

Does Teaching Experience Affect Type, Amount, And Precision of The Written Corrective Feedback?

Reza Norouzian

Texas A&M University

Received for publication: 01 July 2015.

Accepted for publication: 10 October 2015.

Abstract

Research on corrective feedback (Brown, 2012, 2014; Evans et al. 2010; Ferris, 2014; Ferris et al., 2011; Lee, 2011) has highlighted the mediating effect of prime teacher variables. These studies indicate that “teaching experience” of L2 teachers can affect their approach towards several aspects of error correction. Primary among these aspects are manners of feedback provision (e.g. Direct & Indirect) and amount of the feedback (e.g. Comprehensive & Selective) offered by the EFL instructors. Based on the data obtained from teachers of fifteen English writing courses, this classroom-based study sought to measure the potential impact of teachers’ years of teaching experience on the perception of EFL teachers towards the type (i.e., Direct & Indirect) and amount (i.e., Comprehensive & Selective) of their written error feedback. The results showed a significant effect for teaching experience on direct manner of feedback provision perceived by highly experienced EFL teachers. Additionally, a qualitative follow up indicated that highly experienced teacher group presented technically more accurate and precise corrections than those of the other two less experienced ones. Theoretical and practical implications are discussed.

Keywords: teacher variables, written corrective feedback, manners of feedback provision, amount of feedback, teaching experience.

Introduction

A quick reflection on a typical EFL classroom reveals that teachers are central to different aspects of corrective feedback (CF). Nevertheless, research

has shown that teacher factors demand more attention in the CF research arena (Brown, 2012, 2014; Evans et al. 2010; Ferris, 2014). These calls indicate that research into the role of teacher variables can improve our uncertain stance on the usefulness of written feedback (Ferris, 2014; Lee, 2004, 2009, 2011; Liu & Brown, 2015; Montgomery & Baker, 2007; Norouzian & Eslami, 2013; Norouzian & Farahani, 2012). Additionally, as practical foundations of CF have been called into question on the basis of low meta-analytic effects (see Miller & Pan, 2012; Truscott, 2007), some feedback experts have suggested that appraising the role of some teacher variables allows exploring questions that have higher ecological validity, i.e., are classroom-based (e.g. Ferris, 2003, 2014; Ferris et al., 2013; Ellis & Shintani, 2014). With these considerations uppermost in the mind, it can be theorized that investigating teachers’ variables might yield further insight into CF in formal language teaching contexts. Among such teacher variables, however, “teaching experience” seems to be of great importance in determining various classroom written feedback paradigms (see Brown, 2012, 2014; Evans et al., 2010; Ferris, 2014; Lee, 2004, 2008, 2011).

Against this backdrop, there is a dearth of systematic research into the changes that teaching experience of EFL teachers can make regarding different aspects of the currently used feedback practices, namely manners of feedback provision (e.g. Direct & Indirect) and amount of the feedback provided (e.g. Comprehensive & Selective). Based on the data collected from fifteen English writing courses, this classroom-based study examined the potential impact of teachers’ teaching experience on their perception of the type and amount

Corresponding author: Reza Norouzian, Texas A&M University,
E-mail: rnorouzian@tamu.edu

of feedback to the EFL learners. Also, a qualitative follow-up was conducted to evaluate the precision (correctness) of the corrections teacher participants provide on EFL learners' writing. Finally, all teacher participants ($n = 15$) attended a short interview to answer ten open-ended questions regarding their perception of their feedback practices.

A Brief Background to Error Correction

Historically, error correction has been related to a number of theories resulting in different approaches to error correction. The traditional error correction approaches looked at learner errors from a behavioral standpoint (e.g. Skinner, 1957). Thus, errors, no matter the type, were viewed as readily fossilizable requiring on-the-spot correction by teachers. This approach later formed the basis for "form-focused instruction" which did not adequately emphasize learners' ability to communicate the learned material in the target language. As a result, the view created learners that showed higher mastery over formal language features (i.e., accuracy) but had lower ability in communicating the meaning (see Van-Patten, 1988; McLaughlin, 1990; Schwartz, 1993; Paradis, 1994; Hulstijn, 2002).

On the other hand, in cognitivism, learner errors were: (a) distinguished from mistakes, and (b) believed to be the result of generation of language rules in the minds of learners (Chomsky, 1959). Therefore, error was seen as being systematic and treatable when carefully analyzed. Another camp of scholars related errors to the dynamic stages of learners' interlanguage development (e.g., Corder, 1967; Selinker, 1972). And as such, errors were indicators of learner's language progress. In language pedagogy, however, some approaches did not favor corrective feedback in their learning theory (e.g. Krashen, 1982; Krashen & Terrell, 1983). And even to some researchers, feedback was considered to produce "erratic" results (Long, 1977) and thus be "ineffective" (Truscott, 1996). Eventually, the cognitive approach to error correction led to the emergence of the "meaning-focused instruction" which heralded the communicative era in language teaching pedagogy. Put briefly, the prevailing approach to error correction in this era was that if provided to learners in the course of communicating the target language, feedback is, by and large, conducive to learner's progress (see Russel & Spada, 2006).

As briefly described above, there are several

views regarding the value and place of corrective feedback in L2 instruction. But particularly when it comes to EFL writing instruction, teacher feedback practices become more visible in terms of their type and amount.

