

University of Mississippi

eGrove

---

Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Graduate School

---

2013

## The Effect Of Direct And Indirect Corrective Feedback Taking A Sociocultural Approach

Brenda Aromu Wawire  
*University of Mississippi*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://egrove.olemiss.edu/etd>



Part of the [First and Second Language Acquisition Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Wawire, Brenda Aromu, "The Effect Of Direct And Indirect Corrective Feedback Taking A Sociocultural Approach" (2013). *Electronic Theses and Dissertations*. 898.  
<https://egrove.olemiss.edu/etd/898>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at eGrove. It has been accepted for inclusion in Electronic Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of eGrove. For more information, please contact [egrove@olemiss.edu](mailto:egrove@olemiss.edu).

THE EFFECT OF DIRECT AND INDIRECT CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK TAKING A  
SOCIOCULTURAL APPROACH

A thesis  
presented in partial fulfillments of requirements  
for the degree of Masters of Arts  
in the Department of Modern Languages  
The University of Mississippi

by

BRENDA AROMU WAWIRE

May 2013

Copyright Brenda A. Wawire 2013

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

## ABSTRACT

Debate on the effectiveness and usefulness of written corrective feedback has centered on Truscott's 1996 article that placed a strong case against grammar correction as ineffective and harmful and therefore should be abandoned. A growing body of research has proved the value of judicious and purposeful error correction and has also put forward guidelines to guide such pedagogy. The second language acquisition process is deemed to be a very complex and slow process. Therefore it is paramount that corrective feedback be structured according to an individual learner's linguistic ability.

Contributing to this research base, this study investigated whether there is an effect of the type of feedback (direct and indirect corrective followed by a 15 minute one-on-one tutorial session) administered within a learner's zone of proximal development on the past progressive verb form and to find out whether this resulted in improved linguistic accuracy. Fourteen high intermediate L2 learners from a university south of America formed a control group and two treatment groups. They were tested two times on two controlled and two times on free writing activities that elicited the use of the past progressive verb form.

The study also examined students' reactions to feedback structured in a sociocultural framework through response to six point Likert questionnaires. The study did not find a statistical significance on the effect of direct and indirect corrective feedback structured within the ZPD on the students' accuracy. Despite a lack of a statistical proof the results suggest that indirect corrective structured within the ZPD is superior to direct corrective feedback structured within the ZPD. The results of the questionnaire indicated that students appreciate and

prefer feedback structured within the sociocultural framework. The results showed that they value feedback as a dialogic process and would like it to be conferred individually by a more knowledgeable peer. They appreciate it if their teachers focus on one type of error at a time and also if assistance is withheld once they achieve autonomy. Lastly, they indicated that they should be allowed enough time to internalize the errors that are being corrected or to internalize the mediational means.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis examines the effect of direct and indirect corrective feedback taking a sociocultural approach. It is informed by my language learning and teaching experience as an ESL learner and as a graduate Student in the TESOL program at the University of Mississippi. This research project would not have been possible without extensive external support. I want to take this opportunity to thank all the people who more or less contributed directly to make this research project successful.

First and foremost, I would like to thank my committee members Dr. Tamara Warhol, Dr. Esim Erdim and Dr. Michael Raines for your help, guidance, and advice, explicit and constructive feedback. In particular I would like to give special thanks to Dr. Tamara Warhol for her selfless support and guidance through this long journey. I consider myself lucky for having such a highly involved and supportive supervisor. It was good to know that I would stop by or email anytime to ask questions and clarifications and readily find support and encouragement. Thank you for being the perfect role model. I have learned so much working alongside you. I would also like to acknowledge Dr. Dyer for his assistance, generosity and support over the years as the head of our department.

I would like to pass my gratitude to the students who took part in this research project and to their teacher for welcoming me into their classroom. This research project would not have been complete without their cooperation and willingness. Furthermore I would like to thank Mary Beth and Trent from the Intensive English Program at the University of Mississippi for helping with rating the participants' compositions.

I would also like to thank my dear friends and family for their support and encouragement during the project. Thanks to mum and dad, Maurice and Gladys, for your encouragements and being the role model of success. I appreciate my brothers and sisters for believing in me. Thanks to my life partner John for providing unconditional love and cheering me up when I needed it most.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ESL - English as a second language

IEP - Intensive English Program

RM ANOVAS - repeated measures analysis of variance

SCT - Sociocultural theory

WCF - Written corrective feedback

ZPD - Zone of proximal development



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iv
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	vi
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION .....	1
1.1 Statement of problem .....	3
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE .....	5
2.1 Objection to written corrective feedback .....	5
2.2 Feedback and error.....	8
2.3 Direct and indirect feedback .....	9
2.4 Comparison between direct and indirect written corrective feedback .....	9
2.5 Sociocultural theory .....	15
2.6 Sociocultural theory and second language writing .....	17
2.7 Research questions and hypothesis .....	20
2.8 Significance of the study.....	20
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY .....	22
3.1 Setting & Participants .....	22
3.2 Treatment .....	23
3.3 Target Structure.....	24
3.4 Instruments .....	24
3.5 Procedures .....	28

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS .....	30
CHAPTER 5: RESULTS .....	31
5.1 Discussion.....	48
5.2 Pedagogical implications .....	64
5.3 Limitations and future studies.....	66
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	71
LIST OF APPENDICES .....	83
Appendix A.....	84
Appendix B .....	86
Appendix C .....	88
Appendix D.....	90
Appendix E .....	92
Appendix F.....	96
Appendix G.....	98
VITA .....	102

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Many researchers have examined the concept of written corrective feedback in second language writing. However, there seems to be little consensus about the usefulness of written corrective feedback. Some researchers feel that it does not help L2 learners to gain linguistic accuracy. Scholars have not agreed on the pedagogical strategies to employ when administering written corrective feedback (WCF). It is considered time consuming for the teacher, insignificant and likely to raise affective filters in students. Though some scholars have made strong cases for abandonment of WCF, it is highly relevant in second language writing. Truscott (1996) argues for the abolishment of grammar correction in L2 writing classes. He claims that research does not have convincing evidence to show that error correction ever helps student writers. He further notes that error correction practically overlooks SLA insights about how different aspects of language are acquired, and that practical problems related to willingness to give and receive error feedback make it a futile endeavor. Contrary to Truscott's observations, several studies demonstrate that error feedback can help students to improve their accuracy in the short term (Polio & Fleck 1998), on revisions of the same essay or on targeted patterns of errors over a period of time (Fathman & Whalley 1990; Ferris 1995 c, 1997; Lalande 1992).

Some significant findings show that students expect feedback from their instructors in order to know how well they have succeeded in their writing task requirements (Leki, Cumming & Silva, 2008). Feedback also helps them to find out what they should try to learn in order to improve their writing. It is important to note that corrective feedback is highly valued by students

as it helps them to improve their writing (Cohen 1987; Cohen & Calvacanti 1990; Ferris 1995& Roberts 2001; Leki 1991; Radecki & Swales 1988) as cited in (Ferris, 1995).

Based on the insights from SLA research, it is unrealistic to expect L2 writers' production to be error free. These errors may be attributed to several factors including, the second language acquisition process, which takes time, therefore students' accuracy does not improve overnight. In order to curb this, L2 error correction should be tailored to L2 learners' linguistic knowledge and experience. In addition, instruction should be focused on learners' unique linguistic deficits and needs. SLA follows predetermined chronological stages that include vocabulary; morphology; phonology and syntax all of which represent separately occurring stages of acquisition. Errors that L2 learners make reflect their SLA processes (Ferris, 2000).

Direct and indirect feedback are among the important dichotomies discussed in second language writing literature (Bates, Lane & 1993; Ferris& Hedgecock 1998; Henrickson, 1978, 1980; Lalande 1982). However, few studies have employed feedback strategies that accommodate learners' individual differences. According to (Sheen, 2010), corrective feedback promotes learning because it induces noticing and noticing the gap in L2. Therefore, when feedback is provided learners should be able to internalize the feedback before they can master and incorporate it in their future writing tasks. Internalization is appropriated through negotiation of meaning among peers or between teacher and student.

This study will consider a sociocultural perspective when administering written corrective feedback. Sociocultural theory views learning as a social phenomenon embedded in specific cultural, historical, and institutional context. Social elements are constitutive of cognition and thus learning is one of the variables affecting processes that reside mainly in the

learner's head. Sociocultural theory assumes that higher forms of thinking and the ability to perform certain complex skills originate in and are shaped by social interaction (Vygotsky 1976). Language is the most important symbolic tool that mediates higher forms of human mental functioning. Key concepts of Sociocultural Theory (SCT) hence forth include mediation, developmental change, and cultural embeddedness. In Vygotsky's view, an optimal scenario for development, and hence internalization, is the zone of proximal development (ZPD) Vygotsky, (1978). In his view, learning is the ability to do something under someone's mediation in the ZPD. This mediation is provided through assisted learning or scaffolding, which is a dialogically produced inter-psychological process through which learners internalize knowledge they co-construct with more capable peers. Collaboration is facilitated through negotiation of meaning by the novice and expert; in this case both the learner and the instructor inform the usefulness of corrective feedback. Scaffolding is one of the writing techniques that make up the process in which experts help novice learners to develop higher writing skills. In a tandem agreement, (Kepner,1991; Lalande,1982; Paton, 2002; Reichelt,1999,2001; Semke 1982, 1984) suggest that error correction coupled with feedback provided by an expert results in a students' better understanding of a particular error fact and aids the student when correcting it in subsequent writing.

#### Statement of problem

Many scholars have asserted the significance of direct and indirect written corrective feedback (Bates, Lanes & Lange 1993; Ferris 1995a, 1995c; Ferris & Hedgcock 1998; Hendrickson 1978, 1980; Lalande 1982). However, relatively few studies have situated direct or indirect corrective feedback within the learners' zone of proximal development. In addition to this, few studies have investigated whether this form of corrective feedback process results in

improved linguistic accuracy in L2 writers. Also, most of these studies have not explored writing scaffolding techniques in which mediation is appropriated and internalized to enhance inter-language development. Research on error correction and second language acquisition reveals a great deal of individual variation in student ability to process teacher feedback and utilize it for their development as writers (Ferris, 2000).

Due to these varied individual differences, it is important for research to explore the effectiveness of corrective feedback tailored within a student's ZPD. It is also paramount that feedback is tailored towards the developmental stage of the learner. Most studies have failed to provide feedback that is based on a learner's developmental stage. Truscott 1996 made a similar reference when he observed that grammatical learning follows natural orders; therefore, problems can arise when instructional sequences are inconsistent with those orders. When corrective feedback is administered at a point before learners are ready, it is rendered ineffective.

In order to address the gap in literature, this study seeks to determine the impact of direct and indirect corrective feedback provided within the learner's ZPD. The study will attempt to investigate whether scaffolding writing techniques employed when administering corrective feedback lead to improved linguistic accuracy. In other words, the purpose of this study is to investigate whether learners who receive direct or indirect WCF within their zone of proximal development improve their linguistic accuracy in the long run. The study will take a socio-cultural approach in the analysis of new data.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### Objections to written corrective feedback

Debate has centered on Truscott's (1996) argument that correcting errors in L2 students' writing is not beneficial and is even counterproductive to students' writing development.

According to Truscott, findings of most research that compared the writing of students who received grammar correction over a period of time with those who did not receive grammar correction showed that the ability of the two groups did not differ. In support of Truscott's view, research in L1 (Knoblauch & Brannon, 1981; Hillock 1986, Krashen, 1984; Leki 1990) found that correction had little or no effect on a student's writing ability. Truscott concluded that it made no difference who the students were, how many mistakes were corrected, the detail of the comments, or in what form they were presented.

Truscott maintains that grammar correction cannot work, because of theoretical problems that stem from inter-language development which involves a complex learning process. He further notes that because researchers do not yet understand the process very well, teachers may have difficulty applying it in the classroom. Secondly, he observed that L2 grammatical learning follows natural orders therefore problems can arise when instructional sequences are inconsistent with those orders. When students are corrected on a point before they are ready, the correction is not likely to have much value. The end result of ineffective grammar correction is due to the existence of developmental sequences and the teachers' inability to deal with them.

Truscott also reports about practical problems on the part of teachers. On the one hand,

they may not notice errors. If they do recognize the errors, they may still not have a good understanding of the correct usage. On the other hand, teachers may detect the occurrence of an error but they may not know exactly why it is an error. If they do understand it, they might still be unable to give a good explanation. On the part of students, they may understand an explanation as to why an error occurred, but are likely to forget the new knowledge rather quickly or they may not be sufficiently motivated to correct errors. The harmful effects of grammar correction reported by the study include: stress, tension, and demotivation. Because of this, learners do not enjoy learning; it is inherently unpleasant. Also, students tend to shorten and simplify their writing in order to avoid correction.

Studies by Ferris (1999 a, 2002, 2004) and Goldstein, (2001, 2005) contest Truscott's conclusions. They demonstrate the value of judicious, purposeful error correction as well as principles to guide such pedagogy. These studies disagree with Truscott's critical lack of definition of the term error correction. The major contention emanates from Truscott's inability to compare subjects in various studies; the research paradigms across studies varied widely, and Truscott overstates his negative evidence and disregards studies that contradict his thesis. To illustrate this, L2 error correction studies cited by Truscott examine very diverse groups of subjects. The vast majority of the studies (Cardelle & Como, 1981; Kepner, 1991; Lalande, 1982; Semke, 1984) look at subjects who were college-level foreign language students in the U.S. or who were EFL learners (Robb, Ross, & Shortreed, 1986; Sheppard, 1992). Ferris (1995) holds Truscott's (1996) conclusion as premature in Ferris' (1995) opinion. She posits that results from prior research have shown to be inconclusive because of inadequate methodology with the major drawback being lack of control groups in most studies. With key differences in subjects, research design, and instructional methods it is almost impossible to concretely support any



generalization. Hence Ferris recommends that further research is necessary before further conclusions can be arrived at.

Aside from criticisms, the aforementioned studies agree with some of Truscott's observations. Ferris (1995) agrees with the observation that syntactic, morphological, and lexical knowledge are acquired in different manners. Therefore, if that is the case, probably no single form of correction can be effective for all three. Ferris also acknowledges that teacher and student limitations may short-circuit the accuracy and effectiveness of the error correction process. She reports that teachers are repeatedly inconsistent in their ability to recognize and correct errors and give adequate explanations. As a result, students do not understand grammar feedback and are unmotivated to correct their own errors. In order to curb this, Ferris proposes that teachers should be adequately prepared for error correction. This should be coupled with practice and prioritizing key implementations to be made. She recommends that teachers should receive a thorough grounding in linguistic/syntactic theory and in how to teach grammar to L2 learners. To reiterate the same, the study of the effects of a grammar training project by Ferris, Harvey, and Nuttall, (1998) in which 12 MA TESOL students participated in a ten week tutorial program for ESL writers, reports that the M.A. graduate students showed a great deal of improvement in their ability to define key grammatical terms and also to find, identify, and correct errors in ESL students' writing.

As for the practical problems attributed to student writers, Ferris proposes that effective grammar feedback and instruction should take into account students' L1 background, English language proficiency, their previous English grammar instruction, and their editing strategies. The thoughtful writing instructor will also address the issue of student motivation by raising student awareness about the importance of accuracy in their written texts and about the need to

develop independent self-editing skills (Bates, Lane, & Lange, 1993; Ferris, 1999; Reid, 1997).

Contrary to Truscott's observation that although students believe in correction teachers should not give it, surveys of student opinion about teacher feedback have consistently affirmed the importance that L2 students place on receiving grammar correction from their teachers (Cohen, 1987; Ferris, 1995b; Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1994; Leki, 1991; Radecki & Swales, 1988) as cited in Ferris, (1995).

#### Definition of feedback and error

Lalande (1982) referred to feedback as "any procedure used to inform a learner whether an instructional response is right or wrong" (p. 141). Similarly, Bueningnen (2003) observes that corrective feedback is the marking of a student's errors by the teacher. Therefore feedback is absolutely necessary if the strategies of guided learning and problem-solving are to be invoked by the student (Lalande, 1982). Teachers are assumed to have a professional responsibility for assessing students' writing and hence are expected to have proficiency in L2, knowledge about writing and the local curriculum, and a repertoire of relevant techniques for responding to their students' writing (Leki, Cumming and Silva, 2008).

According to Hendrickson, (1968) an error is "an utterance, form or structure that a particular language deems unacceptable because of its inappropriate use or its absence in real life discourse" (p.58). Errors signal that actual learning is taking place; they can indicate a student's progress in the inter-language continuum (Corder, 1967). They are an inevitable, defining characteristic of writing with limited proficiency in a second language (Leki et.al, 2008). They observe that much pedagogical controversy revolves around the issue of how, or whether to respond to errors. Students' ideas, rhetorical organization, grammar, word choices, spelling, and punctuation are among the broad range of issues that L2 writing instructors respond to in their

written texts (Ashwell, 2000; Cohen & Calcanti, 1990; Conrad & Goldstein, 1999; Ferris, 1995, 1997; Ferris, Pezone, Tade & Tinti, 1997, Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1994; Reid, 1994; Saito, 1994). Instructors choose which of the aforementioned factors to emphasize depending upon: curriculum contexts, variable pedagogical goals or teachers' beliefs and emerging relationships with their students (Conrad & Goldstein, 1999; Cumming, 2001 c, F. Hyland & K. Hyland, 2001; Porte, 1997).

