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The Effect of Explicit and Implicit Corrective Feedback on the Narrative Writing of Advanced Iranian EFL Learners

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Abstract

The effectiveness of the written corrective feedback has gained much interest among second language acquisition researchers since 1970s. In spite of large body of research, there seems to be no unified agreement on the effectiveness of written corrective feedback in L2 learners' writing. The present study seeks to investigate the effect of explicit and implicit corrective feedback on the narrative writing of advanced Iranian EFL learners. In so doing, the study was conducted with 76 advanced level EFL learners from 3 intact classes at a English language teaching institute in Mahabad, West Azerbaijan Province, Iran. The sample was selected from among 92 EFL learners by means of Oxford Quick Placement Test. After the researchers administrated the placement test, the participants were assigned into two experimental groups and one control group randomly. Following this phase of the study, the participants in the experimental and control groups were invited to write their first composition as the pre-test of the study. Then one experimental group received explicit corrective feedback as treatment and the other experimental group was offered implicit corrective feedback as treatment. The control group, however, did not receive any treatment. Within a time lapse of two weeks, the same procedure was repeated for the second composition which served as the post-test of the study. The results of t-test and covariance revealed positive effects of giving written corrective feedback on the advanced EFL learners' writing. Furthermore, the results highlighted the superiority of giving explicit corrective feedback over the implicit one in written tasks. The results of the study have some implications for teachers, learners, and material designers.

Keywords: Explicit, Implicit, Corrective Feedback, Narrative Writing, and Advanced EFL Learners
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Introduction

Corrective feedback is defined as a teacher's reactive move that invites a learner to attend to the grammatical accuracy of the utterance which is produced by the learner (Sheen, 2007). The reactive move according to Ellis, Loewen, and Erlam (2006) may appear as one or a combination of the following responses by a teacher when a learner makes an error: (1) an indication that the learner committed an error, (2) the provision of correct form of the error, and (3) the provision of some metalingual explanation regarding the error. In the last two decades, investigating the efficacy of different types of corrective feedback has been the focus of a number of empirical studies (e.g., Ammar & Spada, 2006; Lyster & Izquierdo, 2009; Erlam & Loewen, 2010; Rassaei, 2015). A growing body of research have categorized feedback as either direct (explicit) or indirect (implicit). Bitcherner and Knoch (2009, p.198) define direct corrective feedback as "the provision of the correct linguistic form or structure by the teacher to the student above or near the linguistic error." It may be in the shape of crossing out an unnecessary word/phrase/morpheme, the insertion of a missing word/phrase/morpheme, or the provision of the correct form or structure. More recently, direct corrective feedback has also included written meta-linguistic explanation (the provision of grammar rules and examples of correct usage). In addition, indirect corrective feedback, Bitcherner and Knoch (2009, p.198) characterize as feedback "which indicates that in some way an error has been made, but correction is not supplied." It could be in fashion such as: underlining or circling an error; recording in the margin the number of errors in a given line; or using a code to show where an error has occurred and what type of error it is. Rather than the teacher providing an explicit correction, students are left to resolve and correct the problem that has been drawn to their attention. This research is an attempt to address, among other issues, the relative efficacy of implicit and explicit types of corrective feedback.

Previous Research on Corrective Feedback

A number of empirical studies have compared the effects of implicit and explicit types of corrective feedback. The results of these studies are mixed and inconclusive. Several studies provided evidence that prompts, a type of explicit corrective feedback are more effective than recasts, a type of implicit corrective feedback (e.g., Lyster, 2004; Ellis, Loewen, & Erlam, 2006; Sheen, 2007; Ammar, 2008; Rassei, 2013;). Ammar (2008) compared the effects of prompts with recasts on the acquisition of English possessive determiners by francophone learners of English. The results indicated the superiority of prompts over recasts in fostering the development of target forms. A computerized fill in the blank test that kept track of learners' speed in answering the questions also indicated that prompts led to quicker responses by learners than did recasts. Ellis et al. (2006) investigated the effects of recasts and metalinguistic feedback on the development of past tense 'ed' by L2 learners of English. The findings indicated that metalinguistic feedback had an advantage over recasts for fostering both implicit and explicit L2 knowledge. In the same vein, Sheen (2007) compared the effects of metalinguistic corrective feedback and recasts along with the moderating effects of language aptitude and learners

attitudes towards error correction on L2 development. The results revealed that learners who received metalinguistic feedback outperformed the other group. Furthermore, the results indicated significant associations between learners' aptitude and their positive attitudes towards error correction and their gain scores as a result of metalinguistic corrective feedback.

Despite a great number of studies that reported the advantage of more explicit types of corrective feedback over implicit ones for L2 development, there are a number of studies reporting that implicit types of corrective feedback can be as effective as more explicit types of corrective feedback such as metalinguistic feedback (e.g., Loewen & Nabei, 2007; Lyster & Izquierdo, 2009; Goo, 2012). Goo (2012), for example, investigated the effects of recasts and metalinguistic corrective feedback along with the moderating effects of learners' working memory capacity on the development of L2 grammar by Korean EFL learners. The results revealed that recasts were as effective as metalinguistic feedback in promoting the development of target forms. Moreover, the results indicated that learners' working memory could predict the efficacy of recasts but not metalinguistic feedback. Lyster & Izquierdo (2009) also investigated the effects of recasts and prompts on the acquisition of grammatical gender by L2 learners of French. The results of two oral production tasks and a computerized binary choice test, which was designed to tap learners' reaction time in addition to accuracy scores, revealed that both feedback types had equal effects in terms of both accuracy scores and reaction time on the development of target forms.

