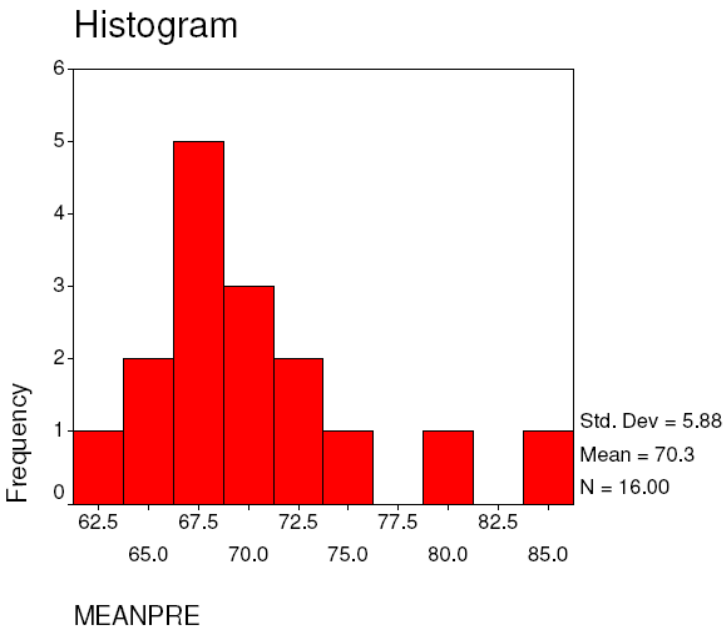
Truscott, J. (1998). Noticing in second language acquisition: A critical review. *Second Language Research, 14* (2), 103-135.

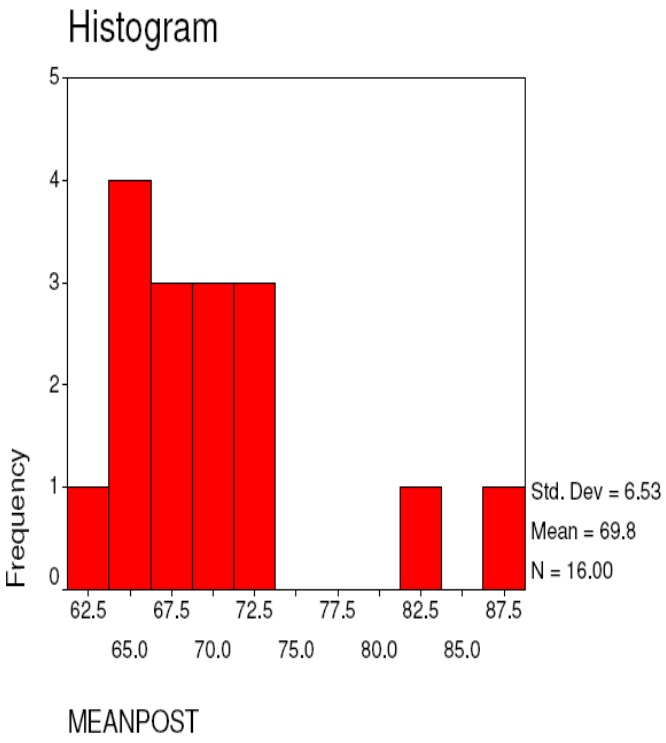
Van Lier, L. (1996). *Interaction in the language curriculum: Awareness, autonomy, and authenticity*. London: Longman.

Walter, T. (2004). *Teaching English language learners.* London: Longman.

Appendix A

Bars. The diagram indicating the changes from pretest to post test.




Histogram
Frequency
5
4
3
2
1
0
62.5
65.0
67.5
70.0
72.5
75.0
77.5
80.0
82.5
85.0
87.5
Std. Dev = 6.53
Mean = 69.8
N = 16.00
MEANPOST