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EFFECT OF CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK ON WRITING ACCURACY OF SSC LEVEL EFL STUDENTS IN SAUDI ARABIA

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ABSTRACT
This study examined the effect of Corrective Feedback (CF) on Writing Accuracy of Secondary School Certificate (SSC) Level Englih as Foreign Language (EFL) students. In this quasi-experimental study, fifty-nine students participated: twenty-nine were there in the control group and thirty participants were there in the treatment group. They were already selected by following random selection procedures. The study exploited quantitative approach. Writing compositions of the experimental as well as the control groups were assessed to find out the kinds of errors they commit and to determine the effect of corrective feedback on writing accuracy of the participants. The experimentation lasted for twelve weeks. This research considered five types of errors; punctuation marks, preposition, subject-verb agreement, verb form and spelling. SPSS (version 17) was used to generate descriptive analyses for this study. The results of this study have revealed a significant positive effect of written corrective feedback on the writing accuracy of the experimental group regarding selected types of errors; punctuation marks, preposition, subject-verb agreement, verb form and spelling. The experimental group outperformed the control group which was not provided direct feedback significantly. It has also been found out that although the participants pay attention to the corrected errors, they do not re-draft the compositions.

KEYWORDS: Corrective feedback, punctuation marks, preposition, subject-verb agreement, verb form, spelling.

INTRODUCTION
The effect of corrective feedback (CF) on learners' writing accuracy has been controversial for decades (Van Beuningen, 2010). Some early researchers (e.g., Hendrickson, 1977, 1980; Lalande, 1982; Hillocks, 1982; Semke, 1984; Robb et al., 1986) posit that CF does not affect the writing accuracy of EFL learners' significantly but several other studies (e.g., Cathcart & Olsen, 1976; Kennedy, 1973; Dulay & Burt, 1977; Krashen, 1977; Krashen & Selinger, 1975) have found that it can be useful. It seems that the debate would not end in the near future.

It seems that literature is full of studies regarding CF, supporting and opposing its effect on writing accuracy of EFL learners. Truscott has declared CF as theoretically wrong and harmful but also practically impossible and wastage of time (1996; 1999; 2004; 2007; 2009; 2010). Truscott, reflecting teachers' views regarding CF, claims that CF in a composition may decrease

learners' error frequency in the next draft but has no effect on the grammatical accuracy in the long run when the learner writes a new composition later after some time. (1996, 1999).

However, several researchers (e.g., Chandler, 2003, 2004, 2009; Bruton, 2009, 2010; Ferris, 1999; 2004; 2010; Bitchener, 2008) finds CF effective for the learner's writing accuracy, positively. The researchers (e.g., Bitchener & Knoch, 2009; Bitchener & Knoch, 2010; Sheen, 2007) conducted research and provided CF on specific features to investigate the effect of CF (e.g., errors while using the past tense) and almost all of them found significant positive effects on writing accuracy after a period of time. For example, Bitchener, Young and Cameron (2005) conducted research to investigate the extent to which CF of different types (direct CF with and without oral conferencing) affects the learners' writing accuracy of new compositions and found it positively effective. Though, a growing mass of studies (already mentioned) supporting CF, different types and amounts of CF that really work best to increase learners' writing accuracy of L2, is still unclear.

The research findings of several researches in support of CF (different types) are unable to demonstrate if the CF affect the writing accuracy significantly. For example, Sheen (2007) provided CF on a specific linguistic feature to measure its effect and found that CF on structural errors increased learners' accuracy significantly. In contrast, Sheppard (1992) in a study provided two types (error coding vs. margin comments) of CF on writing accuracy. He analyzed seven essays written by his students. He posits that the students receiving margin comments, outperformed the other group. Further, he states that the group that received error-coding CF, was found negatively affected by CF as they started avoiding the complex structures.

Researchers have made great effort and explained why several CF types might be ineffective as there is the increasing research evidence both in favor and against the CF. They successfully have found the perspective of the CF, very important. For example, while providing CF, the teacher changes or corrects the language of the learner according to what he thinks the learner wants to say or should say, but sometimes a mismatch is there between what the learner wants to say and the teacher thinks the learner wants to or should say (Ferris, 1995; Gass & Selinker, 1994; Zamel, 1985). In this situation, the ineffectiveness of CF is due to misunderstanding between the teacher and the learner. Researchers have provided evidence that often CF is not understandable in its correct sense and learners are unable to use it correctly. For example, Ferris (1995) and Hyland (1998) have investigated and found the learners face problems to understand the CF provided to them and were unable to use it as intended by the teacher.

Learners' preferences and opinion also influence the effect of CF. For example, if a learner believes or prefers that a specific kind of CF is more useful to improve his writing accuracy, then it becomes essential to give importance to his opinion to make the CF effective (McCargar, 1993; Schulz, 2001). As there is research in abundance in favour as well as opposing the positive effect of CF, it becomes important to conduct a research to find out exact effect of CF on the accuracy of this specific level of EFL students.

Statement of the problem

The researcher's own experience and discussions with the colleagues strongly suggest that SSC Level EFL students need corrective feedback for two reasons; first, it helps the students to improve writing accuracy and second, Pakistani students studying at international schools in the KSA lack English language proficiency in general and writing skills in particular. Furthermore, these students need high proficiency in writing skills in English language as they are required to attempt all exams in English and the majority of questions are of the subjective nature in which they are required to write multiple paragraphs. Thus, it seems extremely important to take all possible measures to support them to perform better in their exams and corrective feedback can possibly play an important role in this regard. That is why this study is conducted to measure the improvement in writing accuracy due to explicit CF.

Significance of the study

The results provided by the previous studies are somewhat conflicting regarding the effect of CF to increase the participants' writing accuracy of L2 (Truscott, 1996; Ferris, 1999). Several studies have attempted to unveil the effects of written, content-focused feedback on written compositions (e.g., Ashwell, 2000; Ferris & Robert, 2001). The findings of this study will contribute to answer the fundamental questions which sparked the debate such as the one initiated by Truscott (1996) and Ferris (1999). The main emphasis has been, whether or not CF is effective and useful for participants' writing. Several previous studies were conducted without a control group but this study is conducted with a control group. Five error types (punctuation, prepositions, subject-verb agreement, verb form and spelling) frequently committed by ESL/EFL learners are the main focus which is different from several previous studies that were either too broad addressing too many areas of error analyses or too specific focusing only on one error type.

Operational Definitions of the Variables and/or Terminology

In this section, the definitions of related terms will be discussed.

Error

Hendrickson (1978) considers errors in target language acquisition as an utterance, structure or form that is not acceptable according to an English language teacher due to its inappropriateness or absence in real discourse. Apparently, in mid of 1980s' errors were redefined by Richards, Platt, Weber and Inman (1986) in a dictionary as they described errors as "the use of a linguistic item in a way, which, according to fluent users of the language indicates faulty or incomplete learning of the target language" (p. 289).

Mistake

Corder states (1981), a mistake occurs as a result of learners cannot perform competently. He further says that processing problems generate mistakes that resist learners to access their target language knowledge and they fall back on some alternative, non- standard rule that they find easy to access.

Error analysis

According to Sercombe, (2000) error analysis (EA) serves three purposes, i.e., to find out the learner's language proficiency level, to obtain information about common language learning difficulties, and to find out the way people learn a language. From this statement, we conclude that the error analysis is something positive for learners, teachers and researchers.

Corrective Feedback

CF is the information that teachers provide to help participants troubleshoot their own performance (Nicol & Macfarlane, 2006). While checking the writers' composition, teachers usually provide feedback. Then the writer uses this feedback, called corrective feedback, to revise or redraft the composition, (Keh, 1990).

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Feedback is a process to guide the learner by adopting different strategies about the output in order to modify learners' understanding of language rules (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996; Shute, 2008). Brown et. al., (1983) define feedback as instructional practice, as students are guided to correct the errors by providing verbal or written instructions, which can enhance students' skill and motivation as it leads to greater students' efficacy (Brown, 2004; Bruning & Horn, 200l).

