Direct vs Indirect Written Corrective Feedback: An Action Research

Dolaylı veya Doğrudan Düzeltme Geribildirimi: Bir Eylem Araştırması

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Öz: Bu çalışmanın amacı, bir mühendislik fakültesinin İngilizce Hazırlık sınıfına devam etmekte olan 28 öğrenci için yabancı dilde yazma öğretiminde doğrudan veya dolaylı olarak sağlanan düzeltme geribildirimi türlerinden hangisinin daha faydalı olduğunun saptanmasıdır. Eylem araştırması şeklinde tasarlanan çalışmanın gözlem ve yansıtma aşamaları var olan düzeltme geribildirimi uygulamasının incelenmesi şeklinde gerçekleştirmiştir. Eylem aşamasında ise öğrenciler işbirlikçi bir yazma etkinliği için altı gruba bölünmüş, bu gruplardan üçüne doğrudan, üçüne ise dolaylı düzeltme geribildirimi sağlanmıştır. Değerlendirme aşaması için yarı yapılandırılmış öğretmen gözlemi, katılımcı tartışmalarının ses kaydı ve yansıtma sorularına verilen yanıtlar kullanılmıştır. Bulgular, her iki düzeltme geribildirimi türünün de katılımcılar için faydalı olduğunu göstermektedir. Ancak, dolaylı düzeltme geribildirimi uygulamasının aynı zamanda doğrudan düzeltme geribildirimi ihtiyacı doğurduğu göz önüne alındığında, bu tür düzeltme geribildiriminin sınıf içi kullanım için daha uygun olduğu görülmüştür.

Anahtar sözcükler: *Doğrudan Düzeltme Geribildirimi, Dolaylı Düzeltme Geribildirimi, Yabancı Dilde Yazma, Yazılı Düzeltme Geribildirimi.*

Abstract: The aim of the present study was to find out if direct or indirect written corrective feedback was more beneficial for a group of 28 students in the English Prep Year of an engineering department at a public university in Turkey. Utilizing an action research design, the observation and reflection phases of the study included the observation of the current written corrective feedback applications in the group. In the action phase, the students were divided into six groups for a collaborative writing task. Following the completion of the task, three groups were provided with direct written corrective feedback while the remaining three were given its indirect counterpart. Evaluation data was collected through semi-structured teacher observations, voice records of participant discussions and responses to guided reflection questions. The findings revealed that both types of written corrective feedback could be beneficial for the participants, however, indirect feedback was more suitable for classroom use since it also necessitated direct feedback for final drafts.

Keywords: *Direct Feedback, Indirect Feedback, L2 Writing, Written Corrective Feedback*

UZUN ÖZET

Gelişimi yabancı dil öğrenenlere hem akademik hem de iletişimsel anlamda katkıda bulunan yazma becerisi ve "iyi kurgulanmış bir yazılı metni" oluşturan bileşenler, araştırmacıların on yıllardır dikkatini çeken önemli konular arasında olmuştur. En genel şekliyle yazma, yararlı bir dil pratiği biçimi olmasının yanı sıra, bir yazarın fikirleri iletme şeklidir. Bununla birlikte, düşünce süreçleri yoluyla fikir oluşturmak ve bunları başarılı bir şekilde iletmek için anlaşılır cümlelere ve paragraflara ihtiyaç bulunmaktadır (Nunan, 2003). Başka bir deyişle, soyut düşüncelerin yapısal ve tutarlı bir biçimde kağıt üzerinde somut dil parçalarına dönüşümü yazıyı oluşturmaktadır (Brown, 2010). Yazma eyleminde yer alan süreçlere vurgu yapan Richards ve Schmidt (2010), yazmayı farklı yazma unsurları arasında ilişkiler kurarak ve iletişim stratejilerinden yararlanarak düzeltme ve gözden geçirme gibi süreçlerin sonucu olarak tanımlamaktadır. Yazının bilişsel yönlerine ek olarak, Tardy (2012) yazma eyleminin esasen sosyal uygulamaların sonucu olan ve yazarın dil arka planından da etkilenebilecek türler üretme eylemlerinden oluştuğunu savunmaktadır. İlgili literatürdeki tanımlara dayanarak, "iyi kurgulanmış bir

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yazılı metnin" sosyal bağlam unsurunu da dikkate alarak belirli bilişsel süreçleri takip eden fikirleri ilettiği söylenebilir.