Type and Amount of Feedback in EFL Writing

The type of written feedback presented to learners has been the focus of a large body of L2 research. Among many types, however, what Hendrickson (1978) termed as "Direct" and "Indirect" feedback has captured plenty of scholarly attention. Direct feedback is offered the moment L2/EFL teachers present the correct form to learners mostly occasioned by the need for revision processes. In contrast, indirect feedback entails learners in what Lalande (1982) called "guided problem-solving" (p. 143, also see Ellis, 2009). When language instructors turn learners' attention to their errors by means other than presenting the correct form (e.g., by underlining, circling, highlighting, use of error codes or locating it in the margins) these responding strategies form the indirect type of written feedback. Accordingly, adopting error codes, for example, to help learners signify the error category, can also be considered an indirect feedback strategy. These error codes seem to promote self-correction. As Ferris (2003) contended "If no codes or labels are used, the student is required not only to self-correct the error, but also to identify the type of error indicated" (p. 78).

Amount of errors corrected in learners' written works has also attracted researchers' attention in the related literature. Although feedback scholars (see Chandler, 2003; Ellis, 2009; Ferris, 2014; Lee, 2004, 2009; Leki, 1990; Truscott, 2007) have cautioned against comprehensive error correction and have long discussed its detrimental effect on learners' motivational drive, practicing teachers may prefer such a correction as part of their teaching method (Lee, 2004). Also teachers are encouraged to make decisions about what amount of errors to correct as research has reiterated that comprehensive correction might not benefit learners (Liu & Brown, 2015; Ferris, 2014; Lee, 2011; Truscott, 1996). Along the same lines, other feedback researchers held that comprehensive correction is far more arduous for L2 learners to process since learner will likely "attend to a variety of errors and thus

is unlikely to be able to reflect much on each error” (Ellis et al., 2008, p. 6). Therefore, teachers may “set a number of priorities for error correction and provide selective feedback” (Mahili, 1995, p. 25) for better results.

Selective feedback (Ellis & Shintani, 2014; Ferris, 2014; Liu & Brown, 2015; Mahili, 1995) theoretically leaves avenues open for EFL learners to more specifically focus on their errors. However, there is evidence for teachers’ to both have high (e.g. Leki, 1990) and low (Kayamata, 2007) opinion of comprehensive marking, it appears teachers can carry these perceptions and pass them through their teaching pedagogy to learners (Ferris et al., 2013).

The common practice among many writing teachers is to follow the conformist approach which supports correction of all faulty forms throughout the written work (see Bitchener & Ferris, 2012; Liu & Brown, 2015). However, this is both time-consuming for the teachers and discouraging for the learners (Ferris, 2014; Liu & Brown, 2015; Storch, 2010). Also, some students may not learn much from the overt correction of all of their errors. Specifically, they commit the same errors or types of errors recurrently from one piece of writing to the next (Truscott & Hsu, 2008). Indeed, due to its common use by EFL/ESL teachers, recent syntheses of research on written corrective feedback show that comprehensive feedback has been at times even taken to define the baseline (i.e., control group) against which experimental groups are compared (Liu & Brown, 2015).

In hindsight, the logic behind feedback experts’ calls for researching teacher variables (Brown, 2012, 2014; Evans et al., 2010; Ferris, 2014; Lee, 2011) makes clear that factors such as teaching experience and perceptual changes that it makes could influence EFL teachers’ feedback methods to varying degrees. It is safe to assume that such perceptions can be directly translated into or bear on teachers’ actual performances at one time and manifest themselves in the form of long-lasting effects at other times (Ferris, 2014). Similar to other time-related variables in SLA (e.g., length of residence), the concept of teaching experience (see Brown, 2014; Evans et al., 2010) here is operationally defined as the amount of exposure (measured in time) to EFL learners and a common EFL context (i.e., here an Iranian EFL context). Although, the effect of teaching experience has been only discussed as a factor in the written corrective feedback

literature, its role in teachers’ choice of the target structure for oral feedback has received empirical attention. For instance, in his meta-analysis of oral corrective feedback practices, Brown (2014) found that that more teaching experience for four groups of teachers (0-2, 3-6, 7-9, and 10+ years of experience) “related to less attention [i.e., less CF] to phonological errors and possibly greater concern [i.e., more CF] for lexical errors” (p. 13). It is interesting to note that in Brown (2014), the effect of years of teaching experience showed to be even greater than other teacher variables namely, being native, non-native, or bilingual.

Research questions

From what followed, this study formulated the following research questions:

- 1- Do accumulated years of teaching experience make any significant difference in the perception of EFL teachers regarding use of: (a) comprehensive and (b) selective error marking (amount)?
- 2- Do accumulated years of teaching experience make any significant difference in the perception of EFL teachers regarding: (a) direct and (b) indirect written feedback (type)?
- 3- Do precision and accuracy of teachers’ correction vary with their years of teaching experience? (Does teaching experience help EFL teachers be more accurate in the feedback)

Methodology

Participants

A sum of 15 participants including 9 male and 6 female EFL teachers teaching at the University of Tehran, the Faculty of foreign Languages and Literatures, centers no 3, 2 and 2 University of Tehran affiliated language institutes met the purpose of the study. These institutes adhere to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR, 2014) global scale. For the purpose of the study and given the largely available B1 level (intermediate) classes, B1 teacher participants were selected for the purpose of this study. Additionally, teachers’ ages ranged from 22 to 41 ($M = 29$, $SD = 2.11$) mostly holding a college degree in an English-related major such as TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language), English translation and English literature. Other EFL teachers with varying years of teaching experience in an Iranian EFL context had earned an unrelated degree in medical sciences,

and chemistry. All participants had varying EFL teaching experience as described in the procedures section below.

