The Effect of Using Direct Corrective Feedback and Metalinguistic Explanation Techniques for FL Egyptian Learners'

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Abstract

Egyptian learners in secondary schools were not accurate in using English indefinite articles and were confused when dealing with type 2 conditional sentences, as the researcher noticed during the weekly visits on practicum days. The current research tried to assist the learners in solving this problem by using two techniques: (1) direct written corrective feedback, and 2 metalinguistic explanations to discover which one will leave a positive effect on learners' performance. The learners used the two techniques: once with another chance to write again, and once without this chance. The researcher used the new texts to calculate learners' performance and accuracy. The findings were surprising to the researcher, as the feedback assisted the learners' accuracy when using type 2 conditional sentences more than when using indefinite articles and the researcher was expecting the opposite. In addition, the efficacy of direct corrective feedback lasted longer than that of metalinguistic explanation. The findings revealed that giving time for revision after feedback had a positive effect on improving learners' performance. Moreover, the findings showed that learners' performances improved when they received immediate correction of their errors instead of presenting a metalinguistic explanation.
Keywords: FL Egyptian learners; Direct Corrective Feedback; Metalinguistic Explanation

The main aim of the present research is to investigate the effect of using two techniques of written feedback: direct corrective feedback, and metalinguistic explanations. Some researchers tried to examine the effect of using different types of written corrective feedback, but they found that this takes more time, as the teacher will give each learner individual corrections to their texts. The researcher considered metalinguistic explanation to be a way of saving time because the teacher didn't have to correct errors individually but instead give clear, direct instructions to the whole class based on the errors found in learners' writing.

Some other studies tried to determine whether the act of asking learners to rewrite again after receiving feedback would improve the effect of the feedback. The current research investigated the same action by using two sets, one of them exposed to revision after feedback while the other set received feedback only. Other studies have focused on using the verb forms and definite-indefinite articles; however, the most important point here is to know whether written feedback is beneficial for complex subordinate structures. Thus, the current study tried to explore the role of form-focused written feedback and whether this role will change if the grammatical purpose changes.

Several recent studies concerning the importance of using written corrective feedback have been conducted in response to Truscott's (2010) rejection of correcting the written errors of the learners; as he said, "There is no good reason to correct the written errors of the learners". As a result of Truscott's position, some other researchers attempted to prove wrongly what Truscott said. One of these was Bruton (2010), who proved the importance of

written corrective feedback in his study. Bitchener (2010) was also keen on using written corrective feedback and succeeded in proving its positive role in enhancing the learners' grammatical accuracy after giving them a chance to rewrite their texts.

Along the same lines, other researchers like Van Beuningen et al. (2012) have explored the effect of using written corrective feedback, but in contrast to the others, they used unfocused written corrective feedback to reveal that learners' accuracy improved when they rewrote their texts after correction, but they were unable to find a relationship between correcting learners' errors and the enhancement of learners' accuracy with respect to specific grammatical features.

Additionally, the researcher noticed that many studies concentrated on using written corrective feedback for simple grammatical features but neglected to use it with complex syntactic features, so there is no clue to discover whether the written corrective feedback influences enhancing accuracy in syntactic features. Also, the researcher found that there were few studies that examined the performance of the learners on rewriting new texts after correction and how this could impact their accuracy.

Review of previous research

The researcher divided this part into three sections: Section One discusses the studies on feedback, Section Two examines the studies of the impact of feedback on accuracy, and Section Three looks into the extent to which various grammatical constructions benefit from feedback.

Section 1
Feedback

The current research is concerned with two types of form-focused feedback: written corrective feedback and metalinguistic explanation. The main purpose of feedback in general is to help students face their problems in writing. Using these two types of feedback are different in that the teacher in written corrective feedback should deal with every learner and correct their written texts individually, and this type is the most common in the research. In metalinguistic explanations, the teacher deals with the whole class and gives direct instructions based on the problems in the learners' writing (Bitchener, 2012).

Based on Van Beuningen's (2012) point of view regarding the positive effect of direct written corrective feedback on learners, especially those who lack language proficiency, the present research decided to explore the effect of direct written corrective feedback. The researchers have adopted different views concerning direct and indirect feedback, while Lalande (1982) believes that direct feedback should be used only when the learners are unqualified to correct their own written errors, but that indirect feedback is more important because it gives the learners more chances to learn and think. By contrast, some other researchers found in their studies that direct feedback is more important and has a more positive effect on learners' performance than indirect feedback (Hashemnezhad, 2012; Frear, 2012). Others (Ferris, 2006; Vyatkina, 2010) considered both direct and indirect written corrective feedback to be equal in their impact on learners' performance, especially when

the teacher asks the learner to write the text again or write a new text.