#### Direct and indirect feedback

Ferris (2006) defines direct feedback as “the provision of the correct linguistic form by the teacher to the student. This may take various forms including: crossing out an unnecessary word, phrase or morpheme; inserting a missing word, phrase, or morpheme; or writing the correct word near the erroneous form for example, above it or in the margin” (p.83). In contrast, indirect feedback “occurs when the teacher indicates in some way that an error has been made by means of an underline, circle, code, or other mark – but does not provide the form, leaving the student to solve the problem that has been called to his or her attention”( p.83). Beuningnen (2003) maintains that direct error feedback identifies both the error and the target form while indirect error feedback only consists of an indication of error (i.e. by underlining the error or providing an error code). Bitchener, Young and Cameron (2005) further expound that direct or explicit feedback occurs when the teacher identifies an error and provides the correct form, while indirect strategies refer to situations when the teacher indicates that an error has been made but does not provide a correction, thereby leaving the student to diagnose and correct it.

#### Comparison between direct and indirect written corrective feedback

Several studies suggest that indirect corrective feedback is generally preferable to direct feedback (Ferris, 1995a, 1995c, 1997; Ferris & Hedgcock, 1998). Indirect corrective feedback

forces students to engage in guided learning and problem-solving (Lalande, 1982). It also helps students build skills as independent self-editors (Bates et.al 1993). However, this hypothesis has not yet been confirmed since the results from studies exploring the relative effectiveness of direct and indirect feedback (e.g. Chandler, 2003, Ferris et.al, 2000, Frantzen, 1995; Lalande, 1982, Rob, Ross, and Shortreed 1986) are inconclusive. Brown (1994) and Ferris & Hedgcock, (1998, 2004) observe that students at a lower proficiency may not have sufficient linguistic knowledge to self-correct errors even when pointed out. Therefore a judicious combination of direct and indirect feedback, varying degrees according to the type, may be most helpful to students (Chaney, 1999; Ferris, 1999; Hendrickson, 1980).

To the contrary, several scholars have investigated the effects of direct and indirect written corrective feedback and the findings have reported conflicting observations. Lalande (1982) compared two treatments over a semester. In group one, all students' errors were corrected by the teacher; and in group 2, the teacher gave error correction using a code and the students noted all the types of errors they made. They rewrote their compositions using that feedback. The study found that students who received indirect feedback reduced their errors over time, whereas those who received direct feedback did not. Contrary to this, Robb et al. (1986) in their study compared four different types of corrective feedback over an academic year. Their findings report that the groups which received direct feedback and the three that received indirect corrective feedback in varying degrees of explicitness showed no statistically significant differences in long-term gains in accuracy though all four groups improved. Frantzen (1995) and Rob et al. (1986) conclude that both direct and indirect corrective feedback are equally effective.

A new emergent pattern evolves in Ferris & Helt's (2000) study which revealed that whereas indirect correction proved to be most effective in improving students' accuracy in

subsequent writing, students who received direct feedback made the most accurate revisions. In further support of this finding, Lalande (1982) and Chandler (2003) report that direct feedback resulted in the largest accuracy gains, not only in immediate revisions but also in subsequent writing.

In the same line, Beuningen's (2003) study investigated the effect of direct and indirect corrective feedback on 62 learners of Dutch in an experiment set up with three phases. Learners were grouped into three major groups that received treatment in the form of direct corrective feedback, indirect corrective feedback, practice writing and self-correction for the control group. Results revealed that all students who had the opportunity to revise their written products produced fewer errors in their revisions than in the initial texts. However, the study concluded that direct error correction appeared to be a more effective treatment for that study's population and resulted in short and long term accuracy improvement.

Similarly, findings of Chandler (2003) are comparable with the results of Beuningen's (2003) study. Chandler suggests that students who received direct feedback could instantly internalize the correct form, whereas students who revised their texts based on indirect error correction were not able to do so, since they did not know whether their own hypothesized corrections were indeed accurate. The study also deduced that direct error correction motivated students because direct feedback improved students' writing accuracy from initial to subsequent drafts while students in indirect corrective treatment committed more errors at Test 3 than Test 1.

Several recent studies have examined the relative effectiveness of different types of direct CF on improved linguistic accuracy. Ferris (2005) compared the effect of direct and indirect feedback. Indirect feedback was either coded or non-coded. In this study, a comparative analysis was conducted which included four treatment groups as follows: direct feedback; indirect

feedback with standard codes; indirect feedback with nonstandard codes; and indirect feedback with no codes. The findings report that students were able to utilize both direct and indirect feedback successfully in their revisions, even when the corrections had no code or inaccurate code attached.

In another study, Bitchener et al. (2005) compared the effect of three different direct feedback combinations typically practiced in advanced proficiency classroom settings: direct error correction (placed above each error) plus oral meta-linguistic explanation in the form of 5 minute one-on-one conferences; direct error correction; and no corrective feedback. The findings report that students in group one who received direct error correction and oral meta-linguistic explanation out-performed both group two and group three for the past simple tense and the definite article but found no such effect for prepositions. Researchers suggested that the addition of oral meta-linguistic explanation may have been the crucial factor in facilitating increased accuracy.

In further support of this finding, Bitchener (2008) investigated the effectiveness of four other direct feedback combinations: direct error correction with written meta-linguistic explanation (of the rule and an example of its use) and oral meta-linguistic explanation (in which discussion and clarification occurred); direct error correction with written meta-linguistic explanation (of the rule and an example of its use); direct error correction; and no corrective feedback. The targeted linguistic structures were two functional uses of the English article system (the indefinite article “a” for first mention and the definite article “the” for subsequent or anaphoric mentions). Participants in group one and group three outperformed the control group while group two only just failed to do so. This study was advanced by Bitchener & Knoch, (2008a, 2009) to include an additional 69 learners with findings which reported no difference

between the same three treatment combinations. Researchers insinuate that the larger sample size eliminated the difference in effect between group two and the other two treatment groups in the first study (Bitchener, 2008).

Taking a comparative perspective of different forms of direct corrective feedback, Ellis et.al (2008) investigated the effect of different forms of direct feedback; focused and unfocused corrective feedback on Japanese learners of English linguistic accuracy in the use of the indefinite article 'a' for a first mention and the referential definite article 'the' for the second mention. The results reveal that the difference between the two groups was insignificant. The corrective feedback also resulted in learners' procedural ability to use articles.

Similarly, Sheen, Wright and Moldaw (2009) also investigated (1) focused, (2) unfocused written corrective feedback and (3) no feedback. For the focused corrective feedback treatment, feedback was provided on English definite and indefinite articles; whereas, for the unfocused corrective feedback group, feedback was provided on articles, copula 'be' regular past tense, irregular past tense, and prepositions. The results revealed that both corrective feedback groups significantly improved in accuracy but the focused CF group outperformed the unfocused and control treatment groups. Researchers concluded that focused corrective feedback aimed at specific linguistic aspects results in greater grammatical accuracy than unfocused corrective feedback aimed at several linguistic categories.

In another study, Bitchener & Knoch (2010) investigated over a 10 month period the relative effectiveness of: direct error correction with written metalinguistic explanation; direct error correction with oral metalinguistic explanation; and direct feedback and no corrective feedback. Researchers found that each of the groups who received one of the treatment options outperformed the control group and that there was no difference in effectiveness between the

three treatment groups, suggesting therefore that none of the written CF options was any more effective than any other. The special significance of this finding was its investigation over a 10 month period and therefore its longitudinal measurement of the effectiveness of different types of CF on accuracy retention.

With the same regard, Sheen's (2007) study of the relative effectiveness of two types of direct feedback (error correction and written metalinguistic explanation) also found no difference between the two feedback options in the immediate post-test, but in the delayed post-test conducted 2 months later found an advantage for written meta-linguistic explanation over direct error correction. Sheen suggests that the passage of time may have been the critical factor in facilitating this delayed effect for meta-linguistic explanation.

Lastly, in their study, Bitchener & Knoch (2010) investigated the longitudinal effectiveness of providing advanced L2 writers with direct and indirect written CF on two functional uses of the English article system. The results revealed no significance interaction between time and written corrective feedback.

Considering these recent studies as a whole, we can see that only the studies that have compared different types of direct and indirect written CF have investigated its effect on new pieces of writing over time. It can be concluded from these studies that the provision of oral metalinguistic explanation may have produced greater accuracy than other types of direct feedback. The nature of the oral metalinguistic explanation may have been the critical factor in the long-term difference in the effect of feedback in Bitchener (2005) and Bitchener & Knoch (2010) studies. A sociocultural theoretical framework might be helpful in further research to ascertain whether feedback provided within the learners' zone of proximal development increases linguistic accuracy. From a sociocultural perspective, oral metalinguistic explanation



may encompass scaffolding techniques that are the very core to sociocultural theory.

### Sociocultural Theory

Sociocultural theory (SCT) is traditionally associated with the work of Vygotsky (1978, 1986) and Wertsch (1979). Wertsch (1979) is generally credited for coining the term ‘sociocultural theory’ as a way of capturing the notion that human mental functioning results from participation in and appropriation of the forms of cultural mediation integrated into social activities. SCT postulates that the adult human mind is mediated. This is the result of transformation of lower forms of thinking into higher forms of thinking through cultural mediation. The three forms of mediation distinguished include; mediation by others, mediation by self, and mediation by artifacts (Lantoff 2000). Language is used to regulate our mental functioning mainly through private speech.

Individuals go through a process of internalization of mediational means before they are capable of operating at high levels of intellectual functioning. Internalization is the process of making what was once external assistance a resource that is internally available to the individual (Van Pattern & William, 2007). Vygotsky (1978) remarks that internalization entails a long series of developmental processes resulting in the radical alteration on the nature of the psychological activity on the basis of mediation (p. 57). In Vygotsky’s view, an optimal scenario for development, and hence internalization, is the zone of proximal development (ZDP). According to Vygotsky (1978), [The ZPD] “is the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” ( p. 86).

SCT sees learning, including language learning as dialogically based, that is acquisition occurs in, rather than as, a result of interaction. Hence L2 acquisition is treated as a shared process between the individual and other persons. Vygotsky (1978) distinguished three levels of development, which are key to understanding ZPD. First “the actual development level, the development of a child’s mental functions that has been established as a result of certain already completed developmental cycles” (p. 85). Second, a level of potential development as is evidenced in problem solving undertaken with the assistance of an expert. The third level, not commonly mentioned by sociocultural theorists, is the level that lies beyond the learner; that is a learner who is unable to perform the task even if assistance is provided. The ZPD lies at the second level. Corrective feedback can be viewed as an arena for studying how interaction mediates learning through the construction of ZPD.

According to Vygotsky, learning is the ability to do something under someone’s mediation in the ZPD. The Zone of Proximal Development has been metaphorically conceived as a form of scaffolding since assistance in the ZPD is extended as long as other-regulation persists but is removed once the learners can function independently. Scaffolding is referred to as the supportive behaviors by which an expert can help a novice learner achieve higher levels of regulation (Lidz, 1991; Stone, 1993; Wood et al., 1976). As the mediation is appropriated and internalized, the individual achieves autonomy or self-regulation and is then able to re-contextualize the ability. The internalization and re-contextualization of mediation is what leads to development. Donato (1994) extends scaffolding framework to peer interaction and suggests that learners can scaffold one another in much the same way as experts scaffold the performance of novices.

## Sociocultural theory and second language writing

Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research first began to appear in the mid-1980s (Frawley & Lantolf, 1985) through the publication of an article on second language discourse but gained momentum after Lantolf 's (1994) publication with a special issue in the *Modern Language Journal*, that was specifically devoted to sociocultural theory and second language learning, and within the same year, an edited volume appeared (Lantolf & Appel, 1994). Presently, more than 300 journal articles, book chapters and doctoral dissertations in SLA relating to the sociocultural theory appear in the research literature (Lantolf, 2009).

Aljaafreh & Lantoff (1994) observe that research based in SCT, addresses feedback from a different vantage point. Corrective feedback and negotiation are contextualized as a collaborative process in which the dynamics of the interaction itself shape the nature of the feedback and inform its usefulness to the learner. They identify mechanisms for effective help relating to intervention within ZPD. To start with, the assistance should be calibrated with no more help provided than is necessary. Secondly, a minimum level of guidance must be given so that the novice can successfully carry out the action at hand. Lastly, help should be contingent to the actual need and similarly removed when the person demonstrates the capacity to function independently. Graduation and contingency are critical elements of developmentally productive joint activity. This process is dialogic and entails continuous assessment of the learners' ZPD and subsequent tailoring of the help to best facilitate developmental progression from other-regulation to self-regulation (Lantolf, 2009). In connection with this, Aljaafreh & Lantolf (1994) observe that the ZPD brings all the pieces of the learning setting together: the teacher, the learner, their social and cultural history, their goals and motives as well as resources available to them including those that are dialogically constructed together.

Aljaafreh and Lantolf (1994) further claim that both explicit and implicit feedback impact linguistic accuracy, but that the relevance of the type of feedback offered is as important an index of development in second language as is the actual linguistic form produced by the learners (ibid, 467).

A variety of pedagogical approaches to writing development have been applied in the second language classroom. Scaffolding writing techniques make up the process in which experts help novice learners to develop higher levels of writing skills. Wood et.al (1976) hypothesize that successful scaffolding techniques consist of: maintaining novice learner's attention, reducing variability within the task, highlighting critical learning characteristics, minimizing frustration during development, and providing solutions to problems.

The following studies suggest that simply correcting errors in second language learners' writing has no effect on the development of writing skills, however, when this error correction is coupled with feedback provided by an expert, students come to a better understanding of the error and are able to correct it in subsequent writings (Lalande, 1982; Semke 1982,1984) and also on subsequent revisions of the same piece of writing.

In their study, Aljaafreh & Lantolf (1994) address developmental progression by looking at the relationship of negative feedback. Three ESL learners enrolled in an eight week early intermediate ESL reading and writing course took part in the study. Interaction was analyzed around four frequently recurring grammatical usage problems: articles, tense marking, use of prepositions, and modal verbs. Researchers developed a "regulatory scale" to reflect the extent to which help was provided. They report that though the three learners in the study demonstrated similar proficiency on a placement exam, they exhibited individual differences while performing tasks. According to Vygotsky's (1994) formulation of the ZPD, one 'cannot arbitrarily assume

that any two learners who attain identical scores on a test are necessarily at the same developmental stage should instructors assess their actual development. It is imperative to assess the learner's potential level of development as well' (p. 473). The researchers also observe that the same errors made by different learners represent different problems. The regulatory hierarchy within the ZPD is explicitly designed so that learners gain increased awareness of, and control over, their linguistic activity in the L2 (Lantolf & Frawley 1984). The study reports that over time, both within and across sessions, each participant demonstrated internalization of assistance and gained ability to function autonomously.

Similarly, Nassajji and Swain (2000), in their investigation of the efficacy of two forms of feedback related assistance, compared ZPD and non ZPD help in which the tutor worked with the students on problematic uses of articles (a, an, the, and the  $\emptyset$  (null) in their compositions. The findings suggest that intra-session and intersession progress was demonstrated by the ZPD students; whereas for the ZPD non-students, 'random help was much less capable of eliciting an appropriate response on the part of the student as compared with the ZPD help. They also observed that the more explicit the prompt, the more effective it may be even if it is provided in a non-collaborative random fashion' (p.47).

Nassajji and Swain's (2000) research is consistent with other research on feedback (Schmidt & Frota 1986) which supports the view that attention to form plays a critical role in the development of grammatical accuracy. Although both students shared intermediate classification, the non-ZPD student outperformed the ZPD student in the use of the correct articles in the first composition. As the project progressed, their relative performance shifted such that the ZPD student was consistently and significantly surpassing the non-ZPD student in correct uses of articles by composition three. Regression, an expected aspect of developmental

process, was exhibited by the non-ZPD student.

### Research Questions

This study seeks to examine how learners react to feedback provided within the sociocultural framework as defined within the literature review. The study will determine this by addressing the following research questions:

1). Within the zone of proximal development, is there a difference in the effect of direct and indirect corrective feedback on learners' attention to verb forms?

Hypothesis 1. Learners' attention/ focus on form vary depending on type of feedback provided.

2). Within zone of proximal development, does corrective feedback help to improve students' verb form accuracy in writing from an initial task to subsequent writing tasks? If so, what kind of feedback, direct vs. indirect feedback on written output, will be the most effective?

Hypothesis 2: Improved learners' verb form accuracy in writing from initial to subsequent tasks varies depending on the type of feedback provided.

