

***The Effectiveness of Teacher's Written Direct and Indirect Corrective Feedback on the Acquisition of Tenses and Subject Verb -Agreement for EFL L2 Students at M'hamed Bougara University of Boumerdes***

**Boughelamallah Hanane**

University of Mhammed Bougara. Boumerdes, Faculty of Letters and Foreign Languages, Department of English  
hanane.boughelamallah@gmail.com

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**Abstract:**

Written corrective feedback is mainly defined as the return of information about a result of a process or an activity. And this research aims at exploring the effect of teacher's written direct and indirect corrective feedback on the acquisition of two main grammatical structures which are tenses and subject-verb agreement, and mastering these crucial aspects in grammar will definitely lead by the end to writing and accuracy. The general focus of this study is going to be on two central types of WCF, which are direct and indirect. And according to theories of SLA and sociocultural learning, many studies assumed that the type of written corrective feedback might plays a pivotal role in helping learners recognizing their errors and correct themselves .This research will involve the use of questionnaire that follows the quantitative method design and will include students from English department from M'hamed Bougara University across all levels as participants .The data will be collected through a well-structured questionnaire over a period of ten days. The findings are expected to add insight to the pedagogical strategies applied in classes and to help students during their process of mastering the use of tenses and subject- verb

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agreement and might also help teachers in selecting the appropriate type of written corrective feedback.

**Keywords:** Written direct corrective feedback, written indirect corrective feedback , subject verb agreement, EFL L2 students, EFL teachers; feedback .

## **Introduction**

Teacher's written corrective feedback in class plays a crucial role in enhancing and developing student grammatical accuracy. Particularly in the context of English as a foreign language (EFL), Corrective feedback may play a key role in helping learners noticing the gap between the inter language and the target language. Therefore, corrective feedback is considered as a guide for students to find out the points of strength and areas that needs improvement, as it is an important element in forming a competent learner.

Therefore, written corrective feedback here, important element in forming a competent learner.

Therefore, written corrective feedback refers to the process by which teachers provide guidance or corrections to students, where they address grammatical errors through WCF.

However, mastering grammar for a learner is very important, especially in terms of overall linguistic growth and written communication, where students want to be more brilliant in presenting coherent passages and synthesizing complex information. But, they frequently Struggle with it, especially with the two main fundamental aspects of grammar which are tenses and subject-verb agreement. And here where the focus of this research goes , precisely on how teacher's written corrective feedback helps in the acquisition of tenses use and subject-verb agreement.

- **Statement of the Problem**

DespitethefactthatmanyEFLteachersprovidewrittenCFfortheirstudentsto enhance the grammar acquisition, many learners are still having

difficulties when dealing with the basic grammatical structures, specifically with the use of tenses and with subject verb agreement even after receiving WCF, this what led many researchers to shed light on the corrective feedback trying to find out responses and answer the questions that surround the written direct and indirect corrective feedback, in terms of efficiency, student perception, and internalization of the written corrective feedback provided.

This research tries to address this concerns through focusing on how Learners

experience internalizing and evaluating the WCF precisely the direct and indirect WCF in relation to tenses and SVA learning, by analyzing EFL L2 students and teachers responses to the

distributed questionnaires. This study aims to explore how the nature of the provided WCT may help the acquisition of T and SVA, and how each type might enhance a superficial correction level only or support a meaningful grammatical improvement.

### • **Research Questions and Hypotheses**

This research tries to explore the effectiveness of teachers' written direct and indirect correct feedback on the acquisition of tenses and subject verb agreement. Therefore, four main questions were raised to conduct this study:

- Q1: do learners understand and the errors better through written direct or indirect corrective feedback?
- Q2: which type of written corrective feedback among direct and indirect is more effective in helping students acquiring the correct tense usage and subject verb agreement?
- Q3: do learners 'preferences align with what is pedagogically effective during the acquisition of tenses and subject verb agreement?

- Q4: what is the type of written corrective feedback that EFL teachers find more effective for improving students' use of tenses and subject verb agreement?

