Efficiency of Written and Oral Feedback Types Used for Persian EFL Students' Language Production

A Literature Review

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Abstract

This paper aims to present research on oral and written feedback concerning the language accuracy, acquisition, and retention of Persian EFL speakers as a target group in the EFL teaching from 2010 to 2017. Regarding the massive amount of research conducted on the effectiveness of different feedback types in Scandinavia during the last decades, it is now time to gain a deeper insight into how effective in Iran the different feedback types have been with Persian learners of English, as one example of migrant groups that EFL teachers may encounter in Sweden. This review discusses the findings of this area of research along the following dimensions: a) direct and indirect written feedback on written assignments b) oral feedback on Persian EFL speakers' language production.

According to the results of the presented experimental studies, written and oral explicit feedback types seem to be more effective on Persian EFL students' language production than implicit ones. Since Persian EFL learners are only one example of non-Swedish speakers in the multicultural EFL classroom in Sweden, further research is needed to investigate the effectiveness of oral and written feedback types with other linguistic backgrounds than Persian.

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Introduction

1.1 Background

Over the past few decades, researchers have shown a keen interest in collecting data about how teachers treat second language learners' erroneous linguistic forms. Both in Scandinavia and in other countries a great number of research studies have been conducted on EFL learners' grammatical errors and the effectiveness of feedback provided in the classroom. In the light of the positive evidence of corrective feedback (CF) on erroneous linguistic features that have been presented since the 90's (Ferris 1999; Sheen 2010), the question is no longer its efficiency, but rather how effective it is, depending on the form, the timing and the manner of the feedback provided. Additionally, the question remains, how effective feedback is in the long run. Moreover, as several linguists have pointed out, the type of error should also be taken into consideration when feedback is provided.

According to Graddol (2006), the number of English language learners is still increasing all over the world. It also needs to be highlighted that English is still the dominant language of communication among internet users, which suggests a privileged position of English among foreign languages worldwide. Consequently, the position of English as a lingua franca raises high expectations on English teaching methodology. In a modern globalised world, educators have to be sensitive to the wide range of cultural backgrounds and the needs of language learners.

Ohlander (2009) highlights that the English language classroom has received a "multi-contrastive" dimension that has reshaped the applied methodology in the classroom. On the one hand, this means that teachers need to be aware of central areas within different languages and cultures, and be prepared to handle common linguistic errors. On the other hand, every professional within the field of pedagogy needs to have some declarative knowledge of the key differences between learners' L1, that is chronologically the first language learnt by the learners, and their L2, defined as "A language acquired by a person in addition to his mother tongue" (UNESCO, 1953 cited in Cook, 2016, p.2.).

Naturally, English may also be language learners' L3, that is chronologically the third language learnt by the learner. However, in terms of language acquisition, it is pivotal to include learners as active participants in their learning process, and paying attention to the whole context in which the learning process takes place. In other words, language learners' primary concern is the acquisition and use of a language other than their L1. Thus language

acquisition includes not only L2s but also any further languages in a given context (Cook, 2016).

The question of context is also highlighted in the Swedish curriculum for English. The Swedish steering document says that "students should be given the opportunity, through the use of language in functional and meaningful contexts, to develop all-round communicative skills" including "correctness in their use of language in speech and writing" (Skolverket, 2011, p. 1). In response to Skolverket's (2011) expectations of correct language use in meaningful contexts, and in the belief that various kinds of feedback may help learners to make better choices in their grammatical repertoire, this paper intends to give an insight into native Persian speakers' plausible linguistic difficulties.

As is highlighted above the "multi-contrastive" classroom has gained research interest in recent years. However, despite the growing body of research of EFL learners' global migration and its pedagogical implications, there has been little attention given to feedback practices provided to Persian speakers in Scandinavia. By looking at this specific migrant group of EFL learners in Sweden, EFL teachers may build up a more thorough picture of Persian speakers' feedback expectations and their specific linguistic needs in the language classrooms.

In his book *Sweden's Languages in Numbers: Which Languages Are Spoken by How Many?*, Parkvall (2015) notes that the number of Persian speakers in Sweden is estimated to be 74 000. This makes Persian one of the most commonly spoken foreign languages in Sweden. According to the national statistics, the Persian speakers' group is ranked 7th on the list of the twenty largest immigrant groups in Sweden (SCB, 2017). Further, it needs to be mentioned that there has been an increase of 73 per cent in the total number of newly arrived Persian immigrants between 2016 and 2017. These facts suggest that alongside other foreign languages, such as Arabic and Polish, Persian takes a prominent place among the most commonly spoken foreign languages in Sweden.

According to Ohlander (2009), the prerequisites of language teaching have changed, and he points out that English teachers can no longer rely on students' homogeneous background. He claims that in a heterogeneous class students may face different linguistic challenges arising from their various L1s. His study, which examined Swedish and Non-Swedish students' performances in listening, writing and grammatical correctness, did indeed find differences between the Swedish and the Non-Swedish group's performance. The

research indicated that the overall test results were higher for the Swedish speakers, while in correctness and written production, the Non-Swedish group performed better.

While Ohlander (2009) described several linguistic problems of the Non-Swedish group, he did not pay special attention to the incorrect grammatical forms of any specific group of learners, nor did he describe the feedback types that might help Persian EFL speakers in their language development, which is the research interest of this paper. There is thus a gap in recent research regarding Persian EFL speakers' error treatment in the EFL classrooms.

1.2. Aim and Scope of This Paper

In this paper, the writers aim to give an overview of research on oral and written corrective feedback strategies for Persian EFL learners' language production between 2010 and 2017. Different feedback strategies, provided in classroom environments traditionally and through electronic media, and the effects of CFs across linguistic fields such as morphology, syntax and lexis will be presented in this study.

Truscott (cited in Ferris, 1999) claimed that "There is some reason to think that syntactic, morphological and lexical knowledge are required in different manners. If this is the case, then probably no single error correction can be effective for all three" (p.5). Keeping in mind that different linguistic areas should not be treated as if they were the same (Bitchener, Young, Cameron, 2005), various oral and written feedback types will be presented focusing on different linguistic categories. In this paper, regarding Persian ELF learners' erroneous syntactical forms, the incorrect use of English articles and conditional sentences will be investigated. Concerning the morphological challenges of these learners, the error treatment will focus on irregular verb forms.