Truscott (2007) looked into the results of studies that compared direct and indirect written corrective feedback, and considered the results of these studies to be extremely varied. Truscott mentioned four elements as an evidence of the variation in these studies, including how the researchers used direct and indirect feedback, the nature of the learners who participated in the studies, and whether feedback was focused or unfocused. Ferris (2004) argued that these studies had many problems in their designs, as well as lacking control groups.

The present research considered Shintani's (2014) study to be important because it was carefully designed and showed the great effect of using direct written corrective feedback on grammatical accuracy. Therefore, the researcher decided to use focused feedback and chose to look at only two grammatical structures for more concentration. This choice was reinforced by Van Beuningen (2012), who observed that teachers in focused feedback offered repeated clues as to how to correct the same error, and this may give learners an opportunity to restructure their inter-language systems.

The researchers adopted different perspectives when comparing focused and unfocused written corrective feedback. Based on their studies, some of them considered focused written corrective feedback to be more important than unfocused written corrective feedback for two reasons. The researchers were able to gain clear and statistically significant data and helped the participants to improve their grammatical accuracy,

especially in new written texts (Farrokhi, 2012). Others believed that both focused and unfocused written corrective feedback led to the same results in the case of using new written pieces (Ellis, 2008). Shintani (2014) decided to use metalinguistic explanations instead of written corrective feedback in her study because this type had been seldom investigated. She used metalinguistic explanations in written handout form to clarify the use of definite and indefinite articles in English.

Shintani compared learners' performance after receiving both techniques, and she found that the results were in favor of metalinguistic explanations, as the learners were able to develop awareness of the rules, gain a better understanding, and were able to use it when rewriting their texts. The present research followed Shintani concerning using metalinguistic explanation and direct written corrective feedback. The role of learners in direct written corrective feedback differs from metalinguistic explanation in that learners in direct written corrective feedback made a cognitive comparison between the correct and incorrect forms after giving them positive evidence, which increased the chance that learners may try to understand the rule explained after correction. The learners in metalinguistic explanation need to know specifically their errors and how to correct them, which means that this type of correction needs hard work.

Section 2
Impact of feedback on accuracy
Truscott (1996) disagreed that written corrective feedback helps learners to correct their errors because the learners just copy the corrections. To the contrary, Ferris

(2001) supported using written corrective feedback, arguing that the learners rewriting their original text after correction helped to increase learning and showing the importance of written corrective feedback. In 2003, Chandler added revision to direct written corrective feedback and examined its effect on learners, then divided the learners into two groups. One group revised their errors directly after each piece of writing, while the other group's revision took place after weeks of feedback. Chandler found that the accuracy of the learners in the first group improved because they revised directly after writing, while the learners' accuracy in the other group was not significantly improved.

Another study by Frear (2012) divided the learners into two sets; one set received written pieces with revision but without written corrective feedback, and the other received written pieces with both revision and written corrective feedback. Frear applied this idea to acquiring regular and irregular past tense; the results showed that learners' accuracy in the first set who received revision without written corrective feedback did not improve, but the learners' accuracy in the second set who received both revision and written corrective feedback improved in regular past tense, while the irregular past tense did not improve.

Along the same lines, Van Beuningen et al. (2012) compared three groups of learners; the first group received written corrective feedback and revision after correction, the second group of learners received neither revision nor written corrective feedback, and the last group received written pieces with revision without written corrective feedback. The results of the study were

that the first group's accuracy was greatly improved after receiving written corrective feedback with revision. Another study by Hartshorn et al. (2010) used dynamic corrective feedback and divided the learners into two groups; in the first one, the learners were asked to repeat the same written text several times after they had received indirect written feedback as well as recording their errors in registers, and continued doing this until the learners' writings were completely true without any error. Learners in the second group used many outlines but had no writing corrective feedback, and thus the results favored the first group.

From the above studies, the present research can reach some significant conclusions. Firstly, presenting written corrective feedback alone without revision is not effective for learners' performance, while using written corrective feedback combined with revision proved to be more effective. Secondly, using revision after written corrective feedback proved to be more effective for learners' accuracy in new writing, whether with several chances of repetition or with only one chance. Thirdly, giving the learners a chance to revise their work after written corrective feedback helped them to be more productive, increased their concentration on grammatical forms, and enhanced their memory after discovering and correcting their errors. Taking all these issues into consideration helped to achieve the purpose of the present study.

Section 3
Grammatical Constructions and Feedback

The effect of using feedback on grammatical structures was a subject of study for many researchers

whose work varied according to the type of grammatical structure. One of those studies (Bitchener, 2010) used English articles in general without differentiating between the effect of written corrective feedback on definite and indefinite articles. As a result of this choice, the problems the learners had when dealing with definite and indefinite articles were neglected. In this context, Pienemann (1998) believed that grammatical structures are different and varied in their learnability, so they need different and varied ways to help learners to gain the grammatical structures, which will happen at different developmental steps.