And accordingly we hypothesize the following:

- H1: Students who receive WDCF are more likely to improve better in the use of T and SVA, while those who receive WICF have a chance to internalize those grammatical structures better and for a long term improvement. But , it might show low efficiency in the acquisition of T and SVA in comparing to written direct corrective feedback.

H2: The majority of participants will prefer to receive written direct corrective feedback and think that it would be more helpful for a better performance.

- H3: Most EFL teachers will select WDC the most suitable type for the acquisition of tenses and subject verb agreement.

### **1-Definition of Corrective Feedback**

This research is founded on the concept of corrective feedback since it is an essential mean for analyzing the acquisition of grammatical structures. Specifically, tenses and subject-verb agreement. First, we will introduce the main key terms in relation with corrective feedback, and then explore the differences between written direct and indirect feedback. We will also investigate the influence of the types of feedback on the acquisition of grammatical structures. Then, we are going to concentrate on the contributions of WCF to learning tenses use and subject-verb agreement.

Corrective feedback (CF) generally refers to the information given by the teacher to the learner in order to correct the mistakes made by the student during the process of enhancing the language.

#### **1-1Types of Written Corrective Feedback**

Overtime. Researchers introduced various types of the written corrective feedback, with mentioning each one advantages and drawbacks, based on the context of learning and the level of student's competence. The followings

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are considered as the primary types of feedback used in the instruction of writing in SL.

### **1-1-1 Written Direct Corrective Feedback**

First, the written direct corrective feedback WDCF, refers to the direct written feedback to the student, means that the teacher points at the error explicitly. And the teacher can provide a corrected form as well, so here, learners do not need to guess their mistakes. The written direct corrective feedback aim to enhance the student's writing ability and may be very effective for beginners and intermediate learners who may not be able to correct themselves yet (Bitchner & Knoch, 2008). And according to Sheen (2007) the direct corrective feedback can be very helpful in improving the grammatical accuracy especially in terms of subject-verb agreement and tenses.

### **1-1-2 Written Indirect Corrective Feedback**

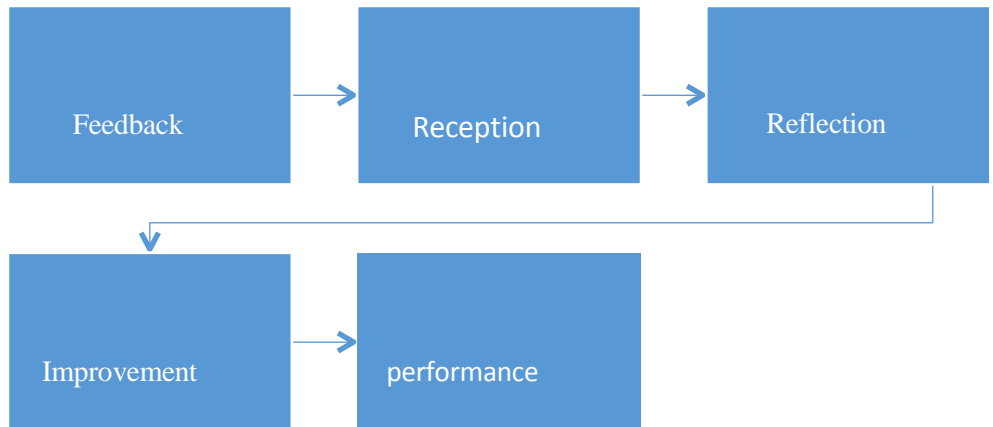
Unlike the direct corrective feedback that includes the direct and explicit correction of the teacher to the learner, the indirect one involves the indication of the teacher that a mistake has been made, but without correcting it directly. Instead, the teacher only indicates the error by circling or underlining it or even giving abbreviated correction for example: SVA for subject verb agreement and T for tense P for punctuation for vocabulary S for spelling...etc. Leaving the learner to correct him. Comparing to the direct corrective feedback the indirect one may not be effective for low level students but its long-term advantages cannot be neglected as well, the indirect written corrective feedback requires the participation of learners in the correction (Ellis, 2009). This last arrange in line with Vygotsky's theory (1972), "The Zone of Proximal Development", which suggests that this type of instructive assistance can enhance better their problem-solving abilities and strategies.