The primary focus of this paper is to address the following questions:

1.) What kinds of feedback have a positive effect on reducing Persian EFL speakers' erroneous linguistic items?
2.) Is feedback effective both in the short run and in the long term?
3.) What significance has the explicitness or implicitness of feedback in Persian EFL learners' language development?

1.3. Method

Frequently used academic databases such as Education Resources Information Center (ERIC), the Linguistic and Language Behavior Abstracts and ProQuest's Dissertations and Theses were chosen for searching articles. For the written feedback types, the following combination of keywords was used:

> Corrective feedback OR error treatment OR metalinguistic OR feedback types, AND Persian (OR Farsi), AND writing (OR) written. When it came to the search of articles for the use of oral feedback types, we changed the word writing (OR) written for oral.

Since some articles were not available in the databases mentioned above, we also studied the reference lists of previous review papers regarding feedback practices provided to Persian EFL learners' (e.g., Saadi & Saadat, 2015). Additionally, some issues were searched manually in the Free Journals Online and ScienceDirect, as ERIC often redirected searches to these sites. Furthermore, the writers also went through the electronic archive of the Modern Journal of Language Teaching Methods (MJLTM), which is a scientific journal specialised in articles published in Iran.

To achieve consistency in our study design, the chosen articles for this paper were selected to "investigate similar variables in a consistent manner " (Russel & Spada cited in Guénette, 2007, p. 51) from 2010 to 2017. For the selection of material, we decided that an article had to meet the following criteria to be included:

- The student population participating in the experimental study must consist of only native Persian EFL speakers.
- Students' proficiency levels needed to be measured at various points of an experiment, at least in a pretest, a posttest, preferably even by a delayed posttest.
- CF must have concerned errors in language use (i.e., lexical, morphological, and/or syntactic).
- CF must have been provided by a teacher and/or researcher.
- Both traditional and electronic feedback provision were accepted.

- Other articles, chosen for describing linguistic characteristics of Persian were narrowed down to the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) with special attention to Persian speakers' possible linguistic problems.

Since this study had its limitations, the authors of this paper did not claim to achieve completeness in the selection of articles, and neither did they seek to reflect on all feedback strategies and all plausible linguistic problems of Persian EFL speakers. In our final section, we narrowed down the investigation of written feedback types to nine experimental studies containing direct non-metalinguistic, direct metalinguistic, indirect coded, indirect un-coded, focused and unfocused feedback strategies, further, reformulation strategy. In other words, located and non-located written feedback types will not be specifically examined (as shown in Table 1).

Table 1. WCF research

Name of researchers	Feedback type	Compared to	Language target(s)	Effects
Sarvestani & Pishkar (2015)	Direct	Indirect	Definite and indefinite articles	Improved grammatical accuracy
Alipanahi & Mahmoodi (2015)	Direct	Indirect	Past tense of irregular verb forms	Improved acquisition & retention of the correct past tense o
Marzban & Arabahmadi's (2013)	Indirect coded focused feedback	"Traditional grammar instruction"	Conditionals and wish statements	Improved writing accuracy
Sadat, Zarifi, Sadat & Malekzadeh (2015)	Indirect coded	Indirect un-coded and direct	Conditional sentences and wish statements	Improved accuracy and long-time retention of target structures
Farrokhi &Sattarpour (2011)	Focused feedback	Unfocused feedback	Definite and indefinite articles	Improved accuracy of article usage
Farrokhi &Sattarpour (2012)	Direct focused feedback	Direct unfocused	Definite and indefinite	Improved accuracy of

		feedback	articles	article usage
Sanavi & Nemati (2014)	Reformulation strategy	Coded CF, peer correction CF, metalinguistic CF, direct CF, indirect CF	Accuracy, coherence, cohesion, lexical resources, task achievement	More accurate written forms
Hosseiny (2014)	Direct	Indirect	Definite articles	Improved writing accuracy
Saadi & Saadat (2015)	Metalinguistic coded	Direct	Grammar, vocabulary and punctuation	Improved writing accuracy

Concerning oral feedback types, four experimental studies will be included in this paper examining the effects of recasts, metalinguistic explanation, elicitation, metalinguistic clues, and clarification requests (as shown in Table 2). All the experimental studies selected for this paper were conducted in Iran.

Table 2. OCF Results

Name of researchers	More effective feedback type	Compared to	Language target(s)	Effects
Falhasiri, Tavakoli, Hasiri & Mohammadzadeh (2011)	Metalinguistic explanation	Clarification requests	Misuse of prepositions, Persian structure with English lexicon, article usage, subject-verb agreement, copula be, third person "s"	Increased written accuracy
Rezaei & Derakhshan (2011)	Metalinguistic explanation	Recasts	Conditionals and wish statements	Improved accuracy of conditionals and wish statements
Akbarzadeh, Saeidi, & Chehreh (2014)	Elicitation and metalinguistic clues with	Explicit error correction without	Verb tenses, prepositions, articles and	Improved grammatical accuracy

	interaction	interaction	relative clauses	
Rassaei, Moinzadeh & Youhanaee (2012)	Metalinguistic feedback	Recasts	Articles	Improved grammatical accuracy

1.4. Definition of Feedback

Regarding what feedback means, it is worth considering Hattie & Timperley's (2007) three practical questions in relation to feedback provision. The authors advise that English teachers should address the following issues to their students "Where am I now, how am I going and where to next?" (p.87). Through their feedback technique, Hattie & Timperley (2007) not only call learners' attention to the gap between their present and desired knowledge of curriculum goals in general and of various linguistic items in particular, but also embrace students' engagement in the feedback process.

It follows from the above-described aspects of feedback that it is a broad term. Nevertheless, Hattie & Timperley's (2007) questions manage to grab the essence of feedback, defining it as a tool that helps students in "reducing the discrepancy between current and desired understanding" (p.87), provided it is given consistently and on a regular basis. In other words, Hattie & Timperley (2007) attempted to highlight those stages that might help students in their learning process in general.

Even other researchers, for example, Bitchener (2008), Van Beuningen (2010) and Ellis (2009) underscore the positive effects of language correction with respect to students' language development in particular, since it may direct learners' attention to various linguistic forms. Feedback, in other words, may serve as reinforcement to learners to revise their faulty utterances, provided its context and students' characteristics are considered (Brookhart, 2008).