CF is an evaluation of the composition or teacher's reaction to the students' errors and a source of evidence for the students about what they have done wrong regarding to a desired standard, as they always have a standard of composition in front of them when they are writing their own compositions (Adams, Nuevo & Egi, 2011). Sadler states the same in another way, feedback is a method for reducing the gap between the students' actual performance and the standard performance, as when a teacher guide the students to write a well structured and cohesive paragraph he is trying to reduce the gap between the students' actual efficacy and standard level (1989).

Chaudron (1988) finds the term, CF has manifold meaning. In his view, the term CF "treatment of error" may simply refer to "any teacher behavior following an error that minimally attempts to inform the learner of the fact of error" (p. 150). He further says that the teacher's effort may not be enough to guide him or may make significant effort "to elicit a revised student response" (p. 150). He concludes by saying about CF that finally there is the true correction which succeeds in modifying the learner's interlanguage rule so that the error is eliminated from further future production of the learner.

According to Lightbown and Spada (1999), the CF is an indication to guide the learners that they have used the target language wrongly. There are different strategies to provide this indication. For example, when an EFL learner says, 'She goes to the market every day', explicit CF can be, 'no, say goes to the market, not go to the market' or implicit 'yes, she goes to the market, everyday', metalinguistic information can be added also, e.g., 'the verb should agree with the subject'. (pp. 171-172)

Schachter (1991) mentions three terms, corrective feedback, negative feedback and negative evidence which he thinks researchers use interchangeably in the fields of language acquisition and language teaching. Furthermore, he defines implicit and explicit feedback; explicit feedback is grammatical explanation or error correction and implicit feedback includes repetition, confirmation checks, clarification requests, recast, silence, and facial expressions.

Long see the term CF more comprehensively and posits that the positive and the negative evidence are the instructions provided to the learners about the target language. Further, he clarifies positive evidence as provision of modals to the learners and negative evidence as the provision of direct or indirect information to the learners (1996). He further states, "explicit or implicit, incidental error correction in a response, utterance without interrupting the flow of the conversation and perhaps also the absence of the items in the input" (p. 413).

The effect of CF on learners' writing accuracy has been controversial among SLA theorists and researchers for decades (Van Beuningen, 2010). Some of the early research (e.g., Hendrickson, 1977, 1980; Lalande, 1982; Hillocks, 1982; Robb et al., 1986; Semke, 1984) points out that CF does not affect the writing accuracy of L2 learners but several other studies (e.g., Cathcart & Olsen, 1976; Kennedy, 1973; Krashen, 1977; Dulay & Burt, 1977; Krashen & Selinger, 1975) have found that it can be useful.

The research on CF clarifies that it is full of evidence in favor and against CF. Truscott has strongly opposed and declared it not only theoretically wrong and harmful but also practically impossible and wastage of time (1996; 1999; 2004; 2007; 2009; 2010). Truscott (1996, 1999) reflecting teachers' views regarding CF claims that CF may have a positive effect on learners' writing accuracy and decrease the error frequency in the second draft but it has no effect in the long run on the wiring accuracy of the learners' compositions.

However, several researchers (e.g., Chandler, 2003, 2004, 2009; Bitchener, 2008; Bruton, 2009, 2010; Ferris, 1999; 2004; 2010) defend the case and provide research based evidence to strengthen their claims that CF positively affect the writing accuracy of learners. Many researchers (e.g., Bitchener & Knoch, 2009; Bitchener & Knoch, 2010; Sheen, 2007) conducted research to measure the effect of CF on particular problematic features (e.g., errors in the use of past tense) and almost all of them found significant positive effects on writing accuracy after the period of intervention. For example, Bitchener, Young & Cameron (2005) conducted research to examine the limit to which several different CF types (direct CF with and without oral conferencing) affect the writing accuracy of learners' new compositions and found it positively effective. Though, there is a growing mass of studies (already mentioned) supporting CF, different types and amounts of CF that work best to improve the writing accuracy of L2 learners, is still unclear.

The findings of several researchers in support of the use of different types of CF are unable to demonstrate significant effect of CF. For example, Sheen (2007) investigated the effect of CF on a particular linguistic feature and found that CF on structural errors improved learners' accuracy significantly. Sheppard (1992) in a study investigated the effects of two CF of two types (error coding against holistic comments on the margins) on writing accuracy. The learners wrote seven

essays that he analyzed to measure the CF effect on the accuracy of the writing. He posits that the students, who received holistic comments on the margins of their compositions, outperformed the group that received error coding CF. He further points out that he found error-coding feedback harmful for the students in a way that they stopped using the complex structures.

RESEARCH QUESTION

This study is directed by the following research question:

1. What are the effects of CF on the accurate use of punctuation, prepositions, subject-verb agreement, verb form and spellings in the writing compositions of SSC level EFL learners studying at PIST, KSA?

Hypothesis

1. There would be no effect of CF on punctuation accuracy in writing compositions of SSC level EFL learners studying at PIST, KSA.
2. There would be no effect of CF on preposition accuracy in writing compositions of SSC level EFL learners studying at PIST, KSA.
3. There would be no effect of CF on subject-verb agreement accuracy in writing compositions of SSC level EFL learners studying at PIST, KSA.
4. There would be no effect of CF on verb form accuracy in writing compositions of SSC level EFL learners studying at PIST, KSA.
5. There would be no effect of CF on spelling accuracy in writing compositions of SSC level EFL learners studying at PIST, KSA.

METHODOLOGY

Participants and Sampling

As mentioned already, the study was conducted in SSC level EFL students studying in Pakistan International School, Taif. It was impossible in this context to select the participants randomly, which is the basic requirement of an experimental study. While living as a foreigner in Saudi Arabia it was not possible to get access to other schools to select the participants randomly. In the above-mentioned situation, where random sampling probability is not possible, it becomes important to minimize the influence of selective forces within the smaller available sample (Kane, 2002).

Quasi-experimental approach, also known as Non-probability sampling approach, is different from probability sampling as it lacks random selection of participants, was used in this study. This kind of approach relies on readily available subjects and is frequently used in educational researches (Berg, 2009). In this case, the participants of this research were 59 SSC level EFL students enrolled at Pakistan International School Taif, KSA. They have already been grouped as "B" and "C". Only male students participated in this study because Saudi laws do not allow male teachers to teach female students.

The purpose of a quasi-experiment and all other experiments is common and that is to test causal hypotheses. In the current study the effect of CF on writing accuracy of students was compared in two ways; first the change in accuracy of treatment group was compared with control group which was not provided any treatment, second the improvement at the end of the research of each group (treatment and control) was measured by using pre-tests and post-tests.

Research variables

This is a quasi-experimental study using a repeated measures design with one independent variable and two dependent variables. The repeated measures design was best utilized in this study "in which the experimental units are measured under different treatment conditions or at different times" (Tamhane, 2009, p. 536). The independent variable in this study was the teacher written corrective feedback. The first dependent variable was participants writing accuracy as measured by the number of errors in the participants' writing compositions. Number of errors in their compositions were counted twelve times: once before the treatment, ten times during the treatment, and once after the treatment. The second dependent variable was the participants' perceived preferences before the treatment and after the treatment as indicated by the descriptive analysis of their responses on the Likert-scale questionnaire.

Method

In this section the structure, instruments and procedures of this quasi-experimental research would be discussed.

Pre-test, post-test

In this research quasi experiment was used with a pre-test (week-1) and a post-test intervention (week-12). Quasi experiment is different from randomized design in a sense that it lacks random selection of groups and assignments (compositions). In this design, groups are considered comparable but we are never sure the groups are comparable or similar. As the groups are not equivalent, this design is named as non-equivalent groups design to remind us.