Based on Pienemann's work, Yang (2010) linked the difficulties of different grammatical structures and the range needed to treat these difficulties by using feedback. Yang identified the type of errors that can be treated as those governed by rules, and the learner can find these rules in books to use as references. Frear's study (2012) supported this idea with results that showed improvement in learners' new written pieces after using written corrective feedback, but this improvement was just in regular past tense, while the irregular past tense did not improve. Bitchener (2005) used different types of feedback to treat three structures; results revealed that the learners' accuracy improved in two structures (past tense and definite article) and this is because both of them are rule-governed, while accuracy in terms of the third structure (prepositions) did not improve because it is a more distinctive grammatical characteristic. So, this study considered written corrective feedback to be more effective with treatable structures. In Shintani's study (2014), there were no clear academic rules to distinguish

between treatable and untreatable; she considered this issue a problem because the rules that govern characteristic features can be different and range from easy to difficult. The rule that governed an easy structure like indefinite articles cannot be used with type 2 conditional sentence because it is more difficult, as it demands more effort from the learner and includes complex verb forms. Shintani was not the first to discuss this issue; Ellis (2006) preceded her in presenting implicit and explicit learning to learners at different levels of proficiency, and the results were in favor of indefinite articles over hypothetical conditionals. Based on these studies, it is obvious that the effect of written corrective feedback and metalinguistic explanation needs more investigation, not only with structures governed by rules, but also with more complex grammatical features. The researchers may then reach a deeper understanding of the nature of the treatable error and how to address it.

The present research

The researcher used two different types of feedback in this study: direct corrective feedback and metalinguistic explanation. Both forms are different, as the role of direct corrective feedback is to teach the right forms to the learners, which is considered input, but at the same time, it can work as output if the learners revised, and this figures into this study through one of the groups. By contrast, metalinguistic explanation asked the learners to identify their own errors and present their corrections; thus, the role of metalinguistic explanation is to enhance learners' output. The idea of giving input and enhancing output feedback appeared in many theories of language learning acquisition. Lyster (2004) examined the

difference between direct corrective feedback and metalinguistic explanation by comparing giving input feedback to the learners in reformulation combined with output in stimulation, like asking for explanations.

In spite of the importance of using direct corrective feedback and its positive effect on the learners' researchers, it is considered exhausting to the teacher and a waste of time because the teacher has to correct every learner's errors individually. On the other hand, metalinguistic explanation is preferable to the teacher as he/she gives direct, clear instructions to the whole class regarding the errors in their written pieces. In addition, the teacher prepared it only once and can reuse it at different times if the learners repeated the same errors again in their writings. Additionally, the learners used it as a guide to help them improve their accuracy.

The present research used dictogloss task to investigate the effect of using direct corrective feedback and metalinguistic explanation on learners' accuracy in writing new texts, once with a chance to rewrite the same task after errors had been corrected, and one more time without this chance. To achieve the purpose of the study, the researcher tried to pose some research questions that may help this study to be more accurate. These questions were formulated as follows:

1-Which is more effective, direct corrective writing or writing without feedback to achieve better accuracy in indefinite article and type 2 conditional sentences? Why?

2-Which is more effective, rewriting after direct corrective feedback or using direct corrective feedback

alone to achieve better accuracy in indefinite article and type 2 conditional sentences? Why?

3-Which is more effective, using metalinguistic explanations in writing, or writing without feedback to achieve accuracy in indefinite article and type 2 conditional sentences? Why?

4-Which is more effective, rewriting after metalinguistic explanations or using metalinguistic explanations alone to achieve accuracy in indefinite article and type 2 conditional sentences? Why?

5-What are the differences between the effect of using direct corrective feedback and metalinguistic explanations on learners' accuracy, in indefinite article and type 2 conditional sentences with or without a chance to revise?

Method

Participants

The learners who participated in this study were 70 males and females. Their age ranged between 16.5 and 17 years old, all of them in third-year secondary schools from the Giza governorate. All of the learners were Arabic speakers who had studied formal English for at least 7 years. The researcher chose them randomly without any plan or bias and divided them into five sets as follows:

Set 1 metalinguistic explanation learners were 15,

Set 2 direct corrective feedback learners were 14,

Set 3 metalinguistic explanations with revision learners were 11,

Set 4 direct corrective feedback with revision learners were 10, and

Set 5 the group of comparison learners were 20.