Görevlere ve yazı ile ilgili aktivitelere ek olarak, öğrenenlerin yazılı ürünlerine düzeltme geribildirimi sağlanması da hem etkili hem de gerekli görülen yollardandır (Yamashita, 2017). Ellis (2009), yabancı dil öğrenenler için sağlanan düzeltme geribildirimini doğrudan / dolaylı, odaklı / odaksız, meta-dilibilimsel, yeniden biçimlendirme ve elektronik geri bildirim olarak sınıflandırmaktadır. Bu sınıflandırmada, doğrudan / dolaylı, düzeltme geribildiriminin açıklığına atıfta bulunur. Odaklı / odaksız kategorileri ise, belirli bir hata türünün veya olası tüm hataların düzeltilmesini ifade eder. Meta-dilbilimsel düzeltme geribildiriminde öğretmen, bir hatanın türü ile ilgili kesin bir düzeltme olmaksızın bilgi verir. Bir yabancı dilin yerel bir konuşmacısı, bir metnin hatalı kısımlarının düzeltmelerini sağladığında, yeniden biçimlendirme türü düzeltme geribildiriminden söz etmek mümkündür. Son olarak, elektronik düzeltme geribildirimi, öğrenen-yazar için sıkça ortaya çıkan hatalarla ilgili elektronik kaynakların sağlanmasıdır (Ellis, 2009). Bir öğrencinin belirli bir düzeltme geribildirimi türünden ne kadar fayda sağlayabileceği, analitik yetenek, inançlar, dil becerisi, tutumlar ve hedefler gibi belirli bireysel ve bağlamsal faktörlerden etkilenir. (Bitchener, 2012; Sheen, 2007; Storch & Wigglesworth, 2010) bu nedenle, en verimli geri bildirim türüne ilişkin bulguların kesin bir sonuç arz etmediği bilinmektedir (Park, Song ve Shin, 2016). Bu bağlamda, bu eylem araştırması çalışması, araştırma bağlamındaki mevcut doğrudan ve odaksız düzeltme geribildirimi uygulamasının dolaylı düzeltme geribildirimi türüne göre daha faydalı olup olmadığını tespit etmeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Yöntem
Eylem araştırması olarak tasarlanan çalışma, McNiff ve Whithead'in (2006) Eylem Araştırması Modeli kullanılarak gerçekleştirilmiştir. Bu modele göre eylem araştırması önceki uygulamaların gözlemi ve bu uygulamalarla ilgili paydaşların yapacağı yansıtmaların incelenmesi ile başlayıp, durumu daha iyiye götürecek bir eylemin uygulanması, değerlendirilmesi ve ihtiyaç halinde değiştirilerek geliştirilmesi aşamalarını içermektedir. Bu çalışmada, gözlem ve yansıtma aşaması, dersi veren öğretim elemanı tarafından, Hazırlık Sınıfı Dil Geliştirme dersinde öğrencilerin yazılı ödevleri için sağlanan doğrudan ve odaklanmamış düzeltme geribildiriminin bazı öğrenciler tarafından da eleştirilmesi ile başlamış, buna bağlı olarak bir eylem planı oluşturulmuştur.

Çalışma kapsamında düzeltme geribildirimi uygulamasının iyileştirilmesi için yapılması planlanan eylem, dolaylı geri bildirimin doğrudan geri bildirime kıyasla öğrenciler ve kurs eğitmeni için daha faydalı olup olmadığını tespit etmek amacıyla tasarlanmıştır. Bu eylem araştırmasının amaçları doğrultusunda, zaman bakımından var olan kısıtlamalar nedeniyle meta-dilbilimsel kodlar olmadan dolaylı düzeltme geribildirimi sağlanması tercih edilmiştir. Bu bağlamda, öğrenciler doğrudan düzeltme geribildirimi grubu ve dolaylı düzeltme geribildirimi grubu olarak iki gruba ayrılmıştır. Bununla birlikte, öğrenci grubu oldukça kalabalık olduğu için, uygulamayı daha verimli hale getirmek ve altı grup üretmek üzere her grup dört veya beş öğrenciden oluşan üç gruba ayrılmıştır. Öncelikle tüm gruplara birer biyografi metni yazmaları talimatı verilmiştir. Gruplardan üçüne doğrudan ve odaksız düzeltme geribildirimi verilirken, geri kalan üç gruba dolaylı ve odaklı düzeltme geribildirimi verilmiştir. Daha sonra, her gruptan düzeltme geribildiriminin içeriğini tartışması ve gerekli düzeltmeleri yapması istenmiştir. Düzeltmenin ardından, her doğrudan düzeltme geribildirimi grubundan bir öğrenci, dolaylı düzeltme geribildirimi grubundan bir öğrenciyle, geribildirimin sağlanmasını izleyen grup tartışmasına ilişkin deneyimleri paylaşmak üzere, yer değiştirmiştir. Bu noktada araştırmacılar, öğrencilerin kendilerine sağlanmayan "diğer" geribildirim türüne ilişkin farkındalıklarını artırmayı amaçlamıştır.

Değerlendirme aşaması ise eylem sırasında ve sonrasında gerçekleştirilmiştir. Eylem sırasında araştırmacılar, düzeltme geribildiriminin tartışılması için her grubun harcadığı zamana ve her grubun ne kadar yoğun göründüğüne ilişkin yarı yapılandırılmış gözlem notları alarak veri toplamıştır. Gözlemler ayrıca tartışma sırasında her grubun ses kayıtları ile desteklenmiştir. Eylemden sonra ise, öğrencilerden ayrıca beş yansıtma sorusuna yanıt vermeleri istenmiştir. Nitel bir yapıya sahip olan veriler içerik analizi yönemiyle incelenmiştir. Ses kayıtlarında ise iletişimsel hamleler analiz edilmiştir.

