

EFFECT OF DIRECT AND INDIRECT FEEDBACK ON URDU EFL LEARNERS AT GRADUATION LEVEL

Muhammad Nasir¹ Muhammad Shakeel² Nasim Wahid³ Palwasha Akmal⁴

Abstract

This study was conducted to find out the effects of direct and indirect feedback on EFL learners having Urdu as mother tongue at graduation level. For this purpose 60 students were selected randomly at Govt. Post Graduate College Bahawalnagar, Pakistan and then from those 60 students, a sample of 34 students was taken. The sample was divided into two equal groups (Experimental and Control). A pre-test of both groups was taken separately and their errors were counted carefully. Control group was treated as indirect feedback group and experimental group was treated as indirect feedback group for two weeks by delivering lecture of one hour daily. After two weeks, a post test of both groups (Experimental and Control) was taken and their errors were once again counted carefully. After analyzing the errors, it was found that direct feedback was more useful to correct the errors of Urdu EFL learners at graduation level. Furthermore, the findings of questionnaire were also claimed that direct feedback was more beneficial to minimize the errors of Urdu EFL learners in Pakistan.

Key words: Direct Feedback, EFL learners, Graduation, Pakistan

1 Introduction

Language which has been considered man's most remarkable achievement, is so much a part of our lives, like the air we breathe, that very often we take it for granted and as often are not aware of its characteristic features. There are many things about language that are still a mystery and will probably remain so. However, there are aspects we do know. The past several decades have seen a tremendous amount of linguistics as a language, a description of its basic characteristics would make a better understanding of linguistic science. Language is a system. It is not a random collection of items. Patterning is all important. Each language has its own structure, its own system. It has its own unique way of organizing its units into an internal structure. English is the language of the world, in all fields of arts, science and humanities. The intellectual elite of Pakistan speak English. International trade is done in English. So it is necessary to teach English in our institutions in an effective manner to obtain the desired aims and objectives at National level. So to learn English as a second language, it is important to obtain a good command of the language. And as language is primarily speech, so fluency in speaking is very important. With instant worldwide communication through satellites, the world has become a global village. By speaking English we speak to this global village. In Pakistan itself, English continues to be an official language of the state. It continues to be the medium of instruction at almost all colleges and universities of the country for higher education in science, technology and information technology. Surveys of public

¹ mnasir522@gmail.com

² shakeelahmad7035@gmail.com

³ nasimwahiduol@gmail.com

⁴ palwashahakmal@gmail.com

M.Phil Scholars at the University of Lahore Pakpattan Campus, Pakistan

opinion have revealed that it is felt to be difficult to get a good job or do well in career without good English.

Tufail et al. (2015) claim that teaching of English in Pakistan has been a subject of great challenge to English teachers. They have been adopting various methodologies to make it convenient for the students to learn it as easily and possible. In EFL students' problems in learning English is a topic of discussion for many years in field of research. In Pakistan where class system is very strong and people are class-conscious English is used as a symbol of status.

Feedback is considered a crucial component in target language learning. It is the feedback that corrects the mistakes of the learners in language learning class room. It motivates the learners and discourages the learners as well. Feedback is defined as the advice, criticism and appreciation on the part of teacher to students. As Purnawarman, P. (2011) states that feedback is considered an inherent part and an important element in instructional design and it has a strong foundation in major learning theories. The practice of instructional design has been influenced by major learning theories such as behavioral learning theory, cognitive information processing theory, and Gagné's theory of instruction, and all these theories regard feedback as a crucial part in learning and instruction, including language learning and language instruction. In language learning and language instruction, including writing in English as a Second or Foreign Language context, the vital role of feedback in students' learning is evident. Student writers gain benefits from sufficient writing practice and revisions on their drafts to produce a final piece of writing. In these processes, student writers often rely on feedback either from a teacher, peer, or self. Feedback that students receive from a source, or a combination of sources, provides them with information about what is good and what needs to be improved so that they can incorporate and use the feedback in their revisions and in the final product of their writing. A large number of studies have examined the effectiveness of corrective feedback on student writing although agreement on research findings to date is still inconclusive.

There are many types of feedback and among all the types two are most important; direct feedback and indirect feedback. Direct feedback is when teacher directly points out the errors of learners and give suggestions for correction and indirect feedback is when teacher corrects the mistakes of the learners indirectly. There are long debates on the effect of direct and indirect feedback in EFL learning class rooms. The researches that are done on effectiveness of direct and indirect feedback hold different claims. In Pakistan, teachers use mostly direct corrective feedback to correct the mistake of English learners. It is very rare that indirect feedback is used. There are so many different types of feedback are used to teach English in the world whereas in Pakistan mostly direct corrective feedback is used for English language teaching. In this research article we are going to research that whether the direct feedback that is used from Pakistani teacher is more beneficial for Pakistani English language learners or indirect feedback is more effective because sometime it is noted that through direct feedback the learner feels some type of discouragement and shame and he gives up learning. Sometimes through direct corrective feedback, the learners feels insult and he leaves the learning.

2 Literature Review

Feedback is the most important component in the process of language learning. It is a topic that has a lot of controversy that whether direct feedback is more effective or indirect feedback does well in English learning.

