Let Them Toil to Learn: Implicit Feedback, Self-correction and Performance in EFL Writing

Salameh S. Mahmoud

Faculty of Engineering, King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah, KSA

Khaled K. Oraby

English Language Institute, King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah, KSA

Abstract—This study investigates the effectiveness of implicit feedback by comparing the learning outcomes of explicit correction and implicit error feedback in EFL writing. A comp-form (Wiliams, 1990) was adapted to give the students a chance to find their mistakes and correct them. (See appendices 1&2) Sixty foundation year- engineering students were given a pretest and a posttest before and after the treatment. Self correction and the common mistakes were also examined. The "t" test analysis results were in favor of the experimental groups, but statistically significant only for high achievers. Self- correction and minimizing the number of errors were apparent for both experimental groups but in favor of high achievers. The findings also showed the common mistakes FYES made in their EFL writing. The study emphasized the importance of engaging students in metacognitive teaching and the right choice of feedback for the right level of students.

Index Terms—FYES, EFL, comp form, KAU, explicit correction, implicit feedback

I. INTRODUCTION

One of the main challenges for teachers of English while teaching EFL or ESL writing is direct error correction. (Ferris, 2002; Mantello, 1997 cited in Lee, 2012). It is not only time consuming, but also it doesn't get the results teachers are always dreaming of. These teachers' main concern and academic institutions' ultimate goal is to have an independent learner who can discover his own mistakes and correct them or even be aware of the mistakes and avoid doing them (Xiao, 2008; Lv & Chen, 2010). Furthermore, the danger of over-correcting is that students will lose motivation and their confidence may even be destroyed by correcting every single mistake (Lee, 2012). Indirect error feedback and self correction are expected to help students avoid at least the mistakes they correct over a certain period of training. "Feedback or no feedback" has always been present in the literature about students' errors in writing. The exchanges between Truscott (1996) and Ferris (1999) cited in (Erel and Bulut (2007)) are good examples. Truscott believes that there is no evidence that error correction helps student writers improve the accuracy of their writing; on the contrary, it diverts time and energy away from real practice in writing. On the other hand, Ferris pointed out that error correction can help some students if selective, prioritized and clear. The controversy ends with a compromise that attention should be given to investigating which method, technique, or approach to error correction is shorter and more effective.

Questions of the Study

1. Is there any statistically significant effect of implicit feedback on KAU FYES achievement in EFL writing?
2. Do implicit feedback and indirect corrections have positive effects on KAU FYES self -correction?
3. What are the common mistakes that King Abdul-Aziz University FYES usually make in EFL writing?

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Giving feedback to students about their errors is essential to EFL writing. Teachers of writing believe that corrective feedback can raise students' awareness of the rules and develop their writing skills by highlighting problems and offering suggestions for improvement while rewriting. Recent studies showed that different types of corrective feedback can benefit students when done properly and effectively (Saito, 1994; Junyi 2005; Lee, 2012 and Srichanyachon 2012).

A. Theoretical Background

While giving feedback for writing performance, there are two ways of dealing with students' mistakes: Direct (explicit) feedback which is a technique of correcting students' errors by giving an explicit written correction and indirect (implicit) feedback in which the teacher indicates that an error has been made through an underline, circle, code, etc. Both methods can improve student's writing, but a number of researchers think that indirect feedback is generally more appropriate and effective and brings more benefits to students' long-term writing development than direct feedback (Ferris, 2004). Indirect teacher feedback is useful when it is incorporated with students' self-revision. Ferris (2006) cited in Erel and Bulut (2007)) found that students utilized direct feedback more consistently and effectively

than indirect types. According to Ferris (2002), cited in Abedi et al (2010) direct feedback is appropriate (1) for beginner students; (2) when errors are not easy to deal with as sentence structure and word choice, and (3) when teachers want to draw students' attention to other error types which require student correction.