As the above review shows, the results of previous studies that compared implicit and explicit corrective feedback are mixed and inconclusive. Given these inconclusive results, the present study attempts to see whether explicit corrective feedback and implicit corrective feedback have any effect on the narrative writing of EFL leaners within Iranian context. Furthermore, the study seeks to examine which type of corrective feedback, i.e. explicit or implicit is more effective in the narrative writing of EFL learners. To this end, the following research questions guide the current study:

RQ1: Does explicit corrective feedback have any effects on advanced FFL learners' narrative writing?
RQ2: Does implicit corrective feedback have any effects on advanced FFL learners' narrative writing?
RQ3: Is there any significance difference between the effects of explicit corrective feedback and implicit corrective feedback on the narrative writing of advanced FFL learners?

Methodology

Design

The present study adopted a quasi-experimental design including a pre-test and a post-test with the participants of the three intact classes being assigned into two experimental groups as well as a control one. It consisted of two experimental groups, namely advanced explicit corrective feedback and advanced implicit

corrective feedback as well as one advanced control group. In this study, independent variables were explicit corrective feedback and implicit corrective feedback and dependent variable was narrative writing.

Participants

The current study was conducted with advanced level EFL classes at an English language teaching institute in Mahabad, West Azerbaijan, Iran. All participants were Iranian nationals with Kurdish as their first language. They included male and female EFL learners with an age range of 15 to 25. The participants had studied English for at least 3 years at school. Besides, they had spent 9 terms studying English at language institutes. In order to have homogeneous participants, Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT) was administered at the first phase of the study. The initial number of learners in the three intact classes was 92. However, after examining the OQPT placement test results that learners had taken, 16 learners were discarded from the study because their scores were sharply (–2 SDs) lower than other students' scores. Based on the results of the OQPT, the three classes composing 76 learners were randomly assigned into two experimental groups and one control groups. One class consisting 26 learners was named advanced explicit corrective feedback group. Another class comprising 25 learners was labelled advanced implicit corrective feedback group; the other class including 25 learners was called advanced control group.

Following the selection of the participants in the three groups, one of the experimental groups received explicit CF (corrective feedback) and the other one was exposed to implicit CF while the control group received no feedback. Meanwhile, all the participants were taught by the same teacher. It is also worth mentioning that all the participants expressed their willingness to take part in the study prior to the study.

Instruments

To fulfill the purpose of the study, the following instruments were used:

Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT)

In order to have homogeneous participants, OQPT placement test was administered at the first step of the study. OQPT is a standardized placement test in English, designed by Allen (1992). This test is comprised of 60 questions in vocabulary, grammar, reading, and cloze test, which can provide an overall estimate of the proficiency level of the participants. It was devised by Oxford and Cambridge universities.

Pre-Test

The pre-test which was constructed by the researchers to measure narrative writing knowledge of the participants at the beginning of the experiment, included 3 topics from among which students could choose their favorite one and write a piece of

narrative writing in 30-40 minutes. In order to score the participants' performance during this stage, ACT Aspire assessment rubric for narrative writing was used. Besides, participants' pre-tests were rated by two raters. One of them held a Ph.D. degree in TEFL and the other one held an M.A. degree in TEFL.

Post-Test

The post-test which was also constructed by the researchers to measure narrative writing knowledge of the participants at the end of the experiment, included 3 other topics out of which students could choose their favorite one and write a piece of narrative writing in 30-40 minutes. In order to assess participants' post-tests, ACT Aspire assessment rubric for narrative writing was used. And participants' post-tests were rated by the same two raters who had rated the pre-test results.

Procedure

The current study was conducted with three advanced level EFL intact classes at an English language teaching institute in Mahabad, West Azerbaijan Province, Iran. To have a homogenous sample, the participants were first selected based on their scores in OQPT placement test and then they were randomly assigned to the afore-mentioned classes. Prior to the experiment, the researchers explained the goal of the study to the participants and obtained their consent. Meanwhile, they were assured that their participation and information would be kept confidential. Following this, the placement test (OQPT) was administered to the participants in order to assign them to the target classes. Based on the results of the OQPT, the three classes composing 76 learners were categorized as two experimental groups and one control groups. One class consisting 26 learners was named advanced explicit corrective feedback group. Another class comprising 25 learners was labelled advanced implicit corrective feedback group; the other class including 25 learners was called advanced control group.