Instruments

The study made use of the following instruments:

1. a 24-item teacher questionnaire
2. an error correction precision task
3. a semi-structured oral interview

Originally, Lee's (2004) teacher questionnaire was adopted as the initial guiding framework. Then, items relevant to the type and amount of feedback were extracted and additional items developed by the researcher were added to form the teacher questionnaire of this study (Appendix A). Given these changes, Cronbach's Alpha, the internal consistency (reliability) index of the scores on this questionnaire, was calculated to be 0.81. In addition, construct validity of the questionnaire items scores was confirmed through a factor analysis. The results of the factor analysis indicated four large eigenvalues explaining 78.447% of the variance in the questionnaire item scores (Appendix D). The second instrument was a 5-paragraph sample composition from one of the B1 level students. The number of errors in this student written sample allowed for examining the precision and the amount of attention that teachers had in their real-time feedback practices. To ensure the reliability of the judgments on the error correction precision task (Appendix B), the correction precision task was double-checked for determining the standard number and category of errors in it by two EFL expert (i.e., with a Master's degree in TEFL) raters. The five error categories (i.e., Verb errors, Noun ending errors, Article errors, Wrong word choice, Sentence structure errors) used in Ferris and Roberts (2001) was adopted as the initial framework of reference. Then, other error categories based on the errors present in the error correction precision task were added to arrive at an initial number of errors in the precision task (initial error estimation). Next, each rater independently reviewed the errors in the precision task and decided to keep (coded 1) or discard (coded 0) the initially selected errors. A Cohen's Kappa (κ) index of reliability between the two raters' decisions was calculated to be 0.93. Finally, the oral interview consisted of 10 open-ended questions on various areas regarding teachers' feedback practices (Appendix C) focused on the following features:

- Manner of error marking
- Feedback strategies
- Error correction principle (framework)

- Direct vs. indirect feedback
- Use of error codes
- Error correction responsibility
- Teachers' concerns
- Teacher training in error correction
- Best way to go about error correction

Procedures

Twenty three teachers at the aforementioned language institutes were initially identified as the potential participants in the study using a short demographic questionnaire (i.e., the first part of the teacher questionnaire). To achieve three equally distributed teachers in each experience group (i.e., 0-4 or 5-10 or 10+), 15 out of the 23 teachers were included in the study from the initial teacher sample. In order to investigate teachers' perception of the written error feedback, EFL instructors were requested to complete their teacher questionnaire at the beginning of the semester. On the teachers' questionnaire, they were asked about: (a) their years of teaching experience, educational backgrounds (i.e., recognition questions used to differentiate the teacher groups), (b) correcting errors comprehensively (i.e., correcting all of the learners' errors on a written assignment) or selectively (i.e., teachers' own selection of students error types), (c) whether they make it directly or indirectly (as asked about in the questionnaires), (d) their major principle for the selection of errors, their use of marking codes. Later, one session before the class end (to minimize the teacher sensitization to the questionnaire at the begging of the semester), teachers corrected a 5-paragraph sample composition from one of the B1 level students. Thus, the number of errors in this student written sample allowed for examining the precision of teachers' actual feedback practices (i.e., their real-time precision and accuracy). In addition, teachers were asked ten questions regarding their feedback practices in an oral interview about their perceptions and preferences in the oral interview session. The purpose of the interview was to elicit teachers' views regarding their feedback practices and thus to supplement the questionnaire data. The demographic questions on the questionnaire helped categorizing teachers into three categories; less than five years, between five to ten years, and more than ten years (Table 1).

Data Analysis

To statistically find the effect for teachers' years of teaching experience on the perception of their

amount of marking (Comprehensive vs. Selective) and manners feedback provision (Direct vs. Indirect), teacher questionnaire was carefully coded. The coding framework on the questionnaire ranged from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'. Based on a Likert-scale rating, items were given numerical values from 1 to 5 (Durrneyi, 2003). Then scores on questions related to each construct were added up to form composite scores. For the four composite scores, distributional assumptions were checked using Shapiro-Wilk test of normality and no statistically significant violation was observed. Next, separate one-way ANOVAs were performed between three groups of teachers as independent variables and the scores of questionnaire constructs (i.e., composite scores) as the dependent variable. As to the precision and accuracy of teachers' actual correction, the error correction precision tasks completed by the teacher participants were analyzed based on the errors unanimously established by the two EFL raters in the task and the descriptive results were obtained (i.e., frequency counts). The results of the error correction precision task is presented in the next section. Also, the results of the one-way ANOVA procedures for the first and the second research questions and frequency count analysis for the third research question appear in the next section.

Table 1. Teacher participants' data

Years of Teaching Experience	Number of Teachers	Percentage
Less than 5 years	5	33.33%
5 to 10 years	5	33.33%
Over 10 years	5	33.33%

Results

Results of descriptive analysis regarding the three groups of teacher and their four manners of error marking and feedback provision which encompass our first two research questions are displayed below (Table 2):

Answer to the first research question

With regard to the first research question, one-way ANOVA was carried out to find whether years of teaching experience had an effect on the perception of EFL teachers regarding comprehensive and selective error marking.

Results of the ANOVA test revealed that there was no significant difference between teachers' years of teaching experience in the three groups and their perception of comprehensive error marking $F(2, 12) = 0.40, p > 0.05, \eta^2 = 0.062$. Thus, no post hoc tests were followed.