Bulgular
Bulgular, dolaylı düzeltme geribildirimi gruplarının, doğrudan düzeltme geribildirimi gruplarına kıyasla daha uzun süre ve daha yoğun çalıştıklarını göstermiştir. Ancak öğretmen gözlemleri,

dolaylı düzeltme geribildirimi gruplarının daha sık öğretmen desteğine ihtiyaç duyduğunu, çünkü bu gruplardaki katılımcıların kendi düzeltmelerinden emin olmadıklarını ortaya koymuştur. Grup içi düzeltme geribildirimi tartışmalarının ses kayıtları, dolaylı düzeltme geribildirimi grubunun doğrudan düzeltme geribildirimi grubundan daha yoğun bir iletişim ve tartışma içerisinde yer aldığını, dolaylı düzeltme geribildirimi alan gruplarda alternatif düzeltme fikirlerinin sunulduğunu ve bunların tek tek değerlendirdiğini göstermiştir. Yansıtma sorularına verilen cevaplarda ise, dolaylı düzeltme geribildirimi almanın ve tartışmanın analitik yapısının katılımcılar tarafından övgüyle karşılandığı, ancak düzeltmelerden sonra öğretmen desteğine ihtiyaç duyulduğundan ve katılımcılar yapılan düzeltmelerden emin olmadıklarından aynı gruplar tarafından eleştirildiği görülmüştür. Öte yandan, doğrudan düzeltme geribildiriminin açık niteliği, bu gruplardaki katılımcılar tarafından övgüyle karşılanırken, pasif olarak doğrudan düzeltme geribildirimi alınması eleştirilmiştir. Bu farklılıklara rağmen, katılımcılar hem doğrudan hem de dolaylı düzeltme geribildirimi gruplarında benzer öğrenme kazanımları ve gelecek planları bildirmişlerdir.

Tartışma ve Sonuçlar

Sonuç olarak, hem doğrudan hem de dolaylı düzeltme geribildiriminin, nispeten düşük seviyelerde İngilizce öğrenen öğrenciler tarafından faydalı olarak algılandığı ve alınan düzeltme geribildiriminin türüne bakılmaksızın öğrendiklerinin aynı olduğu görülmüştür. Bununla birlikte, doğrudan düzeltme geribildirimi, öğrencilerin düzeltmeler konusunda daha güvende hissetmelerini sağlarken, dolaylı geri bildirimlerin öğrenmenin gerçekleşmesi bakımından için daha güçlü olabileceği görülmektedir. Bu bağlamda, çalışmanın bulgularından çıkarılabilecek bir sonuç, her iki düzeltme geribildirimi türünün de olumlu algılanmasından dolayı, bu çalışmadaki katılımcılara benzeyen gruplarla her iki düzeltme geribildirimi türünün de kullanılabileceğidir. Bununla birlikte, dolaylı düzeltme geribildirimi, sınıf içi kullanım için doğrudan düzeltme geribildiriminden daha etkili görünmektedir çünkü dolaylı düzeltme geribildirimi alırken yapılan düzeltmeler, bu çalışmada olduğu gibi kapsamlı grup tartışmalarından oluşan bir etkinlik olarak değerlendirilmelidir. Dolaylı düzeltme geribildiriminin öğretmenler tarafından tercih edilmesi durumunda, öğretmen tarafından doğrudan düzeltme geribildirimi sağlanması da gerekli görünmektedir çünkü öğretmenden gelen bir düzeltme geribildiriminin olmaması öğrencilerin metinleriyle ilgili çözemedikleri problemler noktasında herhangi bir yardım almamaları anlamına gelmektedir. Bu sorunlar öğretmen tarafından çözülmediği takdirde, normalden daha düşük algılanan yazma performansı yazma kaygısını artırabilir.

1. INTRODUCTION

A crucial productive language skill whose development contributes to L2 learners in both academic and communicative terms, what constitutes 'good writing' has attracted researchers' attention for decades. In its most general form, writing is the way a writer communicates ideas along with being a beneficial form of language practice. However, in order to invent ideas through thinking processes and communicate them successfully, their skilful arrangement into comprehensible sentences and paragraphs is a prerequisite (Nunan, 2003). In other words, an artful transformation of abstract thoughts into concrete pieces of language on paper in a structured and coherent manner is what constitutes writing (Brown, 2010). Putting more emphasis on the processes involved in the act of writing, Richards and Schmidt (2010) define writing as the outcome of processes such as planning, drafting, reviewing and performing revisions through establishing relationships among different elements of writing, making use of communication strategies and the writer's discourse competence (Schmitt, 2010). In addition, the cognitive aspects of the writing, Tardy (2012) argues that the act of writing is primarily constituted by acts of producing genres, which are inherently results of social practices and might also be affected by the language background of writer. Based on the definitions in the relevant literature, it can be stated that good writing communicates ideas following certain cognitive processes, also taking into account the element of social context.

Naturally, to produce a given genre by transforming ideas into texts after planning, transcribing and revising requires an ability to do so, to define which the common practice is to utilize the constructs of complexity (both lexical and syntactic), accuracy and fluency (Pallotti, 2009). According to Bonzo (2008), syntactic complexity is marked by the existence of clauses with noncanonical word order while lexical complexity refers to the ratio of complex words in a text. The second construct which forms the ability to write, accuracy, refers to being devoid of errors when language is used for communication purposes orally or in written form (Skehan, 2009). Lastly, fluency in writing refers to the process of

text production that is error-free, swift and comfortable on behalf of the writer, allowing for the allocation of cognitive resources to meaning rather than form (Kim, Gatlin, Al Otaiba, & Wanzek, 2017). In other words, the production of a text successfully requires the writer to achieve a sufficient level of complexity, accuracy and fluency.