Then the participants in the experimental groups and control group were asked to choose a topic out of three topics offered to them and write a piece of narrative writing as the pre-test of the study. Time allotted to complete the writing task was 30-40 minutes. This draft was considered as the pre-test of the study. After that explicit corrective feedback was given to the first draft of the explicit corrective feedback group, which means that learners' errors were determined and were corrected directly. As for the implicit corrective feedback group, learners' errors were determined but they were not corrected. Then the learners' writings were returned to them; meanwhile, the control group did the same activities without receiving any corrective feedback, neither explicit nor implicit. Within a time gap of 2 weeks, this procedure was repeated using other topics and drafts as the post-test of the study. Learners' writing activities during the experiment were rated by the researchers by means of ACT Aspire assessment rubric for narrative writing. The ACT Aspire assessments represent an extension into earlier grades of the philosophy of writing and assessment found in established ACT writing tests and the ACT Quality Core® English constructed – response assessments. Then the average score

of the participant was estimated and fed into SPSS 18 software for analysis. Finally, necessary statistical analyses were run to measure participants' performances.

Reliability of the Tests

In order to ensure the reliability of the instruments used in the study, internal consistency of all three pre-tests were estimated using Kuder-Richardson Formula 20, on the performance of 50 percent of all learners participating in the study. Table 1 displays the reliability coefficients for the three measurement instruments.

Table 1. Reliability of the Tests

Tests	Placement test	Pre-test	Post-test
Reliability	.89	.78	.80

Data Analysis

The purpose of the study was three-fold: (a) to examine how explicit corrective feedback affects advanced EFL learners' narrative writing, (b) to investigate how implicit corrective feedback influences advanced EFL learners' narrative writing, and (c) to see any significant difference between the effects of explicit corrective feedback and implicit corrective feedback on the narrative writing of advanced EFL learners.

In order to measure the writing performance of the experimental groups and that of the control group, a writing task was administered to the groups as pre-tests and post-tests. A paired sample t-test was used to analyze the data gathered from the writing tasks in pre-tests and post-tests from all groups and to determine whether there was a significant difference between pre-test and post-test results in each group. Also, it was possible to compare the post-test means of the control group and the experimental groups to find out the differences between the performances of them. By calculating the post-test means for each group, a better understanding of the difference between the control group and each experimental group could be achieved. The same data was analyzed through an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) to see whether the difference between these groups resulted from the treatment or from the pre-existing differences. According to Hatch and Lazarton (1991), ANCOVA makes it possible to control for some variable - perhaps a pre-test score - so that the measurement of dependent variable is adjusted taking into account these initial differences among the participants. To answer the research questions, raw scores were obtained for the two writing tasks as the pretest and posttest. Descriptive statistics were estimated for the two tests on two different testing occasions. An alpha level of .05 was set. SPSS 18 was used to perform the analyses.

RQ1: The Effect of Explicit Corrective Feedback on Advanced FFL Learners' Narrative Writing.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of pre-test and post-test scores for advanced explicit group and control group

Groups	Pre-test			Post- test		
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD
Experi-Group1(explicit)	26	77.31	7.004	26	85	5.45
Control Group	25	68.98	7.16	25	69.08	9.01

Table 2 presents descriptive statistics for advanced learners' pre-test and post-test scores in the explicit corrective feedback writing tasks for explicit and control groups. The table indicates that the mean of pre- and post-test narrative writing in control group are very close to each other. In fact, there is a little difference between pre- and post-test means in control group. However, after treatment (explicit) there is a great difference in the means of pre- and post-test narrative writing of the explicit group.

As this research is quasi-experimental, narrative writing is measured in pre-tests and post-tests. Through analysis of covariance, not only the effect of independent variable on the dependent variable will be studied, but also the effect of another variable (pre-test) which is a covariate will be examined. First, in order to justify and determine the type of statistical technique to be used in the study, the existence of homogeneity of regression slopes, equal variance assumed and the existence of linear relationship between covariate (pre-test) and dependent variable (narrative writing) are calculated in the following section.

- Analysis of existence of linear relationship between covariate and dependent variable

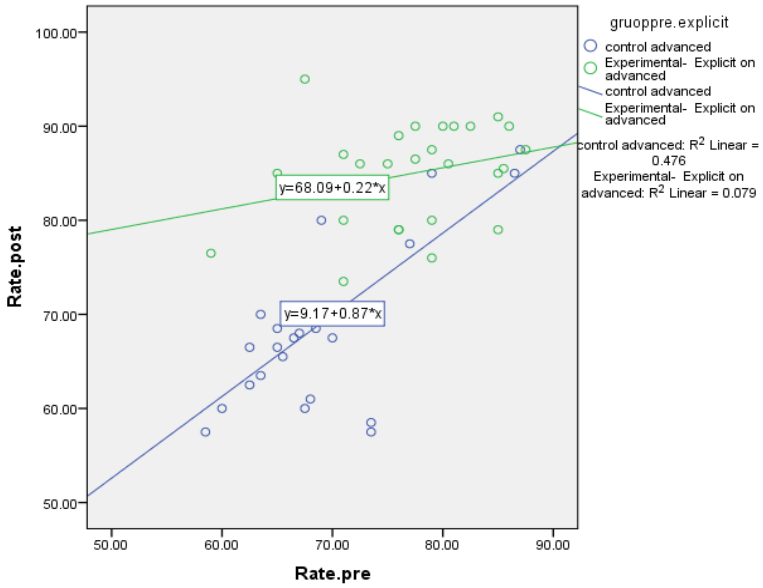

Figure 1. Distribution of the of pre and post-test scores of advanced explicit group and control group

Figure 1 displays that the lines slope is zero, indicating a nonlinear relationship between the pre-test scores and dependent variable (narrative writing after explicit corrective feedback on advanced EFL learners). As regression lines are not parallel and they cut each other, it shows that there is a reciprocal effect between covariate (pre-test) and the group variable (control and experimental), and that it does not follow the assumptions of using analysis of covariance. Given this, one of the conditions to perform ANCOVA does not exist.

