

**The Effect of Teacher Direct Written Corrective Feedback on
Al-Aqsa University Female Students' Performance in English Essay
Writing**

أثر التغذية الراجعة الكتابية التصحيحية المباشرة من قبل المعلم على أداء طالبات جامعة
الأقصى في كتابة المقال باللغة الإنجليزية

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Received: (8/5/2014), Accepted: (27/8/2014)

Abstract

The last two decades have witnessed a debate among L2/FL (second language/foreign language) educators and practitioners on the relationship between teacher feedback and students' writing performance. This study investigated the effect of one of teacher written corrective feedback types (direct feedback) on the performance of a sample of Palestinian EFL (English as a foreign language) university female students in essay writing. The sample of the study consisted of 60 participants who were divided into two equivalent groups with thirty students in each. While the experimental group received direct feedback over a 9 week period, the control group received no-feedback at all. Two essay tests were administered in this study: a pre-test and a post-test. Utilizing means, standard deviations, and T. Test, the study found that while teacher direct written corrective feedback enhanced high achievers' performance in a new piece of writing, it did not improve middle and low achievers' performance. Based on such results, the study offered important implications such as using direct feedback in improving essay writing performance of EFL proficient student writers.

Key Words: Teacher, direct corrective written feedback, Al-Aqsa University, essay writing, performance

ملخص

لقد شهد العقدان الأخيران جدل بين التربويين والمختصين بتعليم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية حول العلاقة بين التغذية الراجعة المقدمة من قبل المعلم وأداء الطلبة الكتابي. هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى البحث في اثر نوع من أنواع التغذية الراجعة التصحيحية المقدمة من قبل المعلم (التغذية الراجعة المباشرة) على أداء عينة من الطالبات الفلسطينيات في كتابة المقال باللغة الإنجليزية. تكونت عينة الدراسة من 60 طالبة تم تقسيمهن إلى مجموعتين متكافئتين، بحيث اشتملت كل مجموعة على 30 طالبة، وبينما تلقت طالبات المجموعة التجريبية التغذية الراجعة المباشرة لمدة 9 أسابيع، لم تخضع طالبات المجموعة الضابطة لأي تجربة، واستخدمت الباحثة اختبارين للتعبير الكتابي: اختبار قبلي واختبار بعدي، وكذلك تم استخدام المتوسط الحسابي، والانحراف المعياري، واختبار T في تحليل نتائج الدراسة التي بدورها أشارت إلى انه بينما طورت التغذية الراجعة المباشرة أداء الطالبات ذوات التحصيل المرتفع في كتابة موضوع تعبيرى جديد، لم تطور أداء الطالبات ذوات التحصيل المتوسط و المنخفض، وبناء على هذه النتائج قدمت الدراسة توصيات هامة من أبرزها استخدام التغذية الراجعة المباشرة في تطوير مهارة كتابة المقال باللغة الإنجليزية لدى الطالبات ذوات التحصيل المرتفع.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التغذية الراجعة المباشرة، المعلم، أداء، كتابة المقال، اللغة الإنجليزية، جامعة الأقصى.

1. Introduction

The last two decades have witnessed a debate among L2/FL educators and practitioners on the relationship between teacher feedback and students' writing performance. While some authors (e.g., Truscott & Hsu, 2008) suspected the effectiveness of teacher feedback in improving L2/FL writing, others (e.g., Evans, Hartshorn, McCollum, & Wolfersberger, 2010; Hyland & Hyland, 2006) asserted the positive impact of teacher feedback on L2/FL writing performance. In this context, Hyland and Hyland (2006) state that the question of whether corrective feedback is beneficial to L2 students in both short and long term has become a major issue of discussion.

According to Gower, Philips, and Walters (1995), providing language students with feedback is one of the teacher's responsibilities, since ongoing feedback can help the students assess their progress. Additionally, Ferris and Roberts (2001) and Hyland and Hyland (2006) provide that teacher feedback is central to the improvement of second language skills including writing.

