Teacher-correction, Peer-correction and Self-correction: Their Impacts on Iranian Students' IELTS Essay Writing Performance

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This study investigated the impact of Teacher-correction, Peer-correction, and Self-correction on the performance of Iranian advanced students on IELTS writing test. The participants of the study were 54 students who were chosen from among 75 IELTS candidates, and then divided into three groups of 18. All of the students took writing pre-test at the beginning of the term and, then the 8-week treatment in which they received different types of feedback started. One-way ANOVA results of the post-test revealed that there was a significant difference among the performance of the three groups. The results of the Scheffe Test showed that there was a significant difference between Teacher-correction and Self-correction groups, between Teacher-correction and Peer-correction groups, and between Self-correction and Peer-correction groups. The findings suggested that Peer-correction and Self-correction were much more effective than the traditional Teacher-correction, and Peer-correction was shown to be the best method of giving feedback.

Key words: corrective feedback, teacher-correction, peer-correction, self-correction, IELTS writing

INTRODUCTION

With the exception of a few articles (Lalande, 1982; Semke, 1984; Zamel,

1985) published in the mid to late 1980s, research on written commentary really did not get much attention until the 1990s. Thus, many issues inherent in commentary have yet to be addressed or adequately addressed in the research literature. Since Truscott published his 1996 article, "The case against grammar correction in L2 writing classes", debate about whether and how to give L2 students feedback on their written grammatical errors has been of considerable interest to researchers and classroom practitioners. There have always been two opposing views regarding the effectiveness of corrective feedback in the improvement of students' writing ability. The first group is of the opinion that corrective feedback is of no use in writing courses. However, the second group believes that feedback is an integral element of writing courses, and does improve the students' writing ability.

On several grounds, Truscott (1996) claimed that grammar correction had no place in writing courses, and had to be abandoned (p. 330). From an analysis of the previous studies (Semke, 1984; Zamel, 1985), he concluded that there was no convincing research evidence that error correction ever helped student writers improve the accuracy of their writing. For two major reasons, he explained that this finding should not be surprising. On the one hand, he argued that error correction overlooked SLA insights about the gradual and complex process of acquiring the forms and structures of a second language. On the other hand, he outlined a range of practical problems related to the ability and willingness of teachers to give, and of students to receive error correction. Not surprisingly, these claims have since generated a considerable amount of vigorous debate at international conferences, and in published articles. Krashen (1978, as cited in Erfanian, 2002) stated that error correction did not improve the students' production (p. 45).

On the contrary, the second group of scholars believes that giving feedback is an integral part of writing courses. Championing against the Truscott's firmly held position, Ferris (1999) claimed that Truscott's arguments were premature and overly strong, given the rapidly growing research evidence pointing to ways in which effective error correction could help at least some

student writers, providing it was selective, prioritized and clear. As Chandler (2003) pointed out, Truscott did not always take into account the fact that reported differences needed to be supported with statistically significant evidence. In addition, Ferris (1999) maintained that there were equally strong reasons for teachers to continue giving feedback, not the least of which was the belief that students had regarding its value. However, she did accept that it was necessary to consider ways of improving the practical issues highlighted by Truscott.

Despite his call for the abandonment of error correction, Truscott (1999), in his response to Ferris, acknowledged that many interesting questions remained open, and that it would be premature to claim that research had proven error correction could never be beneficial under any circumstances. Agreeing with the future research focus proposed by Ferris (1999), he suggested that attention be given to investigating which methods, techniques, or approaches to error correction lead to short-term or long-term improvement, and whether students make better progress in monitoring for certain types of errors than others. Allwright (1995, as cited in Erfanian, 2002) suggested that learners' errors should be corrected, if learners can not correct themselves, and teachers need coherent policies and clear classroom strategies in order to avoid confusion in their learners (p. 56). Hendrickson (1978) stated that error correction did improve the proficiency of ESL/EFL learners, if they were errors that inhibited communication, stigmatized the learners, and occurred frequently (p. 390). Even Truscott changed his mind, and came to recognize the positive role of feedback in improving the students' writing ability. However, it is not clear yet who should give the feedback.

In some classes, the teacher provides the correct form for the students. Most of the students prefer to be corrected by their teachers, because the teacher is seen as the authority and the source of knowledge in the classroom. There are, however, some counter-arguments. Walz (1982) pointed out that giving the students the correct answers did not establish a pattern for long term memory.