1.5 Different Feedback Types

As it is mentioned above, corrective feedback is a multifaceted term, and it includes several various types. Although several researchers have developed different typologies of CF, in this paper Sheen's (2011) classification of oral and written CF types was chosen. Since this paper will investigate and discuss the effects of coded and un-coded feedback types, Sheen's (2011) taxonomy will be used to provide a theoretical framework to prepare the readers for the presentation of and discussion about the different feedback types (as shown in Table 1. & 2.).

1.5.1 Written Corrective Feedback Types

Sheen's (2011) taxonomy of written CF types (WCF) is based on Ellis' (2009, pp. 99-102) classification. Sheen (2011) suggests that teachers can provide seven different feedback types, each of which is either direct feedback or indirect feedback. When CF takes the form of direct feedback, learners receive the correct form from their teachers, while indirect feedback does not entail the correct form of the erroneous L2 item. For example, the sentence "The dog escaped having *the* bone" illustrates direct feedback provision, while "A dog stole (X) bone from (X) butcher " is an example of indirect feedback provision (Sheen, 2011, pp. 5-6).

Both direct and indirect feedback types can be combined with some sort of metalinguistic clues, which means that written feedback can be categorized as indirect metalinguistic feedback and direct metalinguistic feedback. An example of indirect metalinguistic feedback is when the learner omitted the definite article, and the teacher asks "What word do you need before a noun when a person/thing is referred to for the first time? Direct metalinguistic feedback can be illustrated according to the following: If a student incorrectly writes that "A dog stole (1) bone from (2) butcher", the teacher may remind the student that with anaphoric mention the student needs to use the indefinite article "a" (Sheen, 2011, pp. 5-6).

Sheen (2011) also states that according to the location of error correction, two more indirect feedback categories can be identified, such as not located indirect feedback and located indirect feedback. By using not located indirect feedback teachers do not indicate where the error was made in the text, while in located indirect feedback provision they do. An example of non-located indirect feedback is: XXX A dog stole bone from butcher. If the teacher puts the X into the sentence, like, "A dog stole X bone from X butcher", the error correction becomes located (Sheen, 2011, p.6).

Another feedback type according to Sheen (2011), is coded error treatment when teachers place various labels over the location of the error or in the margin of the text to indicate the specific error type. For example, "A dog stole [art] bone from [art] butcher" illustrates coded error treatment. This kind of error correction can still be classified as an indirect feedback type since it makes the learners correct their mistakes themselves. Moreover, Sheen (2011) also names reformulations as an option for error correction, which is an explicit form of feedback. This form of CF rephrases complete erroneous sentences or paragraphs to provide the learner with a target-form output. For instance, when the learner says: "I have gone to the butcher last week.", the teacher may respond with " You went to the butcher last week. So did I."

With regard to the focus of feedback, Sheen (2011) speaks about focused and unfocused feedback. While using focused feedback teachers focus on one or two specific linguistic forms, such as conditional sentences. On the other hand, unfocused feedback "targets at a range of linguistic features, (e.g., articles, past tense, copular "be", prepositions, passive voice and phrasal verbs)" (p.8).

In terms of terminology, it is essential to mention that some research papers describe the explicitness and implicitness of written feedback as direct and indirect, while other articles use the terms of explicit and implicit feedback for the same feedback types. Sheen (2010), based on her research, states that the explicitness or implicitness of feedback plays a pivotal role in its efficiency. Sheen's (2010) statement is in contrast to what Hattie & Timperley (2007) propose, who suggest that it is the medium of feedback that has a primary influence on its success. However, the mode of feedback, in other words, if it is supplied orally or in writing, electronically or traditionally, has secondary significance for Sheen (2010).

Sheen (2011) states that in written error correction direct feedback is input providing, since it reveals the correct form to the learners, while indirect feedback is output pushing, and contributes to learners' autonomy. Direct or explicit feedback types include direct non-metalinguistic, direct metalinguistic and reformulation strategies. Indirect or implicit feedback types comprises indirect not located, indirect located, indirect coded and indirect metalinguistic feedback types. In this paper, with the exception of located and non-located feedback types, all the WCF categories will be examined.

Table 3. WCF typology (Sheen, 2011)

Feedback Type	Description
Direct non-metalinguistic written correction	The teacher writes the correct form next to the student's faulty form in their written production.
Direct metalinguistic written correction	The teacher writes the correct form in the student's text and explains the nature of the error that has been made.
Indirect written correction (not located)	The teacher indicates that an error has been made in the text, but does not fix it or indicate its location, leaving the students to find the error for themselves.
Indirect written correction (located)	The teacher locates and shows where the errors in the text are, but does not correct them for the student.
Indirect written correction using error	The teacher locates the errors and marks them with labels so the student knows what kind of errors they are. The student will

codes	then have to correct the errors.
Indirect metalinguistic written correction	The teacher provides a clue about the nature of the error, prompting the students to self-correct their errors.
Reformulation	The teacher reformulates the student's sentence including the error, prompting the students to recognize the error that has been made and correct it themselves.

1.5.2 Oral Corrective Feedback Types

When it comes to oral corrective feedback, (OCF), Sheen (2011), similarly to her WCF taxonomy, defines it in terms of explicitness and implicitness. Implicit corrective feedback refers to the lack of an "overt linguistic signal/marker" from the teacher. Implicit feedback types consist of recasts, clarification requests, and repetition. In explicit feedback types, such as, in explicit correction, in elicitation and in metalinguistic clues, the teacher provides an "overt linguistic signal/marker, such as "Y, no X" that a mistake has been made (p.18) (as shown in Table 4).

One form of oral feedback types, called recasts, is a situation in which the teacher implicitly reformulates the student's utterance without changing its content. For example, the student may ask "How weight are you?" and the teacher may respond like " How much do I weigh?". Clarification requests mean oral feedback that lets the student know that the utterance has not been understood well enough by the teacher. For instance, the student may formulate a sentence like "Why does he taking the flowers?" and the instructor may say "Sorry?" or "Pardon me?". The next oral feedback type, elicitation, involves the teacher asking the students to reformulate sentences by raising questions about them. For example, the student expresses an idea according to the following: "Once upon a time, there lives a poor girl named Cinderella.", the teacher may answer as "Once upon a time there..." Another category is repetition when the teacher reproduces the students' faulty utterance to highlight that an error has been made. For example, the student says "Mr. Jones travel a lot last year ", and the teacher inquires "Mr. Jones travel a lot last year?" indicating implicitly that the students' sentence was wrong (Sheen, 2011 pp.3-4).