The first composition "haste makes waste" was given to write for both groups at the beginning of the research (week-1). About 30 minutes were given to complete the composition. There were 30 participants in the treatment group and 29 participants in the control group. The writing compositions from both groups were collected. The errors of the treatment group were corrected with red pen and were counted to compare with those of the control group. The compositions were returned the next day.

Instrumentation

The instrument was the measurement of rate of selected errors committed by the participants while writing selected compositions.

Teaching Process

A course book, Guided English written by D. H. Howe and Brighter grammar written by Mrs. Anjam Shaikh were taught to the participants to develop their English language skills. In the course book, at the end of each lesson, there are exercises regarding comprehension, vocabulary,

grammar, punctuation and composition. These exercises aim to develop language skills by improving levels of vocabulary, correct use of sentence structure and grammar. During this twelve week term, fourteen lessons of Brighter Grammar were taught. Each lesson addresses a specific aspect of English Language. There are exercises regarding interrogative, demonstrative and reciprocal pronouns. Exercises regarding different forms of verbs to make sentences in present, past and future tense are given there in this grammar.It is important to mention that the books mentioned above are prescribed by the school administration. I had no option to go beyond the limits mentioned in the scheme of studies provided by the school. Therefore, I had to abide by the regulations of the school by not changing or modifying the composition topics of the class. Below is a table showing the topics participants had to write compositions on throughout an academic semester of 12 weeks:

Table 1: Topics used in experimental study

Weeks	*Topics*
W – 1	Write a story, "Haste Makes Waste"
W – 2	Write an essay, "A journey by train"
W – 3	Write a letter to friend about preparation for Eid
W – 4	Write an application to hold school election to elect a head girl/boy
W – 5	Write an essay, "is the computer a blessing or curse"
W – 6	Write a story, "Try, Try Succeed"
W – 7	Write a letter to your father who is away about something important that happened in his absence
W – 8	Write an essay, "My aim in life"
W – 9	Write an application to the manager of ready-made garments for the refund on the sweater you bought from his shop
W – 10	Write a paragraph about discipline
W – 11	Write any essay, "Life in a city"
W – 12	Write story, "It never pays to over reach yourself"

Data collection

The errors were counted to find out the effect of CF on the accuracy of participants' written compositions.

Ethical issues

Prior permission was taken from the principal of Pakistan International School Taif to conduct the study at PIST (See Appendix N). The participants consent was taken to participate in the research. The participants were told that they have the right to withdraw from the research at any stage. This is an important ethical consideration due to the "emergent and unpredictable nature of research in real life context" (Houghton, Casey, Shaw and Murphy, 2010, p. 15). They were also conveyed that the data would be used only for the purpose of the said research study and that the data would not be used for any other purpose. Moreover, as individuals have their own ethical behaviour, Holloway & Wheeler (2002) advocate the continuous need to negotiate with the participants regarding their autonomy. The participants were assured that every possible measure would be taken to maintain their confidentiality.

RESULTS

This Chapter presents the results of quasi-experimental study on the effects of CF on the writing accuracy of SSC level EFL students. First of all data of both groups (control and treatment), before the treatment, is presented and compared with each other to find out the difference between the two groups. Then comparison of data of both groups, collected after the treatment, is compared with the data of both groups before the treatment to find out the significant effect of CF. The change in the accuracy of the treatment group and the control group is discussed also.

Pre-treatment results of both groups

The results of descriptive analyses, including the means, medians and standard deviations were calculated for all the considered types of errors to identify the effect of CF. Furthermore, independent-samples t-test was used to find p value to investigate the difference between the writing accuracy of two groups of SSC level EFL students before the treatment. The data analyses generated the following results.

Table 2: Pre-treatment results of both groups.

	Error Type	*Group*	*N*	*M*	*SD*	*T*	*df*	*p value*	
1.	Punctuation	Treatment	30	1.9667	.8503	.645	57	.522	p >.05
		Control	29	1.8276	.8049	.645	56.98		
2.	Preposition	Treatment	30	.8333	.7915	-.310	57	.757	p >.05
		Control	29	.8966	.7721	-.311	57		
3.	Subject-verb agreement	Treatment	30	.5000	.5086	-.391	57	.697	p >.05
		Control	29	.5517	.5061	-.392	56.95		
4.	Verb form	Treatment	30	.8000	.8052	-.132	57	.896	p >.05
		Control	29	.8276	.8049	-.132	56.93		
5.	Spelling	Treatment	30	3.2667	.7396	.324	57	.747	p >.05
		Control	29	3.2069	.6750	.324	56.82		

From Appendix E (treatment group), Appendix F (control group)

The above mentioned data show that there is no significant difference between the means of treatment group and control group regarding all types of errors selected for this study (e.g., Punctuation, 1.9667-1.8276; Preposition, .8333-.8966; Subject-Verb agreement, .5000-.5517; Verb form, .8000-.8276; Spelling, 3.2667-3.2069). In the same way the p value for all kinds of errors for both groups is greater than ".05" (e.g. Punctuation, p = .522 >.05; Preposition, p = .757 >.05; Subject-Verb agreement, p = .697 >.05; Verb form, p = .896 >.05; Spelling, .747 p >.05).

Comparison of Pre-treatment, Post-treatment results (treatment group)

The results of descriptive analyses, including the means, medians and standard deviations were calculated for all the considered types of errors to identify the effect of CF. Furthermore, independent-samples t-test was run to find p value to investigate if CF has significantly affected the writing accuracy of SSC level EFL students. The data analyses generated the following results.

Table 3: Comparison of first composition and last composition of Treatment Group

	Error Type	Composition	N	M	SD	t	df	p value	
1.	Punctuation	First	30	1.97	.850	3.313	58	.002	p < .05
		Last	30	1.27	.785	3.313	57.63		
2.	Preposition	First	30	.83	.791	2.057	58	.044	p < .05
		Last	30	.47	.571	2.057	52.77		
3.	Subject-verb agreement	First	30	.50	.509	1.588	58	.118	p > .05
		Last	30	.30	.466	1.588	57.57		
4.	Verb form	First	30	.80	.805	2.114	58	.039	p< .05
		Last	30	.43	.504	2.114	48.70		
5.	Spelling	First	30	3.27	.740	5.027	58	.000	p < .05
		Last	30	2.30	.750	5.027	57.99		

From Appendix E (treatment group), Appendix G (treatment group)

The above mentioned data show that there is a significant difference between the means of treatment group and control group regarding all types of errors selected for this study except subject-verb agreement (e.g., Punctuation, 1.97-1.27; Preposition, .83-.47; Subject-Verb agreement, .50-.30; Verb form, .8000-.8276; .80-.43; Spelling, 3.27-2.30). In the same way the p value for all kinds of errors for both groups is smaller than ".05" except for subject-verb agreement (e.g. Punctuation, p = .002 < 05; Preposition, p = .044 < 05; Subject-Verb agreement, p = .118 >.05; Verb form, p = .039 < .05; Spelling, .000 p < 05).

Comparison of Pre-treatment, Post-treatment results (Control Group)

The results of descriptive analyses, including the means, medians and standard deviations were calculated for all the considered types of errors to identify the effect of CF. Furthermore, independent-samples t-test was used to calculate p value to find out if writing accuracy of SSC level EFL students of control group has changed significantly. The data analyses generated the following results.

Table 4: Comparison of first composition and last composition of Control Group

	Error Type	Composition	N	M	SD	t	df	p value	
1.	Punctuation	First	29	1.8333	.79148	.666	56	.508	p > .05
		Last	29	1.7143	.53452	.675	51.149		
2.	Preposition	First	29	.9000	.75886	.417	56	.678	p > .05
		Last	29	.8214	.66964	.419	55.833		
3.	Subject-verb agreement	First	29	.5667	.50401	.469	56	.641	p > .05
		Last	29	.5000	.57735	.467	53.751		
4.	Verb form	First	29	.8000	.80516	.072	56	.942	p > .05
		Last	29	.7857	.68622	.073	55.560		
5.	Spelling	First	29	3.1667	.69893	-.297	56	.768	p > .05
		Last	29	3.2143	.49868	-.300	52.490		

From Appendix F (control group), Appendix H(control group)

From the table it is clear that there is no significant difference between the error frequencies regarding punctuation, preposition, subject-verb agreement, verb form and spelling between the first composition and the last composition of control group, as the value of "p" for all types of errors is greater than "α" (.05). Therefore, we accept the null hypothesis that there is no difference between the first composition and the last composition of control group regarding error

frequencies of five aspects of language mentioned above. This means that there was no significant change in error frequencies of punctuation, preposition, subject-verb agreement, verb form and spelling. Simply saying, the control group did not improve its accuracy of writing during the research period.

