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The Long-term Effect of Indirect Selective and Indirect Comprehensive Corrective Feedback on Improving Writing Accuracy

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the comparative effectiveness of indirect selective and indirect comprehensive written corrective feedback in improving the writing accuracy of first year university students. For this purpose, students in two sections (N=52) who were taught a writing course by one teacher were purposely selected, and were randomly assigned into a selective and a comprehensive feedback groups. The selective feedback group students were offered with indirect CF by underlining five selected grammatical error types and writing codes over those errors. Conversely, the comprehensive feedback group students were provided with the same kind of CF on all of the grammar errors they produced. The treatment process took 42 days in which the participant students were made to write three expository paragraphs: a pre-test, an immediate post-test and a delayed post-test. The results showed that indirect selective corrective CF resulted in significant gains in writing accuracy between compositions one and three as well as between compositions two and three. On the other hand, the indirect comprehensive CF group students didn't bring significant improvements in their writing accuracy between any of the writing occasions. It was also found that there was no significant difference in the writing accuracy improvement of the two groups in the immediate posttest. However, during the delayed posttest writing, the indirect selective CF brought better improvements in writing accuracy (at P=0.01) than the indirect comprehensive CF.

Key words: comprehensive corrective feedback; grammatical errors; improving writing accuracy; indirect corrective feedback, writing accuracy measures

INTRODUCTION

In the second and foreign language teaching, there have been shifts in attitudes towards language learners' errors. At times, there had been theories of learning (behaviorism) which considered errors as bad habits. Teachers ascribed to those theories tried to implement different strategies to prevent errors from occurring in their students' oral as well as written products, and if they occurred, to eradicate them. To do so, there had been attempts to contrast the two languages i.e., the student's native language and the target language, and to find out areas of differences between the two languages (Contrastive Analysis). The areas of differences were assumed to be the major,

if not the sole, sources of errors, and thus classroom teaching focused on such areas of differences. However, later, scholars, like Corder (1967), began to argue that errors are not bad things; rather, they are indicators that learning is happening. This later view assumes that errors are inevitable and important parts of learning. Corder (1967) strongly argues that errors are important for teachers as well as students, for they provide them with vital information regarding their teaching and learning. As to this view, the different sources of language learners' errors should be carefully analyzed (Error Analysis) rather than considering mother tongue interference as an only source. Currently, most educators seem to agree that

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errors are important as long as they are wisely utilized in the process of providing and receiving corrective feedback (CF).

Not only have scholars' attitudes towards grammatical errors been varied but have theories on error correction also been**.** Generally, there have been two sides of the debate. On the one side of the battle are those scholars who argue that corrective feedback (CF) might not contribute for the development of L2/FL grammar knowledge. These scholars lend support basically from Krashen's (1982, 1985) theories of second and/or foreign language acquisition. According to these theories, language learning could happen naturally if learners were provided with comprehensible positive input. Nevertheless, there are many scholars who stand on the opposing front of the battle. As to this group, positive evidence alone does not suffice for successful second language development **.**This group holds that CF on students' output might help them notice their gaps by comparing what they have produced with what should have been in the target language.

The theoretical debate on the value of CF in helping L2 development has in part been fueled by the fact that empirical evidences from different researches were inconclusive and, at times, contradictory (Ferris, 2004, 2010; Hyland & Hyland, 2006). Some researchers, most notably, Truscott (1996, 1999, and 2007), Kepner (1991) and Robb et al, (1986) reported in their findings that CF had not resulted in significant gains in writing accuracy. On the other hand, other researchers (Eslami, 2014; Bitchener, Cameron & Young, 2005; Van Beuningen, 2011) came up with results indicating that CF has resulted in significant gains in the students' writing accuracy.

The present study was an attempt to contribute to the body of evidence on the effectiveness of corrective feedback by particularly focusing on the effectiveness of indirect focused and indirect unfocused corrective feedback on improving the writing accuracy of Ethiopian first year university students.