Providing the students with metalinguistic clues with the intention that the students will revise their errors is also an option for teachers' oral error correction, and it usually includes a metalinguistic comment. For example, the student may incorrectly say "He kiss her", and the teacher may respond "You need past tense.". A metalinguistic clue is an explicit form of feedback, which in combination with the provision of the correct form is called

explicit metalinguistic oral feedback. For example, "Fox was clever." says the student, to which the teacher may reply as "The fox was clever. You should use the definite article, the because fox has been mentioned". One more option for teachers to push learners towards more correct language use is to explicitly signal what was wrong in their utterance providing the proper form without a metalinguistic clue. This kind of error treatment is called explicit error correction, for example, the student makes an error, like, "I'm late yesterday" and the teacher corrects the student by saying "You should say 'I was late', not 'I'm late' " (Sheen, 2011, pp. 3-4).

Sheen (2011) also highlights the focus of oral corrective feedback which, similarly to written feedback, has two subcategories, focused and unfocused feedback. As it is described in the WCF types, focused feedback merely directs at one or two specific L2 targets, while unfocused corrective feedback provides error correction on as many students' mistakes as possible across a number of different L2 items (e.g., articles, past tense, copular "be", prepositions, passive voice and phrasal verbs)" (p.8). (OCF types shown in Table 5.)

Table 5. OCF typology (Sheen, 2011)

Recasts	The teacher implicitly reformulates the students' errors.
Explicit correction	The teacher points out the error, and explicitly provides the correct form.
Explicit correction with metalinguistic explanation	The provision of correct form together with a metalinguistic clue.
Clarifications requests	The teacher signals that something is wrong in the students' utterance and asks them to reformulate themselves.
Repetition	The teacher repeats the student's erroneous utterance in the hope of eliciting the correct form from the learners.
Elicitation	The teacher repeats the learner's utterance minus the error to promote self-correction.
Metalinguistic clue	Withholding the correct form, the teacher merely provides a metalinguistic comment to enhance learners' self-correction.

1.6 Typical Errors of Persian Speakers of English

When it comes to the typical linguistic categories that may be difficult for Persian speakers of English, Kafipour & Khojasteh (2011) examined the basic cornerstones of communication in terms of semantics, morphology and syntax. Furthermore, other researchers, (e.g., Khansir & Shahhoseiny, 2013) suggested that Persian speakers of English may encounter challenges in the realms of article usage and verb tenses.

Kafipour & Khojasteh (2011) conducted an experimental study examining typical mistakes that Persian speakers may make in their EFL production. They state that faulty linguistic forms can be categorized according to the omission of articles and prepositions, the addition of articles and the misuse of tenses. In their research Kafipour & Khojasteh (2011), asked 40 undergraduate Persian students to write a composition about two pictures of their own choice, related to the US war against Iraq and to "Nouruz", one of Iran's national holidays. In the form of a test, the participants were expected to produce a written essay based on their own background knowledge of the two topics. The students' linguistic errors were extracted, analyzed and categorized by the researchers. According to the findings of Kafipour & Khojasteh (2011), Persian native speakers committed errors within the area of article usage, and they misused tenses.

Another experimental study, Khansir & Shahhoseiny's (2013) research provides further insight into Persian EFL learners' grammatical challenges in the language acquisition process. Khansir & Shahhoseiny's (2013) measured the error types of 100 Iranian university students in the field of article usage, passive voice and tense choices. The participants' syntactical knowledge was examined in the forms of a General English Proficiency test and a Grammatical Judgement test. After having observed and categorized the learners' mistakes, the researchers came to the conclusion that the most frequent linguistic errors belonged to the incorrect use of active and passive verb forms, followed by incorrect use of articles and wrong choice of tenses.

Nezami & Najafi (2012) also analysed the common error types of Persian learners of English. The researchers attempted to discover whether there is any connection between the learners' proficiency levels and the error types they made. To this end, they carried out an experimental study, based on two tests, to analyse overall error types across proficiency levels. Moreover, Nezami & Najafi (2012) also aimed to observe the frequency of these error types. The test results indicated that native Persian EFL speakers made mistakes in verb tense and aspect, article use, punctuation, spelling and conditional sentences, word order and word

choice. The findings revealed that the error types changed across proficiency levels as well as the error frequency. Nezami & Najafi (2012) claim that not "only the errors found in this study should be targeted" in the EFL classroom referring to the importance of learners' individual differences and the role of context (p.163).

Nevertheless, it is important to highlight that their findings were confirmed by Sarvestani & Pishkar (2015) who also noted faulty linguistic forms in article usage, and by Marzban & Arabahmadi (2013) who observed students' erroneous L2 items in conditional sentences. Furthermore, the research results of Alipanahi & Mahmoodi (2015), who investigated students' challenges in tackling verb tenses and aspects, are also in line with Nezami & Najafi's (2012) findings.

Thus, it can be noted that Persian speakers of English may face difficulties in the area of morphology, lexis, and syntax in their local environment. The questions, which need to be addressed, are how effectively these errors can be treated in the short and long term in Iran, and what implications these error treatments may have when this group of native speakers migrate to Sweden. In the view of this study's writers, the investigation of these questions, alongside with the identified gap concerning the little attention that has been given to Persian EFL learners' specific linguistic challenges and feedback practices in Sweden, calls for a literature review.

1.7 Overview of the Study

This paper is structured as follows. Chapter 2 presents an overview of the relevant research of written and oral feedback focusing on the current limited knowledge regarding the effect of various feedback types targeted at different linguistic domains and features. Chapter 3 presents the analysis in the form of a discussion in that it considers the pedagogical implications, and makes suggestions for future research for different feedback strategies for Persian EFL speakers.

2. Effects of Corrective Feedback Types

In this section of the paper, the writers intend to highlight the effects of written and oral corrective feedback types used for Persian EFL learners' error correction. Different kinds of written and oral corrective error treatments will be presented here covering direct and indirect written error correction, and explicit and implicit oral error treatment. Additionally, the efficiency of both coded and un-coded feedback will be covered. Finally, error treatments will

be examined both in a focused manner, targeted at a limited number of linguistic features, and in an unfocused manner investigating a large number of linguistic items.