Structures used in the study

The current study used two different types of structures: 1- type 2 conditional sentences 2- indefinite article a/an and these types will be illustrated as follows:

1-Type 2 conditional sentence,

Many researchers considered type 2 conditional sentences to be the most difficult type of conditional sentences, especially for learners who learn English as a foreign language because its structure is complex both semantically and syntactically. Izumi (1999) identified the difficulty of this type for learners as referring to an unlikely or hypothetical condition and its probable result. These sentences are not based on actual situations. In type 2 conditional sentences, the time is now or any time, and the situation is hypothetical. There are certain things the learners should know to be able to grasp this type; firstly, information about the tense and its form, then the model of the helping verb, and finally how to turn this verb into a negative verb (Celce-Murcia, 1999). Izumi (1999) added that learners should have an additional marker of past tense in the form of the past perfect to distinguish it from unreal conditionals.

2- Indefinite articles a/an.

An article is a word used to modify a noun, which is a person, place, object, or idea. Technically, an article is an adjective, which is any word that modifies a noun. Adjectives usually modify nouns through description, but articles are used instead to point out or refer to nouns. There are three types of articles that point out or refer to a noun or group of nouns: the definite article "the", indefinite articles "a/an", and a zero article (Hawkins, 2001).

The English article system is difficult for foreign language learners. Since articles are among the most frequently used words in the English language, the difficulty increases for learners whose first language has no articles and/or the functions of which are realized differently in their native languages. The Arabic language makes use of the definite article "al،" which superficially corresponds to the English definite article. However, Arabic has different ways of encoding both the notions of definiteness and indefiniteness. Because of the unique nature of the English article system functions, many native Arabic speakers have much difficulty in acquiring English articles (Hassan, 2011).

Indefinite articles are difficult for Arabic speakers for many reasons; firstly, when foreign language learners begin to acquire the language, they can't find something similar in their native language as a guide. Secondly, there are no indefinite articles in Arabic. Many researchers have established this as a reason for the lateness of learners acquiring the indefinite article (Hawkins, 2001). Some studies (Bitchener, 2010; Shintani, 2014) who have investigated using articles with written corrective feedback found that learners prefer to overgeneralize the use of the definite article, and this behavior confuses the researchers as to whether the learners have really acquired the definite article. However, when they limited their research to analysis of a/an only, they were able to acquire more reliable scoring.

Study Design

The study divided the participants into five groups that took part in five sessions. The researcher not only divided the groups, but also divided the time into five weeks and created a plan for each week. In the first week,

all the groups completed their first writing task, In the second week, the researcher chose two groups only, direct corrective feedback and metalinguistic explanations, giving them feedback and asking them to review it carefully, and then completing a new piece of writing. In the third week the researcher asked two groups to revise their original piece and then begin a new piece of writing. In the fourth week, all the participants worked on their third piece of writing to complete a history questionnaire in the fifth week. The comparison group was not treated; it just completed a new piece of writing. To avoid any effects that may come because of writing tasks, all the groups were divided into three subgroups, and the researcher gave each subgroup a different task to complete in the first, third, and fourth weeks.

Tools

The researcher divided the materials used in this study into three parts: writing tasks, meeting with learners, and the history questionnaire. These parts were clarified as follows:

a- Writing task

The current study chose to design three dictogloss tasks because contexts do not naturally arise in writing type 2 conditional sentences. This differs when dealing with indefinite articles because contexts emerge spontaneously in writing. Many previous studies found that learners in free-writing tasks usually avoid using complex structures; here lies the importance of using the dictogloss texts after reconstructing them, as it gives contexts for varied uses of both indefinite article and the type 2 conditional sentences. The weak level of students

in English language skills encouraged the researcher to use dictogloss. When the learners began the writing task, the researcher gave them some instructions. Firstly, a paper with an empty table was distributed to each participant; the participants were then asked to listen to the text in the tape twice and write down their notes in the table. The researcher then gave the participants twenty minutes to rewrite the text (see Appendix A).

b- Meeting with learners

The researcher randomly selected ten learners who did not participate in the study but are of the same school year as the participants. The researcher asked the learners to complete the first writing task. After a week, she divided them into two groups: one group received direct corrective feedback on their writing, and the other group received metalinguistic explanations of their errors. Both groups then completed the second writing task. Finally, the researcher held a meeting with those learners to find whether their responses to direct corrective feedback and metalinguistic explanations were different from those of the learners who participated in the study (see Appendix B).

c- History Questionnaire

The current study used this questionnaire to gather information about the learners concerning their languages they know whether they have traveled to any English speaking countries, what countries and how long they stayed there.