LITERATURE REVIEW
As indicated above, corrective feedback (CF) has been an area of debate among theoreticians and practitioners in the field of teaching English as a Foreign or Second Language. However, there are compelling justifications which urge us to conduct studies on the effectiveness of different modes of CF at different teaching-learning contexts and come up with practicable findings. When it**,** especially, comes to the teaching and learning of English as a foreign language (EFL) writing skills, the provision of CF seems to be mandatory because there are several research findings which indicate that EFL students badly want CF from their teachers. EFL teachers also feel that providing CF is one of their responsibilities. In essence, CF is too important to be avoided. In addition, writing skills are very complex to master; because of this, when trying to develop their writing skills, students require the assistance of their teachers, usually in the form of CF.

Unfocused/Comprehensive versus Focused/Selective Corrective Feedback
The first area of research in written CF, which is the focus of this study, is to compare the effectiveness of selective or comprehensive correction. Many scholars (Ferris, 2004, 2010; Hendrickson, 1980; Ellis, 2009; Sheen, 2007) suggest that selective corrective feedback is more beneficial than the comprehensive one for the fact that: it doesn't threaten students' self-esteem, it doesn't overwhelm students with too much corrective information**,** and it is economical in terms of teacher time and energy. This group holds that if a teacher is a perfectionist and tends to be too critical of every small error, the learners may perceive the task as an impossible one.

Researchers tuned to selective CF face two major problems. The first is the difficulty of deciding which errors to focus on. Concerning this issue, different scholars forwarded their own suggestions. Corder (1967), for example, makes a distinction between mistakes (deviations due to performance failure) and errors (deviations due to competence), and he suggests that CF should focus on errors rather than mistakes. Ferris (2004), on her part, categorizes errors into treatable and untreatable, and calls for a focus on treatable errors rather than untreatable ones. There are also scholars who suggest that CF should target at errors which happen most frequently in students' compositions (both in a single student's writing as well as across a group of students' written pieces). The final suggestion regarding which linguistic errors to target for correction is that CF should focus on errors which break major grammatical rules rather than exceptionalities. As Ellis (2009), Ferris (2004), and Bitchener & Knoch (2009) state, all these proposals might not work effectively in different contexts.

Like other issues related to CF, scholars split regarding this question. Some targeted 15 and 21 error categories (Ferris, 2004). Polio (1997), on her part, employed a very detailed categorization of linguistic errors (about 40), while Liu (2008) focused on three broad categories of errors.

Scholars like Ferris (2004) seem to suggest that a focus on a few, but broad, categories is likely to be more beneficial, for it can allow students to focus on a more limited range of forms and rules when learning about a specific error type, and hence, it doesn't overwhelm students. On the other hand, scholars like Lalande (1982) argue that comprehensive CF is more fruitful than selective CF. Lalande considers selective correction as traditional and illogical especially in writing because he believes that leaving errors uncorrected might reinforce the formation of wrong language systems. He also argues that the saying that correction of all error might embarrass students is unfounded.

Studies conducted on the effectiveness of selective and comprehensive CF also came up with mixed results. Some indicated that selective correction is more fruitful (Bitchener, Cameron & Young, 2005; Bitchener & Knoch, 2010; Sheen, 2007; Eslami, 2014). Other researchers (Ellis, 2009; Rouhi & Samiei, 2010) found that there is no significant difference in efficacy between these two forms of feedback. Still, Van Beuningen (2011) revealed that comprehensive correction resulted in long-term improvement.