2.1 Effects of Written Corrective Feedback on Students' Written Assignments

One of the articles that calls attention to what kind of written error treatment is more effective in terms of direct and indirect feedback for improving L2 accuracy is Sarvestani & Pishkar's (2015) paper. The experimental study examined students' improvement in the use of definite and indefinite articles for eight weeks. Sixty male and female intermediate level students within an age range of 19-32 were enrolled into three groups. A control group without feedback provision, a direct feedback and an indirect feedback group were formed. The researchers administered a pretest and a posttest to measure and to compare the students' performances in the three groups regarding their article usage before and after the treatment.

The results of the posttest showed that the experimental group that received direct error treatment performed best, followed by the other experimental group treated by indirect feedback. Subsequently, the control group without any error treatment was outperformed by both groups. Thus, this research indicates that direct corrective feedback is more effective in improving intermediate level students' grammatical accuracy than indirect feedback, at least, when it comes to article usage.

In a similar vein, with the modification of the feedback mode, Alipanahi & Mahmoodi (2015) also attempted to explore the differential effects of two various feedback types, that is, explicit and implicit feedback. They examined the effect of these feedback strategies on the acquisition and the retention of irregular verbs' past tense forms by using corrective feedback via emails. Sixty pre-intermediate level female high school students were randomly assigned in two groups establishing an explicit and implicit corrective feedback group. All the participants had contact with the researchers, who provided explicit, respectively implicit written feedback on students' writing via email during the eight-week study.

At the end of the treatment, the students were required to take two posttests, an immediate test, and delayed posttest. According to the test results, the explicit group outperformed the implicit feedback group both in the acquisition and in the retention of the irregular past tense forms. In other words, Alipanahi & Mahmoodi's (2015) test results seem to provide further evidence in support of Sarvestani & Pishkar's (2015) findings.

Another experimental study that attempted to investigate the effect of corrective feedback on students' writing performance was Marzban & Arabahmadi's (2013) paper. Their

research aimed to highlights students' improvement in writing concerning accuracy, fluency and complexity after having provided error treatment of wish statements and conditional structures to the students. Thirty-two intermediate level female students aged between 17-32 were divided into an experimental group and a control group. The experimental group was exposed to focused coded corrective feedback targeted at wish statements and conditional structures, while the control group received traditional grammatical instructions. It needs to be noted that Marzban & Arabahmadi (2013) did not specify in their study what traditional grammatical instruction exactly means in an Iranian context. Furthermore, the total length of error treatment remained undefined. On the other hand, Marzban & Arabahmadi (2013) provided information about the timing of the delayed posttest that was conducted four weeks after the posttest.

The study was based on having students in the treatment group produce a paragraph for ten minutes at each treatment time. Students in the experimental group got coded feedback on their daily writing and were asked to identify the error types marked by symbols under or over the faulty linguistic forms, and to correct the committed errors themselves. After the CF treatment, the participants took two posttests exactly like the pretest to measure the efficiency of coded written corrective feedback in comparison with the control group's traditional grammar instruction.

According to the test results, there was a significant difference between the treatment group and the control group's performance on the posttests of writing accuracy. Moreover, the test results also suggested that CF was more effective on writing accuracy than on fluency and complexity. These results seem to support that focused CF on targeted linguistic forms enhance students' understanding of grammatical rules and encourage them to apply their grammatical knowledge in writing based on teachers' error correction.

Another experimental study that sought to examine indirect and direct written corrective feedback on article usage in terms of definite and indefinite articles was carried out by Hosseiny (2014). Sixty pre-intermediate level female students were selected and divided evenly into three groups, one being a control group and the other two forming experimental groups. In order to ensure that their prior knowledge of the English article system was equal, the sixty students took a pretest.

The first group were to receive direct feedback on their work, the second would receive indirect feedback, and the third group did not receive any feedback at all. Tests selected from three books were given to the participants throughout five sessions, one session per week, for a total of five weeks.

The results of this study revealed that the group that had not received any feedback at all was outperformed both by the direct and indirect corrective feedback group. Between the scores of the two feedback groups, there was seemingly no significant difference suggesting that both types of feedback can be equally effective on the improvement in students' article usage. The findings of Hosseiny's (2014) experimental study go against the results of Alipanahi & Mahmoodi's (2015) and Sarvestani & Pishkar's (2015) research results.

Sadat, Zarifi, Sadat & Malekzadeh (2015) also sought to examine the effectiveness of direct and indirect feedback. They investigated the effects of these feedback types on retention and grammatical accuracy on the structure of conditional sentences. Their study included ninety female students that were EFL English majors, whose age ranged between 14 to 16. The participants took a pretest to ensure their knowledge of English matched the experiment's requirements. The selected students were divided into an indirect coded, an indirect un-coded feedback group, and a control group that was exposed to direct feedback. The study design took the form of a pretest, in-treatment tests, and posttests during a treatment period of ten weeks. In the indirect coded group, some codes were introduced for the students, and students' papers were corrected by using these codes. For the indirect un-coded group the instructor just put a mark (×) next to the sentence where he found error without underlining or highlighting it. The third group received direct feedback, which according to Sadat et al. (2015), is the traditional feedback provision technique in Iran.

In the light of the posttest and delayed post results, the students who received indirect coded feedback on their errors improved their grammar knowledge significantly more than the other two groups. Regarding their findings, Sadat et al. (2015) propose that indirect coded feedback helps students to pay more attention to their errors. Moreover, it contributes to retaining their acquired knowledge in the long term.

One experimental study that compared the effects of direct and metalinguistic coded feedback on Iranian EFL learners' grammatical knowledge was carried out by Saadi & Saadat (2015) among twenty-nine intermediate level male and female English major students. The students were enrolled in a direct feedback group, and in a metalinguistic feedback group. In both groups, the students were asked to write and revise paragraphs according to their instructors' error correction. In the metalinguistic feedback group, error correction was provided in the form of error codes on grammar, vocabulary, and punctuation. Prior to the experimental study that lasted for ten weeks, a proficiency test was administered for the students in order to make sure the groups' homogeneity regarding language proficiency. In addition to the proficiency test, the participants also needed to take a grammar test at the

beginning and at the end of the error treatment to measure their development in grammatical accuracy.