In contrast to the above opinion, Truscott and Hsu (2008) view that written corrective feedback is not only useless but also harmful to L2 writers, in that it does not focus on the productive aspects of writing. Moreover, Schulz (1998) provides that according to some applied linguists, error correction is harmful, because it may raise student's level of anxiety which precludes the student from acquiring communicative ability. Schulz (1998) also states that in the view of such linguists, L1 (first language) and L2 are acquired in a certain predetermined order, apart from the sequence of instruction or amount of corrective feedback.

Due to such debate, an increasing number of studies (e.g., Chandler, 2003; Evans, Hartshorn, McCollum, & Wolfersberger, 2010; Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Tsui & Ng, 2000) have been recently conducted on this research area. The present study came to contribute to the growing body of literature related to this issue through investigating the effect of one of teacher written corrective feedback types (direct feedback) on the essay writing performance of a sample of Palestinian EFL students.

2. Research Context

According to Al-Aqsa University (2014), Al-Aqsa University consists of seven faculties capable of giving B.A. (Bachelor of Arts) degree. The students who major English language teaching are supposed to have many academic courses (Writing 1, Writing 11, Novel, Drama, Poetry, Shakespeare, TEFL 1, TEFL2, etc.). For the students to pass such academic courses, they have to be competent in English essay writing. In this context, the researcher noticed from her experience as an instructor of English courses at Al-Aqsa University that some EFL students complained about the lack of teacher direct corrective feedback in writing classes. Additionally, Hammad (2013) and Hammad (2014) reported that Al-Aqsa University EFL students had problems with writing, and they showed a poor level in their essay writing performance. Consequently, the present study attempted to improve Al-Aqsa University EFL students' performance in essay writing through using teacher direct corrective feedback in writing classes.

Reviewing the previous studies conducted in the Palestinian EFL context in this area, the researcher found that while Abu-Jarad (2008) and Farrah (2012) focused on the use of peer feedback in EFL classrooms, no studies approached the use of teacher direct feedback in EFL instructional settings. Consequently, the present study aimed to examine the impact of teacher direct written corrective feedback on Al-Aqsa University EFL female students' essay writing performance.

3. Research Terms Teacher Corrective Feedback

Teacher corrective feedback in both first and second writing pedagogy means that teachers share their insights, opinions, recommendations, and suggestions with student writers with the aim of helping them improve English writing skill (Andrade & Evans, 2013). Moreover, it is defined as "information provided to learners about the ill-formedness of their L2 production" (Loewen, 2012, 24). Teacher corrective feedback is also defined as the vehicle through which teachers can guide students along the learning process through identifying the areas of strength and weakness (Donohue, 2009).

Written Feedback

For Loewen (2012), written feedback is the feedback that is given after a text has been written. Brookhart (2008) refers to written feedback as the comments that are provided after students' works have been finished, and it is more permanent than oral feedback.

Direct Feedback

According to Hyland and Hyland (2006), direct feedback is "the provision of the correct linguistic form by the teacher to the student. It may take various forms, including crossing out an unnecessary word, phrase, or morpheme; inserting a missing word or morpheme; or writing the correct word or form near the erroneous form" (p.83). Ferris and Hedgcock (2014) provide that in direct feedback, teachers provide student writers with correct linguistic forms i.e., crossing out an unnecessary words, and phrases, inserting a missing word, and writing correct forms. Additionally, Wigglesworth and Storch (2012) refers to

direct feedback as rewriting learner's text, correcting any errors but maintaining the intended meaning.

Generally speaking, this study defines Teacher direct written corrective feedback as the explicit written comments teachers give to EFL students for helping them correct all their essay writing errors such as grammar errors, vocabulary errors, cohesion and coherence errors, lack of content, and mechanics errors. Thus, teacher may cross out an unnecessary words, phrases, sentences, or paragraphs; insert a word or a phrase; write correct forms; reorganize sentences and paragraphs; and provide new ideas.