Indirect versus Direct Corrective Feedback

Indirect CF is when one indicates an error through circling, underlining, or marking it at its location using a code and leaving it for students to make corrections by themselves. On the other hand, direct CF is when a teacher corrects an error by showing the correct form of the error. Studies conducted to compare the effectiveness of these CF techniques came up with varying and inconclusive results. Indirect CF has been claimed to encourage students to be more reflective and analytical about their errors Bitchener & Knoch, 2009; Eslami, 2014; Hussieni, 2014). Since the students are required by indirect feedback to take more responsibility for their errors, they are likely to learn more from the process and to make long-term progress in finding, correcting, and eventually avoiding errors. Conversely, there are some studies which found that direct CF brought significant improvements in the writing accuracy of participants (Kang & Han, 2015).

Error Location versus Error Identification

Another research line for CF researchers is to compare the effectiveness of error location (indicating the presence of an error by circling it, highlighting it, or putting a checkmark in the margin) and error identification (showing the types of errors that have been made using symbols). These are different forms of indirect CF. Error location is favored by some scholars for the fact that it places maximum responsibility on the student writer to figure out both the nature of the problem and its solution. On the other hand, some other scholars prefer error identification because it provides more information to students so that they can call upon their prior knowledge or use resources such as grammar handbooks to understand or remember the rule and figure out how to apply it. Because each of these CF techniques has its own inherent weaknesses, a combination of the two seems to be a more viable strategy.

Measures of Written Grammatical Accuracy

Teachers and researchers have been using different approaches to measure the grammatical accuracy of EFL students' compositions. The most widely discussed measures of grammatical accuracy are holistic scoring, analytic scoring and error counts.

Holistic Scoring

One approach to writing assessment is holistic scoring, which aims to rate the overall proficiency level reflected in a given sample of student writing. In a typical holistic scoring session, each writing sample is read quickly and then judged against a rating scale, or scoring rubric, that outlines the scoring criteria. Holistic scoring rubrics generally consist of different levels or bands, each of which corresponds to a score and a set of descriptors.

Holistic scoring is reported to be economical regarding time since readers are required to make only one decision (i.e., a single score) for each writing sample. Besides, researchers in L_2 writing generally agree that holistic scoring is reliable, provided guidelines pertaining to rater training and rating session administration are faithfully adhered to (Polio, 1997). For this reason, holistic scoring is commonly used in large-scale assessment of writing. However, it has some serious disadvantages since the single score, which gives useful ranking information, doesn't give details. That is, holistic scoring cannot provide useful diagnostic information about a person's writing ability, as a single score does not allow raters to distinguish between various aspects of writing.

Analytic Scoring

Analytic scoring procedures involve the separation of the various features of a composition into components for scoring purposes. Depending on the purpose of the assessment, texts might be rated on such features as content, organization, cohesion, register, vocabulary, grammar, or mechanics.

Generally, it has been reported that analytic scoring is preferred over holistic schemes by many writing specialists for a number of reasons. To start with, it provides more useful diagnostic information about

students' writing abilities. That is, it provides more information about the strengths and weaknesses of students. In addition, analytic scoring is particularly useful for L_2 learners, who are usually heterogeneous in their abilities at different aspects of writing. Moreover, it is easier to train raters (especially inexperienced ones) to use analytic scoring schemes as they may find it easier to work with explicit and specific textual features. Finally, the explicitness of analytic scoring guides offers teachers a potentially valuable tool for providing writers with consistent feedback.

Nevertheless, analytic scoring is also reported to have some limitations. For instance, it takes longer than holistic scoring. Besides, measuring based on sub skill scores might diminish the interconnectedness of written discourse. Furthermore, sometimes, scorers find it difficult to assign numerical scores based on certain descriptors (Hamp-Lyons, 1989, as cited by Polio, 1997). Put another way, qualitative judgments about coherence, style, and so on are not always easily accommodated by analytic scoring methods.

Error Counts

In an attempt to arrive at a more objective assessment of the linguistic accuracy of the writings in their studies, several researchers have utilized error counting as a measure of accuracy. The researchers in this regard have followed two lines. In the first line, Robb et al (1986), Kepner (1991), and Hartshorn (2008) employed error-free T- units/total number of T-units as measurements of accuracy. (A T-unit is defined as an independent clause and all dependent clauses attached to it). Nevertheless, taking a whole T-unit only as a single error might be misleading because, in one independent clause, there could be several grammatical errors. Other researchers like Polio (1997) and Erel & Bullut (2007) used error counts per number of total words in a written product as a measure of linguistic accuracy in a given writing.