### Significance of this study

The importance of direct and indirect written corrective feedback is highly recognized in research (Lalande 1982; Bates, Lane & Lange 1993, Ferris 1995 c; Ferris & Hedgcock, 1998; Reid, 1986 b; Chaney 1999; Ferris, 1999; Ferris & Roberts 2000; Bitchener et.al 2005; Buenigen 2008; Sheen et.al, 2007; Ellis et.al 2008; Bitchener, 2008; Sheen et.al 2007; Bitchener & Knoch 2010 a; Bitchener & Knoch 2010 b). However, many previous studies have not acknowledged contextualization of written corrective feedback within the learners' zone of proximal development. In addition, the fundamental issues of the sociocultural theory which contribute highly to feedback techniques and strategies have not been factored into administering direct or

indirect written corrective feedback. Moreover, most studies have not employed scaffolding writing techniques in an endeavor to improve the learners' linguistic accuracy.

This study seeks to provide information about how to effectively contextualize direct or indirect written corrective feedback within the learners' zone of proximal development. Second language writing teachers are bestowed with the professional responsibility to assess student writing and provide feedback. Therefore, it is our responsibility as teachers to develop effective and appropriate strategies, techniques, and methods of giving WCF to individual second language writers that is situated within their ZPD. Thirdly, this study seeks to make a contribution to the existing body of literature about students' reactions to direct and indirect feedback from a sociocultural perspective. Lastly, the results of this study may be useful for curriculum designers, teacher trainers, and most importantly, language teachers because it will provide them with efficient feedback strategies and techniques to be incorporated when giving direct and indirect written corrective feedback.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

#### Setting and participants

The participants in this study were fourteen high intermediate ESL students in the intensive English Program offered by a university in the Southern area of the United States of America. Their age ranged from 18 to 25 years. The students came from a range of language backgrounds with four from Oman, five from Japan, and one from Sri-Lanka, Israel, Rwanda, Taiwan and South Korea. This program is well known for providing high quality instruction in English to non-native English speakers with the ultimate goal of improving their proficiency in English for academic, professional, and social purposes. Learners are also equipped with cultural knowledge and awareness to enable them to function satisfactorily in the United States and at American universities particularly. The IEP describes its approach to the teaching of English as communicative, with an equal focus on reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

The program draws students from all over the world. Students come from a range of language backgrounds including: Arabic, Chinese, French, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese and Spanish. There are five sections in the program which are based on the levels of proficiency of the learners. They are as follows: beginners, intermediate, high intermediate, advanced, and advanced plus.

Students were admitted into the high intermediate level of the Intensive English program based on their overall placement score in the Michigan English Proficiency Test. They were assessed on listening, grammar, and reading comprehension. The proficiency exam gave



guidelines for “cut scores” but not for overall proficiency scores. Students’ final scores were tabulated through a combination of grammar, reading, speaking, and writing scores. Students were placed in either of the aforementioned proficiency sections based on the score they made to ensure their ESL proficiency level is homogeneous.

#### Treatment

The study focused on High Intermediate learners who met the selection criteria. The study includes three treatment groups. Group one received direct corrective feedback and a 15-minute tutorial session. Direct feedback was administered by crossing out the erroneous forms and then writing the correct form near the erroneous one. Group two received indirect feedback followed by a 15-minute one-on-one tutorial session. Indirect feedback was in the form of an underline of the erroneous forms. Group three received no feedback but a simple brief commentary such as “clear outline of the ideas in the narrative” or “well-organized piece of writing”.

In other words, students in group one and two received comprehensive direct and indirect corrective feedback. Each feedback session was followed by a one-on-one tutorial session provided by the researcher. The tutorial session included a simple 15 minute explanation of the targeted functional use of the past progressive tense with examples of its use. The tutorial session adapted the regulatory scale developed by Lantolff (1994) to reflect the extent to which help provided by the researcher was implicit or explicit. The study did not attempt to prepare a specific set of procedures to be followed by the participant and the researcher but corrective feedback was negotiated between the novice and expert.

Feedback was tailored to narrow the gap between the current and the potential performance that entailed scaffolding techniques. Hyland (2005) observes that scaffolding takes

many forms and can be provided in relation to cultural, social, contextual, and linguistic aspects of a target genre. For this study, scaffolding techniques were employed during the one-on-one feedback sessions. This entailed oral and written modeling by the researcher, placing information in a larger framework and reinterpretation, discussion, explicit instruction, and considerable researcher input to assist learners toward competence in the descriptive narrative. Hyland further observes that the degree of teacher intervention and the kinds of tasks selected for students to engage in therefore play a key role in scaffolding writing, representing a cline of support from closely controlled activities to autonomous extended writing. No other forms or structures were corrected.

#### Target structure

The study provided treatment in the form of corrective feedback on errors that were made in the use of the past progressive tense. The type of corrective feedback provided varied according to the group in which the students were placed. Three functional uses of the past progressive were targeted: description of actions in progress in the recent past, or at a specific time in the past, and a description of a scene. The past progressive tense was chosen because this study has heeded to the example of effective SLA studies on oral corrective feedback and therefore investigated the effect of targeting only one potentially “treatable” (Ferris, 2002, 2003; Truscott, 1996) error category.

#### Instruments

Our study investigated the effect of direct and indirect written corrective feedback focusing on verb forms provided within the learners’ zone of proximal development, and also how the type of corrective feedback provided within the ZPD influences linguistic accuracy of the targeted linguistic structures. The study designed a pre-test (cloze test) at the beginning of the

four-week study. This was followed by two writing tests that required participants to write a narrative (tell a story) that elicited use of the past progressive tense following an essay writing prompt. A post-test (cloze test) was administered immediately after feedback was provided on the second test.

The pre-test and post-test tasks were cloze test passages describing scenes from the past. They were helpful in establishing the students' grammatical proficiency. Students were required to complete blank items with the past continuous form of verbs in parentheses. According to Bailey, K. (1998), a cloze test is a language assessment tool that requires learners to supply appropriate words in blanks. The cloze passages consist of texts longer than a sentence – usually at least a paragraph in length. They are widely used in language assessment particularly for the assessment of reading and overall proficiency. It has been observed that the ability to supply an appropriate word in blanks requires several capabilities that exhibit language competence. Thus, an individual should be well-equipped with knowledge of vocabulary, grammatical structure, discourse structure, reading skills and strategies, and internalized 'expectancy' grammar (Brown, 2001). Oller (1979) defined expectancy grammar as the portion of our internalized language competence that enables us to predict likely sequences of incoming language whether we are reading or listening. In Oller's opinion, a cloze test activity is an important tool for predicting learners' overall language proficiency.

For the pre-test, this study adapted the cloze test of Spaventa & Werner (2007), see (Appendix A), as an appropriate instrument to measure learners' overall grammatical and semantic knowledge of the past progressive tense. The passage describes scenes from the past. It gives an account of a childhood summer experience. The cloze passage contains 9 blank items and students were required to complete them with the past progressive forms of the verbs in

parentheses. This cloze test was scored by the researcher using the exact word method which is a scoring procedure that test-takers get credit for a correct answer if and only if the word they write in any given blank is the exact word that was deleted from the original text in that space (Bailey, 1998). The post-test in the study adapted a cloze test to establish improved linguistic accuracy in the use of the past progressive form after feedback had been given within the ZPD. Similarly, the study adapted a cloze test of Spaventa & Werner (2007), see (Appendix B), as an instrument to measure improved linguistic accuracy in the use of the past progressive tense. This cloze passage was a description of scenes from the special memory of a childhood Christmas. It contained five items and was scored by the researcher using the exact word method. Students scored one point for each blank if they inserted the exact answer.

#### Narrative

The study also used two writing tests. Each student was required to write two narratives. The narrative adapted the genre stages and purpose structure outlined by Hyland (2006). The narrative had an orientation which gave information about the characters' situation. This could be followed by an optional complication which presented one or more problems for the characters to solve. An optional evaluation stage followed that also evaluates major events for the characters. The last stage was resolution that sorts out the problems for the characters. This study adapted two writing tasks from Spaventa & Werner (2007) as a measure of students' overall writing skills, linguistic competence which was to be exhibited through their cognitive processing of the tasks at hand, drafting and revising. For both tasks, students were allowed to write a short narrative (two to three paragraphs). They were required to tell a story based on the prompts provided in Appendixes) C& D.

The narratives were evaluated by two ESL graduate instructors in the Intensive English

program using the Test of Written English Scoring guide. The careful procedure outlined by Crookes (1986) was adopted by the study.

1. A corpus was selected
2. Raters were selected
3. The overall design was explained to the raters
4. Definitions of the units of analysis were presented and discussed
5. Unit boundary markers were presented and discussed
6. Worked examples were presented
7. Raters practiced analyzing simple texts
8. Complex texts were analyzed, inter-rater reliability calculated, and disagreements discussed
9. Step 8 was repeated until satisfactory inter-rater reliability was attained
10. The corpus was rated
11. Analysis

The study adopted the overall procedure though using students' written texts. Two volunteer raters were selected. The overall design of the study was explained to them. Definition of target linguistic structures and the methods of administering feedback (direct and indirect written corrective feedback followed by a 15-minute tutorial session) accompanied by writing scaffolding techniques were presented and discussed. Worked examples were also presented. Raters practiced analyzing simple texts. They then analyzed the research narratives, inter-rater reliability was calculated and disagreements that arose were discussed. This step was repeated until satisfactory inter-rater reliability was attained. The tasks were then rated and coded for analysis.

## Questionnaire

The study also sought to find out learners' perceptions of feedback from a sociocultural perspective. This feedback will be useful for the course instructor for better handling of the class and also for future planning. The study designed a Likert scale which consisted of a series of statements, all of which were related to a particular target; respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with these items by marking one of the responses ranging from 'strongly agree' to strongly disagree (Dornyei 2003). After the scale was administered, each response option was assigned a number for scoring purposes (strongly agree = 5, strongly disagree = 1). Finally, the scores for the items addressed were summed up or averaged. (see Appendix E)

## Procedures

Data for the study was collected from the 11th to the 14th week of the semester. The researcher took two weeks before the study to familiarize herself with the students by; observing the class for one week, assisting the class instructor in planning lessons, grading students' assignments, and tutoring students.

Five days before the pre-test was administered, the participants and the instructors in separate sessions were provided with information sheets about the study and were given the opportunity to ask questions before signing a participant consent form.

The data was collected by the researcher as follows:

1. On day one, the pre-test was administered. Before giving the students the task, the researcher explained the task and instructions. Students were allowed 15 minutes to complete the cloze text.
2. On the same day, students were given the writing prompt for the first writing task

followed by explicit instructions on how to handle the task. The task was due the following day of class.

3. One week later, the treatment of corrective feedback was provided. The researcher returned the students' compositions and then had a 15-minute tutorial session with students in the direct and indirect treatment groups.
4. Immediately after the session, the second writing prompt was handed out and was due the following day of class.
5. One week later, the post-test was administered. After that, students responded to items on the Likert scale questionnaire.

## CHAPTER 4

### ANALYSIS

Obligatory uses of the targeted feature were identified and corrected for each text written by each student in the three groups on each of the four testing occasions. For the texts of students in group three, (the control group), this was done with a photocopy of each script so that students in this group did not receive the targeted feedback. Error identification and correction was carried out by the researcher. Two volunteer teachers in the IEP of the researcher's institution did an inter-rater reliability to check this analysis. Accuracy on each occasion was calculated as a percentage of correct usage for each script given the range of obligatory occasions arising in each script. For example, in any one script, four correct uses of the targeted features from 10 obligatory occasions meant a 40% accuracy rate. Group means and standard deviations were calculated for each feedback group on each of the two testing occasions. Tests of statistical significance were carried out by means of a Repeated Measures ANOVAs. The questionnaire responses were recorded in an excel spreadsheet. The means of participants' responses were calculated and then t-tests were conducted to compare the results.



## CHAPTER 5

### RESULTS

The purpose of this chapter is to present and analyze data obtained from high intermediate ESL students. This section also presents the results of investigating the extent to which different types of corrective feedback structured within the learners' zone of proximal development on the targeted past progressive verb form helped learners improve the accuracy of their writing when producing new texts. The tests in the study were designed to measure learners' ability to use the past progressive tense correctly by means of two grammaticality judgment tests: the pre-test and the delayed post-test. The other two tests, which were the experimental treatment and the post-test, were written compositions based on a prompt that was provided.

The statistical procedure Repeated Measure Analysis of Variance (RM ANOVA), a test of group differences, was used to analyze students' performance on the four tasks. RM ANOVA is defined by Larson-Hall 2010 as "ANOVAs for data in which the same participants were tested at more than one time (a longitudinal design), with more than one measure, or participated in more than one experimental condition p. 143".

Before analysis, the data was tested to find out if it met the assumptions of normality of data and homogeneity of variance for both data and residuals. This was done by visually looking for normality by examining graphics. It was found that the data did not adhere to the assumptions of normality and variance. An examination of the box plots indicated that these data across the four testing periods are not normally distributed (the median is not centered and there are no

equal-length tails on both ends of the boxes as illustrated in figure 1 and 3 respectively, all the data was skewed and contained some outliers (test 1 and test 3), and the variances were unequal for the groups (the lengths of the interquartile range boxes are much longer in skewed distribution than in normal distribution). For instance, in test 1, the indirect feedback group 2 has a normal distribution while the direct and control groups 1 and 3 have a skewed distribution. In test 3, the indirect treatment group also has a normal distribution as illustrated in Figure 3. Test 3.