The research results indicated that there were no significant differences between the grammar scores of the two groups in their final test. These findings seem to support that both explicit feedback types, direct feedback and metalinguistic feedback, are equally effective in improving Persian EFL learners' language accuracy. This research result is in line with Alipanahi & Mahmoodi's (2015) and Sarvestani & Pishkar's (2015) findings which also state that explicit forms of feedback are effective for improving Persian EFL speakers' language accuracy.

In another experimental study conducted by Farrokhi & Sattarpour (2011), the researchers attempted to find the answer to the question whether direct focused written corrective feedback or direct unfocused feedback contribute more effectively to L2 learners' accurate use of English articles in two different proficiency levels, low and high. The sixty participants aged 18-35 were enrolled in two experimental groups and one control group across low and high proficiency levels during the treatment period that lasted for three weeks.

The focused group was exposed to error treatment in relation to the correct use of the indefinite article (for the first mention) and that of the indefinite article for anaphoric use. The error treatment of the unfocused group included five grammatical features: (1) English articles, (2) copula „be", (3) regular and irregular past tense, (4) third person 's', and (5) prepositions (e.g., at, in, on). The control group did not receive any feedback treatment at all. In terms of study design, it needs to be mentioned that the participants were asked to write a picture composition as a pretest to measure their article usage, five essays during the treatment sessions, and a final picture story as a posttest.

The test results showed that all groups that were exposed to error treatment outperformed the control group. Furthermore, it was also statistically confirmed that the focused feedback group performed better in terms of correct article use than the unfocused group at each proficiency level. It is noteworthy that according to the research results, the low proficiency group's grammatical accuracy improved more than the high proficiency level group's. These results suggest that focused corrective feedback has different efficiency on language development depending on students' proficiency levels. Overall, these results appear to indicate that direct focused feedback was more effective than unfocused feedback as regards the accurate use of English articles.

When it comes to the efficiency of direct focused and unfocused corrective feedback regarding highly proficient EFL students, Farrokhi & Sattarpour (2012) conducted an experimental study selecting sixty male and female participants within an age range of 18-35.

The focus of this three-week research, similarly to their earlier one of Farrokhi & Sattarpour (2011), was the use of English definite and indefinite articles. The study design followed the same pattern as Farrokhi & Sattarpour's (2011) earlier research applying a pretest-treatment-posttest method. The test results demonstrated that the two experimental groups outperformed the control group and the focused feedback group showed superior test results in comparison to the unfocused group. Hence, the findings of Farrokhi & Sattarpour (2012) experimental study are in accordance with Farrokhi & Sattarpour's (2011) earlier research. This result seemingly confirms that focused written feedback is salient for students' accurate use of English articles at high proficiency level.

Sanavi & Nemati (2014) conducted an experimental study in which they used six different feedback strategies with a focus on overall improvement of grammatical accuracy. Their ultimate goal was to explore which CF strategy works most effectively for International English Language Testing System (IELTS) candidates. Sanavi & Nemati (2014) aimed to compare the efficiency of a wide range of CF types among the different experimental groups. To this end, 186 learners, whose age ranged between 21 and 35 years were selected for the study for ten weeks. Due to ethical considerations, the design lacked control groups, and the students were randomly signed into six different CF groups according to the following categories: reformulation, direct form, indirect form, metalinguistic feedback, peer correction and error coding. All CF groups participated in a pretest to measure the students' writing ability prior to the CF treatment.

At the end of the study, the students were asked to write a final assignment in order to gauge their improvement in writing. The writings were scored in terms of accuracy, cohesion and coherence, lexical resources and task achievement.

The findings of this study indicate that the reformulation group received the highest scores, followed by the error code group, peer correction and metalinguistic group. Quite unexpectedly, according to the final test results, direct CF, as well as indirect CF, proved to be the least successful feedback types in improving students' overall grammatical accuracy. Overall, the research results (Sanavi & Nemati, 2014) suggest that reformulation, which is an explicit feedback type, is more fruitful to enhance students' writing accuracy than the implicit feedback strategy.

2.2. Effects of Oral Feedback on Persian EFL Students' L2 Language Production

When it comes to the significance of the degree of explicitness, Falhasiri, Tavakoli, Hasiri & Mohammadzadeh (2011) intended to discover whether the implicit or explicit form of feedback is more effective to reduce Iranian students' grammatical and lexical errors in their compositions. To this end, twenty-three male and female students from different majors were chosen to participate in their experimental study for four weeks. Each week the students were asked to produce four compositions that were later analysed, and the error frequency was calculated. The researcher devised explicit feedback on the incorrect use of prepositions, double subject in relative clauses, and on the misplacement of adverbs of frequency. They used implicit error correction on incorrect article usage, erroneous subject-verb agreement, and on the omission of copula "be".

After the treatment, the students were required to write four more compositions, and the frequency of errors before and after the treatment was compared. The findings showed that both explicit explanation and implicit clarification led to error reduction. Moreover, the findings revealed that the frequency of those errors which were treated by explicit feedback decreased more than the frequency of those errors which were treated by implicit feedback.

Running in a similar line that their predecessors have tackled in terms of examining the efficiency of different feedback types, Rezaei & Derakhshan (2011) aimed to investigate the effects of recasts and metalinguistic correction on conditional structures and wish statements. In an attempt to reveal whether there was a differential effect of these two feedback types, they conducted an experimental study on task-based grammar instruction by selecting sixty intermediate level male students for the study. Three groups, a recast, a metalinguistic, and a control group were formed by randomly assigning the participants to each group. Each group comprised twenty students, their age ranging from 15 to 25.

First, the students were told to take a proficiency test to measure if their proficiency level in English was adequate for the study. Second, a pretest, developed by the researchers for this study, inquiring the conditional structures and wish statements, were given to the students to make sure that these target structures were new to them. After the feedback treatment, a posttest was given to the participants to gain an understanding of the different feedback types across the groups. The test results indicated that both CF groups outperformed the no-feedback group; hence this experimental study confirms that feedback can weed out

the incorrect grammatical forms from learners' language production. Furthermore, the findings also showed that metalinguistic feedback was more effective than recasts in the task-based instruction of conditionals and wish statements.