The next active participants in the process of language learning are the

learners. The learners can do the correction individually, or in groups. Self-correction and Peer-correction are the methods that are used in the more learner-centered approaches these days. Both of the methods seem to be promising and effective. The students' Self-correction can have a long-lasting effect on their memory, because they are involved in the process directly and actively, and this can activate the operations necessary for long-term retention. Krashen and Pan (1975, as cited in Walz, 1982) found that advanced learners could correct 95% of their errors (p. 56).

Peer-correction is another way to involve students in the teaching and learning process. This method, too, can be informative, because it comes from someone who has had the same experience. Furthermore, it is less threatening, because no scoring is involved.

Statement of the Problem

Now with such a diversity of ideas regarding the treatment of errors, teachers come to class with no predetermined decision as to how to correct students' errors. Furthermore, teachers are not patient enough to correct the students' errors all the time carefully. Even if we are so optimistic about the situation, and think that teachers will correct the errors thoroughly, it is the students who do not use the opportunities offered. After receiving the papers peppered with discouraging red pen, they just have a look at the score, and fold the paper desperately, and put it in their bag, and never look at it again. Some scholars(Semke, 1984; Truscott, 1996) have cautioned us against the devastating effect of demoralizing red pen on the motivation of students, and have suggested that we look for more humanistic approaches to correction that do not discourage students.

On the one hand, teaching theorist and practitioners (Cross, 2000; Gardner, 1999) unanimously believe that we should look at the learning side of the coin more seriously, and involve our students in the process of learning. Most of the methods are nowadays learner-centered, and students are expected not to be passive participants. On the other hand, De Guerrero and Villamil

(1998) believed that peer-correction fitted into Vygotsky's theory of cognitive development, because he put emphasis on the social origin of language and thought. It is clear that Vygotsky's concept of "Zone of Proximal Development" (Vygotsky, 1978) in particular suggests that "communicative collaboration with adults and peers contributes to the development of self-regulation, which is the capacity for independent problem solving" (P. 86).

There are some arguments against the possibility and efficiency of self-correction and peer-correction, however (Palloff & Pratt, 1999; Topping, 1998). Even though peer and self correction enjoy solid theoretical and empirical support, there are still questions about the learners' capacity to help each other in solving linguistic problems in their text. Among practitioners, there seems to be a lingering feeling that L2 students are not knowledgeable enough to detect and correct errors in the target language. Furthermore, some of the problems of peer and self revision may be attributed to the cultural values and social differences among societies, that is, some like to learn individually, while others want to learn in groups.

It is obvious that there is a state of confusion regarding the most effective type of feedback. The teachers and researchers are confused, and can not decide precisely which one is the best method. It seemed, therefore, that more research on the effects of peer and self revision on L2 writing was needed in order to help teachers choose the most effective type of feedback.

Thus, this study aimed to investigate the impacts of three different methods of giving feedback on the IELTS writing performance of Iranian students, and find the most efficient type of feedback to help the writing instructors and students. More specifically, the study sought to make a comparison between Self-correction and Teacher-correction, Teacher-correction and Peer-correction, and Peer-correction and Self-correction methods of giving feedback. As a result, these three null hypotheses were formulated.

1. There is no significant difference between the IELTS writing performances of teacher-correction and self-correction groups due to the method of giving feedback.

2. There is no significant difference between the IELTS writing performances of teacher-correction and peer-correction groups due to the method of giving feedback.

3. There is no significant difference between the IELTS writing performances of peer-correction and self-correction groups due to the method of giving feedback.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant in at least four ways. Firstly, as it was discussed in the previous sections, the traditional way of Teacher-correction did not prove successful, and most of the scholars (Cohen, 1987; Zamel, 1985) in the field of writing viewed it as inappropriate for writing courses. Zamel (1985) and Cohen (1987) identified the lack of ESL students' revision strategies, attributing the problem in part to writing instructors who were mostly uncertain of the best way to provide feedback to their students.