In order to help L2 learners reach the desired levels in the aforementioned constructs, the product, process, genre and process-genre approaches have been proposed in the literature so far. Based on the behaviourist learning technique of imitation, the product approach places emphasis on the final outcome, that is, the written text itself and the structural features of the text, aiming to improve L2 writing proficiency (Badger & White, 2000). Adopting a cognitive perspective, the process approach to teaching L2 writing pays importance to the processes of planning, transcribing and reviewing a text that is written for authentic audiences through individual reflection and collaboration (Graham & Sandmel, 2011). According to Rijlaarsdam and Van den Bergh (2006), the cognitive activities that are undergone during these processes account for 80% of text quality, confirming the benefits of the process writing approach. The social aspect of the concept of text is also included in the teaching of L2 writing with the introduction of the genre approach, which adopts a systemic-functional stance, pointing at the embeddedness of forms and functions within contexts (Hyland, 2007). The genre approach to the teaching of writing proposes a sequence of teaching and learning as modelling, deconstruction (rhetorical analysis), joint construction and independent construction which should follow one another, helping learners discover how rhetorical moves are performed by particular discourse communities (Bruce, 2008; Rose & Martin, 2012). The last approach that has been proposed for the teaching of L2 writing is the process-genre approach, which is essentially a mixture of both approaches in order to make full use of the cognitive aspect of the process approach and the social aspect of the genre approach (Badger & White, 2000). Typically, the teaching/learning sequence in the process-genre approach follows a pattern of identifying the purpose of communication, modelling, analysis, first draft, revision and final draft (Leki, Cumming & Silva, 2008). In conclusion, the teaching of L2 writing can be said to have followed a developmental pattern from behaviourism to social constructivism as the underlying learning theories as understood by the major approaches adopted by researchers and practitioners.

As have been discussed so far, complexity, accuracy and fluency appear to be the aims of writing development and certain approaches have tried to achieve these aims as documented in the relevant literature. One commonality of every single approach, however, is the existence written tasks assigned to learners through the process of teaching. Tasks seem to be crucial in the gaining of writing ability since repetition of the same skill, in this case, writing, through completing tasks is considered to have positive effects on the working memory such as alleviating the cognitive load by causing automaticity in the production of language items, thus increasing syntactic variety and facilitating an improved focus on form (Ellis, 2015; Larsen-Freeman, 2012). Written task analysis is also known to help learners have a better understanding of purpose, authorship and form (Philippakos, 2018). When treated collaboratively, written tasks provide the learners with an opportunity to be engaged in task-related dialogue, fostering the co-construction of the scaffold required for the extension of the learners' Zone of Proximal Development (Stortch, 2018). Lastly, including pre-writing, role-playing, brainstorming or graphical organization tasks in relation to writing improve the processes involved in the generation of ideas, which, in turn, increases the quality of writing (Lee & Tan, 2010; Voon, 2010).

In addition to the tasks and writing-related activities available through tasks, the provision of written corrective feedback (WCF) is also among the common ways that are considered both effective and necessary (Yamashita, 2017). Ellis (2009) categorizes WCF typically provided for learners of L2 as direct/indirect, focused/unfocused, metalinguistic, reformulation and electronic feedback. In this categorization, direct/indirect refers to the explicitness of WCF and focused/unfocused dichotomy denotes the treatment of a particular type of error or all errors possible. In metalinguistic WCF, the teacher typically provides information regarding the nature of an error without explicit correction. Reformulation type of feedback occurs when a native speaker of the L2 provides native-like corrections of the erroneous parts of a text and lastly, electronic feedback is the provision of electronic sources for the learner-writer regarding frequently occurring errors (Ellis, 2009). How much a learner-writer might benefit from a particular type of feedback is known be influenced by certain individual and contextual factors such as analytic ability, beliefs, language aptitude, attitudes and goals (Bitchener, 2012; Sheen, 2007; Storch & Wigglesworth, 2010), therefore, the findings with respect to the most efficient type of feedback are known to be inconclusive (Park, Song, & Shin, 2016).

Within the Turkish undergraduate context, it is possible to come across with studies investigating the effects of different types of feedback on L2 writing performance with predominantly descriptive designs and varying results. In a quasi-experimental design, which is rather few in number, Bostancı and Şengül (2018) find that collaboration between students and course instruction in the provision of feedback produces more successful results in comparison to peer feedback and teacher feedback. Similarly, Yangın Ekşi (2012) concludes that learners experience positive changes in their written products when they receive peer feedback during the composing process and teacher feedback for the final draft. In other quasi-experimental designs, Ataman and Mirici (2017) as well as Çınar (2017) reveal that direct feedback results in positive changes in the quality of the texts produced by undergraduate students and this particular type of feedback is favoured by them if it has explanatory comments. In their descriptive studies aiming to unravel learner preferences with respect to written corrective feedback, Atmaca (2016), Bozkurt and Çamlıbel Acar (2017) and Üstünbaş and Çimen (2016) identify direct feedback as the most preferred type of feedback by undergraduate students. However, it should also be noted that these descriptive studies are based on cross-sectional accounts of learner opinions and the learners, in fact, might have never received indirect feedback and thus, they may be unaware of the potential benefits of it.

Considering the relevant literature, it can be seen that the act of writing in an L2 includes behavioral, cognitive and social processes which are commonly and practically assessed through complexity, accuracy and fluency, for whose improvement certain approaches have been developed along with techniques such as providing different kinds of WCF, task analysis, collaborative writing activities or pre-writing tasks. In this respect, this action research study aims to find out if the current WCF practice in the context of the research, which falls within the categories of direct and unfocused feedback in Ellis's (2009) terms, is more beneficial than its indirect counterpart according to the learners.