The present study employed error counts to measure the grammatical accuracy of the paragraphs written by the participant students. It, particularly, utilized the proportion of the total number of errors committed by the students in a given writing task to the total number of words written by those students there, and then, the result was multiplied by 100 to get the percentage of grammatical errors in each composition. This percentage of errors (also called the adjusted mean) was taken as a measure of the grammatical accuracy level of the student writers.

Objectives of the Study

The major purpose of this study was to test the effectiveness of indirect selective and comprehensive corrective feedback techniques in improving the accuracy of EFL university first year students' paragraph writing. More specifically, the study tried to examine whether:

- The ISCF brought significant differences in the writing accuracy of the students in that group between any of the writing occasions
- The ICCF brought significant differences in the writing accuracy of the students in that group between any of the writing occasions
- There were significant differences in the writing accuracy of the students in the two groups between any of the writing occasions

METHODS AND TOOLS
Research Design and Methods

This study employed a quasi-experimental research design with a quantitative research method. This design was used because it was felt appropriate to achieve the objectives set above. Two intact group students who were offered a writing course by one teacher were purposely selected in order to prevent the results from being contaminated by instructor-related variables. One of these groups was randomly assigned into an indirect selective feedback (ISCF) group, while the other was placed into an indirect comprehensive corrective feedback (ICCF) group by using a lot.

The Nature and Duration of the Treatment Process

The experiment took 42 days. Within these 42 days, the students were made to write three expository paragraphs: a pre-test, an immediate post-test, and a delayed posttest. The timing of the tests was made based on Li's (2010) classification of post-test writing tasks by considering the time elapsed between a writing task and the return of that task with CF. According to this author, posttests could be classified as:

- Immediate posttest if the test takes place within 7 days after a treatment.
- A short term delayed posttest if it is administered 8-29 days after the commencement of the treatment
- A long term delayed posttest if it happens 30 days or later after the beginning of the treatment.

The participant students were, hence, made to write a pre-test paragraph which was returned with CF seven days after its production. Here, as indicated above, the ISCF group students were

provided with indirect CF on selected grammatical errors only while the ICCF group students were provided with indirect CF on all their grammatical errors. Then, the students were made to write an immediate posttest paragraph seven days after the return of the pretest paragraph. This paragraph was again returned with CF seven days after its production. Finally, the students were made to write a delayed posttest paragraph 28 days after the return of the immediate posttest paragraph. All the paragraphs written by the participant students were photocopied for further follow up, and then, they were returned to the students with CF.

Grammatical Errors Targeted during the Study

Prior to the current study, the researcher undertook a study to categorize the grammatical errors exhibited in first year university students' expository paragraphs, and he found that those errors could be categorized into 16 error categories (Asres, 2022). These errors, in descending order of their frequency, were verb formation, word formation, punctuation, preposition, sentence fragment, article, word choice, unnecessary, pronoun use, connector use, omission, spelling, word order, possessive's, awkward, and quantification. In the present study, the ISCF group students were provided with CF by focusing only on the 5 most frequent linguistic errors (sentence fragment, punctuation, preposition, word formation, and verb formation). These errors together accounted for about 66.76% of the total linguistic errors committed by all the participant students. On the other hand, the ICCF group students were offered with CF on all the grammar errors they produced.

Most previous studies on selective CF targeted only three or less error types, almost all of them focusing on the English article system. Ferris (2010) criticizes this trend to be too narrow. Understanding this shortcoming, the present study tried to focus on five error categories.

To measure the writing accuracy level of the students, as indicated above, this study employed the error count method.

