The Effect of Immediate and Delayed Error Correction on Accuracy Development of Intermediate EFL Learners' Writing

Keivan Seyyedi[1]* & Nazar M. Hamad Amin[2]

[1]Department of Chemistry, Faculty of Science, Soran University, Soran, Kurdistan Regional Government, Iraq
[2]Department of English, Faculty of Arts, Soran University, Soran, Kurdistan Regional Government, Iraq
Corresponding Author: Keivan Seyyedi, E-mail: kevansayyedi@gmail.com

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	This study investigated the immediate and delayed effects of error correction on the accuracy improvement of intermediate EFL learners' writing. Through TOEFL test, the researcher selected 3 intact intermediate classes and assigned them into peer correction, self-correction and teacher correction groups. Before the main treatment, all participants were requested to write a composition on a topic, which served the purpose of pre-test. After writing the composition, the first group (peer), including two learners in each group, corrected the errors underlined by the teacher together. The learners in the second group, namely, self-correction, corrected the errors underlined by teacher individually and the third group received the correct forms written by the teacher on top of the errors. All the groups wrote 6 compositions on the topics during 6 sessions. The first topic served the purpose of immediate pre-test. This procedure was followed for 6 weeks and the 6th composition was regarded as immediate post-test and after a month (12th week), delayed post-test was conducted for all learners. The findings of ANOVA indicated that both peer correction and self-correction were influential in enhancing learners' writing accuracy; however, the group doing peer correction outperformed the self-correction one.

Introduction

Since good writing entails the acquisition of various linguistic abilities, including grammatical accuracy, lexicon, syntax, and planning strategies like organization, style and rhetoric, writing instruction is especially important in foreign language classes. Writing is not only an individual act, but it is also a social and interactive process during which the writer attempts to express an idea (Aydin & Yildiz, 2014). According to Hyland (2003), teaching grammatical structures for the purpose of achieving grammatical accuracy and ensuring the students' use of those structures appropriately for various aims in different situations can be a difficult for second language writing teachers.

Written error correction is viewed by writing teachers as an important element in improving L2 writing accuracy (Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Lee, 2004), but there is a lot of debate regarding its effectiveness (Truscott, 1996; Chandler, 2003). Giving feedback to learners' performance is one of the most important responsibilities of a teacher. Schmidt (1990) states that noticing is a necessary element in second language (L2) acquisition and that acquisition happens when learners consciously notice linguistic features. However, most teachers state that all their efforts in marking student essays and giving feedback on grammatical accuracy, particularly when such feedback sometimes seems to be given scant regard by students is in vain (Riddiford, 2006).

Errors are not the result of not learning rather they are the outcome of natural development in language learning. So, in this process the teacher's role is a facilitator and does not always correct errors and engages the students in the process of correcting errors. Teacher can provide feedback in different ways in class and one of them is teacher correction. In a traditional classroom, a teacher as well as students expect and want the teacher to give feedback. Since the teacher is the

only knowledgeable person who flows information to the students, s/he will decide whether students have learnt or not (Sultana, 2009).

However, self-correction is closely linked to learner autonomy as well as the say, "Tell us, we forget; Show us we remember; Involve us, we learn." Self-correction is the technique in which students are engaged to correct their own errors. "It can… foster the development of skills needed to regulate their own learning and it places more responsibility for learning on the students (Rief, 1990 as cited in Sultana, 2009)".

Social constructivist theory states that learning is a social activity (Vygotsky, 1978). A learner can develop knowledge when he/she socially interacts with others. Collaborative and peer feedback in second language (L2) writing have proven to be effective means of improving L2 learner's writing skill. They warrant attention because it is proposed that the collaborative dialogue that emerges in the writing process mediates language learning. Attending to talk generated during the co-construction and revision of a piece of writing has allowed some researchers not only to access the cognitive processes learners deploy (Lantof, 2000) but also to keep track of the impact of that talk on language learning as reflected in the students' writing (Swain, 2000).

Moreover, White and Caminero (1995) claim that learners can also benefit from the opportunities of learning from each other through peer feedback. Students learn to communicate effectively, accept different opinions, listen carefully, think critically, and participate efficiently.

Literature Review

In learning a foreign language, errors occur in all stages of learning. Contrary to what some language learners and teachers believe, errors will not disappear simply. Language acquisition will occur if the learner is relaxed and willing to learning. They should have no fear of making errors. Creating a friendly and relaxed atmosphere in language classrooms, encouraging peer work or small group work and using appropriate and engaging techniques for language acquisition will reduce the stress in the classroom (Kavaliauskiene, 2003).