The specialists in the field of effectiveness of feedback argue that indirect feedback is more beneficial for most students, because it involves them in guided learning and problem solving. Moreover, they debate that the mistakes that are corrected through indirect feedback have long term effectiveness as Ghandi & Maghsoudi (2014) researched on the effect of direct and indirect corrective feedback on Iranian EFL learners' spelling errors. The study was conducted at the gifted girls' high school in Saveh, Iran. A sample of 56 high school sophomores was randomly assigned to two equal groups of 28. Group 1 (the direct feedback group) and Group 2 (the indirect feedback group) were treated differently regarding their spelling errors for five weeks. Their research revealed that indirect feedback was more effective than direct feedback in rectifying students' spelling errors.

There are untold findings that claims that indirect feedback is more beneficial than direct feedback. Baleghizadeh & Dadashi (2011) conducted a research on the effect of direct and indirect corrective feedback on students spelling errors. They tried to examine the role of indirect feedback to junior school students to correct their spelling errors by the dictation of the teachers. They worked on two equally divided school groups 'A' and 'B' in a district Zanjanrood of Iran. Group 'A' was treated as direct corrective feedback regarding their spelling errors in a regular classroom and group 'B' was treated as an indirect corrective feedback in an additional classroom activity with spelling errors for six week respectively. It found that the group 'B' which was treated with indirect corrective feedback was more effective and valuable than that of group 'A' with direct corrective feedback.

But there is always exception in everything. Many researches show that direct feedback is more effective than indirect feedback as Van Beuningen, et al. (2008) conducted a research on the effectiveness of direct and indirect feedback. They divided their sample into four groups. Two were controlled groups to whom direct and indirect both feedback were given and two were experimental groups that received indirect feedback. Findings of their research revealed that direct feedback was more useful for error correction than indirect feedback.

Barbara et al. (2011) conducted a research on impacts of different types of teacher corrective feedback in reducing grammatical errors on ESL/EFL students' writing in Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. They divided their sampling of one hundred and twenty one university students in four groups and used four different strategies of feedback that were indirect feedback, direct feedback, indirect feedback followed by direct feedback with explicit corrective comments, and no feedback (IF, DF, IDECC, NF). They found that direct feedback that was given to correct on the part of language teacher, was more effective than any other types of feedback strategy.

But beyond the department of education it is noted that direct feedback is more useful than indirect feedback. Darby (2006) worked on a research about the effectiveness of feedback on energy consumption in domestic life. She tried her best to explain that most of energy users were unaware

about the consumption of electricity. She motivated different people by displaying monitors and by showing electricity bills etc. She concluded that in domestic life mostly people were unable to know about the wastage of energy. She explained the fact that direct feedback was more beneficial in the usage of energy in daily life. She says that indirect feedback is also necessary in long term (e.g. annually) usage of energy. Both direct and indirect feedback also influences the behavior of electricity consumers in daily life as well as in long term consumption of energy.

There are also researches which shows complete different finding in the effectiveness of direct and indirect feedback as Erel and Bulut (2007) conducted a study on the error treatment in L2 writing by a comparison study of direct and indirect coded feedback in Turkish context. They worked on two different Turkish University student groups by giving them different pre writing tasks before their first semester midterm, second semester midterm and third semester midterm. To first group they gave a direct feedback with correct written form and an indirect feedback to second group but with an error in written form. Finally, it revealed that there were no much differences in statistical results both from direct with correct feedback and indirect error feedback but the indirect coded feedback group committed fewer errors than the direct feedback group. And in indirect coded feedback, these errors decreased gradually in first, second and third semester respectively.

But there is also controversy over that usefulness of both types of feedback. It is also a main issue whether feedback is necessary for improvement or not. The most prominent opponent of error correction, states that corrective feedback on second language learners' written output is not only unnecessary and ineffective but even counterproductive because it distracts attention from much more important issues such as development of ideas (Chandler, 2003).

3 Research Questions

Research is conducted by keeping in mind some basic questions and to find the answers of that questions. So, there are three main questions of this study.

1. Is direct feedback is more effective to correct the errors of the EFL learners having Urdu as mother tongue?
2. Is indirect feedback is more beneficial to correct the errors of EFL learner having Urdu as mother tongue?
3. Is both types of feedback (Direct & Indirect feedback) is more useful to correct the errors of EFL learner having Urdu mother tongue?

4 Objectives of the Study

Following are the objectives of this study:

1. To investigate the effects of direct feedback method in Urdu EFL context with regard to accuracy in writings.
2. To analyze direct feedback method of error treatment minimizing errors in writings of Urdu EFL learners.
3. To find out the possible impacts of direct feedback method on different error categories.

5 Research Methodology

This study was conducted to observe the cause-effect relationship between the categorical independent variable (i.e. direct corrective feedback method and indirect corrective feedback method) and dependent variable (i.e. accuracy in students' writings). In order to answer the

research questions, data collected for this research is based on the writings of the students, receiving two different types of feedback that are direct feedback and indirect feedback.

6 Data Collection Tools

In this study two instruments of data collection are used to collect the data. One is questionnaire and 2nd is test. Most of the researches in the field of applied linguistics use test as a research tool. So, in this research, test is adopted as tool to collect the data.