Figure1. Box plots of test 1

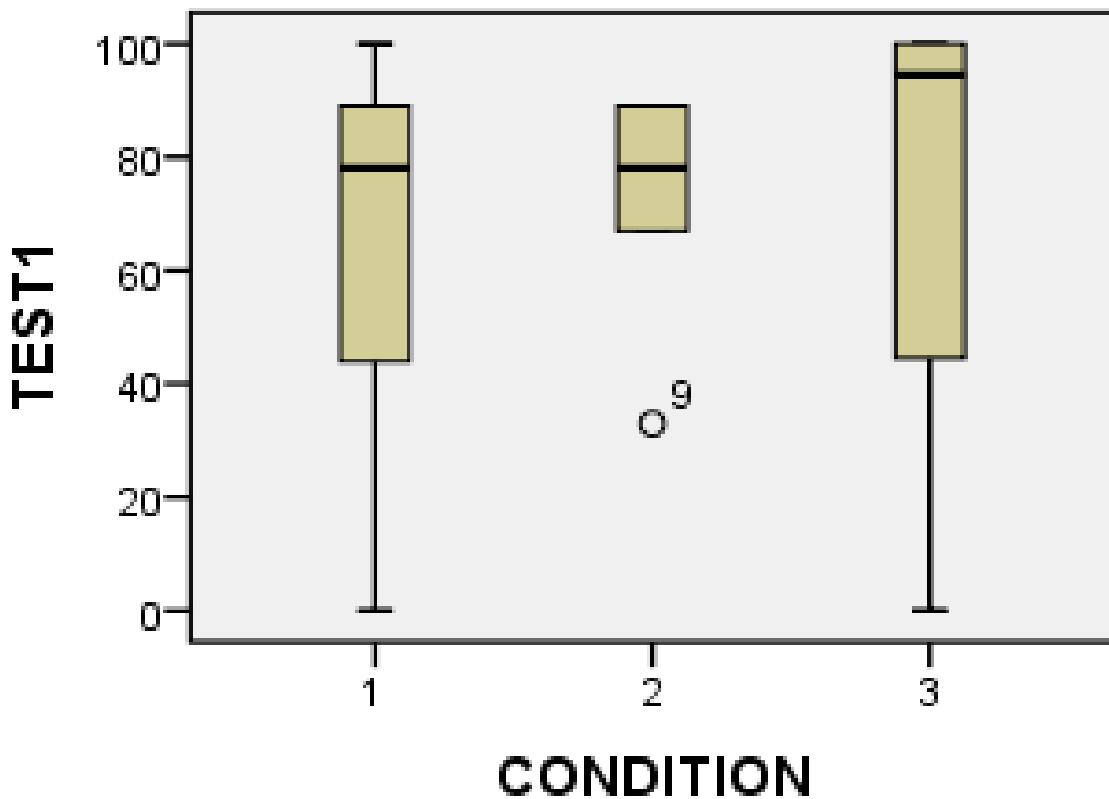


Figure 2. Box plot of test 2

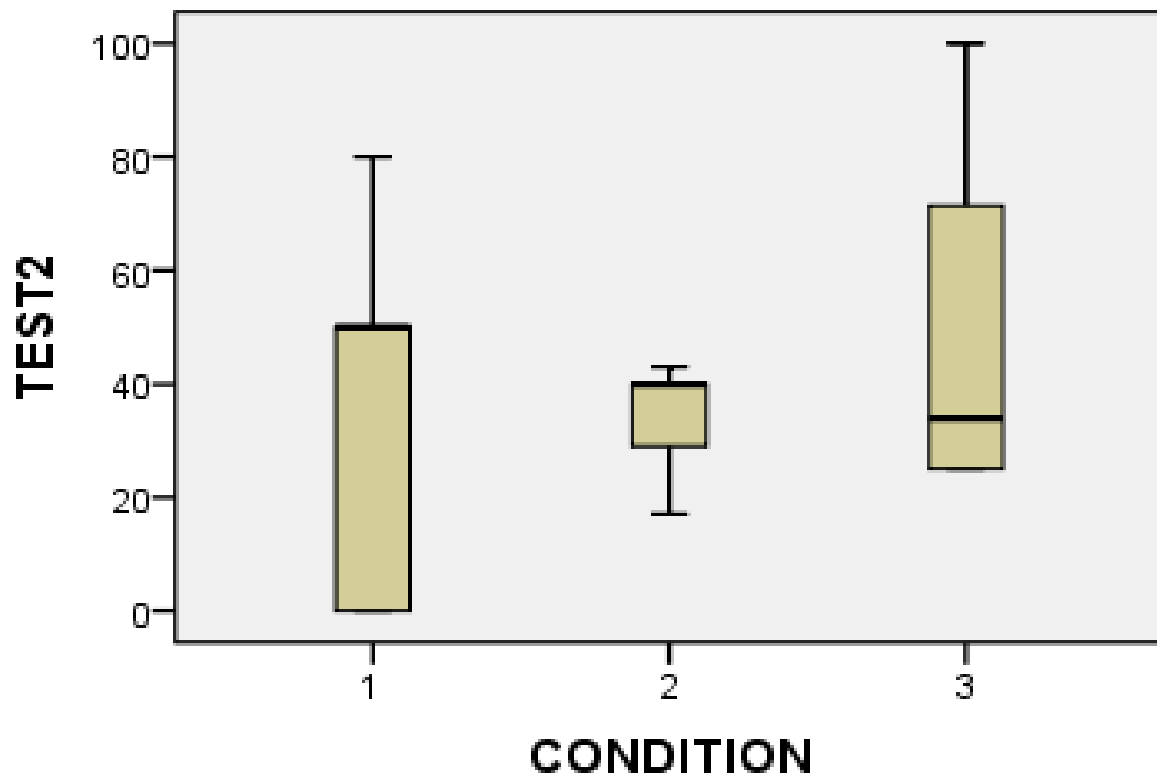


Figure 3. box plot of test 3

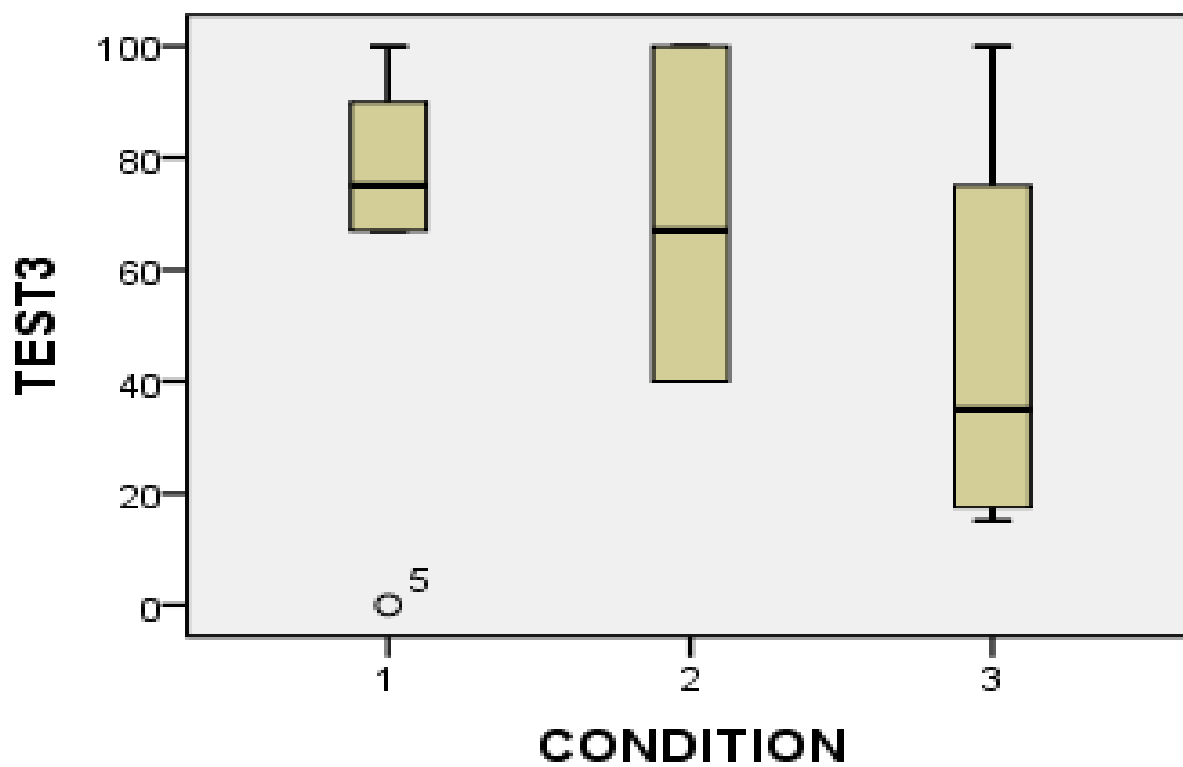
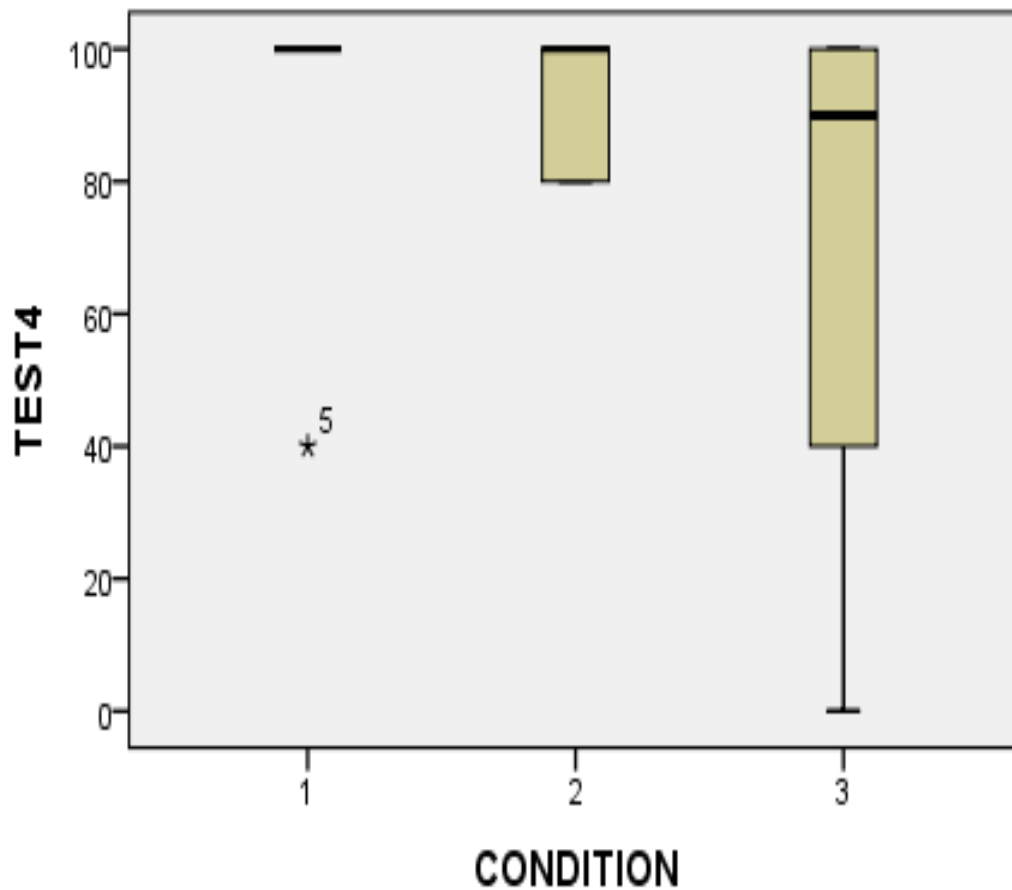


Figure 4. boxplot of test 4



We also observe that in test 4, the direct feedback group 1 has no variance. The data was transformed to see if the problems could be fixed. Transforming the data did not fix the problem of normality or homogeneity of variance. Therefore, analysis of data proceeded though the data did not meet the requirements for normality.

The first research question investigated whether within the zone of proximal development there is a difference on the effect of direct and indirect corrective feedback on learners' attention to past progressive verb form. To address the first research question, first the descriptive statistics were calculated for mean scores and standard deviations. Table 1 shows the descriptive

statistics for the three treatment groups at the four different testing times. Figure 1 provides a visual representation of mean percentages and standard deviation for the four testing periods for each treatment groups.

The purpose of the study was not to examine whether corrective feedback assists in learning of a completely new grammatical structure, but whether direct or indirect corrective feedback within the learners' zone of proximal development enables learners to gain control over a structure they have already mastered. Pre-testing demonstrated that this was indeed the case. The descriptive statistics for the pre-test as presented in Table 1 show relatively high levels of accuracy ranging from direct feedback group 1  $M = 62.20$ ,  $SD = 40.61$ , control group  $M = 68.29$ ,  $SD = 35.17$  to indirect feedback  $M = 71.20$   $SD = 23.22$ . The range of standard deviation is an indication of skewedness of the data. As revealed in Table 1, students performed better in the controlled writing activity than in the composition as depicted by the high accuracy levels in the pre-test and post-test (cloze test 1 & 2). The mean scores of all the groups dropped drastically in composition 1 as can be seen the accuracy levels range from direct group  $M = 36.00$ ,  $SD = 35.07$ , indirect group  $M = 33.80$ ,  $SD = 10.80$ , control to  $48.25$   $SD = 35.53$ . After the treatment intervention, there is a marked improvement registered in the immediate post-test with accuracy levels ranging from 66% to 69%. The highest accuracy levels are registered in both post-tests 1 and 2. In other words, while all the three groups had higher scores on the pre-test 1, all the groups showed a marked decrease in the pre-test 1. After the intervention, the two treatment groups increased their mean in the immediate post-test 1 and the delayed post-test while the means of the control group dropped from 48% in the pre-test 1 to 41% in post-test 1.

In addition, a RM ANOVA was performed to find out if there were any statistical differences in the mean scores displayed at the various treatment times. In preliminary

examination of the data for satisfying the assumptions, a RM ANOVAs were performed and displayed through box plots in Figure 1. The data does not meet the assumptions of homoscedasticity and normality of distribution. As stated earlier, transforming the data did not fix the problem of normality; therefore, analysis of data proceeded. The sphericity assumption of the Mauchly's Test of Sphericity was met; the significance value was  $p = .206$  so the hypothesis that the variances of differences between levels were significantly different was supported. The F values were corrected using the Greenhouse-Geiser adjustment. The Repeated Measures ANOVAs revealed that there was not a differential effect for any of the feedback options (direct or indirect) provided within the learners' zone of proximal development ( $F(2, 15330.79) = .240$ ,  $p = .791$  partial eta-squared = .04, power = .79). Thus, Hypothesis 1 that learners' attention/ focus on form vary depending on type of feedback provided was not supported. In other words, the results indicated that the differences found among the three groups were not statistically significant.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for mean test scores by condition and time

Group	Pretest		Pre-test		Post-test		Post test	
	Cloze test 1		Comp 1		Comp 2		Cloze test 2	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
<b>Direct CF</b>	62.20	40.610	36.00	35.071	66.40	39.272	88.00	26.833
<b>Indirect CF</b>	71.20	23.221	33.80	10.803	69.40	30.030	92.00	10.934
<b>Control</b>	68.29	35.175	48.25	35.528	41.25	44.418	70.00	29.5329

(Direct Corrective feedback group followed by a 15-minute tutorial session, indirect corrective feedback group followed by a 15-minute tutorial session, Control group received no feedback)

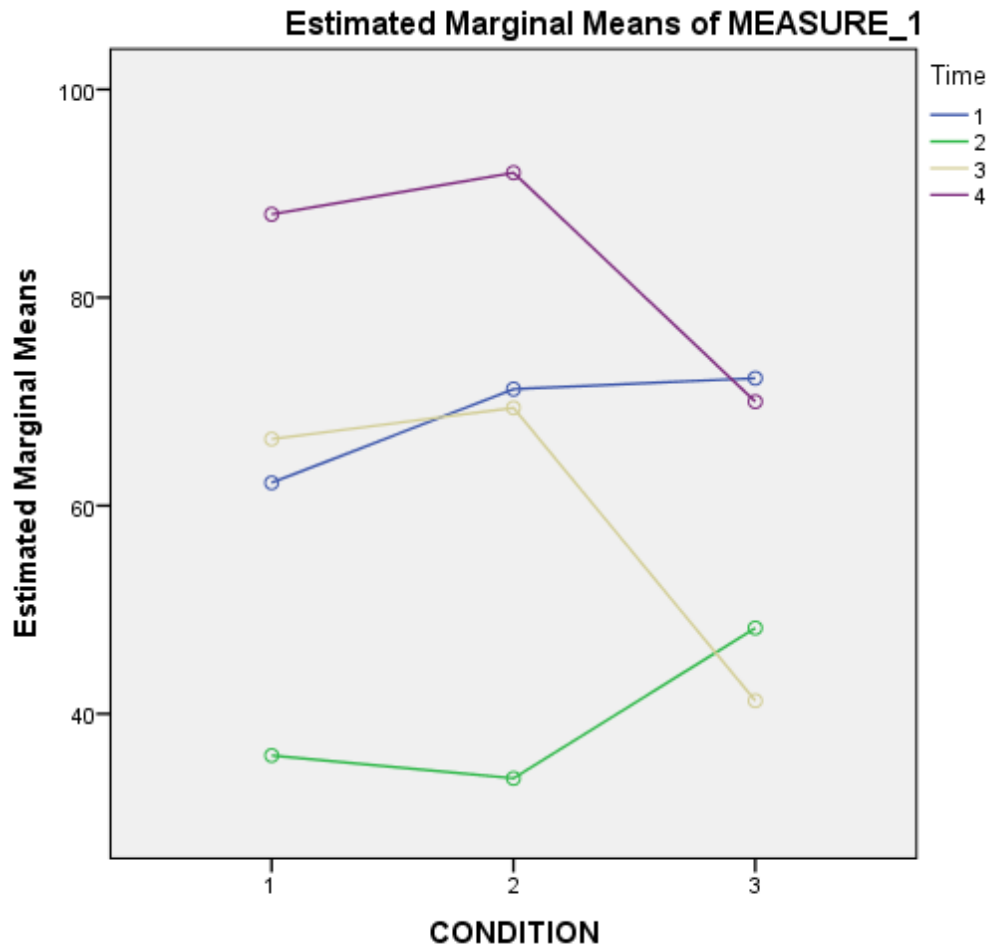


Figure 5. Accuracy by group and time

The second research question investigated whether or not there is a statistically significant difference if the feedback type is situated within the learners' ZPD. The question examined whether there was improved linguistic accuracy on the past continuous verb forms from an initial task to a subsequent writing task. In other words, this question sought to investigate if there is a differential effect in the interaction of time and type of written corrective feedback provided within the learner's zone of proximal development. The RM ANOVAs revealed that there were no statistically significant differential effects in the accuracy of the scores for the direct, indirect, and control groups ( $F(4.01, 22.073) = .523, p = .720$  partial eta



squared = .09 observed power = .151). The power to find statistical differences is quite high and the effect size is quite low. The RM ANOVA revealed that the time when treatment was administered had a statistically significant effect ( $F(4.007, 22.073) = 4.678, p = .02$  Partial Eta Squared = .09, observed power = .151). Pairwise comparisons further revealed significant differences between the different times corrective feedback was administered. It is surmised that the non-statistical results of interaction between the type of written corrective feedback and time may have been due to low power. Therefore, no conclusion could be made. Further testing with more participants would be necessary.

The study also explored correlations to look for some relationships, or common variation between the variables. Larson-Hall (2010) observes that a correlation as a statistical test involves two variables which are both continuous. It can be a negative or a positive one. A partial correlation was chosen because the study manipulated some variables while holding all other variables constant. The variable treatment condition was controlled for before the experimental participants were selected to take part in the study. A partial correlation controlling for condition found a statistical significance between direct and indirect written corrective feedback type and the time when feedback was administered. As illustrated in Table 2, the Pearson  $r$  statistic was positive ( $r = .78, p = .002$ ), meaning the scores on the written composition increased after the intervention was provided within the zone of proximal development, and the effect size was large (R Squared = .61). Controlling for condition found no correlations between time (the four different testing periods) and the types of written corrective feedback (condition) at the pre-test and the post-test ( $r = .51, p = .078$ ). This was before the treatment intervention was administered.