In FL writing, one form of collaborative work that has been widely accepted and studied since the 1990s is peer feedback (Hyland, 2000; Liang, 2010; Lockhart & Ng, 1995; Villamil & de Guerrero, 1996). Collaborative writing involves two or more people working together to produce a piece for which the group is responsible (Bosley, 1989). Research into collaborative writing, both in the first language (L1) and second language (L2), has shown that collaborative writing demands reflective thinking, helps learners to focus on grammatical accuracy, lexis and discourse (Donato, 1994; Storch, 2002).

The way mistakes can be remedied is also of great importance in reducing fear. Majority of EFL teachers have an active role in error correction, wand learners prefer to be passive and depend on teachers' corrections. Nowadays, due to the emphasis on learner-centeredness and autonomy, learner's self-correction of errors is considered more useful for language learning than teacher's correction

Self-Correction

In self correction or self-repair (Lyster, 1998), the teacher makes the error salient by repeating in speaking, underlining the error in writing. It is a strategy in which students themselves are supposed to read, analyze, correct, and evaluate their own writing through the teacher's indirect feedback (Bitchener, Young, & Cameron, 2005).

There are several advantages to self-correction. In self-correction, the learners consciously pay attention to his or her erroneous sentence. It increases students' independence from the teacher; moreover, students remember better when they see and get aware of their own mistakes, strengths, and weaknesses in writing, and it saves time in large classes (Yang, 2010). Ancker (2000) states that through self-correction, students attend their errors and attempt to reduce reliance on the teacher, so that they move toward encouraging autonomy.

There are some studies investigating the effect of self-correction. For example, Kubota's (2001) study on lower intermediate university students learning Japanese as a foreign language indicated that due to self-correction, the number of errors in students' writing decreased. Furthermore, Makino (1993, as cited in Lee & Ridley, 1999) states student correction either self-correction or peer correction is much more effective than teacher correction in the sense that "it allows learners to be the architects of their own learning"(p. 26).

Peer Correction

Peer feedback is a writing activity in which learners work in groups collaboratively and provide information on each other's writing (Liu & Hansen, 2002). Through feedback, the writer learns where he or she has made an error, provided not enough information which confused the readers, developed the ideas incorrectly, or used inappropriate words or tense.

Collaborative writing has been originated from a sociocultural perspective (Storch, 2005; Villamil & de Guerrero, 1996). In collaborative writing, writers make decisions on how to express their ideas, and formulate the structure to express those ideas in writing. Wells (2002) states that it is the "joint attempt to construct common understandings" (p. 74) that is superior to individual understandings.

According to Swain (2000), through collaborative dialogue, learners pay more attention on message conveyance, that is, dialogue provides learners with opportunities to use language, and to reflect on their own language use. As a result of this collaboration, "…together [learners'] jointly constructed performance outstrips their individual competences" (Swain, 2000, p. 111).

Collaborative interaction is useful for learners in who try to construct texts jointly (Swain & Lapkin, 1998) because it provides opportunities for learners to focus on various aspects of writing such as grammar, lexicon and discourse (Donato, 1994; Kim, 2008; Storch, 2002, 2009; Swain & Lapkin, 1998; Wigglesworth & Storch, 2009). Collaborative writing is an important part of writing classes. Studies carried out by researchers have shown that the implementation of collaborative writing improves learners' production, and leads to meaningful revisions (Storch, 2009).

Storch (2002) looked at the characteristics of collaborative work and found that when learners had collaboration with each other, they were able to co-construct and extend knowledge and support each other to reach higher levels of competence. She suggests that noticing the gap between one's interlanguage and the target language, the consolidation and extension of knowledge are processes that facilitate language learning.

According to Ferris (1995), scaffolding in the form of peer feedback in collaborative writing helps learners to improve confidence and motivation and think critically. Moreover, it provides more feedback for learners on their writing than they could just from the teacher. Therefore, giving and receiving feedback from peers not only promotes the level of the learners' writing but it also offers them opportunities to communicate with each other, share ideas and give useful comments and suggestions.