-Analysis of homogeneity of regression slopes

Table 3. Effect of inter-group test for analysis of homogeneity of regression slopes of advanced explicit group and control group

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Rate.post

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	4217.509[a]	3	1405.836	38.741	.000
Intercept	677.199	1	677.199	18.662	.000
Group pre.explicit	393.783	1	393.783	10.852	.002
Rate.pre	726.234	1	726.234	20.013	.000
Explicit Group* Rate.pre	259.411	1	259.411	7.149	.010
Error	1705.530	47	36.288		
Total	309844.000	51			
Corrected Total	5923.039	50			

a. R Squared = .712 (Adjusted R Squared = .694)

As Table 3 shows, the reciprocal effect (*group of pre-test narrative writing) is significant (sig. = 0.010≤0.05). Therefore, the assumption of homogeneity of regression slopes is not confirmed and performing ANCOVA test is not valid. Given this, to examine the effect of treatment on the groups, the difference of pre- and post-test scores is calculated through independent t-test in the following table.

Table 4. T-test results for advanced explicit group and control group

Group Statistics

	Group pre.explicit	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Diffrate	Control advanced	25	-.1000	6.59229	1.31846
	Experimental- Explicit on advanced	26	-7.6923	7.56978	1.48456

In dependent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					
								95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
diffrate	Equal variances assumed	1.664	.203	3.813	49	.000	7.59231	1.99097	3.59130	11.59332
	Equal variances not assumed			3.824	48.537	.000	7.59231	1.98551	3.60132	11.58330

As Table 4 shows, with regard to the existence of the assumptions of homogeneity of variances (sig. = 0.203), the calculated t is significant at 0.05 level (sig. = 0.0001). In other words, the result suggests that the participants' narrative writing improved significantly through explicit corrective feedback. ($\eta^2 = 0.144$, p = 0.007 and $F_{(1,52)} = 7.915$). In other words, explicit corrective feedback has positive effect on narrative writing of advanced learners.

RQ2: Effect of Implicit Corrective Feedback on Advanced FFL Learners' Narrative Writing

Table 5. Descriptive statistics of pre-test and post-test scores for advanced implicit group and control group

Groups	Pre-test			Post- test		
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD
Experi-Group2(implicit)	25	74.06	10.55	25	79.02	11.07
Control Group	25	68.98	7.16	25	69.08	9.01

Table 5 presents descriptive statistics for advanced learners' pre-test and post-test scores in the implicit corrective feedback writing tasks for implicit and control groups. The table indicates that there is a slight change between the means of pre- and post-test narrative writing in control group. In fact, there is a little difference between pre- and post-test means in control group. However, after treatment (explicit) there is a great difference in the means of pre- and post-test narrative writing of the implicit group.

As this research is quasi-experimental, and narrative writing is measured in pre- and post-tests, one of the most suitable statistical analysis for this study is the analysis of covariance. Analysis of covariance is usually used in pre- and post-test models. Through analysis of covariance, not only the effect of independent variable on the dependent variable will be studied, but also the effect of another variable (pre-test) which is a covariate, will be analyzed. First, in order to justify and determine the type of statistical technique to be used in the study, the existence of homogeneity of regression slopes, equal variance assumed and the existence of linear relationship between covariate (pre-test) and dependent variable (narrative writing) are calculated in the following section.

-Analysis of existence of linear relationship between covariate and dependent variable

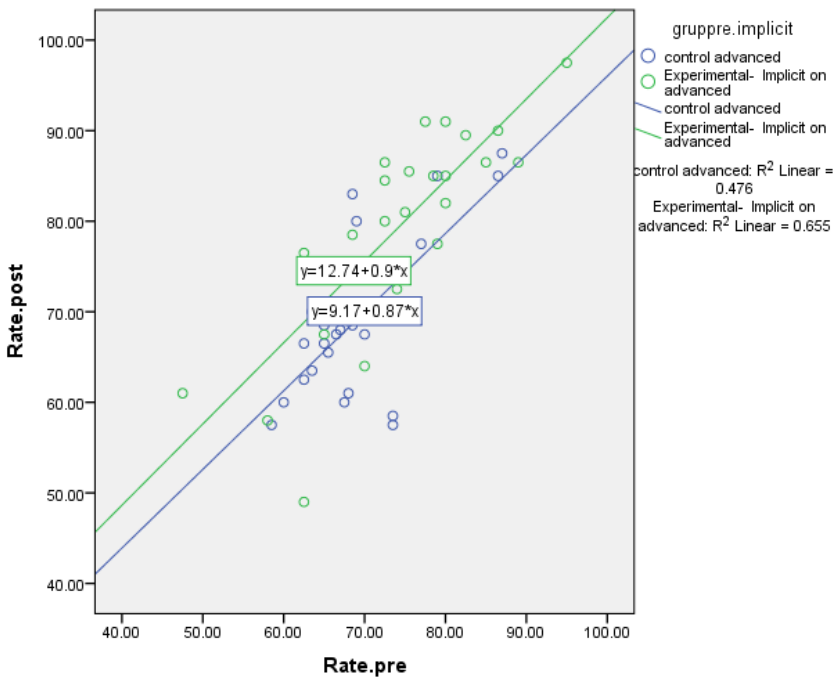

Figure 2. Distribution of the of pre- and post-test scores of advanced implicit group and control group