Comparison of Post-treatment results of both groups

The results of descriptive analyses, including the means, medians and standard deviations were calculated for all the considered types of errors to identify the effect of CF on both groups at the end of treatment. Furthermore, independent-samples t-test was used to calculate p value to find out if writing accuracy of SSC level EFL students of control group has changed significantly. The data analyses generated the following results.

Table 5: Comparison of Last composition of treatment group and Control Group

	Error Type	*Composition*	*N*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*df*	*p value*	
1.	Punctuation	Last	30	1.2667	.7849	-2.618	57	.011	p < .05
		Last	29	1.7241	.5276	-2.6351	50.921		
2.	Preposition	Last	30	.4667	.5714	-2.251	57	.028	p < .05
		Last	29	.8276	.6584	-2.246	55.306		
3.	Subject-verb agreement	last	30	.3000	.4661	-1.598	57	.116	p > .05
		Last	29	.5172	.5745	-1.592	53.899		
4.	Verb form	Last	30	.4333	.5040	-2.074	57	.043	p < .05
		Last	29	.7586	.6895	-2.063	51.206		
5.	Spelling	Last	30	2.3000	.7497	-5.116	57	.000	p <.05
		Last	29	3.1724	.5391	-5.145	52.704		

From Appendix G (treatment group), Appendix H (control group)

From the table it is clear that there is a significant difference between the error frequencies regarding punctuation, preposition, verb form and spelling between the last composition of the treatment group and the last composition of control group, as the value of "p" for all types of errors is smaller than "α" (.05). There is no significant difference between the error frequencies regarding subject-verb agreement, as its p value is greater than "α".

The results of this research are consistent with the results of several researches that have been conducted already regarding the writing accuracy of learners. Regarding punctuation and verb-form we have found significant improvement in the writing accuracy of the learners that is consistent with the findings of Sheppard (1992) who found significant positive effect of CF on punctuation and verb-form of the learners at the end of his research.

The results of this research regarding subject-verb form contradicts with Sheppard's (1992) findings. Sheppard found positive effects of CF on subject-verb form but in the current study, it is not significant. There may be several reasons of this difference e.g. the learners may have not focused subject-verb agreement like other selected language aspects, it may be due to the difficulty level because it is a little difficult to understand subject-verb agreement for SSC level learners.

We have found significant positive effect of CF on punctuation and spelling that confirms Suwangard's (2014) findings who found a positive effect of CF on writing the accuracy of

learners regarding subject-verb agreement, spelling, preposition and several other grammatical aspects of foreign language. The results showed that after 15 weeks there was a decrease 63.34% in error frequency of subject-verb agreement and 57.91% in spelling. The preposition was subcategorized as a wrong verb form after preposition that was reduced 100%, preposition missing reduced by 31.30% and inappropriate choice of preposition was reduced by 1.25%. The above mentioned results are consistent with the results of the current research except subject-verb agreement. The subject-verb agreement frequency was not reduced significantly. There may be some reasons already mentioned e.g. lack of attention, difficulty level, etc. Positive effect of CF on preposition and verb form confirms the findings of Bitchener and Knoch (2009) who found that the experimental group performed significantly well regarding preposition and verb form.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The study was conducted in Pakistan International School Taif to find out the effect of CF on the accuracy of the participants' writings. There were two research questions; 1- What are the effects of CF on the accurate use of punctuation, prepositions, subject-verb agreement, verb form and spellings in the writing compositions of SSC level EFL learners studying at PIST, KSA? And 2-, What are the effects of CF on the perceived perceptions of SSC level EFL learners studying at PIST, KSA? There were two groups participating in this study, the control group and the treatment group. There were 30 participants in the treatment group and 29 participants in the control group. The treatment group was provided explicit feedback for twelve weeks. The data were collected regarding all five error types; i.e., punctuation marks, prepositions, subject-verb agreement, verb forms and spellings separately.

At the beginning of the study the means of the responses of both groups were compared to identify whether any significant difference exist by using independent samples t-test because it is very important for both groups to be similar to each other in their writing skills. It was found that there was no significant difference between the writing skills, accuracy of the control group and treatment group at the beginning of quasi-experimental research regarding all types of errors; i.e., punctuation, preposition, subject-verb agreement verb form and spelling. It means there was no difference between the treatment group and the experimental group at the beginning of the research regarding five aspects of language selected for this research.

At the end of the study the means of the responses of both groups were compared to identify whether any significant difference exists by using independent samples t-test to answer the research question. It was found that there was a significant difference between the accuracy of the control group and treatment group at the end of quasi-experimental research regarding four types of errors; i.e., punctuation, preposition, verb form and spelling. It means the results of this research reject the null hypothesis that there is no difference between the accuracy of treatment group and the control group at the end of the research regarding four types of errors. Regarding subject-verb agreement, the difference was not significant. It means that the null hypotheses regarding subject-verb agreement was accepted.

The results of this research (regarding four error types) confirm the findings of several earlier

researches (e.g., Cathcart & Olsen, 1976; Kennedy, 1973; Dulay & Burt, 1977; Krashen, 1977; Krashen & Selinger, 1975) that CF has a significant positive effect on the writing accuracy of the learners. These results are in the line of several later researches (e.g., Chandler, 2003, 2004, 2009; Bruton, 2009, 2010; Ferris, 1999; 2004; 2010; Bitchener, 2008) that CF has a significant positive effect on the writing accuracy of the learners.

The results of this research regarding subject-verb agreement are consistent with the early researches (e.g., Hendrickson, 1977, 1980; Lalande, 1982; Hillocks, 1982; Semke, 1984; Robb et al., 1986) that there is no significant effect of CF on the writing accuracy of the learners. Truscott has declared CF as theoretically wrong and harmful but also stated that it is practically impossible and only wastage of time (1996; 1999; 2004; 2007; 2009; 2010). Truscott, reflecting teachers' views regarding CF, claims that CF in a composition may decrease learners' error frequency in the next draft but has no effect on the grammatical accuracy in the long run when the learner writes a new composition later after some time (1996, 1999).

Although, no significant effect of CF is found on subject-verb agreement but during the whole experiment it is observed and the results of the questionnaire show that the learners found the CF useful to increase the writing accuracy. Truscott (1996) believes that the students are often unwilling to receive the CF or unable to use the CF is not confirmed during the treatment and it is not supported by the results of the questionnaire. A few differences were found among the learners as some of them believe that explicit CF is more effective but others believe that coded CF is more effective but all of them agreed that the CF is effective and useful to increase their writing accuracy. Even some of the students were found saying that they are not provided enough CF, their compositions are not returned on time and that is why they have not improved their writing proficiency.

Recommendations for future research

The following recommendations are based on the issues emerged during this quasi-experimental study that attempted to find out the effect of CF on writing the accuracy of SSC level Participants of Pakistan International School Taif, Saudi Arabia.

After doing this experimental research, the researcher finds it very important that there should be further research on corrective feedback to find out the difference when the participants are asked to re-draft the assignments as compared to the present study that did not make the participants do that. It seems that giving mere oral or written feedback is not enough. Students should be asked to write the assignments again. It can be very effective because when they know that they will write the assignment again, they would concentrate on the feedback and try to avoid the errors which they've already committed and the frequency of errors will decrease to produce a significant difference between the groups which was asked to re-write the assignment and the other which was not told to do so.