### **1-1-3 The Role of Corrective Feedback in Language Learning**

The written corrective feedback with its reinforcement, motivating and

directing features is considered one of the most important strategies that aim to enhance writing skills, especially for

ESL , more precisely in grammatical accuracy. Correcting errors is not only the main purpose of the corrective feedback, but also it tries to enable



students to identify their weaknesses and aspects that they haven't mastered yet such as grammatical structures, which can lead them later towards an accurate writing skills with minimum repeated mistakes.

### **Figure1.1:** How Written Corrective Feedback Function

Many studies have addressed this aspect and pointed at the high effectiveness of these educational interactions. According to Ferris (2006), written corrective feedback can help in improving the writing performance in the long term, and is an important tool that aims to drive the attention of the learners to their errors, and promotes a chance to think about language differently and not superficially, which can help in improving their writing performance in the long term. Bitchener and Knoch (2008), in their experimental study, ensured that giving feedback, especially when focusing on specific grammatical aspects such as tenses and subject- verb agreement, leads to an obvious improvement, in comparison to learners who do not get any feedback

#### **1-1-4 The Impact of Written Direct Corrective Feedback on the Acquisition of Tenses and Subject-Verb Agreement.**

In grammar focused instruction, the written direct corrective feedback, which involves the explicit correction of learner's errors and mistakes, is usually used with the purpose of Guaranteeing that the learner had the appropriate needed correction. The written direct corrective feedback is considered as the most clear and easy form of written corrective feedback that does not leave a large space for random, wrong, biased self-corrections.

Researchers such as Bitchener et al. (2005) in their study titled “the effect of different types of corrective feedback on ESL student writing”. Suggested that direct corrective feedback can be very efficient in acquiring grammatical features that are ruled by clear rule-based structures. They found out also that when the teacher provides a written direct corrective feedback on grammatical errors precisely past tense errors, the learners showed a significant long-term progress.

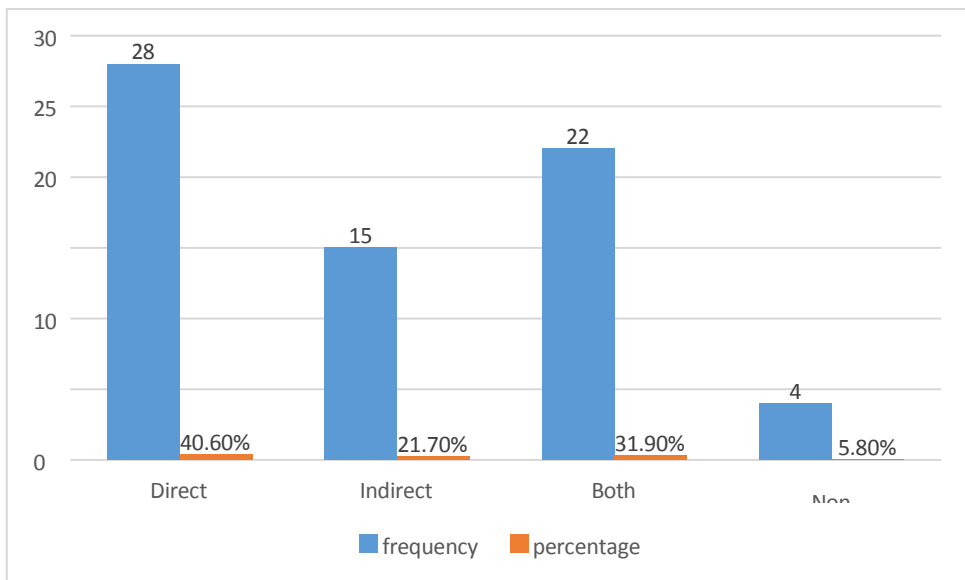
Chandler (2003),in her study «The Efficiency of Various Kinds of Error Feedback for the Improvement of Accuracy and Fluency of L2 Students Writing” suggested that a large Number of learners prefers to receive a written direct corrective feedback, because it enables a clear and simplified correction, allowing them to understand their errors especially with grammatical

Structures that they had not mastered yet. So concerning tenses and subject-verb agreement, written direct corrective feedback, offers a practical samples during the process of correction.