Figure 2 shows that the lines slope is not zero, indicating a linear relationship between the pre-test scores and dependent variable (narrative writing after implicit corrective feedback on advanced EFL learners). Also, regression lines seems parallel (they are homogeneous and equal) and this one shows that there is not any interaction between covariate (pre-test) and the group variable (control and experimental), that it is one of the assumptions of using analysis of covariance. Incidentally, R squared value shows the degree and the relationship intensity between covariate and dependent variable.

-Analysis of homogeneity of regression slopes

Table 6. Effect of inter-group test for analysis of homogeneity of regression slopes of advanced implicit group and control group

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Rate.post

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	4361.241[a]	3	1453.747	31.027	.000
Intercept	80.108	1	80.108	1.710	.198
Group pre.implicit	2.126	1	2.126	.045	.832
Rate.pre	2628.410	1	2628.410	56.098	.000
Implicit Group*	.702	1	.702	.015	.903
Error	2155.279	46	46.854		
Total	281353.500	50			
Corrected Total	6516.520	49			

a. R Squared = .669 (Adjusted R Squared = .648)

As Table 4.15 shows, the reciprocal effect (*group of pre-test narrative writing) is not significant (sig. = 0.903>0.05). Therefore, the assumption of homogeneity of regression slopes is confirmed and the performance of ANCOVA test is valid.

-Analysis of variances homogeneity

Table 7. Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances[a]

Dependent Variable: Rate.post

F	df1	df2	Sig.
.636	1	48	.429

Tests the null hypothesis that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups

a. Design: Intercept + group pre.implicit + Rate.pre + group pre.implicit * Rate.pre

As Table 4.16 displays, the assumption of homogeneity of variances (HOV) is also met. Some researchers like to perform a hypothesis test to validate the HOV assumption. In this study, Levene's Test as shown in Table 7 is used to meet HOV assumption. As the results of the Levene's test in Table 4.16 show, the equal assumption of variances between control and experimental groups is established conservatively (sig ≥0.05). After all the assumptions are established, the hypothesis will be tested through the analysis of covariance.

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Rate.post

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	4360.539[a]	2	2180.270	47.529	.000	.669
Intercept	84.700	1	84.700	1.846	.181	.038
Rate.pre	3080.359	1	3080.359	67.151	.000	.588
Implicit Group	363.096	1	363.096	7.915	.007	.144
Error	2155.981	47	45.872			
Total	281353.500	50				
Corrected Total	6516.520	49				

a. R Squared = .669 (Adjusted R Squared = .655)

After the researcher provided the advanced EFL learners with implicit corrective feedback, as Table 8 reveals, there is a significant difference between the writing of advanced implicit group and control group.

Table 9. Modified Means of post-test narrative writing scores of advanced implicit group and control group

Estimates

Dependent Variable: Rate.post

Group pre.implicit	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
control advanced	71.336[a]	1.382	68.555	74.117
Experimental-Implicit on advanced	76.944[a]	1.382	74.163	79.725

a. Covariates appearing in the model are evaluated at the following values: Rate.pre = 71.5200.

As Table 9 displays, the modified mean of post-test narrative writing scores in the implicit group (= 76.94) is higher than that of post-test narrative writing in control

group (71.33). In other words, the implicit corrective feedback has some effect on improving the advanced learners' narrative writing, and given the partial ETA squared, 14 percent of these differences are the effects of implicit corrective feedback on advanced EFL learners.

RQ3: Difference between the Effect of Explicit and Implicit corrective Feedback on Advanced Learners' Narrative Writing.

Table 10. Descriptive statistics of pre-test and post-test scores for advanced implicit group and control group

Groups	Pre-test			Post- test		
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD
Experi-Group1(explicit)	26	77.31	7.004	26	85	5.45
Experi-Group2(implicit)	25	74.06	10.55	25	79.02	11.07

Table 10 presents descriptive statistics for advanced learners' pre-test and post-test scores in the implicit corrective feedback writing tasks for implicit and explicit groups. The table indicates that the rate of mean increase is greater for the explicit group than that for implicit group. In other words, explicit feedback is more effective on learners' narrative writing than implicit feedback.

Table 11. Results of t-test of explicit and implicit groups' narrative writing

Group Statistics

	Feedback	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Rate.post advanced	Explicit	26	85.0000	5.44977	1.06879
	Implicit	25	79.2000	11.70114	2.34023

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Rate.postadvanced	Equal variances assumed	9.382	.004	2.284	49	.027	5.80000	2.53981	.69605	10.90395
	Equal variances not assumed			2.254	33.650	.031	5.80000	2.57274	.56957	11.03043

As the Table 11 shows, given the existence of assumptions of homogeneity of variances (sig. = 0.004) and as calculated t is significant at 0.05 level (sig. = 0.031),

there is a significant difference between the explicit corrective feedback and implicit corrective feedback treatment on advanced FFL learners' narrative writing.