1.1. Context, Purpose and Research Question

The context of the action research was the School of Foreign Languages, Trakya University, Turkey, where a group of engineering students took their English preparatory year since their departments were 30% English-medium instruction and thus all students were expected to have a proficiency level of B1 or above according to the Common European Framework for Reference. The study group consisted of 30 students who had failed the B1 exemption exam in the beginning of 2018-2019 academic year. The groups had to take 26 hours of English language instruction every week for 28 weeks in one year which aimed to carry them to the level of B1 and above. In their program, 16 hours per week were allocated for the main course, in which they followed two coursebooks in the A2 and B1 levels respectively. 6 hours per week were allocated for a language development course, which included an A2 level coursebook supported by additional writing activities. In the remaining 4 hours per week, the students received grammar instruction only.

The study took place in the 6-hour language development course as it was the one that involved the most extensive amount of writing instruction. The course instructor was one of the researchers in the present study and he had a doctoral degree in English Language Teaching with a specialty in L2 writing (Uzun, 2019). The second researcher also had error analysis within her field of research (Köksal & Çınar, 2012; Köksal, 2009; Köksal, 2005). Throughout the course, the students typically received an in-class writing task according to the content of the week and the texts were collected by the teacher for WCF provision. Within a week after each writing task, the course instructor provided direct and unfocused WCF to the students and gave the marked texts back for investigation. After the texts were investigated by the students, the questions they might have had would be answered.

By the time the research was conducted, several students had informally reported that they had not paid very much attention to the WCF or they had forgotten the details of it shortly after investigating it. For this reason, the aim of this study was to find out if the students in the study group could make better use of WCF when provided implicitly and when the students were given a chance to discuss the content of WCF collaboratively. For this reason, the following action research question was formulated:

RQ1. Do students perceive WCF to be more useful when provided indirectly and they are given a chance to discuss its content in groups?

2. METHODOLOGY

The study was designed as an action research. Action research is the type of research that is performed by practitioners in way that is concerned with improving learning as well as cultural and social transformation in a value-driven and collaborative manner by being engaged in critical questioning and deconstruction (McNiff, 2016). Also referred to as real-world research (Robson, 2011) that is both critical and pragmatic (Johansson & Lindhult, 2008), action research is considered to make it possible for practitioners to partake in critical debate, transformative action and the process of understanding and changing practices (Kemmis, McTaggardt, & Nixon, 2014). Since this study aimed to improve learning by helping students to make better use of WCF, action research was considered suitable for the purposes of the study.

The participants of the study were 28 students of engineering in Trakya University, Turkey, who were taking their English preparatory year in the School of Foreign Languages of the same university at the time of the research. According to the regulations in effect in the university, Mechanical and Electrics-Electronics Engineering departments teach 30% of their courses in English language. For this reason, the students who are admitted to these departments need to provide proof of B1-level English according to the Common European Framework for Reference, or pass a B1 exemption exam in the beginning of their studies. Those who cannot provide proof or pass the exemption exam are required to complete an English preparatory year successfully, which includes 26 hours of English for 28 weeks. The students who have to take the preparatory year are placed in groups according to their exemption exam score and the study was conducted with the group whose scores were the third highest among four groups. 24 students in the group were male and 4 were female. The ages of the students within the group ranged from 18 to 26 with an average of 19.

The following action research model by McNiff and Whithead (2006) was chosen for the study:
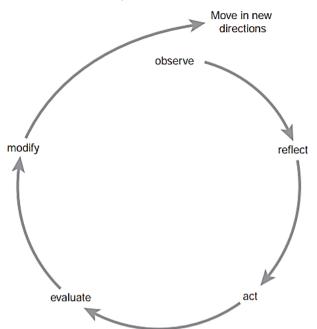

Figure 1. McNiff and Whithead's (2006, p. 9) Action Research Model

As seen in Figure 1, McNiff and Whithead's (2006, p. 9) Action Research Model proposes that the research begin with the observation of and reflection on the previous practices and looking for ways to make them better. In this study, the observation and reflection phases were initiated by the course instructor as the direct and unfocused WCF provided for the written assignments of the students in the language development course was deemed open to improvement. Due to the fact that the provision of direct and unfocused WCF was also criticized by some of the student, action was decided to be taken.

The action designed to be taken to improve the WCF practice within the context of the study was designed with the purpose of finding out if indirect feedback (IF) was regarded more beneficial for the students as well as the course instructor in comparison to direct feedback (DF). However, considering Storch's (2018) suggestion that collaboration allows for the co-construction of the scaffold required to

improve the learning experience, a group discussion component was planned to be integrated with the provision of indirect feedback. According to Frear and Chiu (2015), WCF in its indirect form can be provided with metalinguistic codes upon the indication of an error (e.g. 'WO' for a word order error) or without such codes, only by indicating the location of an error through underlining, circling or using a cursor (^) to indicate a missing component/structure. For the purposes of this action research, provision of indirect feedback without metalinguistic codes was preferred due to time constraints since providing metalinguistic codes as feedback would also necessitate familiarizing the participants with possible codes. In this respect, the students were divided into two groups as direct feedback group (the previous practice – indicating errors and their corrected versions) and the indirect feedback group (indicating errors without metalinguistic codes). Nevertheless, since the group was rather crowded, each group was also divided into three groups of five students to make the implementation more efficient, producing six groups altogether. Initially, all students were given a collaborative writing task, resulting in one text per group. Then, three of the groups were given direct and unfocused WCF while the remaining three were provided with indirect and unfocused WCF. Following the provision of WCF, each group was asked to discuss the content of WCF and identify the required corrections in the case of the indirect WCF group. After this, a student from each direct WCF group was swapped with a student from each indirect WCF group to share experiences regarding the group discussion which followed the provision of WCF. At this point, the researchers aimed to raise students' awareness in regards to the 'other' type of WCF which was not provided to them.