Akbarzadeh, Saeidi, & Chehreh (2014) designed an experimental study to explore the effects of Oral Interactive Feedback (OIF) on fifty intermediate level male and female sophomore students' writing accuracy and complexity considering the acquisition and retention of verb tenses, prepositions, articles, and clauses. They conducted an experimental study containing a proficiency test, pretest, treatment sessions, and posttest. The participants were assigned to an Oral Interactive Feedback group receiving elicitation and metalinguistic clues throughout their feedback treatment, and to an Explicit Group (EF). The Explicit Group was corrected without discussion or interaction in the class. Both the OIF group and the EF group received comments on grammatical and lexical errors. The findings revealed that OIF was effective in improving students' writing accuracy and complexity, furthermore, according to the test results the OIF group outperformed the EF group.

Rassaei, Moinzadeh & Youhanaee (2012) carried out an experimental study in which they attempted to explore the effects of recasts and metalinguistic explanations on the acquisition and retention of explicit and implicit knowledge of English articles. To this end, they assigned intermediate level female and male students within an age range of 20-45, to a recast group, to a metalinguistic group and a control group. Rassaei et al. (2012) motivated their group formation by the explicitness and implicitness of the different feedback types. Furthermore, Rassaei et al. (2012) expected that implicit feedback would enhance students' intuitive knowledge of how to use the articles, while explicit feedback would contribute to students' conscious article usage. Rassaei et al. (2012) applied a pretest-treatment-posttest-delayed posttest method in their experimental study measuring the intermediate level participants' knowledge of English article usage. During the treatment period, the participants received oral recasts, metalinguistic feedback and no feedback at all in their respective groups. Learners' achievements were investigated in the form of grammar tests and also through oral tests.

The test results seemingly suggest that even if recasts improved the learners' EFL knowledge to a certain extent, metalinguistic treatment was more effective on students' EFL development than recasts. Further, explicit feedback developed the learners' explicit and implicit EFL knowledge. These results also seem to support the findings of Falhasiri et al. (2011) and Rezaei & Derakhshan (2011) regarding the effectiveness of explicit feedback types.

3. Discussion

The results of the studies selected for this essay showed that corrective feedback is effective in promoting Persian students' foreign language learning. In light of the findings, the writers of this paper state that the vast majority of the presented research indicated the superiority of explicit feedback type over the implicit ones (e.g., Sarvestani & Pishkar, 2015; Alipanahi & Mahmoodi, 2015).

Sarvestani & Pishkar, (2015) and Alipanahi & Mahmoodi (2015), concluded that direct feedback was more efficient than indirect feedback, at least, when the efficiency of these two feedback types was compared in terms of article usage (Sarvestani & Pishkar, 2015) or verb tense forms (Alipanahi & Mahmoodi, 2015). On the other hand, Sanavi & Nemati's (2014) test results go against the efficiency of direct feedback highlighting that reformulation, which is an explicit form of feedback, seems to be more salient on improving Persian EFL speakers' writing accuracy, at least, when the feedback aims at improving learners' overall grammatical knowledge in an unfocused manner.

Two articles, one by Sadat, et al. (2015) and another one by Marzban & Arabahmadi (2013) investigated the efficiency of coded feedback types on the acquisition of conditional sentences. Sadat et al. (2015) came to the conclusion that indirect coded feedback proved to be more effective on EFL learners' language improvement than indirect un-coded feedback, especially, regarding the long-term effects of coded feedback provision. Marzban & Arabahmadi's (2013) findings also seemed to indicate the effectiveness of coded indirect feedback on conditional sentences.

Moreover, regarding the focus of feedback, Farrokhi & Sattarpour's (2011; 2012) experimental studies also need to be considered. They studied the effects of focused and unfocused feedback types targeting the accurate use of English articles. Unlike Sadat et al. (2015) and Marzban & Arabahmadi (2013), neither of these studies used coded feedback types during the experiments. The findings of Farrokhi & Sattarpour (2011; 2012) contradicts those of Sadat et al. (2015) and Marzban & Arabahmadi's (2013), indicating that direct focused corrective feedback contributes more effectively to enhance L2 learners' accurate language use than indirect feedback.

As regards the experimental studies that examined the effectiveness of oral feedback types on Persian EFL speakers' writing, the vast majority of these studies, similarly to the only written feedback papers, demonstrated the superiority of one or two explicit feedback types in comparison to implicit corrective feedback. Rezaei & Derakhshan's (2011) findings advocated the benefits of metalinguistic feedback provision compared to recasts in case of

treating conditionals and wish statements. Based on the findings of Akbarzadeh et al. (2014), oral interactive feedback in the form of elicitation and metalinguistic explanations in an unfocused manner proved to be more fruitful in solving students' linguistic problems than explicit error correction without interaction. According to the Falhasiri et al. (2011), explicit feedback was superior to indirect feedback to develop Persian EFL learners' language accuracy, which is in line with Rassaei et al.'s (2012) experimental study that also considered explicit feedback more salient on EFL language development than implicit feedback.

As is indicated in the introduction of the present paper, this literature review aimed to provide a robust picture of the efficacy of applied feedback techniques for Persian EFL speakers. For this reason, a number of experimental studies were looked through to be able to draw conclusions in regard to the short- and long-term effects of various implicit and explicit feedback strategies targeted at different linguistic items.

Considering the short-term effects of written corrective feedback, the findings showed that direct feedback, meta-linguistic feedback, focused direct feedback, and reformulation strategy proved to be effective on Persian EFL learners' language acquisition in the short-term. In terms of oral feedback provision, Rezaei & Derakhshan's (2011) experimental study and Akbarzadeh et al. (2014) research findings provided evidence of the short-term effectiveness of metalinguistic explanation, elicitation and metalinguistic clues.

Regarding the long-term effects of written CF, direct feedback, indirect coded feedback, focused feedback and reformulation strategy seemed to be effective on the development of learners' grammatical accuracy. Concerning the long-term effectiveness of the oral feedback types, metalinguistic explanation (Falhasiri et al., 2011; Rassaei et al., 2012) proved to be beneficial in increasing Persian EFL learners' grammatical accuracy.