Table 2. Descriptive analysis of amount of error marking and type of feedback provision

Amount/Type	M	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Comprehensive				
Less than 5 years	4.00	0.86	2.00	5.00
5 to 10 years	3.50	1.00	2.00	4.00
Over 10 years	3.50	2.12	2.00	5.00
Selective				
Less than 5 years	6.88	2.75	4.00	12.00
5 to 10 years	7.00	1.41	5.00	8.00
Over 10 years	7.50	0.70	7.00	8.00
Direct Feedback				
Less than 5 years	5.17	1.65	4.00	8.00
5 to 10 years	7.75	2.50	4.00	9.00
Over 10 years	8.50	0.70	8.00	9.00
Indirect feedback				
Less than 5 years	15.11	1.36	13.00	16.00
5 to 10 years	12.50	3.51	9.00	16.00
Over 10 years	11.01	5.65	8.00	16.00

Also, no significant difference was found between teaching experience of the teachers in the three groups and their perception of selective error marking $F(2, 12) = 0.054, p > 0.05, \eta^2 = 0.009$. Therefore, with respect to the results of the one-way ANOVA procedures presented in this section, the first null hypothesis of the study regarding the possible effect of teaching experience of the teachers on their perception of comprehensive and selective could not be rejected.

Answer to the second research question

To provide an answer to the second research question, one-way ANOVA was utilized to determine whether years of teaching experience had an effect on the EFL teachers' perception of direct and indirect written feedback $F(2, 12) = 5.33, p < 0.05, \eta^2 = 0.47$.

The LSD post hoc test was utilized to locate the

possible significant difference between three groups of teachers and their perception of direct and indirect error feedback teacher. The results indicated regarding perception of direct error feedback there was a significant difference between the first group and the third group ($p = 0.039, \eta^2 = 0.32$). Table 3 exhibits the post hoc LSD test results.

However, as presented in Table 4, there was no significant difference among the three groups of teachers and their perception of indirect error feedback $F(2, 12) = 2.01, p > 0.05, \eta^2 = .25$. Therefore, the results rejected the second null hypothesis of the study regarding the effectiveness of teaching experience the teachers on their perception of direct. Although, respecting the effect of teachers' years of teaching experience on their perception of indirect error feedback the null hypothesis was not rejected.

Table 3. Result of the post hoc LSD test for direct feedback and years of teaching experience

Direct	Group 1	Group 3	Mean Difference	Sig.	η^2
LSD	Less than 5 years	Over 10 years	-3.33	.039*	0.32

Table 4. Result of one-way ANOVA for indirect feedback and years of teaching experience

Indirect	SOS	df	MS	F	Sig.	η^2
Between Groups	30.511	2	14.056	2.011	.177	0.251
Within	90.332	12	7.527			

Table 5. Four categories describing degrees of precision in error correction precision task

Error Correction Precision	Description	Sample Correction
Accurate correction	1. Located and corrected	Efficiency → Efficiency
	2. Located	Efficiency
	3. Located and coded	Efficiency Sp
Inaccurate correction	1. Located but wrongly corrected	A great energy → A powerful energy
	2. Located and corrected wrongly	Nervous to do everything → Nervous of/about doing
Unnecessary correction	1. Correction changing meaning	Is not useful for → Harmful
	2. Correction related to writing content	Your nourishment is not well → you lack proper nourishment
Skipped correction	Neither located nor corrected (possibly treated as correct)	(Be) self-confidence → (Be) self-confident

Answer to the third research question

Precision and Accuracy of Teachers' Written Feedback Practice: A qualitative follow up

To better evaluate the three groups of teachers'

overall precision in their error correction practices, the error correction precision task completed by teachers was analyzed to see how many of teachers in the error correction precision task (a) had 'accu-

rate' marking and feedback provision, (b) had 'inaccurate' marking and feedback provision, (c) had 'unnecessary' marking and feedback provision (d) did not mark or 'skipped' an error in the correction task altogether. Table 5 presents four general description criteria based on which precision of participating teachers corrections of the correction task were categorized.

When analyzed, it was revealed one of the teachers with 10 years of experience in the error correction precision task had made completely accurate corrections. Moreover, one of teachers with 5 to 10

years of teaching experience had made no unnecessary corrections. With the rest of the group however, unnecessary corrections were apparent. Furthermore, 2 out of 5 of the least experienced in the teacher sample (those with less than five years of experience) had one or more inaccurate corrections. Still, 86.6% of all three participating groups (13 out of 15) had skipped one special error in line seven of the error correction task for the word "self-confidence" which had to be in imperative form (Be self-confident) as presented in the error analysis of the error correction task in Table 6.

Table 6. Analysis of errors and their respective categories in the error correction precision task

Error number	Error in line	Student error	Correction	Error category
1	6	efficiency	Efficiency	Spelling
2	15	Your nourishment	Nutrition	Word choice (wrong meaning)
3	17	Foods makes	Make	Verb-ending (third person"s")
4	7	Be self-confidence	Self-confident	Word choice (noun)
5	14	Other people Your enemy	Enemies	Noun-ending (plural)
6	15	Eating good	Well	Word choice (adjective)
7	5	Can't doing	Can't do	Sentence structure
8	1	Been anxious	Being	Sentence structure
9	15	Eating good	Eat	Sentence structure
10	11	A great energy	Amount of	Quantifier (missing)
11	15	Is not well	Good	Word choice (adverb)
12	4-8-11	Your anxiousness (3 times)	Anxiety	Word choice (wrong affix)
13	7	Are confidence	Confident	Word choice (adjective)
14	5	Can't doing everything	Anything	Word choice (wrong meaning)
15	13	you	You	Punctuation (capitalization)
16	5	Relax	relax	Punctuation (capitalization)