The evaluation phase of the action research model was initiated during and after the action. During the action, the researchers collected data by taking semi-structured observation notes with respect to the time spent by each group on the discussion of the WCF and how intensively each group seemed to work. The observations were also backed by voice-records of each group during the discussion. After the action, the students were also asked to respond to five guided reflection questions which aimed to reveal the processes, positives, negatives, perceived learning gains and plans regarding the next writing assignment, prepared in accordance with the "Four-stage Model for Guiding Students' Reflection" (Chau & Cheng, 2010, p. 20). Being all qualitative in nature, the data was analysed using conceptual and sequential coding. The results of the analyses were also used to plan possible modifications in the action phase as suggested by McNiff and Whithead (2006).

3. FINDINGS

For the evaluation of the effects of direct and indirect feedback groups, the teacher took observation notes after the provision of feedback to each group and attempted to see what the participants in both groups did with their feedback. The findings obtained from the observation notes were presented below in Table 1.

Table 1. Teacher's Observation Notes

Focal Point	DF Groups	IF Groups
Time Spent	1 - 3 Mins	4 - 10 Mins
Intensiveness	Slightly Intensive Work	Heavily Intensive Work
	Discussion of Marked Mistakes	Discussion of Marked Mistakes
		Discussion of Possible Corrections
	Trying to Understand Sources of Mistakes	
		Trying to Understand Sources of Mistakes
		Google Searches for Correct Forms
Efficiency	Need Little Teacher Support	Not Sure if a Correction is Accurate
		Need Teacher Support at the End

As seen in the Table 1, the indirect feedback groups spent 4-10 minutes working on their feedback while the direct feedback groups worked on their feedback between 1 and 3 minutes. In terms of intensiveness, the direct feedback group was observed to be engaged in slightly intensive work, discussing marked mistakes and trying to understand their sources. On the other hand, the indirect feedback group was observed to be engaged in heavily intensive work, discussing marked mistakes and their possible corrections as well as trying to understand the sources of the mistakes and trying to find

correct forms using Google. Lastly, the direct feedback groups were seen to need only a little teacher support while the indirect feedback groups were seen to need more teacher support at the end of the discussion since the participants in those groups were not sure if a particular correction was accurate or not. In brief, indirect feedback appeared to have engaged participants in more intensive work than direct feedback, however, the participants who received indirect feedback were not observed to be confident with their corrections without teacher support.

The discussion sessions attended by the participants were also voice-recorded to see the content of communication they were involved in during those sessions. The findings obtained from the voice records were tabulated below in Table 2.

Table 2. Communicative Moves in the Voice Records (N = 28)

Communicative Move	Mentions in DF Group	Mentions in IF Group
Suggesting a Possible Correction	0	83
Pointing at a Mistake	36	52
Asking for Peer Support	8	41
Confirming the Previous Speaker	17	35
Providing Peer Support	0	21
Refusing a Correction Suggestion	0	21
Justifying a Suggestion Refusal	0	15
Justifying a Correction Suggestion	0	10
Evaluating a Possible Correction	2	7
Identifying the Possible Source of a Mistake	21	7
Skip Feedback Item to Ask for Teacher Support Later	2	3
Evaluating the Feedback	14	2
Comparing Direct and Indirect Feedback	0	1
Denouncing Feedback	2	1
Praising Feedback	4	1
Refusing the Presence of a Mistake	1	1
Seeking Group Support to Ask for Teacher Support	3	0
TOTAL	110	301

As given in Table 2, the communicative moves performed by the participants in direct and indirect feedback groups appear to be quite different with 301 total communicative moves by the indirect feedback groups and 110 communicative moves by the direct feedback groups. Among those, suggesting a possible correction, positing at a mistake and asking for peer support were the most common moves performed by the participants in the indirect feedback groups. On the other hand, pointing at a mistake, identifying the possible source of a mistake and confirming the previous speaker were the common moves performed by the participants in the direct feedback groups. It was also seen that suggesting a possible correction, providing peer support, refusing a correction suggestion, justifying a suggestion refusal, justifying a correction suggestion and comparing direct and indirect feedback as communicative moves were performed only by the participants in the indirect feedback groups. Seeking group support to ask for teacher support was the only communicative move performed solely by the direct feedback groups. Apparently, indirect feedback had the participants be engaged in lengthier and livelier discussion sessions, where they had to present suggestions, justify them and accept/refuse them, than direct feedback, which had the participants identify the source a given mistake and proceed to the next one only.

The last phase of the research was to ask the participants reflect on their experiences in terms of the processes, positives, negatives, learning items and plans for the next task. The processes perceived by the participants to have been undergone during the feedback discussion sessions were provided below in Table 3.