Writing Performance

White and Arndt (1991) define writing as "a process that involves brain storming, planning, goal setting, monitoring, and assessing what a writer is going to write, and using correct linguistic forms to express clear messages"(p.3). Furthermore, Hammad (2014) defines writing as a process involving generating ideas, composing such ideas in sentences and paragraphs, utilizing knowledge of grammatical rules, lexical devices, and logical ties, and revising the material written. Based on the two definitions, this study defines writing performance as EFL students' behaviors of generating relevant ideas and using lexical items, cohesive ties, writing mechanics, and grammatical rules in composing sentences and paragraphs.

4. Previous Studies

In fact, a number of recent empirical studies have investigated the impact of various types of feedback on L2/FL writing skills. Some studies centered on the use of peer feedback in FL/L2 classrooms. For example, Abu-Jarad (2008) aimed at examining Palestinian EFL university students' attitudes towards peer feedback. The sample of the study consisted of 25 intermediate students and 22 advanced students selected from Al-Azhar University. Using a questionnaire and percentages, the study found that the participants had positive views on such type of feedback. Moreover, Farrah (2012) investigated the effectiveness of peer review in improving 105 Palestinian EFL students'

writing skills in Hebron University. The study used a pre-test, a post-test, a pre-questionnaire and a post-questionnaire to calculate the data and T-test to analyze such data. It was concluded that peer feedback enhanced the writing performance of participants in the experimental group.

Similar to the above studies conducted in the Palestinian EFL context, Ciftci and Kocoglu (2012) aimed to examine the effect of peer feedback on Turkish EFL students' writing performance. The participants were 30 students selected from a Foundation University in Istanbul. The study showed positive impacts of peer feedback on writing performance. In the same vein, Jahin (2012) evaluated the impact of peer reviewing on the writing apprehension of 40 Saudi EFL major prospective teachers in Taibah University. Utilizing a Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory, an essay writing test, means, and T. Test, results showed positive impacts of peer review on the experimental group students' performance in essay writing. Moussaoui (2012) also examined the effects of peer evaluation on EFL students' writing autonomy of 60 EFL second year undergraduate students from Setif University in Algeria. Based on pre-and post-training surveys, classroom observations, and peer evaluation rubrics, the study showed that peer evaluation increased the experimental group students' writing self-efficacy.

Other studies focused on the types of teacher feedback, specifically, direct feedback and indirect feedback. For example, Bitchener, Young, and Cameron (2005) aimed to explore the effectiveness of written feedback and conference feedback in developing the accuracy levels in the use of past simple, prepositions, and definite article. The participants in the study were 53 ESL adult migrant students. After using percentages and ANOVA (Analysis-of-variance), the study found a positive effect for the combination of written and conference feedback on the students' writing accuracy. Furthermore, Ferris and Roberts (2001) examined the effects of three conditions on self-editing tasks: errors marked with codes, errors underlined but not marked, and no feedback. The sample of the study consisted of 72 ESL university students. Based on ANOVA analysis, the study reported that the L2 university students who received feedback on their compositions outperformed the participants who did

not receive feedback in the self-editing task. In the same vein, Tsui and Ng (2000) evaluated the effectiveness of teacher's comments and peer comments in improving 27 Chinese L2 secondary school students' writing. The results of the study showed that some participants incorporated high percentages of both teacher and peer comments; some incorporated higher percentages of teacher's comments than peer comments, and others incorporated low percentages of peer comments. Furthermore, Purnawarman's (2011) purpose was to assess the effectiveness of four different strategies in improving writing accuracy and writing quality use: indirect teacher feedback, direct teacher feedback, indirect teacher feedback followed by direct feedback, and no feedback. Essay tests were administered to 170 Indonesian EFL freshmen students in Indonesia University of Education. ANOVA analysis showed that both direct and indirect feedback were effective in reducing Indonesian EFL university students' grammatical errors. The study also indicated that the participants who received indirect feedback followed by direct feedback outperformed those who received only one of the two strategies.