Reliability and Validity of Instruments and measures

Efforts were made to make the collected data and analysis of that data valid and reliable. To maintain validity, the topics for the paragraph writing were chosen in consultation with staff members in the department of English who were offering the writing course. Besides, these topics were amongst the common topics which we had used when providing writing activities for our university students.

To keep reliability, participant students were made to write three paragraphs of expository type. This was aimed at prompting the students to produce similar kind of errors across the writing occasions, a kind of test-retest reliability. Besides, two volunteer EFL instructors were trained to identify the grammar errors in the students' compositions based on the 16 grammatical error categories, and these were averaged with the errors identified by the researcher.

Methods of Data Analysis

To analyze the data gathered from students' compositions, different statistical techniques like frequencies, percentages, means paired samples as well as independent samples t-tests were used where necessary.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section attempted to answer the major question of the study by investigating the effects of indirect selective and comprehensive CF moves in improving the accuracy of EFL students' writings. In doing so, first the effects of indirect selective CF on the writing accuracy of the students in the ISCF group were assessed. Then, the effects of the indirect comprehensive CF on the students' writing accuracy of the students in the ICCF group were investigated. Finally, a comparison of the written accuracy level of the students in the two groups was made. For this purpose, the data gathered from the 3 writing tasks written by the participant students in the two groups are presented in the table below.

Table: Weight of Grammatical Errors Committed by the Students in both Groups during the three Writing Occasions

Proportion of No. of errors by each student in the ISCF group to total No. of words in the 3 writing occasions X 100			Proportion of No. of errors by each student in the ICCF group to total No. of words in the 3 writing occasions X 100		
Comp.1	Comp.2	Comp.3	Comp.1	Comp.2	Comp.3

0.97	0.609	0.854	0.696	0.466	0.735
1.221	0.771	0.384	1.26	0.933	1.297
1.114	0.974	0.683	1.724	1.244	1.47
0.683	0.568	0.598	0.829	1.361	1.167
1.149		0.683	1.26	0.972	0.648
1.149	0.446	0.939	0.696	0.894	0.908
1.149	0.649	0.726	1.061		
1.221	0.933	0.214	1.161	1.555	1.426
0.718	0.852	0.683	0.564	0.544	0.346
1.76	1.582	0.726	0.895	0.972	0.864
0.898	0.852	0.811	0.431	1.166	0.216
0.467	0.933	0.769	1.326	1.244	
0.576	0.446	0.598	1.525	1.166	1.34
0.395	0.649	0.641	0.332	0.622	0.562
0.647	1.38	0.726	0.597	0.933	0.951
1.329	0.568	0.683	0.564	0.622	0.951
1.078	0.609	0.512	1.161	1.127	0.951
0.718	0.893	0.555	0.597	1.477	1.34
0.576	0.487	0.512	1.426	0.777	1.08
0.539	0.933	0.897	0.597	1.205	0.735
0.683	0.609	0.384	0.729	0.583	0.605
0.97	0.852	0.555	0.431		0.735
1.042	0.771	0.982	0.497	0.7	0.648
1.365	0.812	0.512	0.962	1.127	1.21
0.718	0.812	0.811	1.658	1.049	1.08
0.503	0.933	0.726	0.829	0.661	0.691
Sum=23.638	19.923	17.160	23.808	23.400	21.956

The Effects of Indirect selective CF (ISCF) on the Writing Accuracy of the Students

The Effects of ISCF between Compositions One and Two

The students in the ISCFG (N=26) wrote a total of 2,784 words during the pre-test writing. From this task, about 658 grammatical errors were identified. The proportion of total number of errors by the students in this group to the total number of words by the group in composition 1 X 100 (i.e., the adjusted mean of the grammatical errors was about 23.638. On the other hand, the students in this group (N=25) wrote 2, 464 words during the immediate post-test writing in which they produced about 491 grammatical errors. This, when adjusted, became about 19.923. This indicated that the students in this group showed improvement in the level of their grammatical accuracy (i.e., percentage of errors reduced from 23.638 to19.923). To check whether this improvement was significant, a pared samples t-test was run by entering the above data into SPSS.