B. The Importance of Students' Perceptions and Preferences of Teachers' Feedback

Students' perceptions of the types of correction and their preferences of teachers' feedback were investigated by (Kavaliauskiene, (2003); Maarek, (2009), Srichanyachon (2012) and Lee, (2012)). They pointed out that students prefer their teachers to indicate their mistakes in providing feedback in an attempt to improve their self-correction. Saito, (1994) investigated the match between teachers' practices and students' preferences for feedback and their strategies for handling it. Srichanyachon (2012) focused on the importance of teachers' written feedback for L2 students' writing development including its effect on students' accuracy and motivation. He discussed students' feedback preferences in terms of content, compared the methods of giving feedback, and suggested practices to help teachers provide effective written feedback for their students. Norouzian and Farahani, (2012) inspected two major areas of written feedback contexts through taking learners' and teachers' written feedback perceptions and teachers' actual feedback practices into account. In his study he examined areas of mismatch between teachers and students' perceptions of feedback and teachers' perceptions and their actual behaviors.

The different components of language and level of students in writing proved to have an effect on students' preferences and attitudes towards teachers' feedback. Rahimi, (2010) explored fifty EFL learners' preferences for receiving error feedback on different grammatical units as well as their beliefs about teacher feedback strategies. The study also examined the effect of the students' level of writing ability on their views about the importance of teacher feedback on different error types.

C. The Impact of Indirect Correction and Error Feedback on the Performance in EFL Writing

Self-correction addresses a valuable need in the language classroom. It raises awareness of the language, as well as urges students to take a more active and responsible role. Self-correction makes them less reliant on the teacher and gradually become self-learners. (Kavaliauskiene (2003); Junyi (2005), starting from the assumption that self correction of mistakes might be more beneficial for language learning than teacher's direct correction, conducted studies to discover how effective the target students could self-correct their writing mistakes against the teacher's feedback. Liu (2008) reports a quasi-experimental classroom study investigating 12 university ESL students' abilities to self-edit their writing across two feedback conditions: 1) direct correction with the correct form provided by the teacher; and indirect correction indicating that an error exists but without providing the correction. Results showed that both types of feedback helped students self-edit their texts. Mourssi, (2012) hopes to build on the positive impact of direct and indirect feedback on the ability of foreign language learners to edit their own texts and improve their accuracy in writing by investigating the role of meta -linguistic feedback in encouraging and preparing L2 learners to improve their level of accuracy and fluency in writing.

Reformulation, elicitation, error detection, coded error feedback and other forms of indirect feedback on writing performance proved to outperform direct correction. Ibarrola (2013) compares the effectiveness and appropriateness of two correction strategies (reformulation and self-correction) for EFL writing. The study examines the reduction of errors in students' drafts through a writing-correction-rewriting task which includes: 1) a reformulation session in which learners received feedback in the form of a reformulated text; and 2) a self-correction session in which learners received no feedback. Results show that reformulation outperformed self-correction and both strategies had a positive effect on error reduction. Abedi and et al, (2010) explored the most effective ways to give feedback to students' errors in writing by comparing the effect of error correction and error detection on the improvement of students' writing ability. The results suggested that error detection along with the codes led to better improvement in the learners' writing than the error correction treatment. Erel, and Bulut, (2007) investigated the possible effects of direct and indirect coded error feedback in a Turkish university context with regard to accuracy in writing. The results of the study showed that an overall comparison of the control and the experimental groups for the whole semester did not yield any statistically significant differences; nevertheless, the indirect coded feedback group committed fewer errors than the direct feedback group for the whole semester.

Individual conferencing for giving corrective feedback is a new idea introduced by Pitcher et al (2005); they investigated whether certain types of feedback result in improved accuracy. These types of feedback are: direct, explicit written feedback and student–researcher 5-minute individual conferences; direct, explicit written feedback only; no corrective feedback. The study resulted in a significant effect for the combination of written and conference feedback on accuracy levels in the use of the past simple tense and the definite article in new pieces of writing but no overall effect on accuracy improvement for feedback types when all errors were included.

III. METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

A. Research Design

Participants in this study are sixty FYES enrolled at KAU for the academic year 2013/2014. The participants form four 15- students sections. The four sections are chosen randomly out of two hundred sections then assigned to two

control groups to be given writing tasks on weekly basis and corrected according to direct correction rules. The first control group includes high achievers level four- students and the second includes low achievers level-two students. The other two sections are the experimental groups to be given the same writing tasks as the control groups but given error feedback through a special form (Appendix 1). The first experimental group includes high achievers level four- students and the second includes low achievers level-two students.

B. Instruments of the Study

The instruments used in this study were: 1) A writing test given to the control and the experimental groups as a pre and post test; 2) Five writing tasks based on the New Headway plus Elementary (for low achievers) and Intermediate (for high achievers) given to all sections over six weeks. 3) The comp form mark-chart which consists of three components: a) A composition form with spaced, consecutively numbered, word-length lines for students to write their essays or paragraphs on so that each word is designated by the number underneath; b) A marking chart with an organized list of eighteen error types and blank boxes so that teachers can mark using numbers only, transferring them from the "comp form" to the "mark-chart. c) A handout (a revision guide) which more fully explains each of the mark chart error types. 4) A form showing students' self- corrected errors over the five weeks; 5) a table that shows the common mistakes FYES made while writing; and finally 6) the "t" test used to analyze the results of the pre and post test.

IV. RESULTS OF THE STUDY

A. Results Related to the First Question/High Achievers

TABLE I
SHOWS THE MEANS OUT OF 20, STANDARD DEVIATIONS AND SIGNIFICANCE ON THE "T" TEST FOR HIGH ACHIEVERS.

		Mean	N	Std. dev	Std. Error. Mean
Pair 1	**post control**	13.0667	15	3.69	. 953
	Post experimental	16.2667	15	2.18	. 564
		T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
Pair 1	**post-control – post experimental**	-3.491	14	. 004	

Table (1) above shows the means of the high achievers control and experimental groups on the post test. They are (13, 16.2) respectively which is in favor of the experimental group. The standard deviations for the post test results of both groups are (3.7, 2.2) respectively. The t-calculated is (3.5) which is more than t- tabulated (1.96). This means that the difference between the mean scores of the control group and the experimental group in favor of the experimental group is statistically significant.

B. Results Related to the First Question/Low Achievers

TABLE II
SHOWS MEANS OUT OF 20, STANDARD DEVIATIONS AND SIGNIFICANCE ON THE "T" TEST FOR LOW ACHIEVERS.

		Means	N	Std. dev	Std. Error. Mean
Pair 1	Post control	8.7	15	3.09	
	Post experimental	10.3	15	2.74	
		T	Df	Sig-(2-tailed)	
Pair 1	postcontrol- postexperimental	. 079	14	. 938	

Table 2 above shows the means of the low achievers control and experimental groups on the post test. They are (8.7, 10.3) respectively which is in favor of the experimental group. The standard deviations for the post test results of both groups are (3.09, 2.74) respectively. The t-calculated is (0.79) which is less than t-critical (1.96). This means that the difference between the control group and the experimental group is not statistically significant.

C. Results Related to the Second Question/High Achievers

TABLE III

SHOWS STUDENTS' RESULTS ON THE FIVE WRITING TASKS: THE NUMBER OF WORDS THEY WROTE IN EACH TASK, THE NUMBER OF ERRORS THEY MADE,
AND THE NUMBER OF ERRORS THEY WERE ABLE TO CORRECT.