The next reason for focusing on self-correction and peer-correction methods was that most of the researches done in Iran concentrated on teacher-correction versus no-correction, or teacher-correction versus self-correction. Furthermore, few studies done with regard to self-correction and peer-correction yielded different and opposing results. Finally, this study was significant because of the strong theoretical support for these two methods. They have captured the attention of many writing teachers and researchers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Some of the researches conducted in past compared at least two of these methods of giving feedback, that is, self versus teacher, self versus peer, or teacher versus peer. These studies are reviewed chronologically. Lalande (1982) compared the effects of self-correction versus teacher-correction on compositions in fourth-quarter college German classes. The self-correcting group had statistically fewer errors at the end of the experiment than did the

control group, who received teacher correction and rewrote their work. Lalande concluded that the combination of one's errors and rewriting with problem-solving techniques was significantly beneficial for developing writing skills in German. In a subsequent study, Lyster (1998) found that corrective sequences involving negotiation of form (i.e., feedback types that provided clues for self-repair rather than correct reformulations) were more likely than recasts and explicit corrections to lead to immediate repair of lexical and grammatical errors, whereas recasts were found to be effective in leading to the repair of phonological errors. Later on, three studies were conducted in Iran, an EFL context, to investigate the impact of feedback on writing or accuracy. Yeganehfar (2000) compared the effect of teacher-correction versus self-correction on Iranian students' writing proficiency. The participants were 20 Upper-Intermediate Iranians students. At the end, she reached the conclusion that the experimental group who received correction from the teacher performed much better than the self-correction group in the post-test. Bahrami (2002) investigated the effect of three different types of correction on the writing ability of 30 female Upper-Intermediate Iranian students. She studied three methods of teacher-correction, self-correction (underlining), and minimal marking (indicating the type of errors). The results showed that minimal marking and self correction were more effective strategies than the traditional teacher correction. Erfanian (2002) studied the efficacy of self-correction strategy on the development of Iranian EFL learners' linguistic competence. He compared self-correction with the traditional teacher-correction. The study came to the point that self correction was a good way of providing feedback on written work, and led to the development of linguistic competence of Iranian learners. One year later, Chandler (2003) studied the effect of four types of feedback on the writing accuracy of 36 music students at an American university. The criterion for accuracy was the number of errors per one hundred words. He argued that underlining with description was the most beneficial type of feedback. Teacher-correction was the second most efficient strategy, but the other two techniques of only underlining and description did not have any significant

impact on students writing ability. The latest study investigating the effects of feedback on revision is Nakanishi (2007). She compared the effect of four different types of feedback on the essay writing of 40 Japanese intermediate EFL learners. A total of 40 Japanese female second-year college students majoring in music participated in the study. They were divided into four groups: self-feedback, peer-feedback, teacher-feedback, and teacher-and-peer feedback. Group D who was required to revise after peer and teacher feedback gained higher scores than any other group. On the other hand, Group A who was required to revise after self-feedback gained lower scores than any other group. However, there was no significant difference between the four different methods. Ninety percent of Group D students considered that peer-and-teacher feedback was useful. On the other hand, only 25% of Group A students considered self-feedback was useful.

The second group of studies compared the effect of one of these methods of giving feedback, or studied other types of feedback. Mendonca and Johnson (1994) described the negotiations which occurred during ESL students' peer-reviews, and the ways in which these negotiations shaped students' subsequent revision activities. In 53% of all the instances, students incorporated peer comments in the final draft, but in 37% of the instances, students revised the text in the ways that were not discussed in the peer reviews. And the remaining 10% of the instances, they did not revise the text, even though they were discussed in the sessions. A decade later, Ryoo (2004) studied the effects of teacher feedback on EFL students' writing in a Korean university class. This experimental study aimed at examining the inconclusive and contradictory claims made about the nature and effects of teacher feedback. The participants were 41 students of a class entitled Basic English II, primarily 19-year old freshmen from various fields, but not restricted to them. They wrote a one- or two-page essay about their life, and were required to submit their essays 3 times during the term for receiving feedback. The feedback addressed the content, organization, and grammar problems of the essay. Compared to the first drafts, the final drafts revealed sufficient improvement in terms of logical flows and grammar. The students wrote

longer, and more coherent texts. And finally, Li and Lin (2007) investigated the effect of teacher indirect feedback and revision on the acquisition of the present unreal conditional in a Chinese EFL college classroom context. Results of the study suggested a very positive role of revision combined with teacher indirect feedback in the Chinese EFL college context. They clearly showed that receiving teacher feedback without revising did not improve the accuracy in such a setting.