Table 3. Perceived Processes Undergone (N = 28)

Topics	Mentions in DF Group	Mentions in IF Group
Discuss Mistakes with Group	6	13
Ask for Teacher Support	1	1
Investigate the Feedback	3	0
Listen to the Others Discussing Feedback	1	0
Review the Mistakes as Group	6	0
TOTAL	17	14

Analysis of the responses to the first reflection question indicated different patterns of perceived processes in direct and indirect feedback groups. The only processes reported by the indirect feedback groups were discussing mistakes with the group and asking for teacher support. However, discussing mistakes with the group, reviewing mistakes as the group and investigating the feedback were reported by the participants in the direct feedback groups as the common processes undergone during the feedback discussion sessions. One participant in one of the indirect feedback groups expressed the group discussion of mistakes as "*We discussed as the whole group and tried to correct our mistakes.*", signalling a collaborative attempt to reach an accurate correction. The same topic was mentioned by a participant in one of the direct feedback groups as "*We discussed our mistakes corrected by the teacher.*", implying that the group attempted to understand the corrections given by the teacher. In this respect, it can be said that the process patterns during the feedback discussion sessions were perceived differently by the participants in different feedback groups.

The second reflection question attempted to reveal which issues were perceived positively by the participants in the reception and discussion of feedback. The results were given below in Table 4.

Table 4. Positive Issues as Perceived by the Participants (N = 28)

Topics	Mentions in DF Group	Mentions in IF Group
Pushed towards Analytical Thinking	0	7
Self-Correction of Mistakes	0	5
More Memorable than Explicit Feedback	0	1
Error Correction by Groupwork	1	0
Explicitness of Feedback	3	0
Learned about Feedback Techniques	1	0
Realizing Errors	11	0
TOTAL	16	13

The issues that were perceived positively by the participants were seen to be fundamentally different in the direct and indirect feedback groups as none of the topics mentioned for this question overlapped in both groups. The positive issues mentioned by the participants in the indirect feedback groups were seen to be being pushed towards analytical thinking, self-correction of mistakes and the more memorable nature of the activity. One participant in one of the indirect feedback groups praised the analytical thinking motivation that comes as a result of indirect feedback by saying "*Since the mistakes were only marked, not corrected, it made us look for [possible] corrections more in-depth and properly*". On the other hand, realizing errors, explicitness of direct feedback, learning about different types of feedback and utilizing groupwork for error correction was mentioned as the positive issues by the participants in the direct feedback groups. Comparing direct and indirect feedback, one participant in one of the direct feedback groups commented positively on direct feedback by expressing "*As a positive, I think it was better that we saw our mistakes directly. I would find it more difficult and confusing to find my mistakes in the other group*". In brief, the second reflection question showed that there was no similarity in the issues found positive by the participants in different feedback groups.

The third reflection question asked the participants to comment on the negative issues experienced during the activity. The results were given below in Table 5.

Table 5. Negative Issues as Perceived by the Participants (N = 28)

Topics	Mentions in DF Group	Mentions in IF Group
No Negatives	8	6
Need Teacher Support after Correction	0	5
Failure to See What is Wrong	2	2
Insufficient Activity	1	0
Passive Reception of Corrections	3	0
Timing of the Activity	1	0
TOTAL	15	13

As seen in Table 5, the negative issues perceived by the participants differed largely according to the type of feedback received directly or indirectly. For the indirect feedback groups, the most frequently mentioned negative issue was the need for teacher support after completing the corrections. One participant from the indirect feedback groups criticizes this by saying "*If we cannot have the teacher check our corrections, then it's bad because then we learn wrong things which we believe are right.*", indicating the risk of coming to inaccurate conclusions during corrections unless the teacher is there for a final check. The most commonly mentioned negative issue by the participants in the direct feedback group was the passive reception of corrections, which was mentioned by a participant as "*We don't really correct the mistaken parts. We just see the corrections*". In short, the major drawback of indirect feedback was reported to be needing a teacher to check corrections and that of direct feedback was mentioned as the passive reception of corrections.

The fourth reflection question asked the participants what they learned as a result of receiving feedback. The results were presented below in Table 6.

Table 6. Learning Gains as Perceived by the Participants (N = 28)

Topics	Mentions in DF Group	Mentions in IF Group
Realized Mistakes	8	6
How to Correct my Mistakes	3	4
Brainstorming on Possible Mistakes	0	2
How to Write a Biography	0	1
How to Write more Carefully	1	0
Preference for Self-Correction	1	0
Realized Own Lack of Grammatical Knowledge	1	0
Text Length Increases Mistakes	1	0
TOTALS	15	13

Learning gains as perceived by the participants as a result of receiving feedback were not seen to be fundamentally different in the direct and indirect feedback groups. In both groups, the most frequently mentioned learning gains were realizing mistakes and learning how to correct them. However, brainstorming on possible mistakes and how to write a biography was mentioned only by a few participants in the indirect feedback groups. On the other hand, learning how to write more carefully, a preference for self-correction (indirect feedback), realizing one's lack of grammatical knowledge and that text length increases the number of mistakes were mentioned only by the participants in the direct feedback groups.

The last reflection question aimed to reveal the plans of the participants related to the next writing task. The results were given below in Table 7.