Discussion

The result of the analyses of the first question research shows that the mean of pre- and post-test narrative writing in control group are very close to each other. And, there is a little difference between pre- and post-test means of control group. While in the experimental group, after treatment (explicit corrective feedback) the mean of post-test narrative writing increased nearly 8 scores. Moreover, as the results of t-test of advanced EFL learners' narrative writing in experimental and control groups in terms of explicit corrective feedback, given the existence of assumptions of homogeneity of variances (sig. = 0.203) is significant at 0.05 level (sig. = 0.0001), it could be said that in the experimental group the effect of explicit corrective feedback on the advanced EFL learners was positive and participants' writings improved. Given this, the first hypothesis $(H_{01})_{is}$ rejected.

This finding is in line with the findings of the studies conducted by Keh (1990), Ferris (1995), and Sheen (2007, 2010), who explored the role of direct and indirect feedback on writing accuracy. And, it is contrary to the findings of the studies conducted by Polio et al (1998) and Truscott (2004) who explored that corrective feedback is ineffective.

As for the second research question, results indicate that in control group, there is no significant difference between pre- and post-test of narrative writing without treatment (the difference is 0.1). While in the experimental group there is a significant difference between pre- and post-test scores of narrative writing, and after treatment, (implicit corrective feedback) the mean of post-test narrative writing increased nearly 5.14 scores. And, based on the results of covariance test of the difference of control and experimental groups in narrative writing,, it can be said that after the researchers provided the advanced EFL learners with implicit corrective feedback, there is a significant difference between the writing of control and experimental groups in advanced EFL learners ($\eta^2 = 0.144$, $p = 0.007$, and $F_{152)} = 7.915$). Thus it can be concluded that the treatment (implicit corrective feedback) had a positive effect on the advanced EFL learners' writing.

This finding is in line with the findings of the studies conducted by Frantzen (1995), Ellis et al (2008), and Bitchner & Knock (2008, 2010a, 2010b), who explored the role of effect of direct and indirect feedback on writing accuracy. And it is contrary to the findings of the studies conducted by Cohen & Robbins (1976), and Polio et al (1998), who explored that corrective feedback is ineffective.

In the third research question, which is related to comparing the effectiveness of implicit corrective feedback and explicit corrective feedback on the narrative writing of advanced FFL learners, the third null hypothesis (H_{03}) is rejected. In other words, there is a significant difference between the explicit corrective feedback and implicit corrective feedback on advanced FFL learners' narrative writing. The difference of the mean of explicit corrective feedback (85) is more than that of the mean of implicit corrective feedback (79.2). As the results of t-test of narrative

writing of two groups of advanced EFL learners that is explicit and implicit corrective feedback groups, given the existence of assumptions of homogeneity of variances (sig. = 0.004) is significant at 0.05 level (sig. = 0.031), H_{03} is rejected. In other words, there is a significant difference between the explicit corrective feedback and implicit corrective feedback of advanced FFL learners' narrative writing. As the mean of explicit group increased higher than the implicit one after the treatment, the difference it could be said is related to the effect of explicit corrective feedback rather than implicit corrective feedback. Then with regard to these results it could be concluded that explicit corrective feedback is more effective than implicit corrective feedback.

This finding is in line with the findings of the studies conducted by Carroll and Swain (1993) and Nagata (1993), who explored that direct (explicit) corrective feedback is more effective than other feedback types. And, it is contrary to the findings of the studies conducted by Loewen and Erlam (2006), Loewen and Nabei (2007), and Sauro (2009), who explored that there is not any difference among different types of corrective feedback.

Pedagogical Implications

The first and most important pedagogical implication of this study is that in EFL classrooms, instructors need to give corrective feedback. The results of this study suggest that explicit and implicit corrective feedback can be effective in enhancing FL accuracy in writing tasks. In every analysis conducted for each research question, participants' scores on the post-test increased, and the error rates in writing tasks decreased after the participants received implicit and explicit corrective feedback. Even though it is possible that many other variables affect these results, they can be considered as positive evidence of the effectiveness of corrective feedback. So, for instructors in EFL classrooms, it would be a good idea to give corrective feedback on grammar as well as on the contents of writings when grading students' papers. Then, how and what kind of written corrective feedback should instructors give in class? About this question the study provides a possible answer as well. First of all, based on the findings of this study, it can be beneficial to students to receive both explicit corrective feedback and implicit corrective feedback. Teachers could experiment with peer feedback. As Villamil and Guerrero (2006) sate, peer feedback allows "both reader and writer to consolidate and recognize knowledge of the FL and make this knowledge explicit for each other's benefit" (p. 39). In fact, no peer feedback means no interaction between students. The teachers should give their students the opportunity to exchange their writing experiences and interact with each other.

Limitations of the study

Like other experimental studies, the current study also suffers from a number of limitations that need to be acknowledged. First, due to some logistical constraints, a delayed post-test was not administered in the current study. The second limitation concerns the designation of participants as advanced learners. The participants of the

current study may not be true representatives of advanced L2 learners in other contexts.