RESEARCH METHOD

Study Setting and Participants

The participants of the study were 54 students of English who were studying at Rashtchi Branch of Tehran University Jihad Institute, located in Tehran. After the pre-test of writing was given to all the candidates, 54 students who were almost at the same level of writing were randomly assigned to three groups of 18 students. Ages of the participants ranged from 20 to 28. They were doing their B.S. or M.S. degrees in different fields such as medicine, or engineering. Thirty of the students were male, and the other 24 were female. Some of the students, mostly medicine students, had done some paragraph writing, whereas engineering students did not have much background about writing. The classes were held three times a week, Saturday, Monday, and Wednesday. In order to neutralize any possible effect of different materials, the same books were introduced for the three classes. The researcher himself was the teacher of all the classes.

The course lasted 10 weeks for a total of 30 sessions, each of which lasting about 105 minutes. The research was conducted in the Winter Semester which lasted from January to March of 2007. The main books of the course were entitled: 101 helpful hints for IELTS, preparation and practice for IELTS general module. The study was concerned with the second task of IELTS Writing that is essay writing.

Research Design

In this study, the data were gathered by three tests, including one paper-based TOEFL Test, and two IELTS Essay Writing tests. One IELTS Essay Writing test was given at the beginning of the term functioning as our pre-test, and the second one as our post-test at the end of the term. Jihad Institute itself gave the students a paper-based TOEFL test as placement test for assigning them in different levels. So, it was likely that the students were almost at the same level of proficiency. Although Jihad Institute gave the students paper-based TOEFL test which reduced the number of candidates from 100 to 75, this test alone did not suffice to show that students were at the same level. The researcher wanted to be completely sure that the students were at the same level at their writing ability, and asked the students to write an essay at the beginning of the term which functioned as the pre-test of the study. This test reduced the number of students from 75 to 54 who were divided into three groups of 18. Six students were quite poor at their writing, so they were excluded from the participants. In addition to these students, other 15 students did not accept to participate in the study, and rewrite their essays due to different reasons such as busy work schedule, being unable to rewrite each essay, or being absent some sessions. The study was a quasi-experimental design; it was similar to experimental designs, except that the participants were not randomly selected for the study (Hatch & Farhady, 1981).

There were two variables in this study. The dependent variable was the writing proficiency which was measured through IELTS Essay Writing test. The independent variable was the method of giving feedback: Teacher-correction, Self-correction and Peer-correction. In this study, descriptive data were collected for the writing pre-test and post-test. The One-way Between-groups ANOVA was adopted to see whether there existed any difference among the writing performance of students prior to, and after the treatment. And the last statistical test used was Scheffe test in order to find exactly where the differences lay.

Instruments

IELTS Writing Test

The Academic writing test in IELTS exam lasts for 60 minutes. The writing test contains two compulsory tests, namely Task 1, and Task 2. In Task 1, students are asked to describe graphs, bar charts, pie charts, and diagrams. In Task 2, candidates are given an essay title on a fairly general subject. Task 1 assesses the ability to analyze data objectively without giving an opinion, whereas Task 2 usually requires a subjective piece of writing on a fairly general topic. In addition, it is worth noting that the exam is not testing knowledge of English language, but rather competence in using English. In other words, it is not testing memory. Awareness of this might help reduce some of the problems that many candidates have in the IELTS exam. In the exam, the minimum word limit for Task 1 is 150 words, and students are advised to spend 20 minutes on this part of the test. For Task 2, the minimum word limit is 250 words, on which it is wise to spend 40 minutes. In both tasks, there is no upper word limit. It is suggested to write between 150 and 180 words for Task 1, and between 250 and 300 words for Task 2. The value of the marks given to each task is reflected in the time. Task 2 carries twice the number of marks as Task 1. In task 2, candidates are presented with a point of view, argument or problem. The candidates are assessed on their ability to present a solution to a problem, present and justify an opinion, compare and contrast evidence and ideas, evaluate and challenge ideas, evidence or arguments. The General Module Writing exam lasts for 60 minutes. The second task is similar to the second task of Academic Module. Task 1 is designed to test the ability to write a particular kind of letter. It may be a personal (but semi-formal) letter perhaps to a friend, a family member, or someone you know or are soon to meet; or it may be a more formal letter, perhaps to a person within a particular institution such as a bank, or college. In either case, the student should respond to a given problem by requesting information or giving an explanation of a situation. The problem is clearly

given in the task; the letter should help solve the problem.