Table 2. Partial correlations

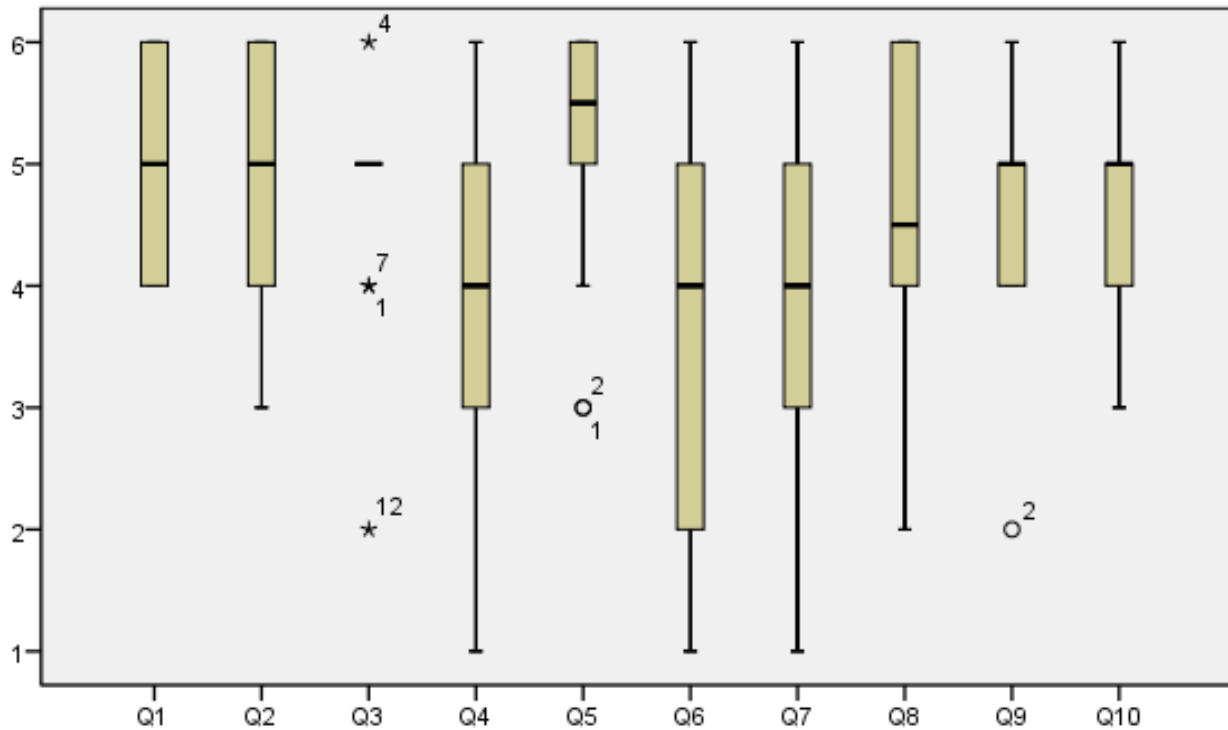
Control Variables	Test1	Test2	Test3	Test4
Correlation	1.000	.506	-.063	.145
Test1 Significance (2-tailed)	.	.078	.838	.637
Df	0	11	11	11
Correlation	.506	1.000	-.113	.010
Test2 Significance (2-tailed)	.078	.	.712	.973
Df	11	0	11	11
Correlation	-.063	-.113	1.000	.777
Test3 Significance (2-tailed)	.838	.712	.	.002
Df	11	11	0	11
Correlation	.145	.010	.777	1.000
Test4 Significance (2-tailed)	.637	.973	.002	.
Df	11	11	11	0

The study also seeks to examine how students react to feedback provided within a sociocultural framework as defined within the literature review. The students were surveyed after the experimental data was collected to find out their reaction to written corrective feedback from a sociocultural perspective. The questionnaire addressed the main assumptions and mechanisms of administering corrective feedback within a sociocultural framework:

1. Students' perception of private speech and whether they engage themselves in private speech before any composition writing activity.
2. Internalization of mediational means.
3. Students' perception and reaction to the feedback process as a dialogically based activity where they are allowed to negotiate for meaning.
4. Whether scaffolding techniques demonstrated during the feedback process help them learn better.
5. If feedback should be withheld once individuals achieve autonomy or self – regulation.
6. The frequency and type of errors that should be corrected in a composition.

They did so by responding to the Likert scale questionnaire addressing the assumptions of the sociocultural theory. The internal consistency reliability was measured by the *Cronbach Alpha coefficient*. The Cronbach Alpha coefficient of the total scale was 0.70, which is rather good. Before analysis, the data was tested for normality of distribution and homogeneity of variance. Figure 3 shows clustered box plots for all the questionnaire items.

Figure 3. Box plot of all questionnaire items



Except for Q1, Q2, Q4, Q5, Q7, the other questions Q3, Q6, Q8, Q9, Q10 display some non-normality. As we can see, there are some outliers in Q5 and Q9 or boxes are not symmetrical around medians. The box plot shows that in Q3 there is basically no variance. Visually, for variances the lengths of the boxes were compared across all questions. On the one hand, in questions 1, 2, 4, 7, 8 the length of the boxes are quite similar; therefore, the range of variance is quite similar. On the other hand, the length of boxes in Questions 5, 9, 8 do not seem too different though they have a smaller variance compared to the first set of questions. Question 6 has a larger variance than all the other questions.

The analysis of this data follows. This was achieved through the use of descriptive statistics and parametric statistical measures. Descriptive frequency tables were used to describe students' responses to each questionnaire item. The quantitative items on the questionnaire were tallied and summed. Table 2 provides an illustration of the descriptive statistics. In looking at the

data, we notice that the standard deviations are quite small; they range between one and two standard deviations from the mean; an indication of positive skewedness. In general, the results of the questionnaire show that students prefer feedback based on the sociocultural framework.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics

		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10
N	Valid	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		5.14	4.79	4.71	3.93	5.14	3.64	3.79	4.71	4.64	4.71
Median		5.00	5.00	5.00	4.00	5.50	4.00	4.00	4.50	5.00	5.00
Std. Deviation		.864	1.251	.914	1.639	1.09	1.499	1.57	1.326	1.082	.914
Variance		.747	1.566	.835	2.687	1.20	2.247	2.48	1.758	1.170	.835
Skewness		-.306	-.356	-	-.235	-	-.241	-	-.542	-.855	-.043
Std. Error of Skewness		.597	.597	.597	.597	.597	.597	.597	.597	.597	.597
Kurtosis		-	-	6.26	-	.150	-	-	-.650	1.511	-.653
Std. Error of Kurtosis		1.635	1.610	5	1.084		1.043	.556			
Range		2	3	4	5	3	5	5	4	4	3

A one-sample t-test was used to compare the mean scores of the questionnaire items. Larson- Hall (2010) observes that a one-sample t-test is used when you have measured only one mean score but you would like to compare this mean to some idealized mean or otherwise already known mean score. Larson-Hall further states that one-sample t-tests are used to determine whether some obtained value is statistically different from a neutral value, from a previously published population mean, from zero, or from some other externally dictated mean score. Since the study administered a 10-item six-point Likert questionnaire to 14 ESL students, the obtained mean scores for each questionnaire item were compared to zero, which is a neutral value because the questionnaire was a six-point Likert scale. The results of the t-test are illustrated in Table 3.

Table 4. One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 0					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Q1	22.260	13	.000	5.143	4.64	5.64
Q2	14.309	13	.000	4.786	4.06	5.51
Q3	19.302	13	.000	4.714	4.19	5.24
Q10	19.302	13	.000	4.714	4.19	5.24
Q4	8.968	13	.000	3.929	2.98	4.87
Q5	17.502	13	.000	5.143	4.51	5.78
Q8	13.303	13	.000	4.714	3.95	5.48
Q9	16.058	13	.000	4.643	4.02	5.27
Q7	8.978	13	.000	3.786	2.87	4.70
Q6	9.092	13	.000	3.643	2.78	4.51

A one-sample T-test was conducted to determine the students' reactions and perceptions to written corrective feedback structured in a sociocultural framework. As highlighted previously, an examination of the data indicated that these data are not normally distributed - some data was skewed and contained outliers, and variances were unequal for the groups. For question #1, (M = 5.14, SD = .86, N = 14) the 95% CI for the difference in means is 4.64, 5.64 (t= 22.26, p=.000, df=13) the null hypothesis that written corrective feedback followed by a teacher-student conference where the teacher explains the errors helps students improve in their composition writing skills could not be rejected. For question #2 ( M = 4.79, SD = 1.25, N =14)

the 95% CI for the difference in mean is 4.64, 5.51 ( $t = 14.309$ ,  $p = .000$ ,  $df = 13$ ) the null hypothesis that students want to engage in the negotiation of meaning during the teacher conference after written corrective feedback has been administered is supported. Question #3 ( $M = 4.71$ ,  $SD = .914$ ,  $N = 14$ ) the 95 % CI for the difference in mean is 4.19, 5.24 ( $t = 19.31$ ,  $p = .000$ ,  $df = 13$ ) the null hypothesis that scaffolding techniques employed by the teacher help ESL learners make noticeable improvements in their writing was supported. Question #4 investigated whether ESL students engage in private speech before proceeding with any composition writing tasks. ( $M = 3.93$ ,  $SD = 1.69$ ,  $N = 14$ ) the 95% CI for the mean differences is 2.98, 4.87 ( $t = 8.97$ ,  $p = .000$ ,  $df = 13$ ). There is a statistical effect for private speech; therefore, the null hypothesis that students engage in private speech before composition tasks is supported. Question #5 ( $M = 5.14$ ,  $SD = 1.10$ ,  $N = 14$ ) the 95 % CI for the difference in mean is 4.51, 5.78 ( $t = 17.50$ ,  $p = .000$ ,  $df = 13$ ). Having a statistical effect the null hypothesis that language teachers should allow enough time for internalization of meaning before introducing new content is supported. Question #6 examined the concept of withdrawing support when learners achieve autonomy and self-regulation. ( $M = 3.64$ ,  $SD = 1.50$ ,  $N = 14$ ) the 95 % CI for the difference in mean is 2.78, 4.51 ( $t = 9.1$ ,  $p = .000$ ,  $df = 13$ ). There is a statistical effect, hence it can be inferred that the null hypothesis that corrective support should be withdrawn when students achieve self-regulation is supported. Question #7 sought to find out the reaction of students toward the focus that language teachers should take when correcting errors in composition. The null hypothesis stated that teachers should correct only one type of error. ( $M = 3.79$ ,  $SD = 1.59$ ,  $N = 14$ ) the 95 % confidence interval for the difference in means is 2.87, 4.51 ( $t = 8.99$ ,  $p = .000$ ,  $df = 13$ ). In this case, there is a statistical difference; hence the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. Question #8 views learning as a dialogically based process where the teacher and student engage in an oral



discussion of a particular composition. ( $M = 4.71$ ,  $SD = 1.33$ ,  $N = 14$ ) the 95 % C I for mean differences is 3.95, 5.48 ( $t = 13.30$ ,  $p = .000$ ,  $df = 13$ ). The null hypothesis that learning is a dialogically based process is supported. Question #9 seeks to find out whether students reflect upon previous written corrective feedback before engaging in new composition to see if they can avoid previous errors. ( $M = 4.64$ ,  $SD = 1.08$ ,  $N = 14$ ) the 95 % C I for the mean differences is 4.02, 5.27 ( $t = 16.06$ ,  $p = .000$ ,  $df = 13$ ). The null hypothesis that ESL students reflect upon previous feedback input before they engage in new composition tasks is supported. Lastly, Question #10 seeks to find the overall perception of the feedback process from a sociocultural perspective. It specifically examines whether students feel what they learn as a result of the feedback process will be beneficial even after they complete the course. The null hypothesis states that written corrective feedback coupled with teacher-student conferencing is beneficial even after course completion. ( $M = 4.71$ ,  $SD = .914$ ,  $N = 14$ ) the 95 % CI for the mean differences is 4.19, 5.24 ( $t = 19.30$ ,  $p = .000$ ,  $df = 13$ ), thus the null hypothesis is supported.

## Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate how direct and indirect written corrective feedback administered through a socio-cultural framework affects linguistic accuracy in ESL learners' composition from an initial task to a subsequent writing task. Motivated by recent research and controversy on the effectiveness of written corrective feedback and whether it should be abandoned by ESL teachers, the study also seeks to find out the reactions of ESL students to feedback structured in a sociocultural framework. Particularly, this study was designed to examine the effects of direct and indirect corrective feedback between ZPD and non-ZPD students to ascertain whether direct or indirect corrective feedback over time structured in the socio-cultural theoretical framework leads to improved linguistic accuracy and to determine students perceptions of feedback based on this theoretical framework.

In this chapter, first, I will answer the research questions and then give a summary of the questionnaire results. Then, I will discuss how the results are connected to previous literature review, research in second language writing, and sociocultural theory in second language writing. The study did not prove major statistical differences between the two treatment groups although some significant partial correlations were found between the type of WCF and time interaction. Additionally, significant effects reported on the questionnaire items will be discussed. With the results of this study following the discussion, several theoretical and pedagogical implications are drawn for learning and teaching second language writing from a sociocultural framework. Finally, I will present the limitations of the study and research directions for further studies in this research area.

## Research question 1

1). Within the zone of proximal development, is there a difference in the effect of direct and indirect corrective feedback on learners' attention to verb forms?

The answer to this research question was negative. There were no significant differences between direct and indirect written corrective feedback followed by a 15-minute tutorial session in which the feedback session was tailored to an individual student's zone of proximal development. This finding corroborates with Robb et.al.'s, (1986) study which compared various forms of direct and indirect WCF over a year and found no difference. Robb et.al.'s findings may not be tied to this study directly because of differing methodological approaches pursued by the two studies. A possible explanation of the non-statistical results in the study may be due to the study having low power because of a small sample size.

Although non-statistically significant, the results suggest that all the ZPD ESL students who had the opportunity to revise their written text after the WCF was provided, followed by a 15-minute tutorial session out-performed the non-ZPD students in the control group. To illustrate this, students in the direct and indirect feedback groups produced fewer errors than students in the control group as illustrated in Table 1.1. This opposes Truscott's (1996) claim that grammar correction could be harmful to learner's accuracy development because all the groups that received treatment improved in the subsequent writing tasks.

A comparable pattern of improvement that distinguishes the three treatments groups shown on Table 1 suggests that the indirect group outperformed the direct group overall in post-tests 1 & 2 (composition and cloze-test). A possible explanation for this observation would be that during the tutorial session, the persistent urge by the researcher for students in the indirect group to notice the gap in form of errors in the use of the past continuous tense marked

indirectly in the students' compositions which was followed by the researcher encouraging learners to self-correct and only giving assistance when the researcher ascertained that they could not figure out the correct expression may have caused an increased awareness of the use of the past continuous tense; unlike the direct feedback group who had the corrections spelled out for them and they just had to review the grammatical structures and model more forms of the same orally and in written form.

On the one hand, support for this interpretation is found in studies that highly value indirect corrective feedback over direct corrective feedback (Ferris, 1995 a, 1995 c, Ferris & Hedgecock 1998). They point out that indirect corrective feedback is highly effective because ESL learners are able to engage highly in problem solving and self-editing skills. On the other hand, this interpretation is strongly contradicted by the prediction in most recent literature that has revealed that students who received direct feedback made the largest accuracy gains (Lalande, 1982; Chandler, 2003; Beunigen' s 2003). These studies found direct corrective feedback to be the more effective form of treatment and that it leads to improved linguistic accuracy in the long term.

With these differing opinions as portrayed in other studies the study it can be concluded that the controversy about which is the most effective form of WCF between the direct and indirect is still on and therefore more research is necessary before any conclusions can be made about which feedback method (direct and indirect) is more effective. A possible explanation of the above inconclusive debate of which feedback type is more effective from a sociocultural framework could be that the studies were not considering individual differences in learners; hence treating ESL and EFL learners as a homogeneous body of students. As stipulated by Ferris (2000), the SLA process takes time; therefore correction should be tailored to the learner's

linguistic knowledge and experiences. This is in consensus with Aljaafereh and Lantolf (1994) observation that though learners may demonstrate similar proficiency levels, they exhibit individual differences while performing tasks. The errors made by these learners could be representative of different problems in their interlanguage continuum. The aforementioned studies that have compared the effectiveness of direct and indirect feedback have not factored into their treatment the learners ZPD which as observed by Aljaafreh & Lantolf (1994), brings all the pieces of the learning setting together: the teacher, the learner, their social and cultural history, their goals and motives as well as resources available to them including those that are dialogically constructed. In agreement with Aljaafreh & Lantolf's (1994) view, Nassaji and Swain's (2000) study revealed that the ZPD student demonstrated linguistic accuracy progress over time compared to the non-ZPD student. Also, in most of the studies it is not stated whether the feedback process was dialogic, which scaffolding techniques were employed and whether learners were allowed to negotiate for meaning. Therefore, it is difficult to ascertain which type of corrective feedback may help learners overcome certain grammatical inaccuracies.