Analysis of the Oral Interview

In the interview session, teachers were asked ten open-ended, semi-structured questions. After each interview, a summary of teacher participants' ideas in all groups was recorded. Then, their common

views were clustered under different categories. On the first question, as with the questionnaire data, mostly (9 of the teachers in all groups) believed they comprehensively mark the errors. As to the second question, seven teachers mentioned using underlining and circling and/or using a cross (X) close to

those error which need to be omitted altogether. Yet regarding the third questions, the majority of teachers expressed they mark errors on the ad hoc basis. Interestingly, they also unanimously believed indirect error feedback encourages students to self-correct their errors but they mostly use direct feedback as they have traditionally done so. With respect to error codes, a common theme was found to be that teachers use it only for significant errors. However, an examination of the error correction precision task shows inconsistent use of such codes. That is, error codes were used with different types of minor (i.e., non-disruptive) and major (i.e., disruptive) errors. On questions six and seven, most teachers said at beginning levels it is more on teachers' shoulder to locate and correct but at higher levels up to the advanced ones it passes to students however teacher should still lead them. On training for written error correction, however, there was an acceptance for more educational training regarding the practice of correction. Lastly, teachers viewed students' participation and cooperation essential as these are the best ways to more actively engage students in the correction process.

Discussion and Conclusion

With respect to the first research question, the result of the parametric procedures did not highlight any significant difference between the three groups of teachers regarding their years of teaching and their perception of comprehensive and selective error marking (amount of error correction). However, descriptive analysis highlighted some differences in their perceptions. Among the three groups, the third group, teachers with over 10 years of experience, were more in favor of selective error marking based upon their higher mean score. This in part, suggests some effects for teachers' years of teaching experience on their perception toward more modern approaches to error correction. It also allows for more students' involvement in locating their own errors and possibly in correcting them for themselves. This way, teacher's authority and learner's centrality is maintained throughout the course. Contrary to highly experienced teachers, less experienced teachers took the traditional path opting for more comprehensive view toward students' errors. For them, this probably was rooted in two major beliefs: (1) marking all errors makes them not recur in future and (2) if students knew where their errors were located, they would have already treat-

ed them for themselves so what would be the role of the teacher (reclaiming teacher authority). Other EFL teachers often maintain if students do not get all their errors marked, they will feel unsafe to continue their writing practice, as students have not received complete assessment of their potential errors. Such beliefs indicate the need for raising the awareness of EFL teachers regarding writing feedback research results. This is, modern methods of language teaching necessitate maximizing the centrality of students (e.g., by providing feedback that is selective in amount) and reducing teachers' role to "communicator" or "facilitator" (see Brown, 2007).

Also as to the second research question, results of descriptive analysis showed that as years of teaching experience increased, the tendency in the teachers' attitudes toward direct error feedback increased. The result of the one-way ANOVA procedure indicated a significant difference in the three groups of teachers' perception of direct feedback. Opposite to the previous research question result, apparently here, experienced teachers defied the rule of leaving some opportunity for students to work on their errors independently. That is, teachers presented the correct form of their errors to them, which has been criticized by many L2 feedback experts (e.g. Ferris, 2002; Montgomery & Baker, 2007). However, as explained earlier, this may prove useful for beginning levels of instruction and also practical to those dealing with "untreatable errors". Moreover, the results of one-way ANOVA showed no significant difference between the perception of the three groups of teachers toward indirect error feedback and their years of teaching experience. Again, according to descriptive analysis, some meaningful differences could be highlighted. By comparing mean scores of the three groups, reasonably an opposite trend was the case here. That is, the less experienced the teachers, the more positive the views they held toward indirect feedback. In other words, least experienced teachers (i.e., first group with less than five years of teaching experience) were more in favor of locating all errors but on the other hand, they did not much support presenting the correct form to students. Conversely, most experienced teachers (with over ten years of teaching experience) were in favor of presenting the correct form to learners. Within the scope of this small-scale study, this indicated the need for more teacher training so that EFL teachers better realize the effects of presenting the

correct form (direct feedback) to learners especially at higher levels of proficiency. But more importantly, such a split in perceptions and views as with some other studies (Lee, 2004, 2009) is indicative of a debatable issue and that is teachers' unawareness of best feedback practices that benefit student (see Ferris, 2014, p. 8). Clearly, this requires due regards in terms of in- and pre- service EFL teachers' training. That is, teacher training courses need to focus on the importance of self-correction and thus indirect manners of feedback provision. Also, the training need to emphasize the ineffectiveness of comprehensive marking. To do so, teacher trainers may particularly use examples of actual research to raise EFL teachers with respect to the type and amount of the feedback they commonly provide. As Lee (2009) argues feedback training sessions need to offer "teachers with opportunities to challenge their own feedback practices" (p. 8). Finally, the result of this study showed that years of teaching experience seems to be positively impacting the precision and accuracy of the corrections made by EFL teachers. That is, more teaching experience appears to be related with constant comparison of similarities and discrepancies that arise in learners' individual written works. And this helps raising the precision of the corrections offered.