Sr	Students' Names	No. of Words					No. of Errors					No. of Corrected Errors				
		1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
1	Al-Waleed Hamadah	77	108	108	116	119	8	7	5	4	4	3	4	3	3	4
2	Bejad Al-Qahtani	104	107	109	110	112	11	6	5	2	2	4	4	4	2	2
3	Khaled Hakame	77	108	115	118	--	9	5	6	5	--	4	3	4	4	--
4	Saeed Thahaba	104	105	122	127	131	11	11	9	6	6	4	5	5	3	4
5	Abdulaziz Khan	112	120	120	122	130	9	7	7	5	3	3	4	5	4	3
6	Abdulaziz Al-Zahrani	85	100	120	120	123	16	15	10	7	7	3	6	6	5	6
7	Abdulaziz Bawazeer	86	110	112	--	128	9	9	8	--	5	4	5	6	--	6
8	Omar Al-Zahrani	69	78	78	79	110	20	14	8	5	5	5	5	4	3	4
9	Faisal Al-Qahtani	98	100	111	120	125	15	11	8	6	7	6	6	4	4	5
10	Mazin Al-Ghamdi	78	90	114	117	117	19	15	10	10	7	6	10	7	8	6
11	Mohammad Tashkendi	96	119	119	120	132	16	8	7	4	2	5	4	5	3	2
12	Yousef Jastaniah	108	--	118	134	140	12	--	8	8	7	5	--	4	5	6
13	Ali Abdullah Bahamran	74	81	85	90	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	-	-	-
14	Salman Moh'd Al-Ghamdi	85	91	--	108	115	11	8	--	7	5	3	4	-	5	4
15	Fahad Al-Zahrani	77	81	-	88	92	14	12	-	8	8	4	6	-	5	7

As can be seen in Table (3) students in the experimental group (high achievers) have done five writing tasks throughout a six week module. These writing tasks are based on Head Way Plus Intermediate (a book from a series of four books published by Oxford). The writing tasks vary between summary writing, reflection and taking a stand. The average numbers of words in the five tasks are 90, 103, 101, 115 and 122 respectively. The average numbers of errors made by the students in the five writing tasks are 13, 9, 8, 5 and 5 respectively. The average numbers of errors corrected by students are 4, 5, 5, 4 and 4 respectively.

D. Results Related to the Second Question/Low Achievers

TABLE IV

SHOWS STUDENTS' RESULTS ON THE FIVE WRITING TASKS: THE NUMBER OF WORDS THEY WROTE IN EACH TASK, THE NUMBER OF ERRORS THEY MADE
AND THE NUMBER OF ERRORS THEY WERE ABLE TO CORRECT.

Sr.	Students' Names	No. of Words					No. of Errors					No. of Corrected Errors				
		1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
1	Hassan Abdulaziz Saleh	48	57	-	57	68	3	0	-	8	5	2	0	-	8	5
2	Khaled Nafea Khaleel	-	50	51	50	70	-	4	9	10	9	-	4	9	8	8
3	Omar Abdalrahman	50	45	55	51	64	4	3	5	7	6	4	3	5	6	5
4	Rayan Abdulkarim Saleh	50	55	54	56	67	6	3	2	3	2	0	3	2	3	2
5	Mansour Yasin Ali Ghalab	50	51	56	-	81	2	12	8	-	4	2	12	8	-	3
6	Muhammad Ali Abdullah	48	46	50	-	51	4	4	2	-	3	3	4	2	-	1
7	Waell Abdullwakeel Hejeri	50	53	-	42	63	2	3	-	5	4	2	2	-	5	4
8	Mohammed Saleh Alelyani	50	46	-	53	71	2	7	-	12	8	2	6	-	11	8
9	Ahmed Jumian Saleh	50	50	59	55	68	5	2	3	9	0	3	2	2	8	0
10	Wail Ahmed Mohammed	50	41	51	55	68	3	8	6	11	6	3	8	5	7	6
11	Mohmmad Abdullah	50	59	48	-	-	4	2	3	-	-	4	2	3	-	-
12	Nasser Saeed Saad	52	48	63	60	58	5	3	9	6	3	5	3	9	5	3
13	Motaz Abdulrhman	49	55	50	53	66	4	2	7	11	9	3	2	7	10	4
14	Abdulaziz Saed Yahya	49	46	-	-	62	9	3	-	-	4	7	3	-	-	3
15	Sultan Solaiman Al zaeidi	49	48	56	-	-	9	10	4	-	-	8	10	4	-	-

As can be seen in Table (4) students in the experimental group (low achievers) have done five writing tasks throughout a module of six weeks. These writing tasks were based on Head Way Plus/Elementary. The writing tasks were based on the first five units in the book. The average numbers of words in the five tasks are 49, 50, 52, 53 and 66 respectively. The average numbers of the errors made by the students in the five writing tasks are 5, 4, 7, 8, and 5 respectively. The average numbers of errors corrected by students are 3, 4, 5, 6 and 4 respectively.