2). Does corrective feedback help to improve students' verb form accuracy in writing from an initial task to subsequent writing task if is administered within the learners' ZPD? If so, what kind of feedback, direct vs. indirect feedback on written output, will be the most effective? The answer to this research question was negative also. The present study, moreover aimed at examining whether the type of feedback administered had an effect on the linguistic accuracy of the past continuous tense over time. Specifically, the study explored the effects of direct and indirect corrective feedback situated within a sociocultural framework on a new writing task. The effect of corrective feedback on new pieces of writing has been referred to as long time effect (Ferris, 2002). The RM ANOVAS analysis revealed that the treatment condition and time

interaction had no statistical significance  $p = .720$ . This non-statistical significance may be attributed to the study having a low power.

Although clear statistical proof is lacking, two observations lead us to suggest that indirect written corrective feedback structured with the sociocultural framework is superior to direct feedback structured within the sociocultural framework. Firstly, the descriptive statistics showed that all the ZPD ESL learners who received direct or indirect written corrective feedback followed by at least a 15-minute tutorial session in which the researcher and the research participants co-constructed knowledge produced fewer errors in their second compositions than in their initial writing task. As we can see in Table 1, students in both the direct and indirect groups improved in their linguistic accuracy between compositions 1 and 2. Students in the indirect groups registered the highest improvement ranging from 33.80 in composition 1 and 69.40 in composition 2. The range of improvement for students in the direct group was lower from 36.00 to 66.40 compared to the indirect feedback group. We also observed that students in the control group (non-ZPD students) who did not receive any form of corrective feedback actually performed worse in subsequent writing tasks with a considerable drop in the mean from 48.25 in composition 1 to 41.25 in composition 2.

Secondly, it can also be observed that students in the indirect treatment group had the highest overall mean in the second cloze test. Their improvement range was from 71.20 in the cloze test 1 to 92.00 in cloze test 2. This was followed closely by the direct CF group with a range of 62.20 in cloze test 1 to 88.00 in cloze test 2. The indirect corrective feedback group had the highest mean overall in both the controlled and the free writing activities.

These results suggest that indirect WCF structured for individual learners according to their language ability and students being allowed to co-construct knowledge with more capable

peers may lead to improved linguistic accuracy. A possible interpretation of the observation that accuracy of learners in the indirect group increased greatly compared to the direct feedback group from initial to subsequent writing tasks in both the controlled and free writing task is that the students may have been more motivated after being allowed to self-correct themselves through engaging in a collaborative co-construction of knowledge with more capable peers.

An alternative explanation might be that the scaffolding techniques employed during the feedback process which included: the researcher inducing a framework based on the regulatory scale so that the learners can notice the gap in the use of the past continuous tense and attempt to self-correct, providing support whenever learners needed it, modeling of the correct written and oral form for the student by the researcher, and allowing students to generate more forms of the same structure thus reducing variability within the task since they only focused on one grammatical aspect. Students were also allowed to give explanations of why they used certain structures and were only corrected when they gave an inappropriate explanation. Support for this explanation can be substantiated by studies that have compared the effects of direct and indirect WCF followed by an oral metalinguistic explanation (Bitchener, 2005; Bitchener & Knoch 2010) which suggest that the nature of the oral metalinguistic explanation may have been the critical factor in the long term difference in the effect of feedback as the studies found that students who received direct feedback followed by an oral metalinguistic explanation outperformed the other treatment groups. This assertion is supported by socio-cultural studies that see language learning as dialogically based and treat acquisition as a shared process between the individual and other persons (Vygotsky, (1978).

To provide a concrete illustration of the gains in linguistic accuracy, consider the following narrative extracts from the pre-test 2 (composition 1) and post-test 2 (composition 2)

for one participant from the indirect corrective feedback group and one from the direct feedback group.

#### Example 1. Indirect feedback group, Pre-test 2

Ryan woke up late in yesterday morning. He woke up at 8.35 a.m. He took a quick shower. He spent two minutes for it. While he was getting out of the shower, he felt down on the floor. He immediately stand up. While he was shaving his beard, he cut his face. He started to shave his beard at 8.39 a.m and finished at 8.40 a.m., he threw the razor on the floor. He got dressed in two minutes. At 8.42 am he teared a hole in his shirt. Then he found a new shirt. When he made coffee, he was pouring the coffee. At 8.45 a.m. spilled the coffee on his shirt. He looked for another clean shirt in two minutes. At 8.47 a.m. he heard the doorbell. Then he ran to the door, but no one was there. He lost his temper in one minute and he went back to the bedroom at 8.48 a.m. At 8.50 a.m., he laid down and was going back to sleep.

#### Post-test 2

I remember something I did badly when I was small kid. In that time, I lived in Sri Lanka. It was a nice evening. I started playing in our back yard garden. My mother used to plant beautiful flower in there. There was a rose plant with bloomed flowers. I went to that plant and touched the flowers. My mother saw it and she said “don’t pick the flowers”. After sometime, I saw my mother was cooking while my father was watching TV. I went to the garden and picked those rose flowers. Suddenly, my mother came to the garden when I was smelling those roses. She was angry with me, because I didn’t listen to her advices. She didn’t punish me. She again gave me advice and told me not to do anything that your parents said don’t do. Then I promised my mother not to do that bad thing again and I didn’t break that promise.



### Direct group Pre-test

In this morning my brother got up at 8.35. realized overslept so he took a two-minutes shower. After he got the shower, he realized his shaves fell on the floor. Whe he picked it he cut his face. But he thought "I don't have enough time" so he didn't care about cut face. He checked time, it was almost 8.41. He got dressed quickly. He was teared a hole in his shirt. So he changed a new shirt. At 8.44, he made coffee then poured the coffee. When he checked a time he spilled the coffee on his shirt. Already time was 8.45. He looked for another clean shirt. After he heard the doorbell. He run to the door, but no one was there. Three minutes later, he lost his temper. He decided to go back to the bedroom. At 8: 50 he lied down and went back to sleep.

### Posttest 2

When I was seven years old, I was living in Japan.  
One day I visited my ground father's house. Then I talked with them. After my sister and me were try to steal money from my grand father's wallet. Because we wanted to buy. I wouldn't gave pocket money from my mother at that moment. WE needed to money to buy toy. We used to say from my parents that you can't steal something. It is bad behavior but I did. I stole ten dollars from my grandfather. I was thinking, it leaked out. Actually, it was leak out Because it was strange that we had some money.  
My mother noticed immediately. Then she asked me " Maya, where were this money come from? Tell me the truth" I was confusing because I did'nt unexpected. Then my mother said "You're bad girl. I was shocking. Of course my mother also shocked. My father and mother were got angry. My feel was also bad because I broke our promise. My parent said to me "You can't hang out one month". It was my punishment from my parents. After I decided that I never steal and never break promise. In my childhood, I was annoyed so if I was child I don't want to break our promise.

In both examples, the two participants demonstrate poor control on the use of the past continuous verb form in the pre-test. They either did not use the past continuous in the expected obligatory occasions or failed to use the past continuous tense completely. In pre-test 2, the

participant from the indirect group supplied the past continuous form in two out of five obligatory occasions while the participant in the direct group did not use the past continuous verb form at all in any of the four obligatory occasions. The post-test shows that an increase in the use of the past continuous verb forms were maintained for both learners, with the learner in the indirect group achieving one hundred percent accuracy. These improvements are representative of the improvements that occurred overall in the two experimental groups. Another interpretation of the illustration as stated by (Lantolf & Frawley 1984), when feedback is provided over time, learners demonstrate internalization of assistance and gain ability to function autonomously.

Drawing from the grammaticality judgment pre-test 1 (cloze test), in which both groups registered high accuracy levels, it can be implied that the students were knowledgeable about the past continuous tense even though they had challenges using the form in continuous prose writing. This assumption could be explained by the fact that all the students in this research study were from expanding circle countries such as China, Japan, Jordan, Oman where there is a strong emphasis on grammar instruction in isolation from the other four language skills. Therefore, students are well versed with grammar structure and the rules to use it but they may not be able to apply them in composition writing.

Also noted is the possibility that the improvement evident in the experimental group's usage of the past continuous verb form especially, by the direct group, could be as seen as a result of avoidance strategy because two students in the direct and one in the indirect group used the target form once. This concept supports Truscott's (2004) observation that correction may cause learners to avoid constructions in which they expect to be corrected, thereby reducing the number of errors they may make in their composition drafts. An alternative explanation for the avoidance strategy could be that the learners were still in the developmental process stage where

they should be allowed more time to internalize mediational means before they are capable of operating autonomously (Van Pattern & William, 2007). It can therefore be presumed that continued scaffolding provided within the learners' ZPD would help them achieve higher levels of regulation. This rationale is in line with Ferris' (2000) observation that errors made by L2 learners may be attributed to the SLA process which takes time; therefore, student's accuracy may not improve overnight. This implies that once the ZPD is established, the teacher should continuously administer corrective feedback while monitoring students' progress with the feedback and once a student proves that he/she can perform autonomously, this assistance can be withdrawn.

It is also worth noting that the quality of gains in accuracy between the two groups may have been influenced by the timing of the task and the fact that the students were not earning any credits towards their final grade for the course. It may be concluded that students may not have put a lot of effort into the study or they may have been less motivated to correct their errors. The study was carried out four weeks before the end of the semester; hence the students may have been anxious and preoccupied with preparation for the end of the semester examinations and some for the TOEFL test. This supposition concurs with Ellis et.al (2008), who reported that if the gains of accuracy in writing were to play no role in the grades they received for the course, there was probably no incentive for students to become more accurate.

Another observation of the data shows that time as an independent variable had a significant effect across the four testing period's  $p < .05$ . It is expected that when treatment is offered learners should register improvement over time. So the study cannot explain whether the significance of the time effect alone was caused by factors other than treatment. Was the influence from the other class activities that students were covering?

A final issue that was explored by the present study was the students' reactions to the feedback process situated in a sociocultural framework. In general terms, the results of the questionnaire match well with past research showing that students expect and appreciate WCF feedback from more knowledgeable peers (Cohen 1987; Cohen & Calvacanti 1990; Ferris 1995 & Roberts 2001; Leki 1991; Radecki & Swales 1988; Leki et.al 2008). Also noted is a high preference for students to receive feedback structured within a sociocultural framework. This observation is based on the results of the t-tests of all the questionnaire items being significant and hence supporting the null hypothesis of each questionnaire item.

For this discussion, the questionnaire items were grouped into five major themes based on the assumptions of the sociocultural theory. For questions one, two, three and eight, the questionnaire sought to find out students' opinions about the corrective feedback being a dialogically constructed process with a sense of collaboration whereas they are allowed to negotiate for meaning. These questions addressed the key concepts of sociocultural theory, which include developmental change, mediation, and cultural embeddedness. The results of the t- tests all indicate a statistically significant outcome as  $p = .000$ .

Two observations can be made about these results. First, students want to engage with more knowledgeable peers whom they have confidence in that will assist them in improving grammatical accuracy in their compositions. Bearing in mind that these students come from expanding circle countries where English is taught as a foreign language, they may tend to rely more on the teacher in whom they believe is more knowledgeable than their peers. Therefore, feedback provided by the teacher may be beneficial to such students considering also that they come from diverse cultures where the role of the teacher is defined culturally. Secondly, it can be deduced from the results that students prefer to have feedback configured for them individually.

It is important that a teacher identifies a student's zone of proximal development and provide assistance at a level when learners feel comfortable to ask questions, share ideas, make suggestions, and express their opinions about grammatical structures they use in their writing. Some L2 learners may not be able to do this before the entire class because of cultural and individual differences. But when the feedback process is structured according to their linguistic abilities, they may feel comfortable in opening up. Lastly, it can also be inferred from the results that students prefer to have an oral explanation of the errors highlighted in their composition. In this forum, students can ask for clarifications, disagree with their teachers, and express their opinions and ideas. This observation was depicted during the intervention as the learners discussed elaborately with the researcher the use of the past continuous tense. Sometimes some learners disagreed with the researcher's opinion and after a period of deliberation, a correct form of the target structure would be agreed upon. This observation is substantiated by Aljaafreh & Lantolf's (1994) report that corrective feedback and negotiation are contextualized as a collaborative process in which the dynamics of the interaction shape the nature of the feedback and its usefulness to the learner.

Question four was concerned with whether students engage in private speech before they begin any writing task. Most students acknowledged that they engaged in private speech before starting to work on a writing task. A possible explanation for this observation is that through the self-directed utterances learners produced, they were able to listen to their inner speech, judge, and self-correct themselves through their intuition as to whether a language structure they wanted to use was grammatical or not. A possible interpretation of the explanation would be that before learners produce any form of written output, they engage in cognitive thought-processing in the mind where they use language to reflect, organize, structure, self-correct, and eventually

produce a text. Support for this interpretation is asserted by Lantolf (2000) in the observation that language is used to regulate our mental functioning especially through private speech. This is in line with Vygotsky's (1976) view that language is the most important symbolic tool that mediates higher forms of human mental functioning.

Question five assessed the students' feeling about the amount of time that they should be allowed to process feedback on errors in their composition before a teacher can shift focus to a new grammatical aspect. As indicated in the results, the students felt that they should be allowed enough time to think about the feedback provided and even engage in more practice on their own until they feel comfortable enough to handle certain grammatical aspects in their compositions before the focus of corrections shifts to other grammatical aspects. This observation is maintained by (Van Pattern & William 2007; Vygotsky, 1978) who report that individuals go through a process of internalization of mediational means before they are capable of operating at higher levels of intellectual functions. It is also in line with Vygotsky's (1978) construct that when feedback is situated within the learner's ZPD they exhibit the potential development, a stage in which they are able to operate with assistance from an expert. Therefore, when learners are at this stage they may need to be allowed more time to grasp a grammatical concept before new structures are introduced. This is the developmental stage learners go through before they are able to function autonomously.

Question 6 gaged the extent to which scaffolding support or assistance from a more knowledgeable peer should be provided and sought to determine when it should be withheld. Students tend to prefer that corrective feedback be withheld once they achieve self-regulation. A possible explanation for this interpretation would be that students may get bored and become disinterested in the feedback process if they feel that an instructor does not acknowledge the

progress they are making. Therefore, it is important that ESL teachers continuously monitor the students' potential developmental stage progress during the feedback process and withdraw assistance once students demonstrate self-regulation in the use of a targeted structure. It may be deduced that when learners sense acknowledgment of their progress they may be more motivated to move on to new grammatical structures. This construal is in line with Aljaafreh and Lantolf's (1994) mechanism for effective help relating to intervention within the ZPD. They suggest that assistance should be dependent on the actual need of students and relatively be withdrawn once students demonstrate self-regulation. Among the harmful effects of grammar correction reported by Truscott (1996) is demotivation, stress, and tension which may be caused by a teacher's lack of attention to individual student's progress. In order to curb these effects teachers may be advised to keenly assess their students' developmental stages and ensure feedback is provided accordingly.

Questions seven and eight asked students their preference on the number of error types that they would like to be corrected in a composition. Students indicated that they would prefer that their language teachers focus on only one type of error at a time. A possible explanation for this preference would be because learners want to internalize a particular grammar structure to be able to use it comfortably in their composition before a new one is introduced. Several scholars allude that SLA is a complex and slow process with a specified morpheme order acquisition (Truscott 1996, 2004; Ferris 2000), and therefore feedback may not be very fruitful if it is outside the learners' developmental stage. This suggests that teachers should focus on one grammatical aspect at a time. In other words, if the teacher administers feedback at a stage when learners are not ready to acquire a certain grammatical aspect it is not very helpful. This observation suggests that if language teachers take a particular focus and tailor feedback within

the learners' ZPD, they may be able to gradually assist learners to improve grammatical accuracy. This finding corroborates with studies that have addressed issues and strategies of responding to student errors that advocate and warn against attempts to mark all students' errors (Leki et.al (2008)). The finding concurs with the study's suggestion that error feedback may be most effective when it focuses on pattern errors allowing teachers and students to correct two or three errors at a time. In the long run, students may learn to focus on particular grammar errors that they may be most prone to and strive to master grammatical terms and rules related to those specific errors.

Questions 9 and 10 assessed the students' perception of the long term usefulness of feedback to find out whether learners will reflect upon prior WCF and oral discussions after course completion. The results of the question insinuate that students value feedback and hope that they can use it in future writing activities. It is difficult to ascertain to what extent this response may be practical given that the study cannot practically prove this assertion. Also noted is that students may have different goals for learning languages and therefore the level of motivation to improve grammatical accuracy is relative. It may also be inferred that the context in which students live may also influence their retention rate and improvement in language proficiency. If they receive constant scaffolding and comprehensible input even after the course is over, they may easily draw from their learning experiences and thus improve their language proficiency. It may be more difficult for students who return to EFL contexts like Jordan and Japan, which was the case for some of the participants in the study. They may not receive constant support from the external environment to improve their language proficiency. Students may also forget the content that they covered in class and during tutorial sessions, much as they may want to refer to previous learning experiences, it may not be possible.