There is also a need to find out the effect of written corrective feedback by taking two treatment groups of different proficiency levels: one having high English language proficiency and the other with low proficiency. This research would help to find out if there is any relation between the English language proficiency of the participants and their capacity to get benefit from

feedback.

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Volume 13 (2), October 2016; 1-27
EISSN: 2289-2737 & ISSN: 2289-3245

Appendix A **Participants' Composition Samples**

Students' Name : Adnan Naeem Roll No. : 876 Class: 8-C
Subject: English-B Quiz Topic Application Subject Teacher Sir. Yaseen Date : 25/5/2014

Test. 03

Application to the Manager for ~~retu~~ refunded money.

May, 25 2014

08/10

The Manager,
X.Y.Z garments,
City= A. B.C.

Dear Sir,

Let me remind you that last month I purchased (purchased) a woolen sweater from your store worth Rs.1500/-. The sales man informed me that this sweater contain one year money back garranty. After wearing it for two times, I had to get it washed, it got desshaped (deshaped) and looks unpresentable (unpresentable). I am sending it back to your store with sales reciept (receipt) containing the warranty slip.

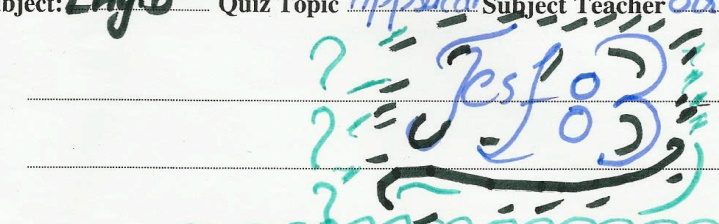
It is therefore requested (that) you may kindly ~~be~~ refunded (refund) my ~~money immediately~~ as per policy at the earliest.

Thanking you in anticipation,

Yours faithfully,

X.Y.Z

Students' Name : M. Ibrahim Roll No. : 813 Class: VIII-C
Subject: Eng.B Quiz Topic Application Subject Teacher Sir Yaseen Date : 25.5.2014



Application for refunting money.

08/10

To,
the manager,
X.Y.Z Garments,

Dear sir,

Let me remined you that I bought a wooden sweater from your shop worth Rs, 1500/-. The salesman told me that ~~their~~ there is one (1) year money back ~~gurrantee~~ guarantee with this sweater. After ~~wearing~~ wearing it for two(2) times, I had to get it washed. ~~U~~ Unfortunately, it got de-shaped and ~~become unrepresentable~~ became unrepresentable. I am sending it back to your store with sales receipt containing the ~~gurrantee~~ guarantee slip.

Kindly refund my money as soon as possible.

Your's faithfully.
X. Y. Z

Volume 13 (2), October 2016; 1-27
EISSN: 2289-2737 & ISSN: 2289-3245

Students' Name : Adnan Naeem Roll No. : 816 Class: 8-C

Subject: English-B Quiz Topic Story Subject Teacher Sir. Yaseen Date : 20-4-2016

10/10

Story.

<Haste> <Makes> <Waste>

~~The~~ A hunter had a faithful dog. The hound always went ~~went~~ with his master when he set out hunting. The hunter had only one son. The hound was also close friend to his master's son. They loved each other very much.

One day, the hunter went to a nearby village to attend a marriage party. When he came back, he found the hound standing ~~at~~ at the gate. His mouth ~~was~~ stained with blood. The hunter thought ~~that~~ the hound had killed his only son. In hot haste, he ~~had~~ killed the ~~hound~~ hound with his sword.

He quickly walked in the house and saw the carcass of a wolf there. Just then, he saw ~~a~~ his son coming out of his room. The boy related the whole story. The faithful hound had killed the wolf which had entered their house. The hunter was very sorry, over his hasty step. He had killed a faithful hound in haste.

Moral: Haste Makes Waste

Students' Name : M. Ibrahim Roll No. : 813 Class: 8-C

Subject: Eng: B Quiz Topic Story: Subject Teacher Sir Yaseen Date : 20-4-14

8/10

Test:1 story: Haste makes waste

A hunter had a faithful hound. The hound always went with his master when he set out hunting. The hunter had only one son. The hound was also a close friend to his master's sons. They loved each other very much.

One day ~~they~~ the hunter went to a nearby village to attend a marriage party. when he came back he saw his hound standing at the gate. His mouth was stained with blood. The hunter thought that the hound had killed his son. In hot haste he killed the hound with his sword.

He quickly walked inside the house & saw a carcass of a wolf there. Just, then he saw his son coming out from his room. ~~They~~ The boy related the whole story. The faithful hound had killed the wolf which had entered their house. The hunter was very sorry over his hasty step. He had killed his faithful hound in haste.

Moral ?

Volume 13 (2), October 2016; 1-27
EISSN: 2289-2737 & ISSN: 2289-3245

Appendix-B Errors, Corrected in First week (Treatment group)

Student Code	Word Limit Composition	Punctuation Marks	Prepositions	Subject-Verb agreement	Verb Form	Spellings	Total
X1	210	2	1	0	1	4	8
X2	190	1	0	1	0	3	5
X3	175	2	2	0	2	3	9
X4	180	3	0	1	0	3	7
X5	185	1	1	1	1	4	8
X6	190	2	1	0	1	3	7
X7	186	1	2	0	2	2	7
X8	174	3	0	0	0	4	7
X9	165	1	0	1	2	3	7
X10	184	3	1	0	2	3	9
X11	163	2	1	1	0	2	6
X12	158	3	0	1	0	4	8
X13	194	1	2	0	0	3	6
X14	168	3	1	0	1	3	8
X15	176	2	0	1	1	4	8
X16	182	3	0	1	0	3	7
X17	172	1	1	0	2	3	7
X18	166	2	2	1	1	4	10
X19	178	1	1	1	1	3	7
X20	182	3	0	0	0	2	5
X21	163	2	0	0	2	3	7
X22	171	1	2	0	1	5	9
X23	182	3	1	1	1	3	9
X24	176	1	1	0	0	2	4
X25	192	2	0	1	0	4	7
X26	181	2	2	1	2	3	10
X27	163	3	0	0	0	4	7
X28	159	1	0	1	0	4	6
X29	186	1	1	1	0	3	6
X30	182	3	2	0	1	4	10
Total		59	24	15	24	98	220

Volume 13 (2), October 2016; 1-27
EISSN: 2289-2737 & ISSN: 2289-3245

Appendix C **Errors, Corrected in First week (Control group)**

Student Code	Word Composition Limit	Punctuation Marks	Prepositions	Subject-Verb agreement	Verb Form	Spellings	Total
Y1	210	1	2	1	0	3	7
Y2	190	1	0	1	0	3	5
Y3	175	3	2	0	2	2	9
Y4	180	2	0	1	0	3	6
Y5	185	1	1	1	1	3	7
Y6	190	2	1	0	2	2	7
Y7	186	3	0	0	2	4	9
Y8	174	3	0	0	1	3	7
Y9	165	2	1	1	1	2	7
Y10	184	3	1	0	2	3	9
Y11	163	1	1	1	0	4	7
Y12	158	3	0	1	0	4	8
Y13	194	1	2	0	0	3	6
Y14	168	3	1	0	1	3	8
Y15	176	2	0	1	1	4	8
Y16	182	2	0	1	1	3	7
Y17	172	1	1	0	1	3	6
Y18	166	1	2	1	0	4	8
Y19	178	2	1	1	0	3	7
Y20	182	2	0	0	0	4	6
Y21	163	2	0	0	2	2	6
Y22	171	1	2	0	1	3	7
Y23	182	3	1	1	1	3	9
Y24	176	1	1	0	2	4	8
Y25	192	1	2	1	2	4	10
Y26	181	2	1	1	0	3	7
Y27	163	2	1	0	1	4	8
Y28	159	1	2	1	0	4	8
Y29	186	1	0	1	0	3	5
Total		53	26	16	24	93	221