Treatment of the study

The present study benefited from previous studies in dealing with experimental groups by giving them just one feedback treatment. Hartshorn's (2010) and Shintani's (2014) studies revealed that one written

corrective feedback treatment was enough to enhance learners' accuracy when writing new texts. The learners in the direct corrective feedback group acquired feedback on their writing in the first week, while in week two the researcher gave the participants five minutes to examine their writing after corrections to begin to write a new dictogloss text. In dealing with the learners who received direct corrective feedback combined with revision, the researcher treated this group like the first group, but she gave them twenty minutes to rewrite their first piece, and while doing so they were provided with corrections to their first text. The learners then gave the first piece and the rewritten piece to the researcher before they began to write the second piece. The learners who received metalinguistic explanations received no feedback during the first stage, but in week two the researcher gave each learner a paper containing a clear explanation of indefinite articles and type 2 two conditional sentences. After they had taken five minutes to look over their written errors, the learners returned their first written pieces and the papers that contained the explanation to the researcher again in order to start writing their second piece. In dealing with the learners who received metalinguistic explanations combined with revision, the researcher treated this group like the first group, but she gave them twenty minutes to rewrite their first piece. While they were rewriting, they were provided with the corrections to their first text. The learners then gave the first piece and the rewritten piece to the researcher before they began to write the second piece. The situation for the comparison group was different because the learners did not obtain any corrections on their writing, but they followed the same steps as the other groups. The

researcher asked them to write the first piece in the first week; in the second week, she gave the participants five minutes to look it over before writing the second piece, and they did not rewrite the first piece.

Scoring used in the study

The current study used the same system used in Shintani's study (2014) concerning dividing the type 2 conditional sentence into seven parts: 1-the past tense, 2-the perfect future, 3-the past participle (PP) form in the if-clause, 4- a modal, 5- the past tense, 6- the perfect future, and 7-the past participle form in the main clause. The researcher gave each part one mark; however, the participants didn't obtain the mark unless the if-clause included two elements (have as a helping verb+ main verb) or if the main clause included three elements (have as a helping verb+ main verb+ past form). The following form was used to measure the whole percentage mark for each participant.

$$\frac{\text{Number of points scored} \times 100}{\text{Number of points possible (i.e., number of conditional sentences} \times 5}$$

The use of indefinite articles in each context was checked, and overuse was counted. The following form of Pica's (1994) was used to measure accuracy.

$$\frac{\text{Number of grammatical morphemes supplied accurately} \times 100}{\text{Number of obligatory contexts + Number of overused forms}}$$

In order to investigate the reliability of the scoring, the researcher asked one of the teachers in the school to rescore 80 texts out of 510; then, the scores were 97% for type 2 conditional sentences and 90.6% for indefinite articles.

Analysis of the data

This study used several statistical analyses to treat the writing task scores as follows:

a) ANOVAs were used to clarify the results of comparing between the scores of the writing tasks after remedy.

b) A post-hoc Bonferroni adjustment test was used to explore if there was any difference between the groups after having big time X the impact of the group.

c) Eta-squared ($\eta2$) with values of .01, .06, and .14 (Cohen, 1988) was used to study the ANOVAs's impact sizes; the indicator referred to different effects from small to large effects, respectively.

d) The correlation coefficient r with values of .1, .3, or .5 was used to investigate the comparisons of the pairwise and identify their effect sizes; the indicator referred to different effects from small to large effects, respectively. All statistical analyses were conducted after ensuring homogeneity and normality.

Results

The current study posed five research questions, and the results will try to answer these questions. Firstly, questions 1 to 4 tried to explore the effects of the types of feedback used in the study, while the purpose of the fifth question was to calculate the learners' accuracy in using type 2 conditional sentences and indefinite articles when writing new texts. The following table displays the accuracy scores of the participants when using type 2 conditional sentences.

Table 1. Accuracy Scores

Groups	Number	Week 1			Week 2			Week 3		
		Endeavor	Mean	SD	Endeavor	Mean	SD	Endeavor	Mean	SD
Metalinguistic explanation	15	2.435	14.055	13.825	2.685	38.845	13.14	2.61	27.345	19.01
Direct corrective feedback	14	2.61	9.36	9.92	2.775	40.92	14.005	2.535	26.955	18.24
Metalinguistic explanation with revision	11	2.505	10.655	14.37	2.545	40.3	11.3	2.39	27.28	20.32
Direct corrective feedback with revision	10	2.555	9.96	13.53	2.425	42.075	14.185	2.955	30.285	18.245
Comparison	20	2.49	13.47	15.02	2.5	9.81	13.325	2.675	15.935	16.35