## Conclusion

The present study investigated the effect of direct and indirect written corrective feedback structured within a socio-cultural framework. The study sought to find out the effects of direct and indirect feedback structured within the learner's ZPD to determine which is more effective, the long term effectiveness of these feedback types on linguistic accuracy and lastly, the student's reactions to feedback in this framework. In this concluding chapter, I will synthesize the main findings produced by the study. In addition, I will discuss the theoretical and practical implications. Lastly, I will sketch some limitations of the present study and highlight some directions for future research and end with concluding remarks.

To begin with, two observations suggest that WCF structured within a socio-cultural framework is more effective compared to WCF outside the socio-cultural framework and that of no feedback at all. There was marked improvement in the means from composition 1 to composition 2 with the indirect group having a higher score compared to the direct group. There was a marked improvement over time between the controlled and free writing activities; an indication that situating feedback according to individual learner's needs may be crucial for improving linguistic accuracy. From the questionnaire outcome, students generally support feedback constructed in this framework and have indicated that they employ the practicalities of the theory in their writing such as engaging in private speech, internalization of mediation, value the dialogic process of feedback, and enjoy the sense of self-regulation that comes with mastery of grammatical structures.

## Pedagogical implications

From the observations of the findings, the major suggestion that the study puts across concerning direct and indirect WCF structured in a socio-cultural framework is that this is a useful tool that ESL teachers can employ to help L2 learners gain linguistic accuracy. Though the study did not arrive at any conclusions, the findings suggest that WCF followed by a tutorial session in which a teacher attends to individual learner's needs may be very useful as an editing tool and an intervention to the SLA process which has been stated in prior research to be a complex process. The study just had one treatment session with the students and yet there was notable improvement. It is expected that if teachers would have more of these sessions with students to address their individual needs, there could be extensive improvement in linguistic accuracy.

For this feedback process to be successfully implemented, teachers should be keen on situating the learners' ZPD so that he or she may provide feedback based on the actual needs of the learners. The teacher should also be keen to provide minimal support until he/she ascertains that a learner can function independently before the support can be withdrawn. Therefore, it is important that ESL teachers be well grounded with the socio-cultural theoretical framework and be equipped with skill sets of how to structure feedback within this framework. This implies that they should be informed about how to identify and situate feedback within the ZPD. They should also be well-versed with scaffolding techniques to employ during the feedback process, how to use the regulatory scale, and how to monitor learner progress. This recommendation is in line with Ferris et.al's (1998) study in which 12 M.A. students participated in a 10-week tutorial session for ESL writers and demonstrated greater ability in terms of defining grammatical terms, and also in identifying and correcting errors in ESL students' writing.

A final implication can be drawn from the preference of feedback structured in a socio-cultural framework by ESL learners. It is considered important for teachers to be well-versed with the socio-cultural framework with regards to second language writing. With this knowledge they will be able to structure the feedback process so that students can benefit maximally. Teachers should therefore ensure that students are accorded enough time to reflect upon and internalize corrective feedback provided based on learner's individual differences. They should encourage students to participate in the co-construction of knowledge during revision as some students, depending on the culture that they come from, may assume that it is solely the responsibility of the teacher to correct their errors. It is also paramount that teachers assess their students' development so that they know when to stop and let students function autonomously.

### Limitations and future studies

Although the findings of the study suggest that WCF feedback structured in a socio-cultural framework is crucial for improved linguistic accuracy, there are a number of limitations to the present empirical research that need to be recognized and considered in future research. To start with, the results of the study did not find a statistical significance of the effectiveness of either direct or indirect corrective feedback within a learner's ZPD. There was also no statistical effect in the interaction of the written corrective feedback type and the interaction between the type of written corrective feedback between ZPD and non-ZPD students for the four different testing times. This could be attributed to the study having a low power because of its low sample size of  $N = 14$  which was subdivided into three smaller groups of  $D = 5$ ,  $I = 5$ ,  $C = 4$ .

The study used one ESL class because of the design of the feedback process which was structured for individual learners. The minimum time limit for each tutorial session with each student was fifteen minutes. During the actual execution of the tutorial, the time range of each session was between fifteen to twenty minutes with one exception that extended to thirty minutes. This was because the researcher could not stop a tutorial session until students had demonstrated satisfactory self-regulation or until they had finished revising a composition. Bearing in mind individual student differences and their varying potential level of development, it may not be possible to treat students homogeneously. Setting a timeline for the tutorial session is ideal for planning issues but may not be practical if L2 learners are to be treated independently according to their linguistic abilities

The study was adapted based on a real language class in which a teacher can attend effectively to students' needs if the teacher-student ratio is very minimal, which could be possible with small class sizes. In summary, the study did not arrive at any conclusions as far the interaction of WCF and time and the effectiveness of different types of WCF; hence the study recommends that further research with larger sample sizes would be necessary.

Secondly, another potential limitation that may have led to students avoiding the target structure in composition 2 in both groups may have been due to the failure of the students to adhere to the stated rubric. The instructions and the rubric for the composition 1 were stated very explicitly and sequenced in a very direct manner; therefore, it was easy for high intermediate learners to interpret it and write clearly. To the contrary, the rubric for composition 2, though inducing the obligatory use of the past continuous verb forms, as not explicitly stated. Since long term linguistic accuracy is assessed by the production of new pieces of writing, adjusting the writing prompt for both the writing tasks to have the same level of difficulty could potentially accommodate all the students. Thus future studies should ensure that rubrics for all the writing tasks are stated with the same level of difficulty or structure so that learners may have the same approach and understanding to a writing task. In support of this view are Nassaji & Swain (2000) who observed that the more explicit the prompt, the more effective it may be.

Thirdly, another limitation of this study is the relatively short period of time, just over four weeks, in which it was done. Undoubtedly, a longitudinal study could have provided evidence whether written corrective feedback situated in a socio-cultural framework was effective in reducing error in the longer term or whether it failed to enact such a substantial, more permanent change. In this study, feedback was provided just once; therefore, the findings of the study may not be generalized as the effect of WCF on linguistic accuracy over a long term. A

future analysis of the participants' writing of more drafts and providing continuous support within the learner's ZPD, followed by a delayed post-test could have provided some further information into this issue. Because of various time limitations or constraints, it was not possible to have a longitudinal element, but a future study of this kind would benefit greatly from having the ability or time to gain insight into the direct and indirect WCF's within a socio-cultural framework's long-term impact.

Fourthly, another drawback that the study may have had that could have led to non-statistical findings may have been caused by the study sample being comprised of students from very diverse cultural backgrounds who may have been exposed to various approaches of language instruction. As portrayed in the cloze test results, most of the learners demonstrated high accuracy levels in the controlled writing activity but performed either at or below average in the composition tasks. In addition to that, situating feedback within a socio-cultural framework entails incorporating all pieces of the learning setting together as observed by Aljaafreh & Lantolf (1994). These pieces include: the teacher, the student, their social and cultural history, their goals and motivation of learning English. The study did not take these variables into consideration. It is necessary that future studies put into consideration all these-variables before conclusions about the effectiveness of direct and indirect WCF within the ZPD can be made.

Lastly, as far as the questionnaire survey is concerned, some items were not measurable because they were gaging the students' reactions to find out if they will use the feedback administered in the future. It is difficult to ascertain these reactions because it is not easy to prove that they will be able to do this, though they indicated that they believed they would be reflecting upon feedback provided during their learning process or that the knowledge they had gained from the learning experience will come in handy even after completing the course. Most

of the other questionnaire items were based on the socio-cultural theoretical framework. In order to avoid questionnaire items with very low reliability estimates and substantive rationale, future studies should consider having the inventory piloted with potential participants to obtain feedback so that the questionnaire items may be further scrutinized for item redundancy, clarity, interpretations and readability.

### Concluding remarks

Though the value of written corrective feedback is highly controversial (Truscott, 1996; 1999; 2004; 2007) and the pedagogical approach to take in order to administer direct or indirect corrective feedback has not been agreed upon, this study provides evidence on the efficacy of written corrective feedback structured within the learners' zone of proximal development. This conclusion is highly supported by the learners' preference for feedback structured within a sociocultural framework. Though the study lacked statistically significant findings, the observations of the results suggest that providing feedback within a sociocultural framework leads to improved linguistic accuracy both in controlled and free writing activities; therefore, it rebuts Truscott's (1996) claim that error correction is not beneficial and counter-productive to students' L2 writing development. The present empirical work thus advances the understanding of the sociocultural theoretical framework with regard to second language writing and how to administer direct and indirect written corrective feedback accordingly as the study has identified this framework to be a useful pedagogical tool. Therefore, further longitudinal research with larger sample sizes is needed before conclusions can be made about the effectiveness of direct and indirect corrective feedback from a sociocultural framework.



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Aljaafreh, A. & Lantolf, J. P. (1994). Negative feedback as regulation and second language learning in the zone of proximal development. *The Modern Language Journal*, 78, 465–483.
- Ashwell, T. (2000). Patterns of teacher response to student writing in a multi-draft composition classroom: Is content feedback followed by form feedback the best method? *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 9 (3), 227–257.
- Bates, L., Lane, J., & Lange, E. (1993). *Writing clearly: Responding to ESL compositions*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle.
- Bailey, K. (1998). *Learning about language assessment: dilemmas, decisions, and directions*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle.
- Bitchener, J. (2008). Evidence in support of written corrective feedback. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 17, 102–118.
- Bitchener, J. (2009). Measuring the effectiveness of written corrective feedback: A response to “Overgeneralization from a narrow focus: A response to Bitchener (2008).” *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 18, 276–279.
- Bitchener, J., & Knoch, U. (2008). The value of written corrective feedback for migrant and international students. *Language Teaching Research*, 12, 409–431.
- Bitchener, J., & Knoch, U. (2009). The value of a focused approach to written corrective feedback. *ELT Journal*, 63, 204–211.
- Bitchener, J., & Knoch, U. (2010a). The contribution of written corrective feedback to language development: A ten month investigation. *Applied Linguistics*, 31, 193–214.
- Bitchener, J., & Knoch, U. (2010b). Raising the linguistic accuracy level of advanced L2 writers with written corrective feedback. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 19, 207–217.

- Bitchener, J., Young, S., & Cameron, D. (2005). The effect of different types of corrective feedback on ESL student writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 14, 191–205.
- Bitchener, J., Young, S., & Cameron, D. (2005). The effect of different types of corrective feedback on ESL student writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 14, 227–258.  
Boston : Heinle & Heinle.
- Brown, H.D. (2001). *Teaching by principle: An interactive approach to language pedagogy*. (5th ed. ). White Plains, NY : Pearson Education
- Cardelle, M., & Corno, L. (1981). Effects on second language learning of variations in written feedback on homework assignments. *TESOL Quarterly*, 15, 251- 261.
- Crookes, G. (1986) Towards a validated analysis of scientific text structure. *Applied Linguistics*, 7: 57- 70.
- Carroll, S., & Swain, M. (1993). Explicit and implicit negative feedback: an empirical study of the learning of linguistic generalizations. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 15, 357–386.
- Chandler, J. (2003). The efficacy of various kinds of error feedback for improvement in the accuracy and fluency of L2 student writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 12, 267–296.
- Chaney, S. J. (1999). *The effect of error types on error correction and revision*. MA thesis, Department of English, California State University, Sacramento.  
Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills and the National Conference.
- Cohen, A. (1987). Student processing of feedback on their compositions. In A.L. Wender & J. Rubin (Eds), *Learner strategies in language learning* (pp.57-69). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

- Cohen, A., & Cavalcanti, M. (1990). Feedback on compositions: Teacher and student verbal reports. In B. Kroll (Ed.). *Second language writing: Research insights for the classroom* (pp. 155-177). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Conrad, S. M. & L. Goldstein (1999). Student revision after teacher written comments: Text, contexts and individuals. *Journal of Second Language Writing* 8.2, 147–180.
- Corder, S.P. (1967). *The significance of Learners' Errors*. International review of Applied Linguistics. 4. 161-169.
- Cummins, J. (1979). *Linguistics Interdependence and the Educational development of bilingual children*. Review of educational Research 49, 222-251.
- de Guerro M. C. M., & Villamil, O. S. (1994). Social-cognitive dimensions of interaction in L2 peer revisions. *The Modern Language Journal*, 84, 51-68.
- de Guerro M. C. M., & Villamil, O. S. (2000). Activating the ZPD: Mutual scaffolding in L2 peer revision. *The Modern Language Journal*, 78, 484-496.
- Donato, R. (1994). *Collective scaffolding in second language learning*. In J. P. Lantolf & G. Appel (Eds.), *Vygotskian approaches to second language research* (pp.35-56). Norwood, NJ: Ablex. edition. New York: Longman.
- Dörnyei, Z. 2003: Questionnaires in second language research construction, administration and processing. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum. 2007: *Research methods in applied linguistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Ellis, R. (1998). Teaching and research: Options in grammar teaching. *TESOL Quarterly*, 32, 39–60.
- Ellis, R., & Sheen, Y. (2006). Reexamining the role of recasts in second language acquisition. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 28, 575–600.

- Ellis, R., Loewen, S., & Erlam, R. (2006). Implicit and explicit corrective feedback and the acquisition of L2 grammar. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 28, 339–368.
- Ellis, R., Sheen, Y., Murakami, M., & Takashima, H. (2008). The effects of focused and unfocused written corrective feedback in English as a foreign language context. *System*, 36, 353–371. *ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 265 552*. Urbana, IL: ERIC
- Fathman, A., Whalley, E. (1990). *Teacher response to student writing: Focus on form versus content* In. B.Kroll (Ed.). *Second language writing: Research insights for the classroom* (pp 178- 190). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Ferris, D. (2002). *Treatment of error in second language student writing*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.
- Ferris, D. R. (1995). Can advanced ESL students be taught to correct their most serious and frequent errors? *CATESOL Journal*, 8, 41–62.
- Ferris, D. R. (1997). The influence of teacher commentary on student revision. *TESOL Quarterly*, 31, 315-339.
- Ferris, D. R. (1999). The case for grammar correction in L2 writing classes. A response to Truscott (1996). *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 8, 1–11.
- Ferris, D. R. (2002). *Treatment of error in second language student writing*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Ferris, D. R. (2003). *Response to student writing: Implications for second language students*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Ferris, D. R. (2004). The “Grammar Correction” debate in L2 writing: Where are we, and where do we go from here? (and what do we do in the meantime. . .?). *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 13, 49–62.

- Ferris, D. R. (2006). Does error feedback help student writers? New evidence on the short- and long-term effects of written error correction. In K. Hyland & F. Hyland (Eds.), *Perspectives on response*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ferris, D. R., & Helt, M. (2000, March 11–14). *Was Truscott right? New evidence on the effects of error correction in L2 writing classes*. Paper presented at the American Association of Applied Linguistics Conference.
- Ferris, D. R., & Roberts, B. (2001). Error feedback in L2 writing classes: How explicit does it need to be? *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 10, 161–184
- Ferris, D. R., Chaney, S. J., Komura, K., Roberts, B. J., & McKee, S. (2000, March 14–18). Perspectives, problems, and practices in treating written error. *Colloquium presented at International TESOL Convention*.
- Frantzen, D. (1995). The effects of grammar supplementation on written accuracy in an intermediate Spanish content course. *Modern Language Journal*, 79, 244–329.
- Frawley, W. & J. P. Lantolf (1985). Second Language discourse: A Vygotskyan perspective. *Applied Linguistics* 6, 19- 44.
- Goldstein, L. (2001). For Kyla: What does the research say about responding to ESL writers. In T. Silva & P. Matsuda, (eds.), *On second language writing*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 73–90.
- Goldstein, L. (2005). *Teacher written commentary in second language writing classrooms*. Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press.
- Goldstein, L. (2006). In search of the individual: Feedback and revision in second language writing. In K. Hyland & F. Hyland (eds.), 185–205.
- Guenette, D. (2007). Is feedback pedagogically correct? Research design issues in studies of

- feedback on writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 16, 40–53.
- Hedgcock, J., & Lefkowitz, N. (1994). Feedback on feedback: Assessing learner receptivity to teacher response in L2 composing. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 3, 141– 163.
- Hendrickson, J. M. (1978). Error correction in foreign language teaching: Recent theory, research, and practice. *Modern Language Journal*, 62, 387–398.
- Hendrickson, J. M. (1978). Error correction in foreign language teaching: Recent theory, research, and practice. *Modern Language Journal*, 62, 387– 398.
- Hendrickson, J. M. (1980). The treatment of error in written work. *Modern Language Journal*, 64, 216– 221.
- Hendrickson, J. M. (1984). The treatment of error in written work. In S. Mckay (Ed.), *Composition in a second language* (pp146-159) Rowley, MA: Newsbury Houx.
- Hillocks, G., Jr. (1986). *Research on written composition: New directions for teaching*.
- Hyland K. & F. Hyland. (eds.) (2006a). *Feedback in second language writing: Contexts and issues*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Hyland, K., & Hyland, F. (2006). Feedback on second language students' writing. *Language Teaching*, 39, 83–101.
- James, C. (1998). *Errors in language learning and use: Exploring error analysis*. London: Longman.
- Kepner, C. G. (1991). An experiment in the relationship of types of written feedback to the development of second-language writing skills. *Modern Language Journal*, 75, 305– 313.
- Knoblauch, C., & Brannon, L. (1981). Teacher commentary on student writing: The state of the art. *Freshman English News*, 10, 1-4.
- Komura, K. (1999). *Student response to error correction in ESL classrooms*. MA thesis,

Department of English, California State University, Sacramento.