Volume 13 (2), October 2016; 1-27
EISSN: 2289-2737 & ISSN: 2289-3245

Appendix D **Errors, Corrected in Last week (Treatment group)**

Student Code	Word Composition Limit	Punctuation Marks	Prepositions	Subject-Verb agreement	Verb Form	Spellings	Total
X1	210	2	0	1	0	2	5
X2	190	0	1	0	1	2	4
X3	175	1	1	0	0	1	3
X4	180	0	1	0	0	2	3
X5	185	2	0	0	1	3	6
X6	190	1	0	1	1	2	5
X7	186	2	0	0	0	2	4
X8	174	2	1	0	0	2	5
X9	165	2	0	1	0	4	7
X10	184	1	1	0	0	2	4
X11	163	2	1	0	1	2	6
X12	158	2	0	0	1	2	5
X13	194	0	1	0	0	1	2
X14	168	1	0	1	1	2	5
X15	176	2	0	0	0	2	4
X16	182	1	0	1	1	3	6
X17	172	2	0	0	0	3	5
X18	166	0	0	1	1	4	6
X19	178	1	1	1	1	3	7
X20	182	2	0	0	0	3	5
X21	163	1	1	0	1	2	5
X22	171	2	0	0	0	3	5
X23	182	0	1	1	0	2	4
X24	176	2	0	0	1	2	5
X25	192	1	0	0	0	2	3
X26	181	1	1	1	1	2	6
X27	163	0	2	0	0	3	5
X28	159	2	1	0	1	2	6
X29	186	1	0	0	0	1	2
X30	182	2	0	0	0	3	5
Total		38	14	9	13	69	143

Appendix E **Errors, Corrected in Last week (Control group)**

Student Code	Word Composition Limit	Punctuation Marks	Prepositions	Subject-Verb agreement	Verb Form	Spellings	Total
Y1	210	2	1	1	0	2	6
Y2	190	1	0	0	0	3	4
Y3	175	2	1	0	1	3	7
Y4	180	2	0	0	0	2	4
Y5	185	1	1	1	1	3	7
Y6	190	2	1	0	1	4	8
Y7	186	2	1	0	1	3	7
Y8	174	3	0	2	1	3	9
Y9	165	2	1	1	2	4	10
Y10	184	2	1	0	2	3	8
Y11	163	1	2	1	0	3	7
Y12	158	2	0	0	0	3	5
Y13	194	1	2	0	1	3	7
Y14	168	2	1	1	1	3	8
Y15	176	2	0	1	0	3	6
Y16	182	2	0	0	1	3	6
Y17	172	1	1	0	1	3	6
Y18	166	2	1	1	0	4	8
Y19	178	2	1	1	1	3	8
Y20	182	1	2	0	0	3	6
Y21	163	2	0	1	2	4	9
Y22	171	1	1	0	0	4	6
Y23	182	2	1	1	1	3	8
Y24	176	2	1	0	2	3	8
Y25	192	1	2	1	1	4	9
Y26	181	2	1	0	1	3	7
Y27	163	2	0	1	0	4	7
Y28	159	1	1	0	1	3	6
Y29	186	2	0	1	0	3	6
Total		50	24	15	22	92	

Appendix F **Twelve weeks' Data, Collected from treatment group.**

Composition/ Essay Draft	Punctuation Marks	Preposition	Subject-Verb agreement	Verb form	Spelling	Total
Week 1	59	24	15	24	98	220
Week 2	55	22	14	22	95	208
Week 3	60	23	15	23	92	213
Week 4	53	20	13	20	93	199
Week 5	50	21	14	21	94	200
Week 6	52	20	12	18	92	194
Week 7	45	18	13	19	90	185
Week 8	50	20	11	17	91	189
Week 9	40	19	12	18	94	183
Week 10	43	18	10	17	93	181
Week 11	47	17	11	19	94	188
Week 12	38	14	9	13	69	143
Total	592	236	149	231	1095	2303

Most number of errors were corrected in spellings (48%), Punctuation Marks (26%), Verb Form (10%). Preposition (10%) and Subject-Verb agreement (06%).

Appendix G **Two Weeks' (first and last) Data, Collected from Control group.**

Composition/ Essay Draft	Punctuation Marks	Preposition	Subject-Verb agreement	Verb form	Spelling	Total
Week 1	53	26	16	24	93	212
Week 12	44	19	12	19	84	174
Total	97	45	28	43	173	386

Appendix H **Permission from the head of the institution**

To,

The Principal,
Pakistan International School,
Taif, Saudi Arabia.

Subject: Permission to conduct research in school

Sir,

With due respect, it is stated that I'm the employee of this school. I want to conduct a research on secondary school level students regarding effect of corrective feedback on the writing accuracy as I'm the student of M. Phil English Linguistics in Lahore Leeds University. Kindly grant me permission for the same. I'll be very thankful to you for this act of kindness.

Yours sincerely

Dated: 1st April, 2014.

Muhammad Yaseen

Allowed

PRINCIPAL
PAKISTAN INTERNATIONAL
SCHOOL TAIF

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS' USE OF METACOGNITIVE AWARENESS OF THE AND THEIR SPEAKING ACHIEVEMENT

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ABSTRACT
Studying metacognitive strategies in English as a foreign language (EFL) language classes has recently attracted attention. Reactions to strategy instruction have been mixed and conclusive findings about the value of strategy instruction are yet to be established. The present study made an attempt to investigate the relationship between Iranian EFL learners' use of metacognitive strategies of the and their speaking achievement. 95 participants took part in this study. They were pre-intermediate EFL learners studying in Jahad Daneshgahi Institute in Kerman Iran. They were homogenized using Oxford Placement Test and finally 72 homogeneous learners were selected as the study sample. The instruments used in the study were the MAI-Metacognitive Awareness Inventory test and a test of speaking. The questionnaire was developed and used by Schraw and Dennis (1994) to estimate the metacognitive awareness of a group of EFL learners. The collected data was analyzed using the SPSS software. The results showed that there was a meaningful relationship only between three metacognitive strategies categories of declarative knowledge, information management strategy, and conditional knowledge. In fact, metacognitive awareness was an effective factor that could affect the speaking level of the learners belonging to high, mid and low level of proficiencies. Moreover, EFL learners having various types of metacognitive awareness can speak and converse in the second language differently and at different proficiency levels.

KEYWORDS: achievement, language learning, speaking, metacognition

INTRODUCTION
English is playing a major role in many sectors including medicine, engineering, education, advanced studies, business, technology, banking, computing, tourism etc. All our software development today, the communication facilities available to us through internet, our access to a variety of websites, are all being carried out in English. The role of English as an international language means that more and more people today find that fluency in spoken English is a necessity for social purpose for travel, for work, for business or for education (Richards, 1990). We communicate with others, to express our ideas, and to know others' ideas as well. Communication takes place, where there is speech. Without speech we cannot communicate with one another. The importance of speaking skills hence is enormous for the learners of any

language. Without speech, a language is reduced to a mere script. The use of language is an activity which takes place within the confines of our community.

Metacognition is seen "awareness and management of one's own thought" (Kuhn & Dean, 2004, p. 270) or "the monitoring and control of thought" (Martinez, 2006, p. 696). As Kuhn and Dean (2004) explain, metacognition is what enables a student who has been taught a particular strategy in a particular problem context to retrieve and deploy that strategy in a similar but new context. The authors note that in cognitive psychology, metacognition is often defined as a form of executive control involving monitoring and self-regulation, a point echoed by other researchers (McLeod, 1997). Further, Schraw (1998) describes metacognition as a multidimensional set of general, rather than domain-specific, skills.