One pedagogical dimension that the results seem to support is that both direct and indirect feedback strategies provide the students with the opportunity to practice English target structures (Hosseiny, 2014). On the other hand, Hosseiny (2014) noted that in indirect feedback provision the learners were encouraged to be actively engaged in their language acquisition, while in direct feedback provision the teacher solved the problems for the students.

Undeniably, both written direct and indirect feedback types and oral explicit and implicit feedback strategies help the learners to reduce the mismatch between their incorrect language forms and the target-language item (Rassaei et al., 2012). On the other hand, in both direct written or in explicit oral error treatments, the teachers explicitly focus the learners' attention on the errors that they have made. Thus, the error should not go unnoticed by

learners. This fact probably explains why teachers in an Iranian setting prefer the use of explicit, rather than implicit feedback types in the improvement of learners' language skills.

Understandably, directing learners' attention on target language outputs led to beneficial effects in terms of grammatical acquisition and retention when focused error treatment was provided. The preference of focused feedback among Iranian teachers may be explained by the fact that unfocused feedback can be cognitively overloading for students, which might prohibit feedback processing (Sheen, 2007).

Regarding the efficiency of coded and un-coded feedback types, it can be observed in the light of the findings included in this literature review, that coded feedback types may improve learners' grammatical accuracy over time (Sadat et al., 2015; Marzban & Arabahmadi, 2013). Coded feedback types involve learners in problem-solving, and similarly to focused feedback types, this type of error correction makes learners aware of the gap between their actual level of English knowledge and their desired one. On the other hand, there were only two experimental studies selected for this paper that seemed to confirm the long-term beneficial effects of this feedback type. For this reason, a general conclusion regarding the long-term effectiveness of the coded feedback types cannot be drawn.

When it comes to the influence of the Iranian context on study design, it is worth noting that the vast majority of the experimental studies showed a keen interest for the examination of the Persian EFL learners' plausible syntactic challenges. The importance of context can be also be highlighted by the fact that some researchers (e.g., Sadat et al., 2015) labeled direct feedback as the traditional feedback type, commonly used in Iran. Further, according to the majority of the experimental studies included in this paper, explicit feedback seemed to be more beneficial on Persian EFL learners' language development than implicit feedback types.

In other words, native Persian speakers of English are accustomed to receiving feedback on their grammatical mistakes, often in an explicit form. Persian EFL students' exposure to these feedback practices in their homeland probably means that they might expect an explicit feedback provision targeting at syntactical errors, even if they migrate to another country, for example to Sweden. Consequently, Swedish EFL teachers need to keep this feature of Persian EFL learners' educational background in their mind when they provide feedback to these learners.

4. Conclusion

As it has been noted in this paper, the vast majority of the experimental studies showed a more significant effect of explicit feedback types compared to implicit feedback ones. On the other hand, it needs to be highlighted that the findings can be influenced by individual traits such as proficiency level, age, gender (as shown in Appendix 1. & 2.), so the presented results do not provide teachers and researchers with an ultimate solution for Persian EFL students' feedback provision. The undeniable value of these experimental studies is that they indeed contribute to the investigation of various feedback types. Moreover, the selected research detected the effects of different feedback strategies in the short- and long-term, depending on whether they included delayed posttest or not. It means that teachers have a wide selection of pedagogical tools to select from, and they can, in light of these research findings, trust in the efficiency of their chosen feedback types.

The writers of the present paper recommend for future research to conduct more cross-sectional and longitudinal studies over longer periods of time with significantly larger student populations. Furthermore, there is a need to involve more than one rater in future studies to ensure higher reliability for the tests. Additionally, it also needs to be addressed that with a few exceptions, the research papers primarily focused on intermediate level students. For this reason, it would be beneficial for future research to extend the scope of proficiency to high-intermediate and advanced levels.

Without researching higher proficiency levels, neither the teachers nor the students can gain a better understanding of how they can achieve these levels, which has vital importance in higher education in Sweden. In other words, Swedish EFL teachers may have received a robust picture of feedback treatment at lower proficiency levels. On the other hand, more research investigating effective feedback types for high proficient Persian EFL speakers is recommended.

Besides, the present research paper limited the investigation of EFL learners' plausible linguistic problems to one group of native speakers. Naturally, the Swedish "multi-contrastive" EFL classroom includes more than one group of Non-Swedish native speakers with their own language specific problems within several linguistic domains including morphology and lexis. Consequently, it would be interesting to examine what kind of linguistic challenges these other Non-Swedish groups, with respect to their specific linguistic and cultural background, may encounter in the communication-oriented Swedish classroom.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Table 1. Different factors in study design, WCF

Studies	Number of Participants	Gender	Age	Proficiency level	Length of study
Sarvestani & Pishkar (2015)	60	Male & Female	19 - 32	Intermediate level learners	8 weeks
Alipanahi & Mahmoodi (2015)	60	Female	High school students	Pre-Intermediate	8 weeks
Marzban & Arabahmadi (2013)	32	Female	17-32	Intermediate	Undefined weeks plus 4 Weeks
Hosseiny, M. (2014)	60	Female	students at Ardabil Language Institute	Pre-Intermediate	5 Weeks
Saadi & Saadat (2015)	29	Male & Female	29	Upper Intermediate	One semester
Sadat, Zarifi, Sadat & Malekzadeh (2015)	90	Female	14 - 16	Intermediate level	10 weeks
Farrokhi & Sattarpour, (2011)	60	Male & Female	18-35	Low and High-Proficient	3 Weeks
Farrokhi, & Sattarpour (2012)	60	Male & Female	18 - 35	High-Proficient	3 Weeks
Sanavi & Nemati (2014)	186	Male & Female	21 - 35	High-proficient	10 weeks

Appendix B

Table 2. Different factors in study design, OCF

Studies	Number of Participants	Gender	Age	Proficiency level	Length of Study
Falhasiri, Tavakoli, Hasiri & Mohammadzadeh (2011)	23	Male & Female		English majors	4 weeks
Rezaei, & Derakhshan(2011)	60	Only Males	15 - 25	Intermediate level learners	
Akbarzadeh, Saeidi, & Chehreh (2014)	50	Male & Female	19 - 30	Intermediate level learners	11 weeks
Rassaei Moinzadeh. & Youhanaee (2012).	86	Female & Male	20 - 45	Low-Intermediate level learners	3 weeks