The issue of accuracy of teacher feedback is closely linked to how learners can benefit from correction. As one of his pedagogically-oriented arguments against written corrective feedback, Truscott (1996) called into question the ability of L2 teachers—especially non-native ones (e.g., common in EFL settings)—to provide accurate error correction. In particular, Truscott contended that "questions regarding grammar can be very difficult, EVEN for experts and someone who speaks or writes English well does not necessarily understand the principles involved" (p. 350, emphasis added).

In other words, Truscott related the precision of the corrections made by L2 teachers to the failure of learners to apply the feedback to new pieces of writing (see Bitchener & Ferris, 2012). This argument of Truscott can be realized within the larger cognitive-interactionist SLA theories supporting corrective feedback. More specifically, if teachers are not precise with respect to the corrections they provide, the act of noticing the errors by learners (Schmidt, 2010) will likely suffer. That is, imprecise (e.g., unnecessary, inaccurate) corrections fail to draw learners' attention to noticing their erroneous language form while this is necessary for acqui-

sition (i.e., formation of genuine language knowledge that can extend to different writing tasks) to occur (Schmidt, 1990, 1994). Therefore, inaccurate teacher corrections likely reduces the ability of learners to detect and analyze their own errors and does not prevent learners from committing the same errors in the future (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012).

Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

The small number of teacher participants is one the limitations of this pilot, classroom-based study. In the context of this study (i.e., language institutes), on average, the ratio of teachers to students was 1:20. Thus, increasing the number of teacher participant required many more classrooms and language institutes. Also, the concept of teaching experience was defined as the amount of exposure to EFL learners, and a common EFL context (i.e., an Iranian EFL context). Research has pointed out that teaching experience has direct bearing on teachers' perception and practices of error correction (Brown, 2012, 2014; Evens et al., 2010; Ferris, 2014). However, several other variables (e.g., different levels of language instruction, teachers' educational background) could be simultaneously added to base the study around a more inclusive definition of teaching experience and thereby allow for addressing more complex research questions. Clearly, this requires using more measurement instruments (e.g., questionnaires, rating scales, observational tools) and considerably larger pool of teacher participants. The accuracy of teacher corrections was measured using a single error correction precision task. However, multiple measurements of teachers' corrected samples helps increasing the ecological validity of the teachers' correction performance results. Finally, more structured interviews could help better complementing the questionnaire data. Thus, future large-scale studies may also aim at enhancing the qualitative measures (e.g., interviews) to see whether a convergence between the quantitative and qualitative results could be achieved.

Reference

- Brown, D. (2014). The type and linguistic foci of oral corrective feedback in the L2 classroom: A meta-analysis. *Language Teaching Research*, 20, 1-23.
- Brown, D. (2012). The written corrective feedback

- debate: Next steps for classroom teachers and practitioners. *TESOL Quarterly*, 46, 861-867.
- Chomsky, N. (1959). Review of Skinner's verbal behaviour. *Language*, 35, 26-58.
- Chandler, J. (2003). The efficacy of various kinds of error feedback for improvement in the accuracy and fluency of L2 student writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 12, 267-296.
- Chaney, S. J. (1999). The effect of error types on error correction and revision. Unpublished master's thesis, California State University, Sacramento.
- Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (2014). Available at: http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework_EN.pdf
- Corder, S. P. (1967). The significance of learners' errors. *International Review of Applied Linguistics*, 5(4), 162-170.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2003). *Questionnaires in Second Language Research: Construction, Administration, and Processing*. University of Nottingham. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates publishers. Mahwah, New Jersey.
- Ellis, R. (2009). A typology of written corrective feedback types. *ELT Journal*, 63 (2), 97-107.
- Ellis, R., Sheen, Y., Murakami, M., & Takashima, H. (2008). The effects of focused and unfocused written corrective feedback in an English as a foreign language context. *System* 36, 353-371.
- Evans, N. W., Hartshorn, K. J., & Tuioti, E. A. (2010). Written corrective feedback: the practitioners' perspective. *International Journal of English Studies*, 10(2), 47-77.
- Ferris, D. R. (2014). Responding to student writing: Teachers' philosophies and practices. *Assessing Writing*, 19, 6-23.
- Ferris, D. R., Liu, H., Sinha, A., & Senna, M. (2013). Written corrective feedback for individual L2 writers. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 22(3), 307-329.
- Ferris, D. (2003). Response to student writing: Implications for second language students. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Ferris, D. R., & Roberts, B. (2001). Error feedback in L2 writing classes: How explicit does it need to be? *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 10, 161-184.
- Ferris, D. (2002). Responding to student errors: Issues and strategies. In D. Ferris (Ed.), *Treatment of error in second language student writing* (pp. 49-76). Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press.
- Hendrickson, J. M. (1978). Error correction in foreign language teaching: Recent theory, research, and practice. *Modern Language Journal*, 62, 387-398.
- Hulstign, J. H. (2002). Towards a unified account of the representation, processing and acquisition of second language knowledge. *Second Language Research*, 18, 193-223.
- Kao, C. & Wible, D. (2014). A Meta-Analysis on the Effectiveness of Grammar Correction in Second Language Writing. *English Teaching & Learning*, 38, 29-69.
- Krashen, S. D., & Terrell, T. D. (1983). *The natural approach: Language acquisition in the classroom*. London, UK: Prentice Hall Europe.
- Lalande, J. F. (1982). Reducing composition errors: An experiment. *Modern Language Journal*, 66, 140-149.
- Lee, I. (2004). Error correction in L2 secondary writing classrooms: The case of Hong Kong. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 13, 285-312.
- Lee, I. (2008). Understanding teachers' written feedback practices in Hong Kong secondary classrooms. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 17, 69-85.
- Lee, I. (2009). Ten mismatches between teachers' beliefs and written feedback practice. *ELT journal*, 63, 13-22.
- Lee, I. (2011). Feedback revolution: what gets in the way? *ELT Journal*, 65, 1-12.
- Leki, I. (1990). Coaching from the margins: Issues in written response. In B. Kroll (Ed.), *Second language writing: Research insights for the classroom* (pp. 57-68). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Liu, Q. & Brown, D. (2015). A methodological synthesis of research on the effectiveness of corrective feedback in L2 writing. *The Journal of Second Language Writing*, 30, 66-81.
- Long, M. H. (1977). Teacher feedback on learner error: mapping cognitions. In Brown, H. D., Yorio, C. A., & Crymes, R. (eds.), *On TESOL '77. Teaching and learning English as a Second Language: Trends in research and practice* (pp. 278-94). Washington, D.C.: TESOL.
- Mahili, I. (1995). Responding to students writing. *English Teaching Forum*, 33, 24-27.
- McLaughlin, B. (1990). Conscious versus unconscious learning. *TESOL Quarterly*, 24, 617-631.
- Miller P. C., & Pan, W. (2012). Recasts in the L2