The only instrument used in this study was the second task of IELTS Writing, which is Essay Writing. This study concentrated on the second task due to the following reasons. Firstly, the first task of IELTS writing is different in General and Academic module. The second reason for focusing on Task 2 was that Essay writing is more general, and not limited to IELTS writing. Furthermore, in the second task, students are required to write more words, hence allowing more room for making mistakes and corrective feedback. The pre-test and post-test given to students were of this type. The topics of pre and post test were as follows:

Topic for pre-test: Most young people without a partner would prefer to have a boyfriend or girlfriend. Yet being in a relationship when you are young is not always a good idea. Do you agree or disagree with this idea? Give reasons for your answers (Adams & Peck, 2002, p. 125).

Topic for post-test: Going overseas for university study is an exciting prospect for many people. But while it may offer some advantages, it is probably better to stay home because of difficulties a student inevitably encounters living and studying in a different culture. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement? Give reasons for your answers (Tucker & Bemmel, 2002, p. 133).

Scoring System

It was not so easy to have access to certified IELTS examiners to do the scoring; thus the researcher came to realize that the best way was to score the tests with the help of a certified examiner. Two experienced IELTS teachers, the researcher and one of his colleagues, did the marking of the papers. The procedure started with a briefing session in which the examiner gave detailed instruction regarding the scoring procedures. Although it is not the norm to mark the papers twice in IELTS, in order to ensure that the scores were as accurate as possible, both teachers marked all of the papers. The average of the scores given by two teachers was the final mark of the papers. The

scoring procedure for IELTS (Jakeman, 2003, pp. 7-8) and the examiner's detailed instructions were the criteria against which the scoring was done. After the briefing session, the teachers scored the pre-test papers of all the students. To see whether the teachers' scoring was as close to each other as possible, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was used, and a correlation of 0.85 was obtained which was much higher than the critical value of 0.27. This test was used to ensure the Inter-rater Reliability of the two raters in their scoring.

TABLE 1
Inter-rater Reliability of the Writing Tests

Number	Degree of Freedom	R.Observed	R.Critical
54	52	0.85	0.27

Data Collection Procedure

After the pre-test was given, and the results were recorded, the treatment which lasted for 8 weeks started. All of the students were informed of the approach to teaching and correcting writing. Two lists of codes (appendixes A and B) that the teachers used for giving feedback were explained through examples, not to cause confusion later on. All of the basic points of essay writing were taught in the classes, and the students were assigned to write an essay each week of the treatment at home, and bring it to the class for correction. Students were required to read and rewrite their papers, and submit it to the teacher next week; otherwise, their next essays were not corrected. In group A, Teacher-correction group, the teacher provided feedback, and made all the necessary revisions; the students had to rewrite their essays with remarks. In group B, Self-correction group, the teacher gave feedback on the problematic areas of the essay, and the students themselves had to correct the essay, and rewrite it again. In group C, Peer-correction group, the students corrected their essays with the help of each other, and rewrote their papers in groups of three students. The error codes used in this study were taken from two comprehensive lists by Chandler (2003, p. 295) and Bitchener, Young, and Cameron (2005, p. 204). However, some needed

codes which were not present in the list were added to the list.

Data Analysis and Statistical Procedure

All the data were computed by Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) version 11. The first statistics used was Pearson Product-Moment Correlation to ensure that there was sufficient correlation between raters in their scorings. To understand the general picture of the participants, a preliminary analysis was then conducted by computing the descriptive statistics of the pre-test and post-test. Furthermore, a One-way ANOVA was run on the results of pre-test and post-test to see if there existed any difference among the performance of three groups. And the last test used was a Scheffe Test to determine where exactly the differences lay.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Statistics of the Writing Pre-test

Table 2 summarizes the descriptive statistics for the writing pre-test. The scores of the students on the pre-test ranged from 3 to 6, and the mean of the pre-test was 4.64. The low standard deviation of 0.76 might indicate that the students were at the same level, but it was not enough.