Furthermore, the three studies of Farrokhi and Sattarpour (2012), Mirzaii and Aliabadi (2013), and Shirazi and Shekarabi (2014) were conducted on the same issue in the Iranian EFL context. Farrokhi and Sattarpour (2012) aimed at examining the impact of direct feedback on the use of articles. The study administered a TOEFL proficiency test to 26 males and 34 females at a university in Iran. The data analyzed by means and ANOVA indicated that focused corrective feedback is more effective than unfocused corrective feedback in improving grammatical accuracy. Additionally, Mirzaii and Aliabadi (2013) aimed to investigate the effect of direct and indirect feedback on 120 Iranian EFL advanced learners at Kish Institute of Science and Technology. After administering a TOEFL test, results reported that direct feedback was more effective than indirect feedback. Moreover, Shirazi and Shekarabi's (2014) purpose was examining the effect of direct feedback and indirect feedback on the linguistic accuracy of Iranian advanced learners of Japanese as a foreign

language. T. Test analysis indicated that direct feedback was more effective than indirect feedback in improving linguistic accuracy.

In contrast to the above studies, the two studies of Liu (2008) and Mubarak (2013) indicated that direct written feedback did not improve L2 writing performance. As for Liu (2008), it aimed at exploring the effect of direct feedback on writing accuracy of 12 first-year ESL students in a southern university in the United States. The study concluded that direct written corrective feedback did not improve the L2 university students' accuracy in a different paper, though it reduced their errors in the immediate draft. Additionally, Mubarak (2013) aimed to assess the effectiveness of direct feedback and indirect feedback in improving the writing performance of 46 Bahraini media students. The study collected its data through a pre-test, a post-test, a questionnaire, interviews, and classroom observations. Using T. Test, the study showed that neither type of feedback had a significant effect on the students' accuracy, their grammatical complexity, and lexical complexity.

It is obvious that most previous studies did not classify the participants into levels, i.e., students with high achievement level, students with low achievement level, and students with middle achievement level. Thus, the present study attempted to examine the effect of one of teacher corrective feedback types (direct feedback) on the essay writing performance of three types of EFL students, i.e., high achievers, low achievers, and middle achievers. It is noteworthy that the present study considered the previous studies methodologies and instruments. Indeed, the previous studies helped in designing the study instruments, collecting its data, and using data analysis procedures.

5. Research Questions

The present study addressed four research questions:

1. To what extent does direct written corrective feedback from EFL writing teachers improve essay writing performance of Al-Aqsa university female students?

2. To what extent does direct written corrective feedback from EFL writing teachers improve essay writing performance of female high achievers at Al-Aqsa University?
3. To what extent does direct written corrective feedback from EFL writing teachers improve essay writing performance of female middle achievers at Al-Aqsa University?
4. To what extent does direct written corrective feedback from EFL writing teachers improve essay writing performance of female low achievers at Al-Aqsa University?

6. Research Hypotheses

The current study put four hypotheses:

1. There are no statistically significant differences at (0.05) in essay writing performance between the students who received direct written corrective feedback on their compositions (experimental group) and those who received no treatment at all (control group).
2. There are statistically significant differences at (0.05) in essay writing performance between high achievers in the experimental group and their peers in the control group in favor of the experimental group.
3. There are no statistically significant differences at (0.05) in essay writing performance between middle achievers in the experimental group and their peers in the control group.
4. There are no statistically significant differences at (0.05) in essay writing performance between low achievers in the experimental group and their peers in the control group.

7. Research Method

7.1. Research Design

This study attempted the experimental approach (i.e., quasi-experimental), since it investigated the effect of direct written corrective feedback on Al-Aqsa University EFL students' essay writing

performance. According to Lodico, Spaulding, and Voegtle (2006), experimental approach is useful in determining cause-effect relationships. Moreover, Verma and Mallick (2005) provide that while the experimental group in the experimental research receives special treatment, the control one receives a different treatment or no treatment at all.

7.2. Participants

Participants in this study were sixty Palestinian female students. They were all second-year students enrolled in English department at one of the Palestinian governmental universities, Al-Aqsa University. Their ages ranged from nineteen to twenty years. The sixty participants were divided into two equivalent groups with thirty students in each. While the experimental group received direct feedback, the control group received no-feedback at all. Based on the students' grade point averages (GPA) in their university, each group consisted of five high achievers of English, nineteen middle achievers, and six low achievers. All the participants had been studying English as a foreign language for ten years.