Teacher Correction

Giving feedback to learners' performance is one of the most important responsibilities of a teacher. Schmidt (1990) states that noticing is a necessary element in SLA and that acquisition happens when learners consciously notice linguistic features. However, most teachers state that all their efforts in marking student essays and giving feedback on grammatical accuracy, particularly when such feedback sometimes seems to be given scant regard by students is in vain (Riddiford, 2006).

Whether teachers should provide feedback on grammar in the writing errors of English language learners has caused considerable arguments in the field of second language acquisition (SLA). Some researchers (e.g., Kepner, 1991; Sheppard, 1992; Truscott, 2007) believe that grammar corrections have no effect on L2 writing accuracy development. According to Krashen (1982) and Truscott (1996), corrective feedback (CF) is seen as not only ineffective but also harmful. However, other researchers (Bitchener & Knoch, 2008; Chandler, 2003) claim that CF promotes grammatical accuracy.

Regardless of pedagogical approach, the response of teachers to student performance has been examined in a variety of ways. Depending on the type of the feedback, teacher feedback has been found sometimes to help, to hinder, and occasionally to have no effect on students' learning and revising (Silva & Brice, 2004, as cited in Ahangari, 2014). There are many different ways of supplying written CF on L2 learners' writing ranging from more explicit to more implicit (Van Beuningen, 2010). The two most prominent dichotomies are direct and indirect written CF. A range of studies have investigated whether certain types of CF or their combinations are more influential than others. In these studies, feedback is categorized as either direct (explicit) or indirect (implicit) (Corpuz, 2011).

In sum, communicative classroom activities allow some attention to form and also can provide opportunities for noticing linguistic features. How to increase student awareness of accuracy in writing is a concern of most teachers of English. While enough conceptualization has already been made about teacher correction and self-correction, and a good number of experimental studies have been conducted to examine the effect of peer correction on different aspects of second language learning, there are limited reflection and research studies that have compared the effect these three types of correction in one study on intermediate EFL learners' writing accuracy improvement. The research so far has not been conclusive on the

central issue of which type of feedback and correction is an effective means of improving L2 writing accuracy. So inspired by the reviewed literature, the main aim of this study was to investigate the immediate and delayed effects of collaborative correction, self-correction, and teacher correction on the accuracy improvement of learners. To this end, the researcher formulated the following research questions.

a) Is there any significant difference among peer correction, self-correction and teacher correction on accuracy development of intermediate learners in short term?

b) Is there any significant difference among peer correction, self-correction and teacher correction on accuracy development of intermediate learners in long term?

Methodology

Participants
By means of TOFEL test, 60 homogenous female participants within the age range of 14-20 out of 140 learners from one of the institutes called Fardaye No were selected. Subjects were divided into 3 equal groups (i.e., peer, self, and teacher). The classes were held three times a week.

Instruments
In order to put the theoretical aspects of the current study into practice, the following instruments were utilized to pave the way for data collection procedures:

- TOEFL proficiency test
- Pre-test
- Immediate and delayed post-tests

Procedure
Prior to any treatment, through the TOEFL test, the researcher selected 3 intact intermediate classes. Then three classes were assigned into peer correction, self-correction and teacher correction. In the beginning of the study, all participants were requested to write a composition on a topic which served the purposes of pre-test before the main treatment started.

After writing the compositions, the first group (peer), including two learners in each group, corrected the errors underlined by the teacher together. The learners in the second group, namely, self-correction, corrected the errors underlined by teacher individually and the third group received the correct forms written by the teacher on top of the errors. All the groups wrote 6 compositions on the topics during 6 sessions. The first topic served the purpose of immediate pre-test.

During the treatment, the teacher monitored and observed learners' interactions and discussions in the peer groups and provided suggestions for all the groups if needed. This procedure was followed for 6 weeks and the 6th composition was regarded as immediate post-test and after a month (i.e., 12th week), delayed post-test was conducted for all learners. To compare writing accuracy and mean scores of the three groups in immediate and delayed pre-test and post-tests, the researcher conducted a one-way analysis of ANOVA.

Results and Discussion

Quantitative Data Analysis for the Intermediate Learners in Pre-test
Through Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test, the researcher ensured that the assumptions for parametric tests were met. Therefore, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to ascertain the homogeneity of the participants in pre-test. Table1 shows descriptive statistics obtained for the three treatment groups (peer correction, self-correction and teacher correction).