Fig. 1: Paired Samples Test (Compositions one and two of the ISCF group)

	Paired Differences							
				95% Confidence Interval				Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviatin	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper	t	df	
Pair 1 ISCF1 - ISCF2	.102640	.376513	.075303	-.052777	.258057	1.363	24	.186

As the data in figure 1 show, the result of the t-test with N(25) df (24), was t=1.362 which was not significant at P=0.05. This shows that the ISCF didn't bring a significant improvement in the writing accuracy of the students in the short term.

The Effects of ISCF between Compositions One and Three

During the delayed post-test writing, the students in the ISCF group (N=26) produced 2,342 words in which there were about 402 grammatical errors. This, when adjusted, became about 17.160. It was shown above that, during the pre-test writing, the adjusted mean of the grammatical errors written by these students was about 23.638. This shows that the ISCF resulted in a decline in the adjusted means of the grammatical errors between the two writing occasions (i.e., from about 23.638 to about 17.160).

A paired t-test was run by using the data in the above table to test whether the change brought about by the ISCF between compositions one and three was significant. As the information in figure 2 below depicts, the result of the t-test t=3.201 indicated that this kind of CF resulted in significant gains in the writing accuracy of the ISCF group students at P=0.05.

Fig. 2: Paired Samples Test (Compositions one and two of the ISCF group)

	Paired Differences							
				95% Confidence Interval				Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviatin	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper	t	df	
Pair 1 ISCF1 - ISCF3	.249000	.396652	.077790	.088789	.409211	3.201	25	.004

The Effects of ISCF between Compositions Two and Three

As has already been indicated above, the adjusted mean of the grammar errors if the ISCF students during the immediate post-test writing was about 19.923, while it became to be about 17.160 during the delayed post-test writing. We could see that the students brought improvements in their writing accuracy between compositions two and three. To test whether this reduction of grammatical errors was significant, a paired t-test was computed again by using the data on the above table.

Fig. 3: Paired Samples Test (Compositions two and three of the ISCF group)

	Paired Differences							
				95% Confidence				Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviatin	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper	t	df	
Pair 1 ISCF2 - ISCF3	.137680	.308436	.061687	.010364	.264996	2.232	24	.035

The result of the t-test with N=25, df (24), was t= 2.232 which was significant at P=0.05. This

indicates the ISCF resulted in significant gains in writing accuracy between the immediate posttest and delayed posttest writing occasions.

The Effects of the Indirect Comprehensive Corrective Feedback (ICCF) on the Accuracy of the Students
The Effects of ICCF between Compositions One and Two

During the pre-test writing, the students in the ICCF group (N=26) produced about 3,016 words which carried 718 grammatical errors. The proportion of these errors to the total number of errors X 100, as could be seen from the table above) was about 23.808. On the other hand, during the immediate pot-test writing, the students in this group (N=24) wrote 2,573 words in which there were about 602 grammatical errors. The adjusted mean of the grammatical errors at this occasion became to be about 23.400. This result indicates that the ICCF led to a reduction of grammatical errors written by this

group between the two writing occasions (i.e., from about 23.808 to about 23.400).

To check whether this change was significant, a paired t-test was run which resulted in t-test (t=-0.542), not significant at P=0.05, two tailed.