The current study used repeated-measure ANOVAs to compare the scores of the accuracy of type 2 conditional sentences in the written tasks after treatment, and the previous table revealed that there were important effects for group (F (2.0675) = 4.714, $p < .05$, $\eta2 = .156$), and concerning the time used (F (1.135) = 56.787, $p < .05$, $\eta2 = .429$), there were significant effects when comparing the time used with group interaction also (F (4.135) = 5.6655, $p < .05$, $\eta2 = .196$). In addition, this study used a Bonferroni adjustment test to determine whether there were any significant differences between the groups after giving them more time, and the results revealed that in week 1 there were no significant differences. The situations in weeks 2 and 3 were different, as the results showed that in week 2 there were significant differences between the experimental groups and the comparison group in favor of the experimental groups, Metalinguistic explanation ($r = .37$), Direct Corrective Feedback ($r = .375$), Metalinguistic explanation +Revision ($r = .39$), and Direct Corrective Feedback +Revision ($r = .38$). The four experimental groups registered no differences from the

comparison group at week 3 (Metalinguistic explanation: $r = .1$, Direct Corrective Feedback: $r = .115$, and Metalinguistic explanation +Revision: $r = .09$) while, the Direct Corrective Feedback +Revision group was the only group that registered a significant difference from the comparison group with a moderate impact size ($r = .195$).

The effect sizes for the accuracy scores in type 2 conditional sentences for the experimental groups are displayed in the following table:

Table 2. Effect Sizes for the Accuracy Scores

Groups	Number	Week 1- Week 2	Week 2- Week 3	Week 1- Week 3
Metalinguistic explanation	15	.34	.165	.185
Direct corrective feedback	14	.395	.2	.255
Metalinguistic explanation with revision	11	.38	.185	.215
Direct corrective feedback with revision	10	.38	.17	.27
Comparison	20	.065	.1	.04

It was clear in Table 2 that the comparison group didn't register any significant differences during the three weeks, while the effect sizes rose in the experimental groups. The direct corrective feedback group ($r = .255$) and the direct corrective feedback with revision group ($r = .27$) were the only groups that showed large effect sizes (i.e., $r > .50$) starting from week 1 to week 3. The experimental groups improved statistically from week 1 to week 2; at the same time their scores were reduced from week 2 to week 3, but the scores in week 3 remained statistically better than the scores of the experimental groups in week 1. The current study merged

metalinguistic explanation and metalinguistic explanation with revision in one group, and also direct corrective feedback and direct corrective feedback with revision in one group to compare and investigate the relative effect. A repeated-measures ANOVA displayed a statistical effect for the group when output for the written tasks (F $(1.0685) = 9.456$, $p < .05$, $\eta2 = .216$) and time (F (1.137) $= 36.519$, $p < .05$, $\eta2 = .348$) also a significant time $\times$ group interaction (F $(2.137) = 11.2685$, $p < .05$, $\eta2 =.248$) were measured.

After using a Bonferroni adjustment test to compare the two merged groups, the results revealed that there were no significant differences between the groups in the first week, including the comparison group; however, in week 2 the two experimental merged groups were better than the comparison group but with no significant differences between the two experimental merged groups, metalinguistic explanation, metalinguistic explanation with revision (r = .38) and direct corrective feedback, direct corrective feedback with revision (r = .38). At week 3 the situation was different, as the merged group of direct corrective feedback showed superiority over the comparison group (r = .17), while the other merged group of metalinguistic explanation did not show any significant differences between the comparison groups (r = .09) nor between the metalinguistic explanation group and direct corrective feedback group (r = .055). It can be concluded from the previous information that the direct corrective feedback and metalinguistic explanation were effective as treatments for the participants, but the effectiveness of the direct corrective feedback excels in that it remains longer than a metalinguistic explanation.

Additionally, this study combined the two experimental groups where the participants received revision in one group and the other two experimental groups where the participants received no revision in one group to determine whether the participants had any effect on their accuracy in the new texts after asking them to rewrite their first text. For this purpose, the study used repeated-measures ANOVA to compare between the two groups, and the results showed a significant effect for group (F (1.0685) = 9.47, $p < .05$, $\eta2 = .217$) and time (F (1.137 = 36.3025, $p < .05$, $\eta2 = .346$) and a significant time × group interaction (F (2.137) = 11.068, $p < .05$, $\eta2 = .244$). After merging the two experimental groups with revision and considering them as one group, the two experimental groups with no revision were treated as one group; this study used a Bonferroni adjustment test that showed no significant differences in week 1 between the three groups (r =.055). In week 2, both groups, the one without revision (r = .375) and the one with revision (r =.385), showed superiority over the comparison group; at the same time, there were no significant differences between the two reconstructed groups at week 2 (r =.03) or at week 3 (r =.02), but in week 3 the group with revision was the only group that showed superiority over the comparison group (r = .165).