7 Research Site & Population

This research was conducted at Government Post Graduate College of District Bahawalnagar of southern Punjab, Pakistan. Population of this study was consisted of students at graduation level in Government Post Graduate College of District Bahawalnagar. Sixty students, having Urdu as their mother tongue were there at graduation level at Government College Bahawalnagar. Out of these 60 students, 34 students were selected randomly. The sample of 34 students was divided into two equal groups. Experimental and control group.

8 Control Group

This group was also consist of 17 students which received direct feedback. After two weeks it was noted that the mistakes of this group decreased up to a great extend while comparing the mistakes of pre-test and post-test

Pre-Test Errors Table (1)

No	Name of Errors	No of Errors
1	Adverb errors	42
2	Verb errors	16
3	Article errors	62
4	Structure errors	47
5	Vocabulary errors	90
6	Plural Noun errors	16
7	Conjunction errors	114
8	Singular Verb errors	144
9	Spelling errors	50
10	Noun errors	77
11	Helping Verb errors	98
12	Punctuation errors	45
No	Name of Errors	No of Errors
13	Adjective errors	85
14	Pronoun errors	65
15	Others	30

Post-Test Errors Table (2)

No	Name of Errors	No of Errors
1	Adverb errors	24
2	Verb errors	15
3	Article errors	10

4	Structure errors	12
5	Vocabulary errors	35
6	Plural Noun errors	05
7	Conjunction errors	39
8	Singular Verb errors	07
9	Spelling errors	13
10	Noun errors	09
11	Helping Verb errors	19
12	Punctuation errors	04
13	Adjective errors	27
14	Pronoun errors	14
15	Others	06

9 Experimental Group:

This group has been given indirect correct feedback through lectures of one hour for 2 weeks. After 2 weeks it was noted that the errors of the respondents did not decrease. The frequency and types of errors that are done in pre-test and post-test are given below.

Pre-Test Errors Table (3)

No	Name of Errors	No of Errors
1	Adverb errors	45
2	Verb errors	25
3	Article errors	50
4	Structure errors	76
5	Vocabulary errors	86
6	Plural Noun errors	22
7	Conjunction errors	93
8	Singular Verb errors	102
9	Spelling errors	57
10	Noun errors	67
11	Helping Verb errors	92
12	Punctuation errors	46
13	Adjective errors	76
14	Pronoun errors	46
15	Others	56

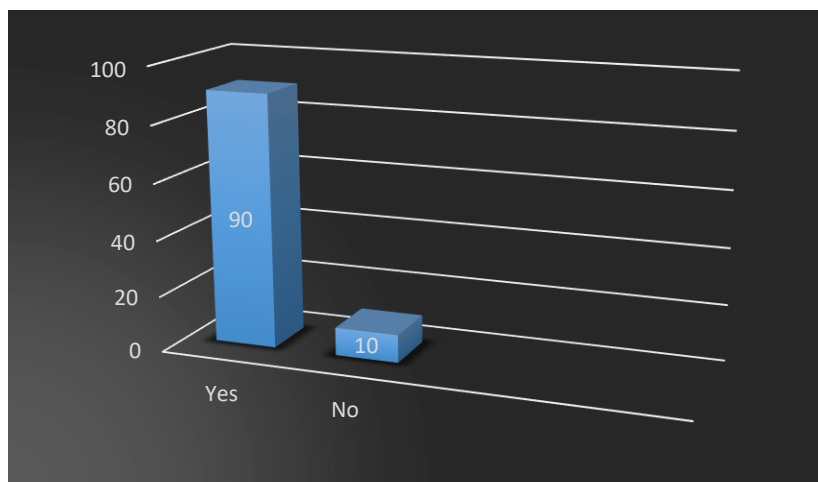
Post-Test Errors Table (4)

No	Name of Errors	No of Errors
1	Adverb errors	39
2	Verb errors	20
3	Article errors	59
4	Structure errors	45
5	Vocabulary errors	82
No	Name of Errors	No of Errors
6	Plural Noun errors	13

7	Conjunction errors	95
8	Singular Verb errors	106
9	Spelling errors	51
10	Noun errors	67
11	Helping Verb errors	83
12	Punctuation errors	45
13	Adjective errors	76
14	Pronoun errors	63
15	Others	27

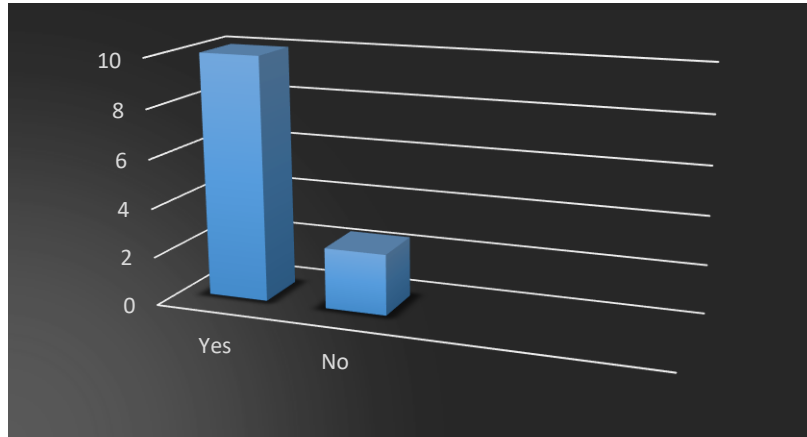
From the above tables of errors, it is clear that there is a large number of errors in the pre-test of both groups (Control & Experimental). But with the passage of time, the error of control group was decreased with the help of direct feedback but the errors of experimental group that was treated as indirect feedback group, remained almost same. So, it is crystal clear, that direct feedback is more suitable to decrease the error of EFL learners having Urdu as a mother tongue.