Studying metacognitive strategies in EFL language classes has recently attracted attention. Reactions to strategy instruction have been mixed and conclusive findings about the value of strategy instruction are yet to be established (Rubin et al., 2007). Moreover, among the few intervention studies on strategy instruction, the focus was invariably on the effect of the teaching on learners' use of the strategies targeted for teaching (Cohen, 1998). Little attention, however, has been given to investigating the 'wash over' effects (if any) on learners' use of strategies which are not targeted for teaching but are pre-existing strategies employed by the learners. To address this research gap, the present study aims to gauge the impact of metacognitive strategy instruction on learners' use of pre-existing, non-target strategies in the English as a second language (ESL) oral classroom. Metacognition sees learners actively involved in planning and managing their own learning goals (Baily, 2005).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical literature review

Within the realm of language teaching one string of study has focused on finding the role metacognitive knowledge plays in determining the effectiveness of individuals' attempts to learn another language. According to Flavell (1979), the effective role of metacognitive knowledge in many cognitive activities related to language use is conspicuous, e.g., oral communication of information, oral persuasion, oral comprehension, reading comprehension, and writing, to language acquisition, and to various types of self-instruction. Research on metacognitive knowledge and language learning especially learner strategies has acknowledged a mutual influence in terms of second language learning and highlights the fact that metacognitive knowledge should be incorporated in learner training programs to make their learning more efficient (Wenden, 1998).

In line with this, researchers have tried to specify the characteristics of good language learners and the type of strategies they use in a specific language task (Birjandi et al, 2006). It has been found that explicit metacognitive knowledge about task characteristics and applying appropriate strategies for task solution is a major determiner of language learning effectiveness. The reason lies in the fact that metacognitive strategies enable learners to play active role in the process of learning, to manage and direct their own learning and eventually to find the best ways to practice

and reinforce what they have learned (Chari et al., 2010). This puts them in a privileged position to process and store new information and leads to better test performance, learning outcome, and better achievement (Mokhtari & Reichard, 2002; Zimmerman & Schunk, 2001). Moreover, metacognitive knowledge characterizes the approach of expert learners to learning (Baker & Brown 1984, Nickerson et al., 1985), it enhances learning outcomes (Dickinson, 1995; Zimmerman & Bahdura, 1994) facilitates information recall (Nickerson et al., 1985), comprehension of written texts (Brown et al., 1986; Schommer, 1990), and the completion of new types of learning tasks and improves the rate of progress in learning (Victori & Lockart, 1995) and the quality and speed of learners' cognitive engagement (Pintrich et al., 1993).

Metacognition and speaking

Bejarano, Levine, Olshtain, and Steiner's (1997) study (as cited in Wretlind & Warfvinge, 2006) employed objective, observational data to track strategy development. The study integrated modified interaction strategies and social interaction strategies [classified under metacognitive strategies in Macaro's (2006) framework] into their strategy instruction.

Thirty-four high school students in Israel were engaged in small group discussions and each group in the experimental and control groups was video-taped before and after the six-week period. An observation-tally form was developed to measure (1) overall participation and non-interactive participation and (2) use of interaction strategies in terms of frequency. Results indicated that the experimental group used significantly more interaction strategies than the control group. While observed frequency of strategy use was used, other forms of investigation would be desirable to help paint a fuller picture of the impact of training on strategy use.

More recently, Nakatani (2005, as cited in Pishghadam, 2009) focused on metacognitive awareness-raising instruction for interactional strategy development and employed retrospective methods to gauge strategy use. In the experiment, 62 Japanese female learners of English were involved. Over 12 weeks, the treatment group received metacognitive strategy instruction whereas the comparison group received only the normal communication course. The effects of instruction were assessed by speaking test scores, transcription data from the tests, and retrospective protocol data for their task performance. The findings revealed that participants in the treatment group improved their oral proficiency test scores but those in the control group did not. Moreover, the results of the transcription and retrospective protocol data confirmed that their success was partly due to an increased general awareness of strategy use brought about by the instruction. However, the methods of assessing the effects of strategy instruction were rather limited.

Practical literature review

Salehi and Farzad (2003) investigated the relationship between metacognitive knowledge, learning conception and learning English among more than three hundred students. In order to carry out the research they used state metacognition inventory and a researcher-made English language proficiency test. Results of the study revealed that there is a relationship between metacognitive knowledge, learning conception and learning English. Moreover, a difference between weak and strong students in metacognitive awareness and learning and conception of

learning was found, while no gender differences have been reported in this regard. Pishghadam (2009) has investigated the relationship between the use of learning strategies with gender for learning English and the preferred learning strategies for learning English by Iranian students. He administrated Oxford's (1990) language learning strategies inventory among three thousands Iranian university students. Results of the study demonstrated that Iranian students use metacognitive strategies more than other strategies and affective strategies less than other learning strategies. Moreover, men and women were not reported to be different in their use of learning strategies in general but men were found to use social and memory strategies more when compared with other strategies. Salarifar and Pakdaman (2010) investigated the role of metacognitive state components on academic performance. The participants who were high-school students completed O'Neill and Abedi's (1996) Metacognitive State Questionnaire. Results revealed a positive association between metacognitive state and academic performance. Meshkat and Nasirifiruz (2009) investigated self-evaluation as a metacognitive strategy in grammar enhancement. Nelson's test (1976) was used to identify students' language proficiency. Moreover, six researcher-made grammar tests were used for data analysis. Findings revealed that self-evaluation had a positive effect in enhancing students' grammatical knowledge.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

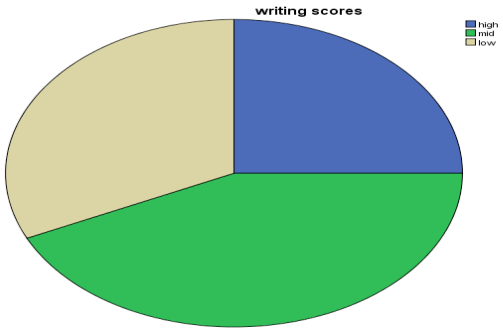
Hence, the present study focused on investigating the following research question:

- What is the relationship between the metacognitive strategies of the EFL learners and their speaking achievement?

METHODOLOGY

Participants and sampling

The population of the study included 95 EFL learners studying in Jahad Daneshgahi Institute in Kerman Iran. They were homogenized using a language proficiency test (Oxford Placement Test). The results of the test indicated that 23 language learners' scores were far above and below the means and thus they were excluded and the other 72 ones comprised the sample of the study. The participants were at pre-intermediate level and they had been studying English for several terms and were instructed with the same teaching method and materials. The participants were chosen regardless of their age and gender since they were not variables to be considered in this study. The levels of the participants is shown in the following graph.



As graph 1 demonstrates, 25% of the candidates fall within the high group, 43% or the majority fall in the mid group and 31% belong to the low group. The speaking levels of the subjects are assigned based as the table below shows:

Scores from 16 to 20	High
Scores from 11 to 15	Mid
Scores below 10	Low

Instruments

The study used three instruments to collect the required data: a placement test, the MAI-Metacognitive Awareness Inventory test and the test of speaking. In order to ascertain the validity and reliability of the chosen research model, the triangulation technique was adopted. This is in line with the views of Mackey and Gass (2005) who stressed that triangulation can aid in conferring credibility, transferability, conformability, and dependability to qualitative research. To fulfill these goals, the researcher employed MAI-Metacognitive Awareness questionnaire to investigate the relationship between metacognitive awareness and speaking levels of the EFL learners of the study. MAI-Metacognitive Awareness Inventory contained 52 items and was made up of two scales assessing the knowledge of cognition that was sub-classified into three subcategories of declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge and the next category was regulation of knowledge that was sub-classified into the following five subcategories: planning, information management strategies, monitoring, debugging strategies and evaluation.