The Effects of ICCCF between Compositions One and Three

It was shown above that, during the pre-test writing, the adjusted mean of the grammar errors written by the students in the ICCF group was about 23.808. On the other hand, during the delayed post-test writing, the students in this group (N=24) wrote 2,314 words in which there were about 508 grammatical errors. The proportion of these errors to the total number of words X 100 = 21.956. This shows that the students in this group brought a difference in their writing accuracy between the two writing occasions (from 23.808 to 21.956). The paired t-test computed to test whether this change was significant had resulted with the following result

Fig. 4: Paired Samples t-test (Compositions one and three of the ICCF Group Students)

		Paired Differences							
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	ICCF1 - ICCF3	-.022292	.322793	.065890	-.158595	.114012	-.338	23	.738

The t-test with a t-value of -338 was again not significant at a 0.05 level of significance. This result shows that the ICCF hasn't resulted in a significant improvement in the writing accuracy of the students between the pretest and the delayed posttest writing tasks.

The Effects of ICCF between Compositions Two and Three

We have seen above that, during the immediate post-test writing, the adjusted mean of the grammatical errors in the compositions written by the students in the CCFG was about 23.400. On the other hand, the adjusted mean of the grammatical errors by this group in the delayed post-test composition was about 21.956. This shows that the number of grammatical errors written by the group showed a decrease from the second to the third writing occasion . A paired t-test computed to test whether this improvement was significant resulted in t=0.873 which was

not significant at P=0.05. (Paired t-test statistics omitted for the interest of space)

The effectiveness of ISCF versus ICCF

In this section, although it could be deduced from the paired-samples statistics results discussed above, an attempt was made to examine the comparative effectiveness of the two CF types on the writing accuracy of the students in the two groups. In other words, the question of whether there were significant differences in written accuracy gains between the ISCF and ICCF group students was investigated. This was done by comparing the mean scores of the two groups in each writing occasion.

Comparison of the Writing Accuracy of the ISCF and ICCF Groups During Composition One

As we could observe from the information in table one above, the students in the ISCF group wrote 2,784 words during the first composition task in which there were about 658 grammar

errors, with adjusted mean of about 23.638. On the other hand, the students in the ICCF group produced 3,018 words, where there were about 718 linguistic errors, which when adjusted became to be about 23.808. These means were put into SPSS and an independent samples t-test was computed to see the mean differences. The results of the t-test are presented in figure _ below.

Fig. 5: Independent Samples t-test (Compositions one of the ISCF and ICCF Students)

CF1		F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean D/ce	Std. Error D/ce	95% Confidence Interval	
									Lower	Upper
errors	Equal variances assumed	1.245	.270	-6.344	50	.950	-.00654	.10307	-.21356	.20048
	Equal variances not assumed			-6.3442	4.8451	.950	-.00654	.10307	-.21372	.20065

As it could be seen from the above figure, the independent samples t-test result (t=-6344) was not significant at P=0.05 level. This shows that the students in the two groups didn't have significant differences in their writing accuracy levels during the pre-test.

Comparison of the Writing Accuracy of the ISCF and ICCF Groups During Composition Two

During the immediate posttest writing, the students in the ISCF wrote 2,464 words in which there were about 491grammar errors with an adjusted mean of about 19.923. On the other hand, during that writing task, the students in the ICCF wrote 2,573 words, 602 linguistic errors, and an adjusted mean of about 23.400. From this information. we could see that there were differences in the students' written accuracy levels between the pre-test and immediate posttest writing occasions. The adjusted mean of the grammar errors of the ISCF students decreased from 23.638 to 19.923. On the other hand, the mean of the linguistic errors by the ICCF students declined from 23.808 to 23.400. This indicates that the students in the two groups brought improvements in their written accuracy levels between the pre-test and the immediate posttest writings. We could also see that the students in the ISCF group brought better improvements in their writing accuracy levels than the those in the ICCF group.

To check whether the improvement in the writing accuracy level of the students in the two groups was significant, an independent samples t-test was computed which resulted in the following output.

Fig. 6: Independent Samples t-test (Compositions two of the ISCF and ICCF Students)

CF2		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean D/ce	Std. Error D/ce	95% Confidence Interval	
									Lower	Upper
error2	Equal variances assumed	1.433	.237	-2.189	47	.034	-.17808	.08136	-3.41758	-1.44025
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.182	4.551	.034	-.17808	.08160	-3.42376	1.37836

We could see from the information in the figure that the difference in the two means (t=-2.189) was not significant at P=0.05 level. In other words, there was no significant difference in the written accuracy level improvement of the students in the two groups between compositions one and two.