10 Questionnaire Results for 1st Question: Do you want your teacher to correct errors in your writings directly?



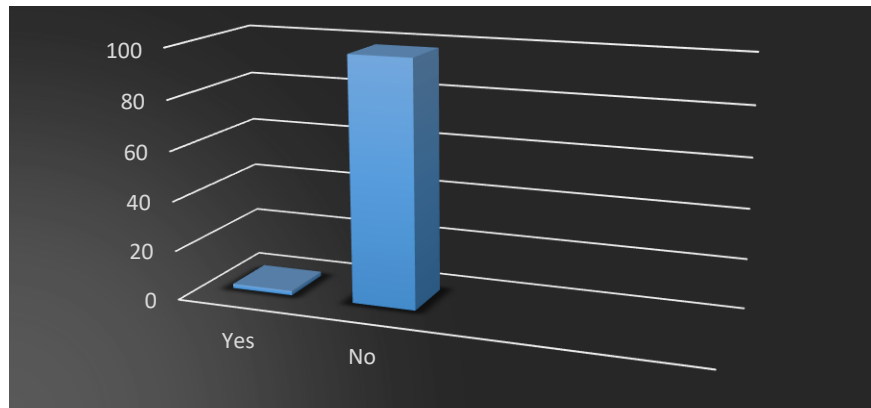
From the above chart it is clear that 90% respondents want that their teacher correct their errors in writing directly. Only 10% respondents expressed their opinion in negative.

11 Questionnaire Results for 2nd Question: Do you think, committing errors depends on students mood or not?



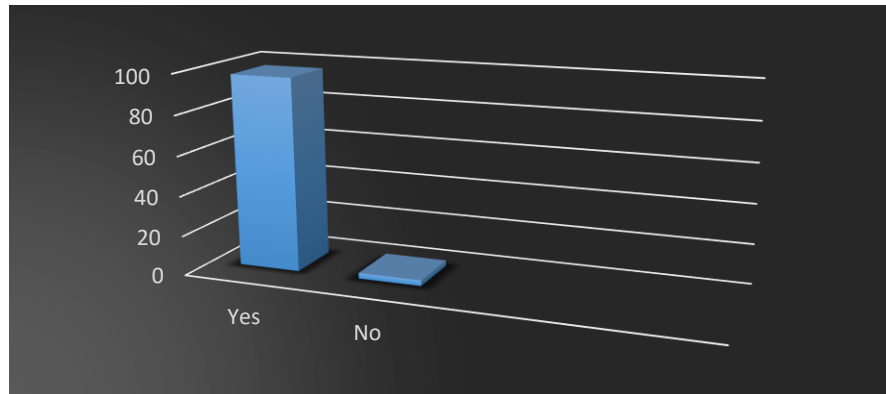
As shown in the above chart 90% respondents expressed that committing errors does not depend on students' mood. Only 10% respondents expressed that committing errors depend on the students' mood.

12 Questionnaire Results for 3rd Question: Do you feel insult while your errors are being identified by your teacher directly?



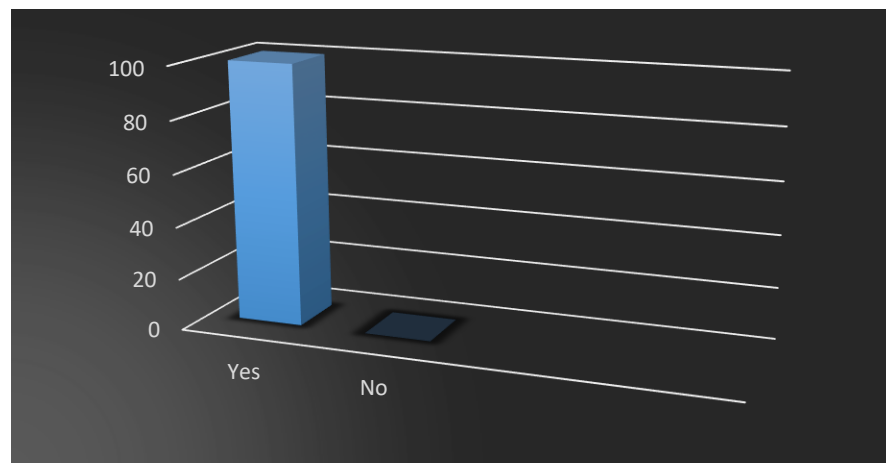
98.2 % respondents claimed 'No' to the 3rd questions of questionnaire. Only 1.8% respondents responded in "Yes".

13 Questionnaire Results for 4th Question: Do you feel that a competent teacher is necessary for direct errors correction?