Concerning the acquisition of the indefinite article in written tasks, the following table showed the accuracy scores of the participants:

Table 3. Acquisition of the Indefinite Article in Written Tasks

Groups	Number	Week (1)			Week 2			Week (3)		
		Com.	Mean %	SD	Com.	Mean %	SD	Com.	Mean %	SD
Metalinguistic explanation	15	2.77	23.57	16.2	2.8255	25.465	19.45	2.895	25.655	15.66
Direct corrective feedback	14	2.61	25.24	17.205	2.715	26.02	19.895	2.695	23.815	14.315
Metalinguistic explanation with revision	11	2.935	23.075	18.355	2.775	30.75	18.705	2.84	29.095	13.52
Direct corrective feedback with revision	10	2.675	28.79	18.935	2.69	30.19	17.375	2.76	22.52	17.535
Comparison	20	2.755	27	19.635	2.89	24.47	14.975	2.755	29.87	15.555

Note. Com. = the mean number of compulsory chances.

The previous table showed there was no significant effect for group (F (2.0675) = .194, $p > .05$, $\eta 2 = .011$) or for time (F (1.135) = .2285, $p > .05$, $\eta 2 = .003$); also, there was no significant time× group interaction (F (4.135) = .5, $p > .05$, $\eta 2 = .029$). The current study used a repeated- measures ANOVA to obtain these results.

Discussion

It was clear from the previous results that the accuracy scores of the participants were improved in the four experimental groups when using type 2 conditional sentences in week 1 and week 2 while, the situation was stable in the comparison group, as there were no changes in the participants' accuracy scores (see Tables 1 and 2). The researcher was surprised when she found that the accuracy scores of the participants in the comparison group increased in week 3 in contrast to what happened to the experimental groups, as they decreased in accuracy over time. In spite of this decrease for the experimental groups, the scores were significantly different between

week 1 and week 3; also, the effect sizes were still large for only two experimental groups: direct corrective feedback and direct corrective feedback with revision. By contrast, the comparison group was stable even with time changes and recorded no significant differences, and the effect sizes were too small to be mentioned. The four experimental groups showed superiority over the comparison group in week 2, while in week 3 this superiority appeared in one group only, direct corrective feedback with revision, so the benefits of feedback lasted longer only in direct corrective feedback with revision group.

The researcher noticed from meetings with participants that they reached accuracy in writing texts through their outright knowledge, and when the participants' accuracy decreased over time, this proved the researcher correct. Although the participants used their outright knowledge, this may not be helpful in their final writing pieces to form type 2 conditional sentences because the outright knowledge is prone to collapse or disintegration. In spite of the fact that accuracy was reduced over time, the accuracy scores were still significant at week 3.

The current study agreed with Shintani's study (2014) that the dictogloss tasks were unable to enhance the implied knowledge of the foreign language; also, Van Beuningen (2012) considered the role of these tasks is to encourage the learners to produce the right language, and if accuracy increased, the participants used their outright language when they formed the sentences. To the contrary, Polio (2012) believed that learners used both outright and implied knowledge in their writings. The researcher also concluded that the written corrective

feedback had a positive effect on learners by increasing their outright knowledge. The present study took in consideration that the learners spent many years learning structure by traditional ways; thus, the learners were asked to treat English as a group of outright rules.

The participants in this study chose to use outright knowledge in dealing with type 2 conditional sentences more than indefinite articles because it requires more conscious concentration when dealing with dictogloss tasks and when rebuilding the written pieces. The forms of the verb were many and varied in type 2 conditional sentences, so participants tended to correct the forms of the verb in type 2 conditional sentences more than indefinite articles. Additionally, when the participants used the dictogloss task, type 2 conditional sentences were clearer and more important than indefinite articles in reconstructing the written pieces. Based on the above, the participants may benefit from their outright knowledge of type 2 conditional sentences, but they failed with indefinite articles when they were asked to rewrite the written pieces without any visual or linguistic help.

The findings showed that type 2 conditional sentences were complex and therefore less treatable and needed more effort; thus this result is different from what previous studies have indicated (e.g., Bitchener, 2010; Van Beuningen et al., 2012) because they used easy structure and considered that using feedback treatment only once was enough to make a difference between the experimental and the control groups. Bitchener (2005) considered that written corrective feedback was not effective when he used it in his study to treat prepositions. This result means that treatability was based

on two elements: features based on rules and the complexity of this feature, which may explain why the feedback was not effective for indefinite articles, as the participants gave little care to the indefinite articles and used their outright knowledge to reconstruct the written pieces.