Comparison of the Writing Accuracy of the ISCF and ICCF Groups During Composition Three

As cold be seen from table 1 above, the adjusted mean of the grammar errors produced by the students in the ISCF group during the delayed posttest writing task was about 17.160. On the other hand, the mean of grammar errors committed by the ICCF group students during this writing task was about 21.956. From this, we could understand that there was a difference in the writing accuracy level of the students in the two groups, showing that the ISCF group students committed fewer grammar errors than the ICCF students. However, whether the difference between these two means was significant should be checked.

To check whether the mean difference in the writing accuracy level of the students in the two groups was significant, an independent samples t-test was computed which resulted in the following output.

Fig. 7: Independent Samples t-test (Compositions three of the ISCF and ICCF Students)

Independent Samples Test

| | | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances | | t-test for Equality of Means | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
error3	Equal variances assumed	9.E0	.003	-3E0	48	.001	-.25468	.07545	-.40638	-.10297
	Equal variances not assumed			-3E0	34.378	.002	-.25468	.07720	-.41150	-.09786

As it could be seen from the information in figure 7, the ISCF resulted in a better writing accuracy gain (significant at P=0.01 level) than the ICCF in the long-run.

Discussion

This study investigated the effectiveness of indirect selective (ISCF) and indirect comprehensive (ICCF) in improving the writing accuracy of first year Ethiopian university students' paragraphs. Two section students (N=52) were randomly assigned into ISCF and ICCF groups. The students were made to write 3 expository paragraphs within a 42 days period. During this time, the ISCF group students were provided with indirect corrective feedback (in the form of underlining grammatical errors and writing codes over those errors) on 5 selected grammar errors. On the other hand, the students in the ICCF group were provided with the same kind of indirect corrective feedback on all of the grammar errors they produced in their writings.

The results indicated that the ISCF brought a significant improvement in the writing accuracy of the students at P=0.05 between compositions 1 and 3 as well as between compositions 2 and 3. This result goes in line with what Bitchener & Knock (2009), Sheen et al (2009), Ferris (2010) and Eslami (2014) had found.

On the other hand, the indirect comprehensive corrective feedback (ICCF) didn't result in significant improvements in the writing accuracy of the students in this group between any of the writing occasions. This finding doesn't concur with what researchers like Lalande (1982) and Van Beuningen (2011) had found. However, as time went on, this type of CF resulted in

reduction of grammatical errors, though it was not significant.

The study also examined the comparative effectiveness of the two CF types in improving writing accuracy. In this regard, it was found that although there was no significant differences in writing accuracy between the two CF groups in the short-run, the ISCF brought a better improvement in the writing accuracy of the students in the group (significant at P=0.01 level) during the delayed posttest writing.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study sought to see the effectiveness of indirect selective (ISCF) and indirect comprehensive (ICCF) corrective feedback techniques (in the form of underlining errors and writing codes of those errors) in improving the writing accuracy of first year university students. For this purpose, the sampled students were made to write a pretest, an immediate posttest and a delayed posttest expository paragraph. The results revealed that the ISCF resulted in significant gains in the writing accuracy of the students in this group between the immediate and delayed posttest writings as well as between the pre the delayed posttest writing occasions. On the other hand, the ICC\F didn't bring significant changes in the writing accuracy of the students in this group between any of the writing occasions. Besides, a comparison of the means of the two groups by using an independent samples t-test showed that the ISCF resulted in better gains in writing accuracy (significant at P=0.01 level) than the ICCF in the long-run, i.e., during the delayed posttest writing. Based on these findings, English as second and/or foreign language writing teachers should be oriented to provide indirect selective corrective feedback on their students' writings.

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