TABLE 2
Descriptive Statistics of the Writing Pre-test

Scores	Frequency	Percent
3.0	2	3.70
3.5	3	5.55
4.0	16	29.62
4.5	4	7.40
5.0	19	35.18
5.5	5	9.25
6.0	5	9.25
Total	54	100

One-way ANOVA Results of the Writing Pre-test

The researcher wanted to ensure that there was no significant difference among the three groups of the study prior to the commencement of the research. To that end, a One-way ANOVA was run on the results of the writing pre-test. After analyzing the results, it was revealed that all the three groups were almost at the same level, and there was no significant difference between the writing performances of the three groups. The results of the One-way ANOVA are reported in Table 3.

TABLE 3
One-way ANOVA Results of the Writing Pre-test

	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	Observed.F	Critical.F
Between Groups	0.343	2	0.171	0.282	3.18
Within Groups	30.972	51	0.607		
Total	31.315	53			

According to Table 3, most of the difference (0.60) was seen within groups, and a small amount of difference (0.17) was found between groups. Besides that, the observed F for the writing pre-test was 0.282, whereas the critical F for degree of freedom (2, 51) was 3.18. The observed F was much less than the critical F, hence, it was manifest that all the three groups belonged to the same population, and there was no significant difference in their writing performance before the research started. Having ensured that there was no significant difference among the three groups of the study, the treatment began.

Descriptive Statistics of the Writing Post-test

Table 4 presents some descriptive statistics about the writing post-test. The mean of scores increased from 4.64 in pre-test to 6.17 in post-test, which was the first indicator of the positive effect of the treatment. The scores of the students ranged from 4 to 8, some students getting top marks. The standard deviation of the post-test was 1.71, much higher than that of the pre-test,

showing that the groups might not be homogenous after the treatment. However, these were not enough, and a One-way ANOVA was employed to see whether there was any difference among the performances of the students.

TABLE 4
Descriptive Statistics of the Writing Post-test

Scores	Frequency	Percent
4.0	3	5.55
4.5	3	5.55
5.0	11	20.37
5.5	8	14.81
6.0	7	12.96
7.0	9	16.66
8.0	13	24.07
Total	54	100

One-way ANOVA Results of the Writing Post-test

This section discusses and analyzes the performances of the students on the post-test. Once again, the statistical test used was One-way ANOVA. Not surprisingly, the results of the One-way ANOVA (displayed in Table 5) provided the researcher with convincing evidence to believe that the groups differed in their post-test writing. Here, almost all of the differences (18.56) existed between groups, while there was a very small amount of difference (1.05) within groups. Furthermore, the observed F of the writing post-test was 17.543, and the critical F for (2, 51) degrees of freedom is 3.18. It was clear that the three groups differed in their performance on the writing post-test. In other words, it was shown that the method of providing feedback did affect the writing performance of the participants.

TABLE 5
One-way ANOVA Results of the Writing Post-test

	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	Observed.F	Critical.F
Between Groups	37.120	2	18.560	17.543	3.18
Within Groups	53.958	51	1.058		
Total	91.079	53			

Scheffe Test Results of the Writing Post-test

In order to find out which groups outperformed others, it was necessary to run a post hoc comparison among groups to whether reject or accept the null hypothesis of the study. From among the possible methods of post hoc comparisons, the researcher used the most widely used and conservative of all that was Scheffe Test. Therefore, a Scheffe Test was run on the writing post-test, the results of which are summarized in Table 6. The asterisks show that the difference among groups is statistically significant, and the plus or minus sign shows which group is superior. If the sign is minus, it means that the second group is better in performance.

TABLE 6
Scheffe Test Results for the Writing Post-test

Comparisons		Mean Difference	Std.Error	Sig.
Teacher.C	Self.C	-0.917*	0.343	.000
	Peer.C	-2.028*	0.343	.000
Self.C	Teacher.C	0.917*	0.343	.000
	Peer.C	-1.111*	0.343	.000
Peer.C	Teacher.C	2.028*	0.343	.000
	Self.C	1.111*	0.343	.000

The results of the Scheffe Test displayed in Table 6 revealed that there was a significant difference between Self-correction and Teacher-correction groups writing performance on the post test because of the way of giving feedback. The students in Self-correction group outperformed the traditional Teacher-correction group. In the same manner, the results of the previous studies such as (Bahrami, 2002; Chandler, 2003; Erfanian, 2002; Lalande, 1982; Lyster, 1998) showed that self-correction was an effective way of giving feedback. However, this was quite the opposite of Yeganehfarr's (2000) study which showed that the teacher-correction group outperformed the self-correction group in their writing. One possible explanation might be that in self-correction group, the students were directly and actively involved in the process of learning, and this must have brought about a deeper learning.