However, many other scholars claimed that (WDCF) might not promote profound revisions, but a superficial one. Truscott (1996), argued in his study titled “The Case against Grammar Correction in L2 Writing Classes”, that such a feedback, without internalizing grammatical rules, may only fix the learners assignments, which means that a learner will get a corrected form, but this last will not ensure that the learner will retain corrected forms in his writing.

## 2- Data collection and analysis

Question01: What type of feedback do you receive most often?



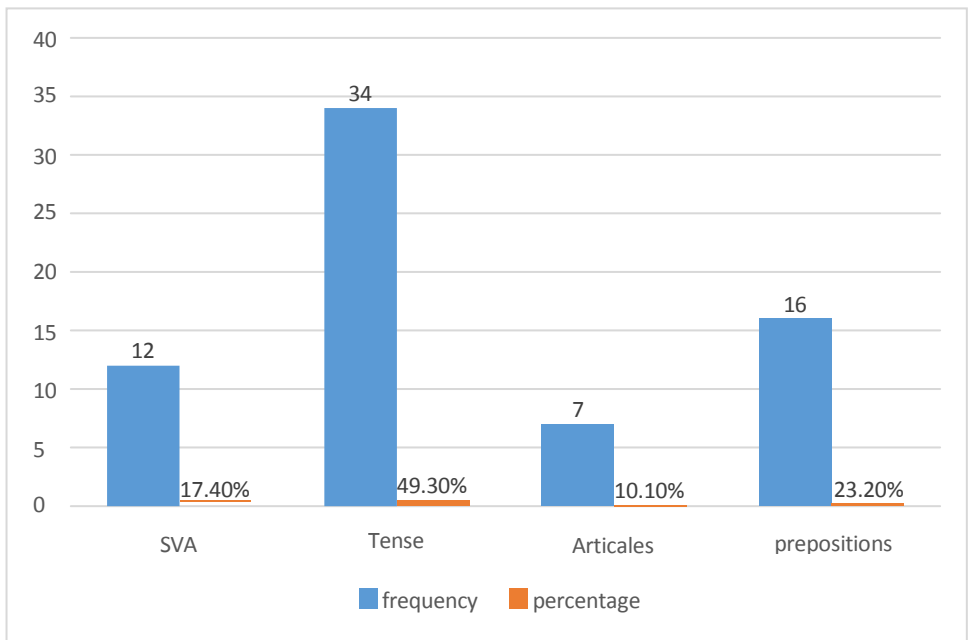
**Bar-graph3.1:** The Type of WCF received by students.

Among the sample of 69 respondents, (28, 40.6%) claimed receiving direct feedback where teacher pointedly correct errors. (22, 31.9%) reported receiving both written direct and indirect feedback, while (15, 21.7%)

received only written indirect feedback and a very minor percentage indicated receiving no feedback at all. The prevalence of direct feedback may

Indicate that teachers prioritize clarity and immediate correction perhaps due to time constraints or learner expectations. However, the notable percentage of receiving both types of feedback indicates an effort to balance correction with learner autonomy.

- Question 02: During your journey of learning English grammar, what is the type of mistakes that you often make?