Conclusion

The current research was conducted to see whether correcting the papers and giving explicit or implicit corrective feedback to the learners influence the writing performance of advanced EFL learners or not. The results obtained from the present study manifests that there seems to be a positive effect of giving written corrective feedback on the learners in advanced level of proficiency. It is proved that the learners had found it useful in their writing ability to receive some corrections from the instructors (Keh, 1990; Bitchner, 2008; Suzuki, 2012). They had surely pondered on their erroneous structures since they had tried to have a better performance on the succeeding tasks as the results show. Another observation here is the superiority of giving explicit corrective feedback over the implicit one in written tasks. It appears that explicit corrective feedback plays a more significant role in improving learners' accuracy and writing.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT)

Oxford Quick Placement Test

Please, Mark the answers on the answer sheet.

Don't write anything on the question sheets. Time: 30'

Part 1
Questions 1 – 5 Where can you see these notices?

1.

Please leave your room key at Reception.

2.

Foreign money changed here

3.

AFTERNOON SHOW BEGINS AT 2 PM

A. at a travel agent's

4.

CLOSED FOR HOLIDAYS
Lessons start again on the 8 th January

5.

Price per night:
£10 a tent
£5 a person

Questions 6–10 Choose the word which best fits each space in the text below.

Scotland

Scotland is the north part of the island of Great Britain. The Atlantic Ocean is on the west and the
North Sea on the east. Some people **(6)** ..... Scotland speak a different language called Gaelic.
There are **(7)** ..... five million people in Scotland, and Edinburgh is **(8)** ..... most
famous city.
Scotland has many mountains; the highest one is called 'Ben Nevis'. In the south of Scotland, there are a lot of sheep. A long time ago, there **(9)** ..... many forests, but now there are only a **(10)** ..... . Scotland is only a small country, but it is quite beautiful.

6. **A.** on **B.** in **C.** at

7. **A.** about **B.** between **C.** among

8. **A.** his **B.** your **C.** its

9. **A.** is **B.** were **C .**was

10. **A.** few **B.** little **C.** lot

Questions 11 – 20 Choose the word which best fits each space in the texts.

Alice Guy Blaché

Alice Guy Blaché was the first female film director. She first became involved in cinema whilst
working for the Gaumont Film Company in the late 1890s. This was a period of great change in
the cinema and Alice was the first to use many new inventions, **(11)** ..... sound and colour.
In 1907 Alice **(12)** ..... to New York where she started her own film company. She was
(13) ..... successful, but, when Hollywood became the centre of the film world, the best
days of the independent New York film companies were **(14)** ..... . When Alice died in
1968, hardly anybody **(15)** ..... her name.

11. **A.** bringing **B.** including **C.** containing **D.** supporting

12. **A.** moved **B.** ran **C.** entered **D.** transported

13. A .next **B.** once **C.** immediately **D.** recently

14. A. after **B.** down **C.** behind **D.** over

15. A. remembered **B.** realized **C.** reminded **D.** repeated

UFOs – do they exist?

UFO is short for 'unidentified flying object'. UFOs are popularly known as flying saucers,
(16) ..... that is often the **(17)** ..... they are reported to be. The **(18)** .....
"flying saucers" were seen in 1947 by an American pilot, but experts who studied his claim
decided it had been a trick of the light.
Even people experienced at watching the sky, **(19)** ..... as pilots, report seeing UFOs. In
1978 a pilot reported a collection of UFOs off the coast of New Zealand. A television
(20) ..... went up with the pilot and filmed the UFOs. Scientists studying this
phenomenon later discovered that in this case they were simply lights on boats out fishing.

16. A. because **B.** therefore **C.** although **D.** so

17. A. look **B.** shape **C.** size **D.** type

18. A. last **B.** next **C.** first **D.** oldest

19. A. like **B.** that **C.** so **D.** such

20. A. cameraman **B.** director **C.** actor **D.** announcer

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<u>Questions 21– 40</u> Choose the word or phrase which best completes each sentence.

21. The teacher encouraged her students ..... to an English pen-friend.

A. should write B. write C. wrote D. to write

22. They spent a lot of time ..... at the pictures in the museum.

A. looking B. for looking C. to look D. to looking

23. Shirley enjoys science lessons, but all her experiments seem to ..... wrong.

A. turn B. come C. end D. go

24. ..... from Michael, all the group arrived on time.