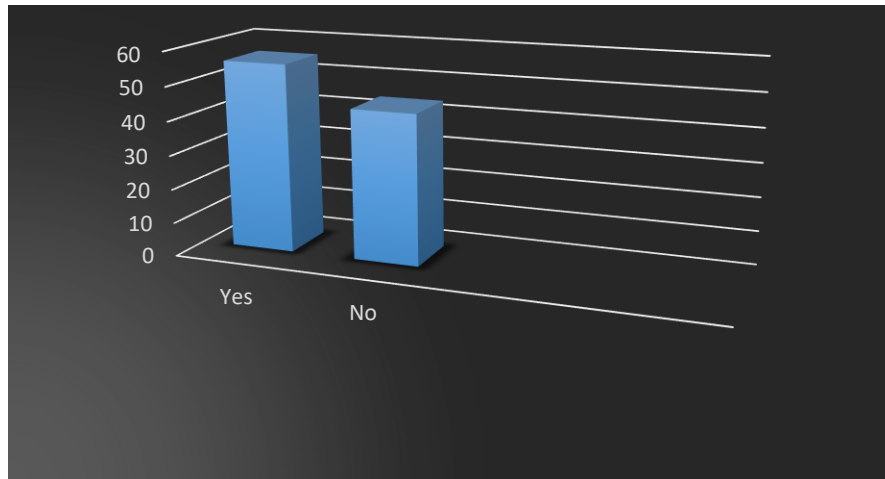
As shown in the chart of question number 4 that 97.1% respondents want that a competent teacher should correct errors directly. Only 2.9% respondents responded in negative.

14 Questionnaire Results for 5th Question: Does direct feedback have impact on the performance of the students in relation to specific categories of error?



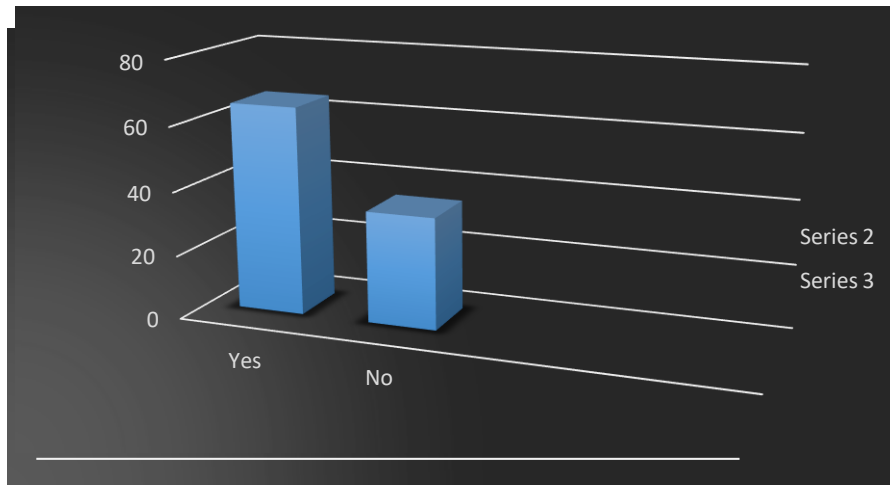
In the 5th question of the questionnaire it was noted by the response of the respondents that 100% respondents think that direct feedback impacts on the performance of the learners. While there was no respondent who expressed his opinion in negative.

15 Questionnaire Results for 6th Question: Do you feel difficulty with the use of verb?



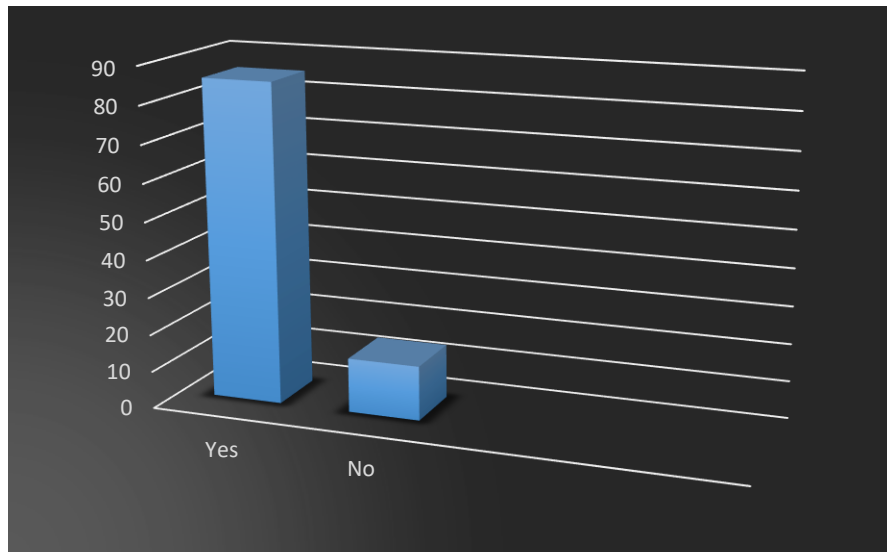
From the chart of the 6th question it was noted that 55.7% respondents feel difficulty while using verb and 44.3% respondents feel no difficulty in the use of verb in EFL class room.