- classroom: A meta-analytic review. *International Journal of Educational Research* 56, 48–59.
- Montgomery, J. L., & Baker, W. (2007). Teacher-written feedback: Student perceptions, teacher self-assessment, and actual teacher performance. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 16, 82–99.
- Norouzian, R. & Eslami, Z. (2013). Applying Teacher Feedback: Grounded Theory Perspective. *Tennessee Foreign Language Teaching Association Journal*. 4, 72-87.
- Norouzian, R. & Khomeijani A. F. (2012). Written Error Feedback from Perception to Practice: A Feedback on Feedback. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 3, 11-22.
- Paradis, M. (1994). Neurolinguistic aspects of implicit and explicit memory: Implications for bilingualism. In N. Ellis (Ed.), *Implicit and explicit learning of second languages*, pp. 393-419. London, UK: Academic Press.
- Rivers, V. (1981). *Teaching foreign language skills*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Robb, T., Ross, S., & Shortreed, I. (1986). Salience of feedback on error and its effect on EFL writing quality. *TESOL Quarterly*, 20, 83-93.
- Russel, J., & Spada, N. (2006). The effectiveness of corrective feedback for the acquisition of L2 grammar: A meta-analysis of the research. In J. M. Norris & L. Ortega (Eds.), *Synthesizing research on language learning and teaching*, pp. 133-164. Amsterdam, Holland: John Benjamin.
- Schwartz, B. (1993). On explicit and negative data effecting and affecting competence and linguistic behaviour. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 15, 147-163.
- Selinker, L. (1972). Interlanguage. *IRAL*, 10(3), 33-45.
- Skinner, B. F. (1957). *Verbal behaviour*. Acton, MA: Copely Publishing Group.
- Truscott, J. (1996). The case against grammar correction in L2 writing classes. *Language Learning*, 46, 327-369.
- Truscott, J. (2007). The effect of error correction on learners' ability to write accurately. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 16, 255-272.
- Truscott, J., & Hsu, A. (2008). Error correction, revision, and learning. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 17, 292-305.
- Van Beuningen, C. G., De Jong, N. H., & Kuiken, F. (2012). Evidence on the effectiveness of comprehensive error correction in second language writing. *Language Learning*, 62, 1-41.
- Vanpatten, B. (1986). The ACTEFL proficiency guidelines: Implications for grammatical accuracy in the classroom? *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 8, 56-67.

Appendix A: Teacher Questionnaire

This questionnaire aims to find out how you mark grammar errors in students' writing, your be-

liefs about error feedback, and the concerns you may have regarding the subject. All your answers will be treated confidentially.

Section 1 Please circle the appropriate answers.

1. Teaching experience:	Less than 5 years	5 to 10 years	Over 10 years
3. Have you received special training regarding written feedback?	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No
4. Do you have a degree?	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No
5. Do you have an English-related degree (e.g., TESL/TEFL, translation)?	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No
6. Do you have a postgraduate Degree/Certificate in Education?	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No
7. Do you have a TOEFL/ IELTS?	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No
8. Do you have a higher degree?	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No
9. Do you have a higher degree in an English-related subject (e.g., TESL/TEFL, linguistics, translation)?	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No

Section 2

1. Feedback is effective when all students' errors are marked.

Strongly disagree disagree undecided Agree Strongly agree

2. I focus on all error categories when marking students' written work.

Strongly disagree disagree undecided Agree Strongly agree

3. There is no need for teachers to provide feedback on student errors selectively.

Strongly disagree disagree undecided Agree Strongly agree

4. It is the teacher's job to locate all errors and provide all corrections to students.

Strongly disagree disagree undecided Agree Strongly agree

5. I mark students' errors selectively.

Strongly disagree disagree undecided Agree Strongly agree

6. The errors should be selected on a pre-determined basis (i.e., I decide on what errors feedback should be provided).

Strongly disagree disagree undecided Agree Strongly agree

7. My selected errors are directly linked to grammar instruction in class (e.g., after I have taught subject-verb agreement, I provide feedback on subject-verb agreement errors).