A. Except B. Other C. Besides D. Apart

25. She ..... her neighbor's children for the broken window.

A. accused B. complained C. blamed D. denied

26. As I had missed the history lesson, my friend went ..... the homework with me.

A. by B. after C. over D. on

27. Whether she's a good actress or not is a ..... of opinion.

A. matter B. subject C. point D. case

28. The decorated roof of the ancient palace was ..... up by four thin columns.

A. built B. carried C. held D. supported

29. Would it ..... you if we came on Thursday?

A. agree B. suit C. like D. fit

30. This form ..... be handed in until the end of the week.

A. Doesn't need B. doesn't have C. needn't D. hasn't got

31. If you make a mistake when you are writing, just ..... it out with your pen.

A. Cross B. clear C. do D. wipe

32. Although our opinions on many things ..... , we're good friends.

A. differ B. oppose C. disagree D. divide

33. This product must be eaten ..... two days of purchase.

A. by B. before C. within D. under

34. The newspaper report contained ..... important information.

A. many B. another C. an D. a lot of

35. Have you considered ..... to London?

A. move B. to move C. to be moving D. moving

36. It can be a good idea for people who lead an active life to increase their ..... of vitamins.

A. upturn B. input C. upkeep D. intake

37. I thought there was a ..... of jealousy in his reaction to my good fortune.

A. piece B. part C. shadow D. touchy

38. Why didn't you ..... that you were feeling ill?

A. advise B. mention C. remark D. tell

39. James was not sure exactly where his best interests ..... .

A. stood B. rested C. lay D. centered

40. He's still getting ..... the shock of losing his job.

A. across B. by C. over D. through

Part 2

<u>Questions 41 – 50</u> Choose the word or phrase which best fits each space in the texts.

he tallest buildings – SKYSCRAPERS

Nowadays, skyscrapers can be found in most major cities of the world. A building which was many **(41)** …….. high was first called a skyscraper in the United States at the end of the 19th century, and New York has perhaps the **(42)** …….. skyscraper of them all, the Empire State Building. The **(43)** …….. beneath the streets of New York is rock, **(44)** …….. enough to take the heaviest load without sinking, and is therefore well-suited

41. **A.** stages **B.** steps **C.** stories **D.** levels

42. **A**. first-rate **B.** top-class **C.** well-built **D.** best-known

43. **A.** dirt **B.** field **C.** ground **D.** soil

44. **A.** hard **B.** stiff **C.** forceful **D.** powerful

45. **A.** weight **B.** height **C .**size **D.** scale

SCRABBLE

Scrabble is the world's most popular word game. For its origins, we have to go back to the 1930s in the USA, when Alfred Butts, an architect, found himself out of **(46)** …….. . He decided that there was a **(47)** ……. for a board game based on words and **(48)** ……. to design one. Eventually he made a **(49)** ……. from it, in spite of the fact that his original **(50)** ……. was only three cents a game.

46. **A.** earning **B.** work **C.** income **D.** job

47. **A.** market **B.** purchase **C.** commerce **D.** sale

48. **A.** took up **B.** set out **C.** made for **D.** got round

49. **A.** wealth **B.** fund **C.** cash **D.** fortune

50. **A.** receipt **B.** benefit **C.** profit **D.** allowance

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Questions 51 – 60 Choose the word or phrase which best completes each sentence.

51. Roger's manager ..... to make him stay late if he hadn't finished the work.

A. insisted B. warned C. threatened D. announced

52. By the time he has finished his week's work, John has hardly ..... energy left for the weekend.

A. any B. much C. no D. same

53. As the game ..... to a close, disappointed spectators started to leave.

A. led B. neared C. approached D. drew

54. I don't remember ..... the front door when I left home this morning.

A. to lock B. locking C. locked D. to have locked

55. I ..... to other people borrowing my books: they always forget to return them.

A. disagree B. avoid C. dislike D. object

56. Andrew's attempts to get into the swimming team have not ..... with much success.

A. associated B. concluded C. joined D. met

57. Although Harry had obviously read the newspaper article carefully, he didn't seem to have ..... the main point.

A. grasped B. clutched C. clasped D. gripped

58. A lot of the views put forward in the documentary were open to ..... .

A. enquiry B. query C. question D. wonder

59. The new college ..... for the needs of students with a variety of learning backgrounds.

A. deals B. supplies C. furnishes D. caters

60. I find the times of English meals very strange – I'm not used ..... dinner at 6pm.

A. to have B. to having C. having D. have

Appendix 2 Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT) Answer Sheet and score level

1	B	**16**	A	**31**	A	**46**	B
2	B	**17**	B	**32**	A	**47**	A
3	A	**18**	C	**33**	C	**48**	B
4	B	**19**	D	**34**	D	**49**	D
5	C	**20**	A	**35**	D	**50**	C
6	B	**21**	D	**36**	D	**51**	C
7	A	**22**	A	**37**	D	**52**	A
8	C	**23**	D	**38**	B	**53**	D
9	B	**24**	D	**39**	C	**54**	B
10	A	**25**	C	**40**	C	**55**	D
11	B	**26**	C	**41**	C	**56**	D
12	A	**27**	A	**42**	D	**57**	A
13	C	**28**	C	**43**	C	**58**	C
14	D	**29**	B	**44**	A	**59**	D
15	A	**30**	C	**45**	A	**60**	B

Total Score	**Level**
0–16	**A1- Elementary**
17–27	**A2 - Pre-intermediate**
28-36	**B1- Intermediate**
37–44	**B2 -Upper-intermediate**
45–54	**C1- Advanced**
55-60	**C2 - Proficient**

Appendix 3 Pre –test sample

Code Number: …….. ***Pre Test***

……

Choose one of these topics and write about it.

1). Your first day at a new school or college

2). A memorable journey

3). An embarrassing experience

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Appendix 4 Post –test sample

Code Number: …….. ***Post Test***

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Choose one of these topics and write about it.

1). Your favorite birthday party.

2). Your most exciting day of school

3). A Week in Your Life, When Parents Left on a Vacation, Leaving you Alone at Home

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