16 Questionnaire Results for 7th Question: Do you feel any problem in the use of article?



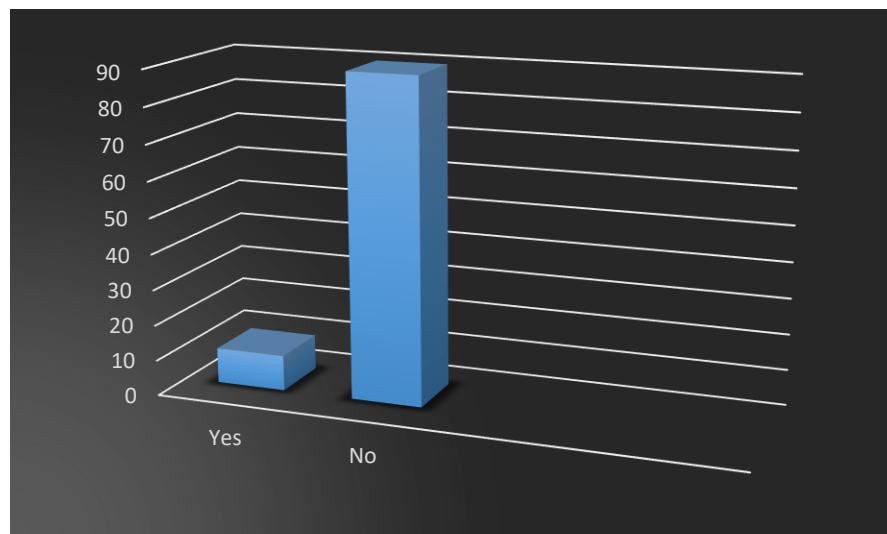
From the response of question 7th we have come to know that 65% respondents have problems in using article while 35% have not.

17 Questionnaire Results for 8th Question: Do you feel any issue with the use of adjective



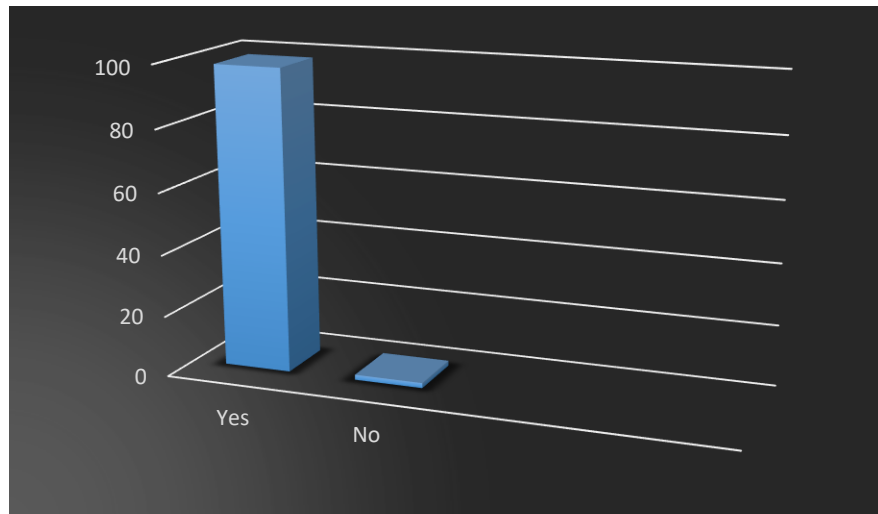
For 8th question, 85.4% students responded that they feel difficulty while using adjective in their writings and 14.6% claimed that they do not feel difficulty in the use of adjective.

18 Questionnaire Results for 9th Question: Do you feel any trouble in the use of noun?



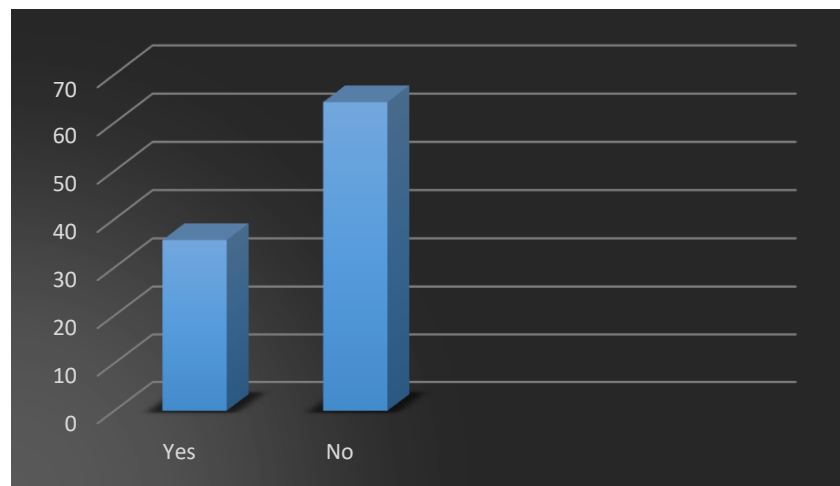
From the 9th questions it was noted that only 10% students have issues in the use of noun and 90% students have no problem in using noun.