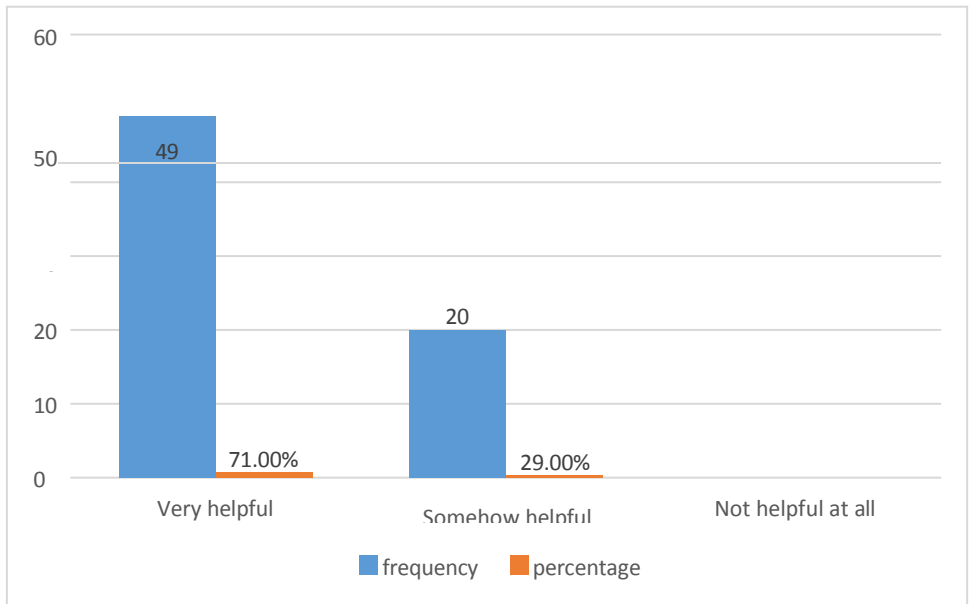


**Bar-graph3.2:** The Type of Grammatical Mistakes that Students often make

Out of 69 responses, (49,3%) which is almost the half of participants identified tense- related errors as the most frequent grammatical challenge they face, followed by the percentage of(25,2%)with prepositions errors, whiles struggled with subject verb agreement and article usage were

reported by(17,4%) and(10,1%) of responses. These results emphasis the importance of targeted grammar instructions, teachers could prioritize tenses and prepositions usage in both classroom activities and written feedback making sure students receive sufficient clarification in these areas.

- Question 03: When your teacher provides written corrected form for you (direct corrective feedback), how helpful is it for learning tenses and subject-verb agreement?



**Bar-graph3.3:** the importance of WCF.

According to the responses a significant majority of participants (71%) claimed that written direct feedback as very helpful for learning tense and subject-verb agreement, in addition to (29%) who considered it somewhat helpful, meanwhile none of the respondents found it unhelpful. The overwhelming positive response shows the benefits of written corrective feedback on student's writing skills and in improving their grammatical accuracy and perceived necessity of this feedback type in grammar instruction.

The results indicate a strong preference for direct feedback among EFL L2 students who found it as a more helpful and clearer method, a significant portion supported the mixed feedback addressing that their combination offers a remarkable opportunities for learner's reflection and engagement offering a balanced effective corrective feedback. Also, it shows that The effectiveness of a feedback depends on the type and also on how it is delivered and supported by teachers. So in general, the results indicate that a strong preference from EFLL2students and EFL teachers for direct and mixed feedback.

### **Conclusion :**

Learning any new language requires the main skills, listening, speaking, reading and writing. Remarkably writing is a major challenge among EFL learners, particularly on the acquisition of grammatical features specifically tenses usage and subject-verb agreement. The strategy suggested in classrooms to limit this issue and find a way to enhance Student's acquisition of grammatical features is to give written corrective feedback , this last could be delivered in a direct form or indirect form and also could be perceived differently aligning with students' preferences, responses and challenges. So teachers should be informed and aware of how to deliver an appropriate feedback for their students to achieve the goal of writing enhancement. Many studies agreed that both types of corrective feedback direct/indirect are effective in enhancing EFL learners' acquisition of grammatical features, more precisely tenses and subject-verb agreement aspects. The present study is conducted or highlight answer to the problem of the research, which is exploring the effectiveness of written direct / indirect corrective feedback on EFL learners regarding what learners prefer and find more benefits with and that may occur during the process of receiving written corrective feedback.

Through the study it is revealed a clear preference for direct written

corrective feedback among the majority of learners, who claimed that, the importance of clarity and specificity during correcting their grammatical instructions. The current research has conducted a quantitative method to collect data, which is leading to answer the research questions effectively. For data analysis the study relied on responses of a structured questionnaires that were distributed among EFL L2

Students and EFL teachers, and chosen to gather preferences, reception and challenges related to written corrective feedback.

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