The next finding was that the students who did the correction with peers in groups performed better than those who received correction from their teachers. This was in line with the results of the studies such as Mendonca and Johnson (1994) in that they found peer-feedback an effective method for improving writing accuracy and performance.

The last comparison to be made was between self-correction and peer-correction groups. As it could be understood from Table 6, the best way of giving feedback was through the comments of peers, this method turned out to be even more effective than self-correction method. This finding corresponded with Mendonca and Johnson's (1994) study in which they concluded that peer feedback was more effective than self feedback. There seems to be a positive correlation between the degree of involvement in the correcting process and the amount of learning. Self-correction and peer-correction involved the learners in the learning process, and this was possibly the reason that they were more successful than teacher correction.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The study demonstrated that Teacher-correction method just wasted the time and energy. However, the two methods of self-correction and peer-correction were very effective in improving the writing performance and accuracy of students. It is suggested that teachers employ these two effective techniques in their writing courses, and make their classes much more active and fruitful. Furthermore, it was shown that students could be trained to appreciate revision, and develop a global approach to writing. Students in peer-correction group said that, in their discussions, they mostly focused on meaning not form. Besides these points, peer feedback encouraged students to write reader-based meaningful texts. Therefore, teachers need to be made aware of, and experiment with a wider range of feedback and error-correction strategies appropriate for different levels and students.

This study was suffering from a number of limitation and delimitations.

The first one was that participants were not randomly selected, due to the small number of students and IELTS classes. The low number of students, just 54, and the fact that all of them were studying in one Language Institute might not allow us generalizability across other contexts. Last, but not least, was that writing proficiency was defined as IELTS writing. Nevertheless, the study provides the writing teachers with two effective methods of giving feedback, and allows them to have a much more relaxed, motivating, and lively atmosphere in their classes.

The research on written commentary is not thorough and comprehensive. Some of what teachers do can be informed by research, and a lot of what they do also needs to be informed through critical examination of their practices. Hopefully, this paper is not an ending, but a beginning of further inquiry. To understand the nature of feedback better and further, the teachers should carefully and systematically scrutinize their commentary practices, and share their findings with each other. Further research can explore in greater depth how the teacher and student factors such as teachers' prior grammatical knowledge, training and experience, attitudes regarding feedback, and students' motivation and attitudes toward feedback can be suitable choices for future research. More research is needed to increase the teachers' understanding of what is going on in peer feedback groups, what strategies they use, or how they use feedback.

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APPENDIX A
List of Codes by Chandler (2003)

Errors and examples…………………………………………..Codes

Errors and examples	Codes
Paragraph: Not indenting with each new speaker.	Indent
Sentence Structure: I suggest you to go with me.	Struc.
Meaning unclear: I planned how to divide my cabins in a good way.	Mean
Awkward: He is the brother of her.	Struc
Idiom: She asked me to lay the table.	Idm
Fragment: Because I did not want to go.	Frag
Run-on: She told me about it, I answered her question, she left.	Run
Punctuation: I wanted her to come; because she knew the way.	Punc
Capitalization: she said Love was very Important.	Cap
Delete: She told to me her answer.	Del
Insert: He is listening music.	>
Word order: I and my sister came.	W.O
Wrong word: He is becoming to mature.	W.W
Repetition: She is a famous and well-known singer.	Rep
Wrong form: It has stopped to rain.	Form
Agreement: she have to do it.	AGR
Verb-tense: If I know, I would tell you.	Tens
Voice: When it be happens, we will know.	Act/pas
Plural: Two woman came.	Num
Article: We saw dog. A dog was named Fido. I like the education.	Art
Pronoun: She is a friend of myself.	Pro
Spelling: receive	Spell

APPENDIX B
Error Types by Bitchener et.al (2005)

Errors_____Codes

Errors	Codes
Prepositions	Prep
Definite Articles	Art
Indefinite Articles	Art
Tense	Tens
Modals	Mod
Passive	Act/pass
Singular Vs Plural verb	Num
Verb Duplication	Rep
Pronouns	Pro
Word order	W.O