7.3. Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

The data of the study were collected in nine weeks. The experiment started in January to March, 2014. Dividing the participants into two equivalent groups, the researcher controlled the other variables (i.e., achievement level). Then, the pre-measurement (English essay test) was administered to the participants in both groups. Two researchers provided the experimental group participants with corrective feedback on the drafts of their first two essays with errors underlined and corrected. The first draft of the third essay was collected three weeks after the second revision of the second essay was collected. Some of the writing activities were done in class, and assignments were done at home. The first draft of each essay was written in class within a time frame of fifty minutes. The researcher asked the experimental group participants to write the first and second revisions of the first two essays at home so as to give them an opportunity to consider the teachers' comments. Each of the first two essays took three weeks to complete.

For evaluating the participants' EFL writing performance, the students' writing samples in the pre-measurement and post-measurement were sent to two EFL writing teachers, using the ESL composition profile developed by Jacob, Hartfiel, Hughey, and Wormuth, (1981). The total score of each sample was the mean of the two raters' scores. Render (1990) states that the ESL composition profile of Jacob, et al. (1981) is a good analytic scoring tool. For identifying the differences between the scores of the experimental group participants and the scores of the control group participants in essay writing, the researcher ran T-Test using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). In this respect, Sheskin (2004) notes that T. Test for two independent samples is used to investigate differences between two samples. Tschumitschew and Klawonn (2012) also provide that the T. Test is based on normal distribution. Moreover, the researcher used Kolmogorov-Smirnov test to determine the distributional differences between the two samples. According to Sheskin (2004), Kolmogorov-Smirnov test can compare the cumulative frequency distributions of two independent samples. The results of the test show that p-value for each type of students is higher than 0.05, the thing which indicates that the data are normally distributed. Table 1 shows Kolmogorov-Smirnov test results.

Table (1): Kolmogorov-Smirnov test results.

Type of Students	Z	P-value
High achievers of English	0.55	0.91
Middle achievers of English	0.75	0.62
Low achievers of English	0.62	0.83
All Students	1.05	0.21

7.4. Instruments

7.4.1. Two Essay Tests

The present study used two essay tests: a pre-essay test and a post-essay test. According to Campell, Smith, and Brooker (1998), essay test is very effective for evaluating students' writing. Each participant in this study was asked to write two well-organized essays, and they were given

fifty minutes for writing each essay. The topics of the essay tests were familiar to the participants so as to help them generate ideas about them (Appendixes A and B). The researcher checked the content validity and face validity of both tests.

8. Results

8.1. Results of First Research Question

The first question was "To what extent does direct written corrective feedback from EFL writing teachers improve essay writing performance of Al-Aqsa university female students?" Using means, standard deviations, and T. Test independent sample, the study showed that there were no statistically significant differences in the test overall score as well as the scores of 'content', 'organization', 'vocabulary', and 'language use' between the experimental group and the control one. Table 2 shows means, standard deviations, and T. Test analysis.

Table (2): Means, standard deviations, and T. test values.

Test sub skills	Group	Mean	STD	T	significance level
Content	control group	17.2	4.8	-0.220	0.827//
	experimental group	17.4	4.6		
Organization	control group	10.2	3.7	-0.545	0.588//
	experimental group	10.7	3.8		
Vocabulary	control group	9.2	2.7	-0.754	0.454//
	experimental group	9.8	3.4		
Language use	control group	9.4	4.5	-1.781	0.080//
	experimental group	11.8	5.7		
Mechanics	control group	2.8	0.9	-2.708	0.009*
	experimental group	3.4	1.0		
Total	control group	49.6	14.4	-0.813	0.420//
	experimental group	53.0	17.5		

* p-value is statistically significant at $\alpha \leq 0.05$

// p-value is not statistically significant at $\alpha \leq 0.05$

Table 2 shows that p-value of the test overall score as well as the scores of 'content', 'organization', 'vocabulary', and 'language use' are higher than 0.05 which means that there are no statistically significant differences between the performance of the experimental group participants and the performance of the control group ones in a new piece of writing, and therefore the study confirms the first hypothesis.