20 Questionnaire Results for 10th Question: Do you feel any complication in the use of preposition?



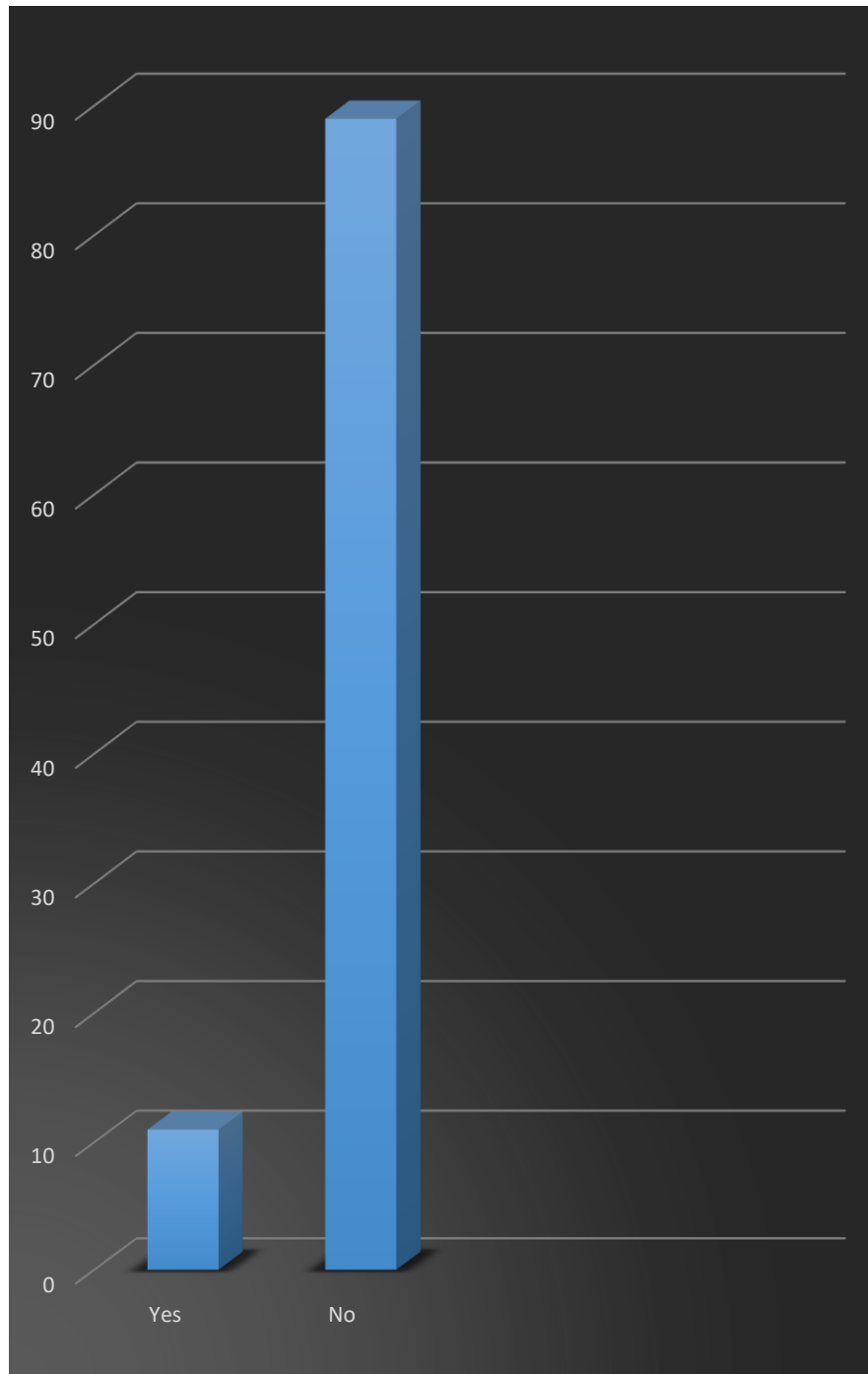
As chart above demonstrates that 98.3% respondents have problem in using preposition and only 1.7% student have a good idea that how a preposition can be used in the writing. From this question, it is clear that the use of preposition is a very confusing task for the students. So teachers should pay special attention to this parts of speech.

21 Questionnaire Results for 11th Question: The use of verb forms is the most confusing task?



For question 11 it is expressed that 35.7% students have problem in using verb forms and rest of 64.3% students have not.

22 Questionnaire Results for 12th Question: Many learners give up trying to speak or write in English because their teachers overcorrect them through direct feedback?



As shown in the above chart it is described that 11% students give up writing or speaking English due to over correct mistake directly from teacher's side while rest of 89% do not.

23 Category wise Treatment of Direct feedback Method by the Teacher:

There is large number of categories of errors that are noted and corrected by the teacher during tests. Here are some examples of important categories of errors.

24 Verb Errors

In this category a subject verb agreement errors was corrected by the teacher. For example;

- I *get up**early in the morning and went to school. (Student)
- I *got up**early in the morning and went to school. (Teacher)
- He *go**to college every day. (Student)
- He *goes**to college every day. (Teacher)

25 Article Errors

Errors like omission of article, unnecessary article are included in this category of errors.

- Man was upset who was sitting in the garden. (Student)
- *The**man was upset who was sitting in the garden. (Teacher)
- **Rive* Ravi flows near Lahore. (Student)
- *The**River Ravi flows near Lahore. (Teacher)

26 Sentence Structure Error

In this category of errors, the place of verb, auxiliary verb is included. It was noted that sentence structure errors were very common in the writing of students.