Strongly disagree disagree undecided Agree Strongly agree

8. My students are aware that I select certain errors (not all errors) to provide feedback on.

Strongly disagree disagree undecided Agree Strongly agree

9. Feedback is effective when teacher select certain categories of errors for correction.

Strongly disagree disagree undecided Agree Strongly agree

10. I use a marking code (e.g., Adj, V etc.) in place of presenting error to student.

Strongly disagree disagree undecided Agree Strongly agree

11. I believe teachers should have students self-correct their own errors in / outside the class.

Strongly disagree disagree undecided Agree Strongly agree

12. Coding errors with the help of a marking code is a useful means of helping students correct errors for themselves.

Strongly disagree disagree undecided Agree Strongly agree

13. I use marking codes that are easy for students to follow and understand so that student can self-correct.

Strongly disagree disagree undecided Agree Strongly agree

14. Students should learn to locate and analyze their own errors.

Strongly disagree disagree undecided Agree Strongly agree

15. I indicate (by underlining/circling etc.) the errors and give my students the correct form, (e.g., has went gone)

Strongly disagree disagree undecided Agree Strongly agree

16. I use error codes and give my students the correct form, (e.g., has went gone , "V")

Strongly disagree disagree undecided Agree Strongly agree

17. I advocate providing the correct form to students in the written assignments.

Strongly disagree disagree undecided Agree Strongly agree

18. I believe presenting the correct form of error is the most effective way for students to improve their writing.

Strongly disagree disagree undecided Agree Strongly agree

19. It is teacher's job to present the correct form to students in their writing.

Strongly disagree disagree undecided Agree Strongly agree

20. I indicate (by underlining/circling etc.) errors, but do not provide the correct form (e.g., has went)

Strongly disagree disagree undecided Agree Strongly agree

21. I indicate (by error codes) errors, but I don't correct them, (e.g., has went, "V")

Strongly disagree disagree undecided Agree Strongly agree

22. I indicate (underline/circle) errors and categorize them, But I don't give correct form, (e.g., has went. Verb form)

Strongly disagree disagree undecided Agree Strongly agree

23. I hint at the location of errors by putting a comment in the margin to indicate an error on a specific line (e.g., check for grammar in this line).

Strongly disagree disagree undecided Agree Strongly agree
 24. I hint at the location of errors and categorize them with the help of an error code (e.g., by writing “Perp.” in the margin to indicate a preposition error on a specific line).
 Strongly disagree disagree undecided Agree Strongly agree

Appendix B: The Error Correction precision Task (Please correct the following writing sample).

Been anxious is not useful for everybody in his or her life.

There are some tips for everybody to reduce anxiousness in his or her life.

(5) 1. First, Relax. If you are anxious, you can't doing everything well and your efficiency would be reduced.

2. Second, Self-confidence. If you are confidence to do everything, you can overcome your anxiousness about your problems in life.

(10) 3. Have hope for the future. This is so important to reduce your anxiousness. Having hope makes a great energy so you can do everything that you want.

4. Have confidence in other people. You have to think; that other people are not enemy.

(15) 5. Eating good. If your nourishment is not well you be nervous to do everything. There are some interesting foods that makes everybody happy. Like ice-cream and spaghetti.

These tips make you happy and won't make you

(20) anxious about everything in your life.

Appendix C: Teacher oral interview questions

1. Are you in favor of comprehensive or selective error feedback? Why?

2. What error corrections strategies do you use? Why do you choose these strategies?

3. Are your error correction strategies linked to grammar instruction? Elaborate on your answer.

4. Do you think it is a good idea to provide corrections for student errors in writing (i.e., direct error feedback)? Explain your answer.

5. Do you use error codes? Why or why not? What problems, if any, can you see in using error codes? How can the problems be solved?

6. Is it the teacher's job to locate and correct errors for students? Explain your answer.

7. Who should be responsible for error correction? Why?

8. What concerns or problems, if any, do you have in correcting student errors in writing?

9. Do you think teachers need any help or special training in error correction? Explain your answer.

10. In your opinion, what is the best way to go about error correction? Explain your answer.

Appendix D: Factor Analysis Pattern Coefficients

Factor Analysis of Teacher Questionnaire

	Components			
	1	2	3	4
Q1	0.334	0.095	0.548	0.029
Q2	0.469	-0.009	0.634	0.105
Q3	-0.283	0.019	0.736	0.032
Q4	0.213	0.204	0.823	0.243
Q5	-0.223	0.704	-0.002	-0.153
Q6	-0.501	0.622	-0.004	-0.025
Q7	-0.285	0.612	0.048	0.096
Q8	-0.612	0.715	0.162	0.123
Q9	0.402	0.536	-0.041	-0.011
Q10	0.844	0.150	0.092	0.102
Q11	0.888	0.087	0.058	0.098
Q12	0.789	0.056	0.043	-0.104
Q13	0.764	0.070	0.013	0.071
Q14	0.443	-0.574	0.034	-0.063
Q15	-0.515	-0.300	-0.054	0.412
Q16	-0.692	0.177	-0.055	0.626
Q17	0.337	-0.051	-0.025	0.396
Q18	0.353	0.081	-0.027	0.561
Q19	0.321	0.441	-0.008	0.709
Q20	0.455	0.073	0.011	0.106
Q21	0.701	0.135	0.051	0.104
Q22	0.539	-0.086	0.061	0.082
Q23	0.504	0.009	0.098	0.139
Q24	0.729	-0.210	0.007	0.061
Eigen-value	7.138	2.874	1.989	1.747
Cumulative%	38.558	49.531	63.612	78.447

Note. Shading indicates Pattern Coefficients greater than .4.