8.2. Results of Second Research Question

The second question was "To what extent does direct written corrective feedback from EFL writing teachers improve essay writing performance of female high achievers at Al-Aqsa University?" To identify the differences in essay writing performance between high achievers in the experimental group and their peers in the control group, the researcher used means, standard deviations and T. Test analysis (See Table 3).

Table (3): Means, standard deviations, and T. Test values (high achievers).

Test sub skills	Group	Mean	STD	T-Test	significance level
Content	control group	23.0	4.3	-0.510	0.625//
	experimental group	24.2	3.0		
Organization	control group	15.0	3.4	-1.532	0.169//
	experimental group	17.8	2.3		
Vocabulary	control group	13.6	2.5	-1.928	0.090//
	experimental group	16.6	2.4		
Language use	control group	15.0	3.7	-2.566	0.003*
	experimental group	21.2	3.9		
Mechanics	control group	3.6	0.5	-5.715	0.000*
	experimental group	5.0	0.0		
Total	control group	75.0	2.6	-5.591	0.000*
	experimental group	85.4	3.2		

* p-value is statistically significant at $\alpha \leq 0.05$

// p-value is not statistically significant at $\alpha \leq 0.05$

Table 3 shows that p-value of the test overall score and the scores of 'language use' and 'mechanics' are below 0.05, the thing which indicates that there are statistically significant differences in essay writing performance between high achievers in the experimental group and their peers in the control group in favor of the experimental group. Based on that, the study accepts the second hypothesis.

8.3. Results of Third Research Question

The answer of the third question, "To what extent does direct written corrective feedback from EFL writing teachers improve essay writing performance of female middle achievers at Al-Aqsa University?" is given in Table 4.

Table (4): Means, standard deviations, and T. Test values (middle achievers).

Test sub skills	Group	Mean	STD	T-Test	significance level
Content	control group	17.2	4.2	-0.043	0.966//
	experimental group	17.2	3.6		
Organization	control group	10.0	3.3	-0.061	0.952//
	experimental group	10.1	2.0		
Vocabulary	control group	8.7	1.8	-0.208	0.836//
	experimental group	8.8	1.4		
Language use	control group	9.3	4.0	-1.665	0.105//
	experimental group	11.4	3.4		
Mechanics	control group	2.7	0.9	-2.112	0.042*
	experimental group	3.3	0.8		
Total degree for the writing test	control group	48.0	8.9	-0.939	0.354//
	experimental group	50.8	8.8		

* p-value is statistical significant at $\alpha \leq 0.05$

// p-value is not statistical significant at $\alpha \leq 0.05$

As shown in Table 4, p-values of the test overall score and the scores of 'content', 'organization', 'vocabulary', and 'language use' are higher than 0.05. This means that there are no statistically significant differences in essay writing performance between middle achievers in the experimental group and their peers in the control one. Thus, the third hypothesis in this study is affirmed.

8.4. Results of Fourth Research Question

The answer of the fourth question, "To what extent does direct written corrective feedback from EFL writing teachers improve essay writing performance of female low achievers at Al-Aqsa University?" is given in Table 5.

Table (5): Means, standard deviations, and T. Test values (low achievers).

Test sub skills	Group	Mean	STD	T-Test	significance level
Content	control group	13.4	0.9	-0.605	0.571//
	experimental group	13.1	0.4		
Organization	control group	7.6	0.9	-0.344	0.740//
	experimental group	7.4	0.8		
Vocabulary	control group	7.8	1.1	-0.399	0.702//
	experimental group	7.6	0.8		
Language use	control group	5.8	0.8	-0.307	0.766//
	experimental group	6.0	1.4		
Mechanics	control group	2.4	0.5	-0.540	0.603//
	experimental group	2.6	0.5		
Total degree for the writing test	control group	36.0	2.5	-0.488	0.633//
	experimental group	36.7	2.4		

// p-value is not statistical significant at $\alpha \leq 0.05$

Table 5 shows that p-value of the test overall score and all test sub skills scores are higher than 0.05, the thing which means that there are no

statistically significant differences in essay writing performance between low achievers in the experimental group and their peers in the control one. In light of this result, the study confirms the fourth hypothesis.