Table 7. Plans of the Participants at the End of the Feedback Session (N = 28)

Topics	Mentions in DF Group	Mentions in IF Group
Avoid Mistakes	5	6
Write More Carefully	7	4
Practice Writing more Often	0	2
Learn English	0	1
Ask for Implicit Feedback	1	0
Avoid Rushing to Complete Task	1	0
Learn Grammar Better	1	0
TOTAL	15	13

When asked what their plans were for the next written assignment, the majority of the participants in both groups responded similarly and the most frequently mentioned topics in this question for both groups were avoiding mistakes and writing more carefully. Nevertheless, practicing writing more often and learning English were mentioned only by the participants in the indirect feedback groups and asking for implicit feedback, avoiding rushing to complete the task and learning grammar better were mentioned only by the participants in the direct feedback groups. In conclusion, the plans of the participants for the next writing assignment were not found to be different in direct and indirect feedback groups.

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This study aimed to find out if direct or indirect feedback was perceived to be more beneficial for a group of English Prep School students in Turkey. Utilizing an action research design, the study made use of semi-structured observation notes, voice records of group feedback discussions and responses of the participants to guided reflection questions. The findings indicated that the teacher observed the indirect feedback groups to work more intensively in a longer period of time in comparison to the direct feedback groups. However, teacher observations also revealed that the indirect feedback groups required more frequent teacher support since the participants in those groups did not feel confident of their own corrections. Voice records of group feedback discussions showed that the indirect feedback group was involved in more intensive communication and discussion than the direct feedback group, suggesting numerous alternative corrections and evaluating them one by one unlike the direct feedback groups. In the responses to the guided reflection questions, it was seen that the analytical nature of receiving and discussing indirect feedback was praised by the participants, however, needing teacher support after corrections and being unsure of the corrections made were denounced by the same participants. On the other hand, the explicit nature of direct feedback was praised by the participants in those groups while passively receiving direct feedback was criticized. Despite these differences, similar learning gains and future plans were reported by the participants in both direct and indirect feedback groups.

The findings appeared to be in line with Bostancı and Şengül (2018) in that both direct and indirect feedback groups were encouraged to collaborate within each other and thus, groups of both feedback types may have benefitted from collaboration to a similar extent, considering the positive effect of collaboration on the internalization of feedback. The learning gains reported by the participants, which were essentially similar in all groups, can also be interpreted to be confirmative of the positive effect of collaboration on the internalization of feedback. The findings of the study were also parallel to those of Yangın Ekşi (2012), who concluded that positive effects could be observed through engaging learners in peer feedback during the composing of a text and providing teacher feedback for final drafts. Considering that the findings of the present study indicated that the experience

of working on the feedback was positive for both direct and indirect groups, it could be said that the peer feedback received in the group discussions and the teacher feedback, either direct or indirect, for each final draft was evaluated to be generally positive by the participants. Nonetheless, the findings contradicted those of Atmaca (2016), Bozkurt and Çamlıbel Acar (2017) and Üstübaş and Çimen's (2016) findings in that even though they identified direct feedback as the most preferred type of feedback by undergraduate students in Turkey, the findings of the present study revealed both direct and indirect feedback types were predominantly perceived positively, resulting in similar perceived learning gains and future plans despite the differences in the processes undergone during working on the feedback.

The findings of the study also showed that performing written correction by means of indirect feedback is much more complex than receiving and reviewing direct feedback. While dealing with indirect feedback, learners were observed to try out possible corrections, present them for evaluation by their peers and accept or reject other's correction suggestions, which took much longer time than reviewing direct feedback. In this respect, while indirect feedback seems to be more cognitively demanding than its direct counterpart, it also provides much more opportunities for learners to extend their Zone of Proximal Development through scaffolding that is realized by numerous instances of discussion and peer feedback. As also requested by the participants of this study and Yangın Ekşi (2012), providing teacher feedback for the final draft may extend the Zone of Proximal Development even further, also helping them receive a final feedback for their corrections so that they could check if they were sufficiently accurate or not.

As a conclusion, it appears that both direct and indirect feedback are perceived to be beneficial by learners who learn English at relatively lower levels and what they learn is reportedly the same regardless of the type of feedback that is received. However, it is also seen that while direct feedback may be making learners feel more secure regarding the corrections, indirect feedback may be more suitable for the extension of the Zone of Proximal Development through scaffolding. In this respect, an implication that can be drawn from the findings of the study is that both feedback types can be used with groups similar to the participants in the present study since both types of feedback are perceived positively. However, indirect feedback seems to be more efficient than direct feedback for classroom use since making corrections upon receiving indirect feedback can be used as an activity by itself, consisting of extensive group discussions as in the present study. In the case that indirect feedback is preferred by teachers, provision of direct feedback by the teacher for the final drafts also seems to be necessary because the absence of such feedback from the teacher may leave learners with unresolved issues related to their text. If those issues are not resolved by the teacher, the uncertainty with respect to the corrections made may lead to a loss of writing self-efficacy and increase writing anxiety, resulting in poorer-than-usual writing performance.

It should also be kept in mind that the study is limited to its participants, who were students of engineering in their English preparatory year and they were considered to be of low proficiency levels. For this reason, the implication that direct teacher feedback after indirect feedback is necessary may be invalid for upper-intermediate or advanced learners of English, who would be expected to be more autonomous in their learning. Further studies might attempt to identify ways to eliminate the sense of insecurity in the absence of direct teacher feedback among low-proficiency learners.

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