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of the Intermediate Learners' Writing Accuracy in the Pre-test

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Self-Correction	20	72.75	2.935	.65645	71.3760	74.1240	68.00	79.00
Teacher Correction	20	71.45	3.590	.80287	69.7696	73.1304	65.00	78.00
Peer Correction	20	71.55	3.425	.76597	69.9468	73.1532	68.00	79.00
Total	60	71.91	3.325	.42935	71.0575	72.7758	65.00	79.00

In addition to descriptive statistics, the researcher used one-way analysis of variance.

Table 2: ANOVA Results of Homogeneity Measures of the Intermediate Learners' Writing Accuracy in the Pre-test

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	20.933	2	10.467	.945	.395
Within Groups	631.650	57	11.082		
Total	652.583	59			

ANOVA results indicated that there was no statistically significant difference (F = .95, p = 0.39>0.05) among three groups in pre-test.

Quantitative Data Analysis for the Intermediate Learners in Immediate Post-test
Table 3 shows descriptive statistics indicating the outcomes of three groups as regards the writing accuracy of intermediate learners in the immediate post-test.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of the Intermediate Learners' Writing Accuracy in the Immediate Post-test

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Self-Correction	20	85.60	3.662	.81886	83.8861	87.3139	72.00	90.00
Teacher Correction	20	77.90	2.770	.61942	76.6035	79.1965	74.00	84.00
Peer Correction	20	91.35	2.455	.54904	90.2008	92.4992	87.00	97.00
Total	60	84.95	6.293	.81248	83.3242	86.5758	72.00	97.00

The mean scores indicated differences among three groups in immediate post-test. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) checked whether these differences were significant (see Table 4).

Table 4: ANOVA Results of the Intermediate Learners' Writing Accuracy in the Immediate Post-test

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1821.700	2	910.850	100.783	.000
Within Groups	515.150	57	9.038		
Total	2336.850	59			

ANOVA results indicated statistically significant differences (F = 100.78, p = 0.00<0.05) among three writing groups in immediate post-test, that is, the group receiving peer correction outperformed the other two groups. Further, Tukey *post-hoc* test was run in order to show the exact points of variations among the groups (see Table 5).

Table 5: Tukey HSD for the Elementary Learners' Writing Accuracy in the Immediate Post-test

Type	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05		
		1	2	3
Teacher Correction	20	77.9000		
Self-Correction	20		85.6000	
Peer Correction	20			91.3500
Sig.		1.000	1.000	1.000

Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.
a. Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 20.000.

Tukey HSD test revealed significant differences among the groups in the immediate post-test. The results of Tukey test indicated that there was an increase in intermediate learners' accuracy from pre-test to immediate post-test in peer correction and self-correction groups compared to other group. Therefore, the third hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference among peer correction, self-correction and teacher correction on accuracy development intermediate learners in short term is rejected.

Quantitative Data Analysis for the Intermediate Learners in Delayed Post-test
Table 6 shows descriptive statistics indicating the outcomes of three writing groups as regards the writing accuracy of intermediate learners in the immediate post-test.

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics of the Intermediate Learners' Writing Accuracy in the Delayed Post-test

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Self-Correction	20	88.95	1.791	.40049	88.1118	89.7882	85.00	92.00
Teacher Correction	20	74.05	2.327	.52050	72.9606	75.1394	70.00	78.00
Peer Correction	20	91.45	2.584	.57800	90.2402	92.6598	86.00	97.00
Total	60	84.81	8.058	1.0402	82.7351	86.8983	70.00	97.00

The mean scores indicated differences among three groups in delayed post-test. One-way analyses of variance (ANOVA) checked whether these differences were significant (see Table 7).

Table 7: ANOVA Results of the Intermediate Learners' Writing Accuracy in the Delayed Post-test

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	3540.133	2	1770.067	346.893	.000
Within Groups	290.850	57	5.103		
Total	3830.983	59			

ANOVA results indicated statistically significant differences (F = 22.81, p = 0.00<0.05) among three groups in delayed post-test, that is, the group receiving peer correction outperformed the other two groups. Further, Tukey *post-hoc* test was run in order to show the exact points of variations among the groups (see Table 8).

Table 8: Tukey HSD for the Intermediate Learners' Writing Accuracy in the Delayed Post-test

Type	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05		
		1	2	3
Teacher Correction	20	74.0500		
Self-Correction	20		88.9500	
Peer Correction	20			91.4500
Sig.		1.000	1.000	1.000

Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.
a. Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 20.000.