9. Discussion and Implications

The current study showed that teacher direct written corrective feedback did not improve the participants' essay writing performance (performance in a new piece of writing) in general. Similar to this result, Liu (2008) indicated that direct corrective written feedback did not enhance the L2 students' accuracy in a different paper, though it reduced their errors in the immediate draft. Likewise, Mubarak (2013) concluded that direct corrective feedback had no significant effect on EFL students' accuracy, grammatical complexity, or lexical complexity in writing.

Incongruent with this result, Purnawarman (2011) reported that direct feedback was effective in reducing Indonesian EFL university students' grammatical errors. Additionally, Mirzaii and Aliabadi (2013) and Shirazi and Shekarabi (2014) indicated that direct feedback was more effective than indirect feedback in the context of L2 writing instruction. This inconsistency between the present study result and the findings obtained by Purnawarman (2011), Mirzaii and Aliabadi (2013), and Shirazi and Shekarabi (2014) may due to the difference in the experimental conditions. For example, Purnawarman (2011) and Mirzaii and Aliabadi (2013) investigated the students' writing accuracy in the immediate draft, the thing which means that feedback did not enhance the students' accuracy in a different paper. Farrokhi and Sattarpour (2012) and Shirazi and Shekarabi (2014) also examined the effect of direct corrective written feedback on the accuracy of the students in the use of only a few grammatical rules.

The study also reported that teacher direct written corrective feedback enhanced high achievers' performance in a new piece of

writing. In line with this finding, Farrokhi and Sattarpour (2012) reported that direct corrective written feedback developed the grammatical accuracy of Iranian L2 high proficient students. In light of this finding, EFL writing teachers in general and Palestinian EFL writing teachers in particular are advised to provide proficient student writers with direct feedback necessary for improving their essay writing performance.

Another finding reported in this study is that teacher direct written corrective feedback did not improve middle and low achievers' performance in a new piece of writing. The main reason for why direct written corrective feedback did not have a positive effect on middle and low achievers' essay writing performance in this study might be that this strategy was used for only nine weeks. In order for direct feedback to be beneficial, it should be used for a long period of time and in many EFL writing courses. According to Graig (2013), "writing well is a practice-based skill that can not be achieved in a single course". Graig (2013) also views that EFL/ESL students need a adequate amount of time through which they can receive instruction, practice, and feedback necessary for building their writing skills. Thus, it would be desirable for EFL researchers and practitioners to increase the treatment time when examining the effects of such type of feedback.

Another reason for the ineffectiveness of direct written corrective feedback in improving the writing performance of low and middle achievers in this study might be that direct feedback is only one of the factors that can affect FL/L2 writing performance. According to Hammad (2014), FL/L2 writing quality can be enhanced by a number of procedures such as improving strategy use, using bilingual and mono-lingual dictionaries, practicing writing, and reading authentic materials. Hence, it may be argued that in combination with such procedures, feedback can have a greater effect.

10. Recommendations

Based on the above discussion, the study recommendations are summarized as follows:

- EFL writing teachers in general and Palestinian EFL writing teachers in particular are advised to provide proficient student writers with direct feedback for improving their essay writing performance.
- It would be desirable for EFL researchers and practitioners to increase the treatment time when examining the effects of direct feedback.
- EFL writing teachers in general and Palestinian EFL writing teachers in particular are advised to use direct feedback in combination with other procedures such as improving strategy use, using bilingual and mono-lingual dictionaries, and reading authentic materials.
- Further research is recommended to investigate the effectiveness of teacher indirect written corrective feedback for improving Palestinian EFL students' performance in essay writing.

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Appendixes

Appendix (A): The pre- essay Test

Write a well-organized essay within fifty minutes about your daily routine. Your essay should include an introductory paragraph, at least two supporting paragraphs, and a concluding paragraph

Appendix (B): The post- essay Test

Write a well-organized essay within fifty minutes about your experience in studying English at Al-Aqsa University. Your essay should include an introductory paragraph, at least two supporting paragraphs, and a concluding paragraph