- He *going was school**at that time. (Student)
- He *was going to school**at that time. (Teacher)
- He *story wrote an interesting story*. (Student)
- He *wrote an interesting story**. (Teacher)

27 Adjective Errors

Wrong use of adjective and wrong use of degrees of adjective are included in this category of errors. It was noted that the students have more problem in using the degrees of adjective (Positive, Comparative & superlative).

- That pizza tastes *more delicious**. (student)
- That pizza *taste delicious**. (Teacher)
- Ali *in the more intelligent**student in the class. (Student)
- Ali *is the most intelligent**student in the class. (Teacher)
- Ahmad is *the tallest than Ali**. (Student)
- Ahmad is *taller than Ali**. (Teacher)

28 Spelling Errors

In this category, errors of wrong spelling are included. It was found that the errors of wrong spelling are present in almost every line of writing.

- His father is *lieutenant**in the army. (Student)
- His father is *lieutenant**in the army. (Teacher)
- Pakistan is *a daveloping**country. (Student)
- Pakistan is *a developing**country. (Teacher)

29 Findings

The objectives of this study were to know the possible effect of direct and indirect corrective feedback on EFL learners having Urdu as a mother tongue. After collecting and analyzing the data by using two tools (Test, Questionnaire) for data collecting, the required objectives of this study were acquired. Tables 1 and 3 show the pre-test errors of EFL learners and tables 2 and 4 show the post-test errors of EFL learners. By comparing the errors of both tests (Pre & Post) of both groups (Control & Experimental), it was found that the direct corrective feedback is more useful and

beneficial for correcting the errors of EFL learners having Urdu as a mother tongue at graduation level as Hashemnezhad & Nejad (2011-2012) founded that direct feedback is more useful for error correction than indirect and mixed method of feedback.

30 Conclusion

With help of this research and ignoring the possible effect of uncontrolled variables, it was found that direct corrective feedback is more useful than indirect feedback. This study also finds some support from empirical studies as mentioned in the literature review. Firstly, error correction is helpful to create accuracy in students' writings is also proved by Ferris (1995); Lalande, (1982); Lee and Ridley (1999) & Kepner (1991). Supportive argument about the results that direct feedback is more helpful to correct the students errors also match from studies by (Carroll et al., 1992; Semke, 1984). Regarding the error categories and type of error treatment method, Carroll et al. (1992) and Fanselow (1977) investigations also prove the different correction method for different types of errors.

References

- Barbara B. Lockee, Kenneth R. Potter, Michael A. Evans, Steven M. Culver, (2011). Impacts of Different Types of Teacher Corrective Feedback in Reducing Grammatical Errors on ESL/EFL Students' Writing.
- Baleghizadeh, S. & Dadashi, M. (2011). The Effect of Direct and Indirect Corrective Feedback on Students' *Spelling Errors*, 13(1), 129-137.
- Beuningen, V. C. G., Jong, D. N. H., & Kuiken, F. (2008). The Effect of Direct and Indirect Corrective Feedback on L2 Learners' Written Accuracy. *ITL International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 279-296.
- Carroll, S., Swain, M., & Roberge, Y. (1992). The role of feedback in adult second language acquisition: Error correction and morphological generalizations. *Applied Psycholinguistics*, 13 (2), 173-198.
- Chandler, J. (2003). The efficacy of various kinds of error feedback for improvement in the accuracy and fluency of L2 student writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 12, 267-296.
- Darby, S. (2006). THE Effectiveness of Feedback on Energy Consumption, A Review for DEFRA Of the Literature on Metering, Billing & Direct Displays. *Environmental Institute*. Oxford University. 1-24.
- Erel, O. S. & Bulut, D. (2007). Error Treatment in L2 Writing: A Comparative Study of Direct & Indirect Coded Feedback in Turkish EFL Context. *Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi Sayı*, 22 (1), 397-415.
- Fanselow, J. F. (1977). The treatment of error in oral work. *Foreign Language Annuals*, 10, 583-593.
- Ferris, D.R. (1995). Student Reactions to Teacher Response in Multiple-Draft Composition Classrooms. *TESOL Quarterly*, 29, 33-53.
- Ghandi, M. & Maghsoudi, M. (2014). The Effect of Direct and Indirect Corrective Feedback on Iranian EFL Learners' *Spelling Errors*. *English Language Teaching*, 7(8).
- Hashemnezhad, H & Nejad, S.M (2011-2012). A Case for Direct and Indirect Feedback: The Other Side of Coin. *English Language Teaching*, 5(3), 6-7.
- Kepner, C. G. (1991). An experiment in the relationship of types of written feedback to the development of second language writing skills. *Modern Language Journal*, 75, 305-313.

- Lalande, J. F. (1982). Reducing composition errors: An experiment. *Modern Language Journal*, 66(2), 140-149.
- Lee, W. and Ridley, A. (1999) What implications does English globalization have for treatment of students errors, *RELC Journal*, 30(2), 18-37.
- Purnawarman, P. (2011). “Impacts of Different Types of Teacher Corrective Feedback in Reducing Grammatical Errors”. Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.
- Semke, H. (1984).The effects of the red pen. *Foreign Language Annals*, 17,195–202.
- Tufail, R., Kanwal, A. & Toor, S.B. (2015). Urdu Speaking EFL Students Problems in Learning English In Public and Private Schools of Punjab, Pakistan. *Bulletin of Business and Economics*, 4(1), 43-47.