Krashen, S. D. (1982). *Principles and practices in second language acquisition*. Oxford:

Pergamon Press.

Lalande, J. F. (1982). Reducing composition errors: An experiment. *Modern Language Journal*, 66, 140–149.

Lantolf, J. P. (2000). Introducing sociocultural theory. In J. P. Lantolf (Ed.), *Sociocultural theory and second language learning* (pp. 1–26). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lantolf, J. P. (2000). Second language learning as a mediated process. *Language Teaching: The international Abstracting journal for Language Teachers and Applied Linguistics*, 33, 79–96.

Lantolf, J. P. (2001, September 28-30). *Private speech and internalization in second language learning: A theoretical argument with some empirical evidence*. Paper presented at the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Sociocultural Theory and Second language Learning Research Working Group, Ontario Institute for studies in Education of the University of Toronto.

Lantolf, J. P. (2005). Sociocultural theory and second language learning research: An exegesis. In E. Hinkel (Ed.), *Handbook of research in second language teaching and learning* (pp. 335–354). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Lantolf, J. P. (2006). Sociocultural theory and L2. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 28, 67–109.

Lantolf, J. P., & Thorne, S. L. (2007). Sociocultural theory and second language acquisition. In B. van Patten & J. Williams (Eds.), *Explaining second language acquisition* (pp. 197–220). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lantolf, J.P. (2009). Knowledge of language in teacher education. *The Modern Language*



*Journal* 93:271-274.

Larson-hall, J. (2010). *A Guide to Doing Statistics in Second Language Research Using SPSS*.

New York and London: Routledge.

Leki, I. (1991). The preferences of ESL students for error correction in college-level writing classes. *Foreign Language Annals*, 24, 203–218.

Leki, I., Cumming, A., & Silva, T. (2006). Second-language composition: Teaching and learning. In P. Smagorinsky (Ed.), *Research on composition: Multiple perspectives on two decades of change* (pp. 141 – 169 ). New York : Teachers College Press .

Leki, I., Cumming, A.A. & Silva, T. (2008). *A synthesis of research on second language writing in English*. London: Routledge.

Lidz, C. (1991). *Practitioners' guide to dynamic assessment*. New York: Guilford Press.

Ohta, A. S. (1995). Applying sociocultural theory to analysis of learner discourse: Learner-learner collaborative interaction in the zone of proximal development. *Issue in Applied Linguistics*, 6, 93-121.

Ohta, A. S. (2001). Peer interactive tasks and assisted performance in classroom language learning. In A. S. Ohta *Second language processing in the classroom: Learning Japanese* (pp.73-128). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.Press.

Oller, John W., Jr. (1979). *Language tests at school*. London: Longman.

Radecki, P., & Swales, J. (1988). ESL student reaction to written comments on their written work. *System*, 16, 355-365.

Reid, J. (1993). *Teaching ESL writing*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall Regents.

Robb, T., Ross, S., & Shortreed, I. (1986). Salience of feedback on error and its effect on EFL writing quality. *TESOL Quarterly*, 20, 83–93.

- Sachs, R., & Polio, C. (2007). Learners' uses of two types of written feedback on a L2 writing revision task. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 29, 67–100.
- Saito, H. (1994). *Teachers' practices and student's preferences for feedback on second language on second language writing: A case study of adult ESL learners*. *TESL Canada Journal* 11 (2), 46-70.
- Schmidt, R.W and S. N. Frota 1986. 'Developing basic conversational ability in a second language. A case study of an adult learner of Portuguese in RR Day (ed) 1986. *Talking to Learn Conversation in Second Language Acquisition* Rowley, M A Newbury House.
- Semke, H. (1984). The effects of the red pen. *Foreign Language Annuals*, 17, 195–202.
- Sheen, Y. (2006). *Corrective feedback, individual differences, and the acquisition of English articles by second language learners*. Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Nottingham, United Kingdom.
- Sheen, Y. (2007). The effect of focused written corrective feedback and language aptitude on ESL learners' acquisition of articles. *TESOL Quarterly*, 41, 255–283.
- Sheen, Y. (2010). Differential effects of oral and written corrective feedback in the ESL classroom. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 32, 201–234.
- Sheen, Y., Wright, D., & Moldawa, A. (2009). Differential effects of focused and unfocused written correction on the accurate use of grammatical forms by adult ESL learners. *System*, 37, 556–569.
- Sheppard, K. (1992). Two feedback types: Do they make a difference? *RELC Journal*, 23, 103–110.
- Stone, C. (1993). What's missing in the metaphor of scaffolding? In E. Forman, N. Minick & C. Stone (Eds.), *Contexts of learning: Sociocultural dynamics of children development* (pp.

- 163 – 169). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Swain, M. (1997). Collaborative dialogue: Its contribution to second language learning. *Revista Canaria de Estudios Ingleses*, 34, 115–132.
- Swain, M. (2000). The output hypothesis and beyond: Mediating acquisition through collaborative dialogue. In J. Lantolf (Ed.), *Sociocultural theory and second language learning* (pp. 97–114). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Swain, M., & Lapkin, S. (2000). Task-based second language learning: The uses of the first language. *Language Teaching Research*, 4(3), 376–401.
- Swain, M., Brooks, L., & Tocalli-Beller, A. (2002). Peer–peer dialogue as a means of second language learning. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 22, 171–185.
- Truscott, J. (1996). The case against grammar correction in L2 writing classes. *Language Learning*, 46, 327–369.
- Truscott, J. (1999). The case for “the case for grammar correction in L2 writing classes”: A response to Ferris. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 8(2), 111–122.
- Truscott, J. (2004). Dialogue: Evidence and conjecture on the effects of correction: A response to Chandler. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 13(4), 337–343.
- Truscott, J. (2007). The effect of error correction on learners’ ability to write accurately. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 16, 255–272.
- Truscott, J. (2010). Some thoughts on Anthony Bruton’s critique of the correction debate. *System*, 38, 329–335.
- Truscott, J., & Hsu, A. Y. -p. (2008). Error correction, revision, and learning. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 17, 292–305.
- Van Beuningen, C. G., De Jong, N. H., & Kuiken, F. (2008). The effect of direct and indirect

- corrective feedback on L2 learners' written accuracy. *ITL International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 156, 279–296.
- Vygotsky, L. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*, M. Cole, V. John-Steiner, S. Scribner, & E. Souberman, Eds.). Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.
- Vygotsky, L. (1996). *Thought and language* (9th ed.). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Wertsch, J. (1985). *Vygotsky and the social formation of mind*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University
- Wertsch, J. V., & Stone, C. A. (1978). Microgenesis as a tool for developmental analysis. *The Quarterly Newsletter of the Laboratory of Comparative Human Cognition*, 1(1), 8–10.
- Wood, D., Bruner, J., & Ross, G. (1976). The role of tutoring in problem solving. *Journal of Child psychology and psychiatry*, 17, 89-100.
- Zamel, V. (1985). Responding to student writing. *TESOL Quarterly*, 19, 79–97.

## LIST OF APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A: PRE-TEST

These passages describe scenes from the past. Complete them with the past progressive form of the verbs in parentheses.

I have a special childhood memory of a summer night when I was seven or eight. My mom and dad and my sister ..... (sit) on the front porch. The sun ..... (set), and the sky.....(become) red and golden. My sisters ..... (swing) on the porch swing, and my mother ..... (rock) in her rocking chair. Our dog ..... (lie) on the steps. My father ..... (play) his guitar and ..... (sing). Everyone ..... (listen) to him. He loved to sing, and he had a wonderful voice. I felt so happy and peaceful and secure. That night is one of my best memories.

## APPENDIX B: POST TEST



I have a special memory of Christmas when I was five years old. My aunts, uncles, and cousins  
..... (visit) us. I ..... (wear) my  
beautiful new dress. We ..... (sit) around the Christmas  
tree, and everyone..... (open) Christmas presents.  
I ..... (look at) one big present near the corner of the  
room. Then my mother took me over the present. It was for me! It was the most beautiful doll  
house I had ever seen!

APPENDIX C: TEST 1

While using the past progressive tense with when and while, tell a story using the following information. Example: This morning everything went wrong for Dave Peterson, too. At 8.35 am, Dave woke up late. He took a two-minute shower. While he was getting out of the shower .....

8:35 A.M.	wakes up late
8:36-8:38 A.M.	takes a shower
8:39 A.M.	gets out of the shower
8:39 A.M.	falls on the floor
8:39- 8:40 A.M.	shaves
8:40 A.M.	cuts his face
8:40 A.M.	throws the razor on the floor
8:41 -8:42 A.M.	gets dressed
8:42 A.M.	tears a hole in his shirt
8:43 A.M.	finds a new shirt
8:44 A.M.	makes coffee
8:45 A.M.	pours the coffee
8:45 A.M.	spills the coffee on his shirt
8:46- 8:47 A.M.	looks for another clean shirt
8:47 A.M.	hears the doorbell
8:47 A.M.	runs to the door, but no one is there
8:48 A.M.	loses his temper
8:48 A.M.	goes back to the bedroom
8:50 A.M.	lies down and goes back to sleep

APPENDIX D: TEST 2

Do you have a memory of a particular time in your childhood when you disobeyed your parent?

What was the rule that you broke? Why did you do it? What happened to you? Use these questions to tell about that time.

1. How old were you?
2. Where were you living?
3. What did you do?
4. Why was this against your parents' rules?
5. How angry were your parents?
6. How did you feel?
7. Did you get punished? What was your punishment?
8. Did you ever break those rules again?
9. How do you feel about it now?
10. Would you do it again if you were a child?

APPENDIX E: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

The purpose of this questionnaire is to improve the teaching of composition. The following are a number of statements in which some people agree and others disagree. We would like you to indicate your opinion after each statement by circling a number that most closely corresponds to your opinion. Thank you for taking the time to answer the questions thoughtfully.

To respond to the following questions please refer to the following scale

6 = strongly agree                      4 = somewhat agree                      2 = Disagree  
 5 = Agree                                      3 = somewhat disagree                      1 = strongly disagree

1. I feel that written correction in composition followed by a short teacher-student conference where the teacher explains errors in my composition helps me improve my composition writing skills.

6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly	Agree	somewhat	somewhat	disagree	strongly
Agree		agree	disagree		disagree

2. I feel free to ask questions, make suggestions, and share ideas I have about my composition when we discuss my composition with the teacher after he/she has graded my paper.

6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly	Agree	somewhat	somewhat	disagree	strongly
Agree		agree	disagree		disagree

3. I feel I am most likely to make meaningful and noticeable improvements in my writing when the instructor explains to me her/his comments in the teacher-student conference.

6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly	Agree	somewhat	somewhat	disagree	strongly
Agree		agree	disagree		disagree

4. I talk to myself silently about a composition task before I begin to write.

6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly	Agree	somewhat	somewhat	disagree	strongly
Agree		agree	disagree		disagree

5. I like when the teacher allows me a chance to practice what I have learned until I master it before he/she introduces another topic.

6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly	Agree	somewhat	somewhat	disagree	strongly
Agree		agree	disagree		disagree

6. I feel that the teacher should stop correcting my errors after I am certain I have mastered the grammatical concept.

6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly	Agree	somewhat	somewhat	disagree	strongly
Agree		agree	disagree		disagree

7. I learn most when the teacher corrects only one type of error in my composition.

6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly	Agree	somewhat	somewhat	disagree	strongly
Agree		agree	disagree		disagree



8. I feel I should have an oral discussion with my teacher after every composition I write.

6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly	Agree	somewhat	somewhat	disagree	strongly
Agree		agree	disagree		disagree

9. I think about instructor's correction and the oral discussions from previous compositions when I write other compositions so that I avoid repeating previous mistakes.

6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly	Agree	somewhat	somewhat	disagree	strongly
Agree		agree	disagree		disagree

10. I feel that the written corrections and teacher-student conference will be useful even after I complete the course.

6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly	Agree	somewhat	somewhat	disagree	strongly
Agree		agree	disagree		disagree

APPENDIX F: Regulatory Scale Implicit (strategic) to Explicit

0. Tutor asks learners to read find errors and correct them prior to tutorial
1. Construction of a “collaborative frame” prompted by the tutor as a potential dialogic partner.
2. Prompted or focused reading of the sentence that contains the error by the learner or tutor.
3. Tutor indicates that something may be wrong in a text (e.g. sentence, clause, and line) “Is there anything wrong in this sentence?”
4. Tutor rejects unsuccessful attempts at recognizing the error.
5. Tutor narrows down to the location of the error (e.g., repeats or points to the specific segment which may contain the error.)
6. Tutor identifies the nature of the error but does not identify the error (e.g., “There is something wrong with tense marking here”.)
7. The tutor identifies the error (“You can use the auxiliary here”).
8. Tutor rejects learners’ unsuccessful attempts at correcting the error.
9. Tutor provides clue to help the learner arrive at the correct form (e.g., it is not really the past but something that is going on”.)
10. Tutor provides the correct form.
11. Tutor provides some explanation of the use of the correct form.
12. Tutor provides the correct pattern when other forms fail to produce an appropriate responsive action.

APPENDIX G: TWE SCORING GUIDE

6	<p>Clearly demonstrates competence on both the rhetorical and syntactic levels, though it may have occasional errors.</p> <p>A paper in this category</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Is well organized and well developed</li> <li>❖ Effectively addresses the writing task</li> <li>❖ Uses appropriate details to support a thesis or illustrate ideas</li> <li>❖ Shows unity, coherence, and progression</li> <li>❖ Displays consistent facility in the use of language</li> <li>❖ Demonstrates syntactic variety and appropriate word choice</li> </ul>
5	<p>Demonstrate competence in writing on both rhetorical and syntactic levels, though it will have occasional errors.</p> <p>A paper in this category</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Is generally well organized and well developed though it may have fewer details than a 6 paper</li> <li>❖ May address some parts of the task more effectively than others</li> <li>❖ Shows unity, coherence, and progression</li> <li>❖ Demonstrates some syntactic variety in the range of vocabulary</li> <li>❖ Displays facility in language, though it may have more errors than does a 6 paper</li> </ul>
4	<p>Demonstrates minimal competence on writing both the rhetorical and syntactic level. A paper in this category</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Is adequately organized</li> <li>❖ Addresses the writing topic adequately but may slight part of the task</li> <li>❖ Uses some details to support a thesis or illustrate ideas</li> <li>❖ Demonstrates adequate but undistinguished or inconsistent facility with syntax and usage</li> <li>❖ May contain some serious errors that occasionally obscure meaning</li> </ul>
3	<p>Demonstrates some developing competence in writing, but it remains flawed on either the rhetorical or syntactic level, or both.</p> <p>A paper in this category may reveal one or more of the following weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Inadequate organization or development</li> <li>❖ Failure to support or illustrate generalizations with appropriate or sufficient detail</li> <li>❖ An accumulation of errors in sentence structure and/or usage</li> <li>❖ A noticeably inappropriate choice of words or word forms</li> </ul>
2	<p>Suggests incompetence in writing</p> <p>A paper in this category is seriously flawed by one or more of the following weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Failure to organize or develop</li> <li>❖ Little or no detail or relevant specifics</li> <li>❖ Serious and frequent errors in usage or sentence structure</li> <li>❖ Serious problems with focus</li> </ul>

1	<p>Demonstrates incompetence in writing</p> <p>A paper in this category will contain serious and persistent writing errors, may be illogical or incoherent, or may reveal the writer's inability to comprehend the question. A paper that is severely underdeveloped, or one that exhibits no response at all, also falls into this category.</p>
---	---

## VITA

Born in 1986 in a small village in Western Kenya, Brenda Aromu Wawire led a most exciting and adventuresome scholarly life. For elementary education she attended Matunda Primary School from 1991 to 1999. She then joined Lugulu Girls' High school and graduated in November 2003. In August 2005 she enrolled in Kenyatta University, where in December 2009 she received a degree of Bachelor's of Education in Arts with a focus in English, Linguistics, and Literature. Upon completing her undergraduate studies, she taught English and literature for two consecutive years at both St. Marks Boys' High School Cheranganyi and at St. Anthony's Boys' High School, respectively. During her postgraduate work experience, she was awarded the Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistantship Award. She was assigned to Jackson State University, where she taught two sections of elementary Swahili during the 2010/2011 academic year. In August 2011, she joined the University of Mississippi to pursue a Masters of Art degree with a concentration in TESL, and during her studies she taught two sections of elementary Swahili.