The situation was different in Shintani's (2013) study because the participants concentrated on indefinite articles only, so the metalinguistic explanation group got better from time 1 to time 2 and showed superiority over the comparison group at time 2 but not at time 3 due to using one structure only, while the direct corrective feedback didn't improve at any time because the participants had to work out the rule alone and were not able to do this. The present research asked the participants to attend to both type 2 conditional sentences and indefinite articles, but they chose to concentrate on type 2 conditional sentences because they thought they were more important and would be helpful to them when reconstructing the written pieces. Finally, it can be concluded that feedback affected the participants' performance positively when using type 2 conditional sentences to formulate and monitor their written pieces; however, this effect decayed over time. On the other hand, the feedback was not helpful or effective in developing the outright knowledge of indefinite articles for the participants' written pieces because the type of writing may have led them to concentrate more on type 2 conditional sentences.

The difference between the effects of direct corrective feedback and metalinguistic explanation

The focus here will be on the results for type 2 conditional sentences because there were no significant

differences between the groups for indefinite articles. This study reconstructed the four experimental groups and made them two groups through combining the direct corrective feedback and direct corrective feedback with revision in one group, while the other group included the metalinguistic explanation group and metalinguistic explanation with revision. The analyses of the two groups showed that the treatments of metalinguistic explanation and direct corrective feedback were effective at week 2, while the effect of direct corrective feedback lasted longer than for metalinguistic explanation. In comparing the comparison group and the two reconstructed groups, the analyses showed that the direct corrective feedback group outperformed the comparison group at week 3, while the metalinguistic explanation groups showed no significant differences. This result agreed with other previous research that considered direct corrective feedback an effective treatment to help learners to improve their accuracy when writing new texts. The direct corrective feedback gave the participants a chance to compare the correct forms of the verb for type 2 conditional sentences and their endeavors to use this structure own their own. Metalinguistic explanation asked the participants to write directly and after that, study and correct their errors. This treatment was also effective, but unfortunately only for a short time. As mentioned before, metalinguistic explanations are considered to saving time because the teacher doesn't have to correct students individually but they will give clear, direct instructions to the whole class based on the errors found in learners' writing. In spite of this advantage, direct corrective feedback proved to be more effective than metalinguistic explanations when dealing with a complex structure like

type 2 conditional sentences, as it gave the participants a clearer understanding of the verb forms.

Rewriting after feedback

The four experimental groups showed superiority over the comparison group at week 2, while at week 3 the revision group was the only group that did so. During the study the researcher kept thinking of the following question: Is there any positive effect on the participants' accuracy when they rewrite their first text? The answer indicates that the learners may benefit from rewriting after feedback, as this treatment gives them a chance to work on feedback more deeply and to enhance their outright knowledge of type 2 conditional sentences. Based on this result, it is important to give learners extra time to work on the feedback they have received to correct their errors.

Conclusion

English was considered a foreign language to the Egyptian participants in this study, as they know English structure and have broad outright knowledge of the language, but at the same time their knowledge was finite to be used in dictogloss tasks. For this reason, any generalization should be limited to those participants. The current study used feedback to investigate its effect on two different structures, while most former studies concentrated on one structure only. As mentioned before, the participants have limited proficiency, so the two structures used in this study were difficult for them. As a result of their limited proficiency, the feedback had a positive effect and significant differences for type 2 conditional sentences only. The participants found it difficult to benefit from feedback on two structures at the same time when completing writing tasks, so they

focused on the most important structure that will help them in written tasks.

It may be beneficial for the future studies to look into the effectiveness of using feedback as a treatment for two structures to also concentrate on the differences and similarities of the two structures in complexity. This study tried to compare two different types of feedback: direct corrective feedback and metalinguistic explanations. The results showed that the direct corrective feedback outperformed metalinguistic explanations and long-lasting because it was more specific about the errors that the learners had committed. The researcher thinks it may be useful for future studies to combine direct corrective feedback with metalinguistic explanations, as they may help the learners to acquire different types of information. One of the purposes of the current study was to determine the effect of adding revision after feedback and whether it will add any value; the results showed that the group with revision outperformed even after deterioration over time, and the direct corrective feedback with revision was the only group that showed superiority to the comparison group in week 3. This study also tried to determine the role of feedback in learning language; this experiment and many previous studies agreed on the importance of feedback in learning.

This study advises teachers to concentrate on only one structure because the results showed that using feedback to treat two different structures was not effective, especially in dictogloss written tasks, and previous studies also supported this idea. In contrast to the other studies that argued that only one-shot feedback was enough to achieve positive effects, the present study

revealed that that positive effect decays over time. Another important point was concerning the correction of feedback, as this study presumed that direct corrective feedback was exhausting for the teacher and a way of wasting time because they have to deal with every learner individually to correct errors, while metalinguistic explanation is a way of saving time because the teacher doesn't have to correct students individually, but instead will give clear, direct instructions to the whole class based on the errors found in learners' writing. This point needs more investigation to support using metalinguistic explanations.

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