Table 1: The categories and subcategories of the questionnaire

	Main Categories	**items**
Knowledge of cognition	Declarative Knowledge	5-10-12-16-17-20-32-46
	procedural Knowledge	3-14-27-33
	conditional Knowledge	15-18-26-29-35
Regulation of knowledge		
	Planning	4-6-8-22-23-42-45
	Information management strategy	9-13-30-31-37-39-41-43-47-48
	Comprehension Monitoring	1-2-11-21-28-34
	Evaluation	7-18-24-36-38-49
	Debugging strategies	25-40-44-51-52

The questionnaire was developed and used by Schraw and Dennison (1994) to estimate the metacognitive awareness of a group of EFL learners. It is made up of two main parts: the first

part collected demographic information and the second part assessed the attitude of the participants on different aspects of metacognitive awareness using five-point Likert scale, 1 as completely agree, 2 for agree, 3 for disagree, 4 for completely disagree and finally 5 for undecided. To estimate the reliability and validity of the questionnaire, the researcher followed the steps below. First the questionnaire was translated into fluent Farsi by an expert of translation. Then it was back translated to detect any faulty and ambiguous translation. A few points were identified and changes were made to correct them.

Since the questionnaire was already employed for the same purpose of estimating the EFL learners' metacognitive awareness by different researchers, (Schraw and Dennison, 1994), it can be claimed that it was valid in content and the goal it followed. However, to be certain about the reliability of the questionnaire, a pilot study was carried out with similar subjects in the same institute. The scores using SPSS were used to estimate the reliability of the questionnaire. Using Chronbach Alfa test, the reliability of the questionnaire was estimated to be .89.

The next instrument was testing the speaking skill of the learners and scoring them. Since speaking is a subjective skill to score, the researcher used the technique of increasing the number of the raters, who have studied above 5 years' experience, so as to make it objective. After the participants finished answering the questionnaire, they were interviewed one by one and each scorer rated the speaking level of the candidates independently. The sum of the three scores made up the total mean of the learners.

Since speaking is a subjective skill to score, the following measures were taken to make it objective. First, the techniques of Preliminary English Tests (PET) were used to determine the speaking level of the learners. It meant that each candidate was asked several types of questions including (1) personal questions (2) questions using pictures and other visuals (3) information questions (4) requiring the candidates to discuss ideas.

The researcher and two other independent examiners observed the interviews and tried to judge the speaking performance of each subjects separately and then they rated them. The reason for increasing the number of the raters to three was to improve the scoring reliability. Since the scoring of some skills is threatened by subjectivity of the raters, to overcome this problem, the number of the raters is increased to two and sometime to three (Heaton, 1988; Ebam, 1989). On the other hand, the researcher asks the raters to use a uniformed system of scoring and for this study they were asked to use holistic scoring approach to obtain a uniform system of scoring. Therefore, to score the subjects, three experienced scorers were used to put their judgments on the speaking and oral performance of the subjects of the study. The mean score of the given marks by the three scorers establishes the final mark.

Procedure and data analysis

Three major types of instruments were used to collect the required data of the study. The first instrument was using Oxford Placement Test to estimate the level of the learners and to homogenize them. It is a 100-test item of grammar, vocabulary and short reading that test the general knowledge of the learners. They have multiple-choice format that make it reliable in

scoring. 60 minutes was given in one session with enough control over the subjects to answer the questions.

The second was using the questionnaire. The required data using questionnaire were collected during the last class sessions of the summer classes. The questionnaire was distributed among the sample groups and then were collected and submitted for analysis. The participants were given half an hour time to give their responses to the questionnaire. Before distributing the questionnaire, the researcher gave enough instruction on filling out it and also talked about the significance of her study.

The third instrument was using the speaking scores provided by three independent raters. Since speaking is a subjective skill to score, three colleagues participated in the test of speaking and the total mean made up the final score for each of the participants. Each candidate was investigated one by one. The questions were posed and the raters focused on each candidate performance.

Data in the present study was collected using one questionnaire and a test of speaking; thus, the study uses both qualitative and quantitative data gathering techniques. For analyzing the data collected through the use of questionnaire, the raw data were tabulated and frequencies and percentages were conducted by Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 22.

RESULT AND DISUSSION

The following tables present the data of correlational relationship between the two variables for each one. As it can be seen, the correlation between declarative knowledge and the level of the learners is completely meaningful: p=.000<.05. On the whole, there was a meaningful relationship only between three metacognitive strategies categories of declarative knowledge, information management strategy, and conditional knowledge.

Table 2: Correlational relationship between categories and levels

	Value	Asymp. Std. Error[a]	Approx. T[b]	Approx. Sig.
Declarative Knowledge	.443	.087	4.134	.000[c]
procedural Knowledge	.177	.097	1.505	.137[c]
conditional Knowledge	-.320	.113	-2.826	.006[c]
Planning	.124	.090	1.044	.300[c]
Information management strategy	-.748	.041	-9.433	.000[c]
Comprehension Monitoring	.091	.116	.764	.447[c]
Evaluation	-.098	.108	-.821	.415[c]
Debugging strategies	.114	.100	.961	.340[c]

To answer the research question, the information in table 3 is significant. As it can be seen, there is meaningful relationship between four metacognitive strategies categories and the level of the candidates' achievement. In other words, different levels in terms of high, mid and low respond differently to these four cases and they have different views towards the mentioned categories.

Table 3: Meaningful relationship between level and categories

	Value	Asymp. Std. Error[a]	Approx. T[b]	Approx. Sig.
Declarative Knowledge	.443	.087	4.134	.000[c]
Conditional Knowledge	-.320	.113	-2.826	.006[c]
Planning	.124	.090	1.044	.300[c]
Information management strategy	-.748	.041	-9.433	.000[c]

In other cases, no strong meaningful relationship could be identified between the levels and the metacognitive awareness categories. The goal of the study was to investigate the metacognitive awareness of a group of university EFL learners and its relevance with their speaking ability and skill. The present chapter offered the achieved data and analyzed them. On the one hand, descriptive data was offered and on the other hand, the correlations were run and estimated. The crosstab data that showed the relationship between the categories and the proficiency level of the candidates were also presented. It was revealed that in some cases, meaningful relationship could be identified between the speaking ability of the subjects and their metacognitive awareness subcategories.

CONCLUSION

The results of the study revealed the idea that in some cases the EFL learners at university level were affected by metacognitive awareness and their speaking level. In fact, metacognitive awareness is an effective factor that can affect the speaking level of the learners belonging to high, mid and low level of proficiencies. Moreover, EFL learners having various types of metacognitive awareness can speak and converse in the second language differently and at different proficiency levels.

The results of the study support the studies that were carried out before on similar topics. For instance, Vandergrift, Goh, Mareschal, and Tafaghodtari (2006) pointed out that learners with high degrees of metacognitive awareness are better at processing and storing new information, finding the best ways to practice and reinforce what they have learned. It has been found that explicit metacognitive knowledge about task characteristics and applying appropriate strategies for task solution is a major determiner of language learning effectiveness. The reason lies in the fact that metacognitive strategies enable learners to play active role in the process of learning, to manage and direct their own learning and eventually to find the best ways to practice and reinforce what they have learned (Chari et al., 2010).

There are some limitation which the authors faced with: first the use of questionnair to elicit information was an important limitation of the study. Because a questionnaire may not lead to be able to investigate all aspect of metacognition and its components.

The other limitation was that the EFL learners may not respond attentively to the question so as to reveal their attitudes towards it. The study came to definite results in terms of the EFL learners' metacognitive awareness and their speaking ability. These achievements can help administrators and managers in different areas to pay more attention to their learners'

metacognitive awareness and their styles in learning a language in general and learning speaking in particular. Since the research sought the ideas of only certain levels and area, it could have more significant achievements if other levels and areas interfered in the experiment and presented their views on their metacognitive awareness. Besides, since the study was carried out in a limited environment, it is recommended that for future studies it is better to extend the environment as well as increasing the number of the subjects of the study. If the study is expanded to completely different areas where the learners have their personal views toward education and the duties and role of the language teacher, it can be more useful and the results can be verified more significantly. Also, studies about metacognitive awareness about other skills and language components should also be studied. On the other hand, the teaching environment and different teachers have to be contrasted with individualized language learning or teacher-based language classes.

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Bio Data

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