Multiple comparisons using the Tukey HSD test revealed significant differences among the groups in the delayed post-test. The results of Tukey test indicated that there was a decrease in intermediate learners' errors from pre-test to delayed post-test in both peer and self-correction groups compared to teacher correction one; however, the increase in accuracy in peer correction group was more. Therefore, the fourth hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference among peer correction, self-correction and teacher correction on accuracy development intermediate learners in long term is rejected.

The importance of peer feedback has been emphasized in foreign/second language learning theories with the shift to the communicative language teaching approach and the process approach to writing. To this end, the findings of this study indicated that both peer correction and self-correction were influential in enhancing learners' writing accuracy; however, the group doing peer correction outperformed the self-correction one.

In line with this study, Hagege (1996) believes that correction is even more efficient when it is done with the help of children's classmates. The peer correction group showed more improvement compared to the other two groups. The better performance of this group as compared to the other groups is in line with Vygotsky's (1978) theory on language learning, that is, learning is a cognitive activity which takes place in social interaction.

Ganji (2009) also expresses that peer-correction seems to have a more lasting effect on the learners' performance, due to the need for more cooperation and activity on the part of the learners, while analyzing and discussing the errors in more details. In this regard the findings of the present study are in agreement with those of Tost (2013) who concluded that peer-mediated repeated oral reading interventions carried out by students' cooperation was effective in improving of the students' pronunciation and fluency.

The findings of this study are in contrast with some studies (Zhang, 1995) which have shown that peer correction has not worked successfully with them. The same idea, which is in contrast with this study, has been reported by Carlson (1996) who says that students do not want to provide feedback to their peers' performances either for maintaining a group harmony or for reluctance to claim authority.

However, from the analysis of the collected data in this study, peer correction made the learning experience more relaxing, confident, and inspiring for the learners and participants were be able to have more insights and directions of writing based on their peer's cognitive interactions. This obviously revealed that the participants gained the benefits of linguistics improvements in English writing accuracy from peer's cooperative activities of brainstorming and discussions. In other words, learners in peer correction groups in both levels were more willing and motivated to participate in the study and work collaboratively. Therefore, their writing accuracy enhanced more than the other two groups in both immediate and delayed post-tests.

In sum, the findings of the study corresponded with Mendonca and Johnson's (1994) study in which they concluded that peer correction was more effective than self-correction. There seems to be a positive correlation between the degree of involvement in the correcting process and the amount of learning. Self-correction and peer-correction involved the learners in the learning process, and this was possibly the reason that they were more successful than teacher correction.

Conclusion

The findings of the present study can be of great benefit to both practitioners and theoreticians in the field of language teaching in general and teaching writing in particular. It would pave the way for English language teachers, especially writing instructors, in taking required steps in improving EFL learners' accuracy. From a pedagogical perspective, findings of the study provide further empirical evidence of the usefulness of peer correction and self-correction in L2 writing classroom. Specifically, peer correction can be used as a pedagogical tool to encourage student collaboration and create a positive social atmosphere in the classroom. Writing does not need to be a solitary act. In other words, CW helps the learners move from other-regulation to self-regulation which is the mail purpose of SCT.

Another potential pedagogical implication of this study is the relevance of peer correction to the learning and teaching of writing in EFL contexts. As mentioned earlier, most existing research on peer correction in L2 to date has focused on ESL rather than EFL contexts. Findings of the present study clearly show that peer correction can also be an important pedagogical tool in the learning and teaching of writing in EFL contexts because it enabled students to produce more accurate written scripts because, as the findings indicated, students enjoyed the activity and felt that it contributed to their L2 learning.

In addition, in nearly all writing classes teachers feel responsible to provide correction to all individual students' writings; however, peer correction can be beneficial for teachers in the sense that collaboration among students can result in more

accurate texts as learners receive feedback from each other not just from their teacher. Students also benefit from the results of this study as peer correction gives them a sense of accountability for their group members improvement.

As any human production, this study has some limitations. A serious limitation of this study was the gender of the participants who were limited to female learners. In order to make generalizations in a more confident manner, other studies with larger samples could be done to ensure the external validity of these findings.

Thus, researchers should triangulate the findings both qualitatively and quantitatively in order to get reliable data to generalize. Moreover, a longitudinal study is required to ensure the efficacy of correction types on the accuracy of the targeted structures in this study as well as other structures.

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