E. Results Related to the Third Question/High Achievers

TABLE V
SHOWS THE TYPES OF THE COMMON MISTAKES THE STUDENTS IN THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP MADE IN THE FIVE WRITING TASKS, THEIR PERCENTAGES AND EXAMPLES ON EACH TYPE OF MISTAKE.

≠ No.	Students' Common Mistakes	Total Number of mistakes	Percentage	Examples
1	Spelling	136	20%	busnise, negbor, avry, plase, firendly, fimely,
2	Word Missing	113	16%	Most ……students…… interested Haramain train …. ….important project
3	Wrong Word	85	12%	The plane took of on time. There jobs that could earn you ….
4	Verb Tense	73	11%	Before I came to engineering I have been in the college of medicine. Saudi Arabia did a new car.
5	Unnecessary Words	65	9%	KSA wants to build a 16 nuclear reactors. Something I should to do.
6	Capitalization	65	9%	jeddah, king saud university,
7	Articles	56	8%	..Project cost.. lot of money. ..UK helps …UN to do services
8	Punctuation	45	7%	mr ghamdi said the project needs 6 more months
9	Part of Speech	38	6%	The railway is resistance to hot weather You will doing a lot of things.
10	Agreement	28	4%	Nuclear engineering have the third highest salary. Which mean that will continue
11	Word order	23	3%	They don't know what means Gazal. Every year from KSA more than 30 engineers nuclear finish.
12	Wrong Preposition	17	2%	Most students are interested of industrial engineering. Most students don't join nuclear engineering as the are afraid from failing.

As can be seen in Table (5), the common mistakes in the five writing tasks for high achievers in the experimental group were spelling (20%), word missing (16%), wrong word (12%), verb tense (11%), unnecessary words (9%), capitalization (9%), articles (8%), punctuation (7%), part of speech (6%), agreement (4%), word order (3%) and wrong preposition (2%). Table 5 also shows authentic examples of the common mistakes.

F. Results Related to the Third Question/Low Achievers

TABLE VI
SHOWS THE COMMON MISTAKES THE STUDENTS IN THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP MADE IN THE FIVE WRITING TASKS, THEIR PERCENTAGES AND EXAMPLES ON EACH TYPE OF MISTAKE.

≠ No.	Students' Most Common Mistakes	Frequency	Percentage	Examples
1	Spelling	114	37.37%	beutifull, reyad, finaily, smol
2	Word missing	70	22.95%	There are a lot of differences between (……). Teacher (….) very good. I want (…) work outside.
3	Punctuation	37	12.13%	- Riyadh is more beautiful than Jeddah, Also, - I want to work in a school (--) I want to be a good teacher. My favorite job is teaching, I like this job for many reasons.
4	Wrong word	30	9.83%	-Riyadh is bigger the Jeddah. - I like this is for many reasons. - I love in assist patients.
5	Unnecessary word	27	8.85%	- You can see a famous people. - I like to work make things. - I like to work teach maths.
6	Agreement	19	6.22%	- There is many differences between them. - They was very nice. - He go to work every day.
7	Word order	8	2.62%	- He has a car red. - I job like it. - Riyadh is Jeddah bigger.
	Total	305	100%	

As can be seen in Table (6), the common mistakes in the five writing tasks for low achievers in the experimental group are spelling (37%), word missing (22.95%), punctuation (12.13%), wrong word (9.83%), unnecessary words (8.85%), agreement (6.22%), and word order (2.62%). Table 6 also shows authentic examples of the common mistakes.

V. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

A. Discussion and Analysis of the First Question/High Achievers

The statistical analysis related to question 1 concerning high achievers (Is there any statistically significant difference in students' achievement in writing that is attributed to indirect correction and error feedback given to FYES writing tasks?) shows results in favor of the experimental group. The mean score of the experimental group is more than that of

the control group. The t test results show that this difference is statistically significant as the value of t calculated (3.14) is bigger than the value of t critical (1.96). This difference in favor of the experimental group may be attributed to the long process students went through to recognize their mistakes and the effort they did to correct them. This procedure may have led students to gain experience in the types of mistakes and consequently to avoid them while writing. The results of this study agree with a few studies done recently about the effects of indirect feedback on students' achievement and on facilitating the process of learning. (Junyi, 2005); Liu, (2008); Hajimohammadi &Mukundan (2011) and Ibarrola (3013)) found out that self correction and implicit feedback can help students self edit their writing and consequently improve writing accuracy. Furthermore; research proved that there are differences between high achievers and low achievers in terms of attitudes toward school, attitudes toward teachers, goal valuation, motivation and general academic self- perception in favor of high achievers (Mcoach and Siegle (2001). In addition, high achievers have the ability, confidence persistence and motivation and they are able to organize their study materials and study habits more efficiently and initiate more voluntary interaction (Mcoach and Siegle (2001); Wilson (1999)). The results also indicated that the high-achieving students were more likely than the low-achievers to try to understand meanings thoroughly, to regulate their learning strategies to fit the purpose of the study, and to link new knowledge to their previous learning (Addiba, 2004)

B. Discussion and Analysis of the First Question/Low Achievers

The statistical analysis related to question 1 concerning low achievers didn't show significant results. Although there are differences between the mean scores on the post test in favor of the experimental group, these differences are not statistically significant as the value of t on the t-test is (0.79) which is less than the t tabulated (1.96). This can be referred to the reasons below:

Low achievers don't have enough linguistic, semantic, syntactic and stylistic skills that enable them to deal with the indirect approach of finding and self-correcting errors.

Low achievers lack the motivation and the dedication which is necessary for the long process suggested in this research. It may work for some clear errors like spelling, capitalization and unnecessary words, but low achievers can't deal with parts of speech, word order, subject verb agreement and other errors that need high competence on the part of students (Mcoach and Siegle (2001).

Low achievers in this study have the habit of absenting themselves for the slightest reasons. Out of the 200 hours they are supposed to attend in each semester, they are allowed to be absent for thirty hours and most of them usually exceed this absence limit. This lenient approach of dealing with the absence issue should be reconsidered. The reasons mentioned above form a barrier against applying indirect correction and error feedback on low achievers. The indirect feedback followed by self correction needs to be practiced on daily bases over a reasonably enough period of time so that they affect achievement. This becomes more urgent in teaching language skills especially writing as it relies mainly on the amount of exposure and engagement. The result of this study is in agreement with a few studies done recently about indirect feedback (Kavaliauskiene (2003); Maftoon, Shirazi and Daftarifard (2011); Ibarola (2013); Rana and Perveen (2013). Although these studies didn't have statistically significant results in favor of self correction and error feedback, they revealed that such strategies enhanced the students' linguistic competence. Furthermore, students were able to identify specific problems with their written work and this in turn motivated them to revise their work until they were able to produce better quality work.

C. Discussion and Analysis of the Second Question/High Achievers

Table 3 above contains the number of words, the number of mistakes and the number of corrected mistakes for the experimental group/ high achievers on the five writing tasks students did over six weeks: a thank you letter, a description to your favorite room, two paragraphs about your favorite job, a report about a car accident and a biography. The average numbers of words in the five writing tasks in the first column are (90, 103, 101, 115 and 122) respectively. It is clear from the table that there is a gradual increase in the number of words written in each writing task which refers to the fact that there was learning taking place. Students started with an average of 90 words and ended up with an average of 122 words. This increased number of words may also refer to a psychological reason reflected in the lack of fear of mistakes as students used to correct their mistakes. The second column shows the average number of the mistakes students made in the five writing tasks which are (13, 9, 8, 5 and 5) respectively. As table 3 shows, the number of mistakes is decreasing which indicates that they were getting benefit of self correction. The time the students spent matching the numbers under the mistakes on their writing papers with the types of mistakes in the list of the common mistakes and the investigation, group work and teacher consultation they did to correct the mistakes may have a positive effect on the number of mistakes they make and consequently their performance in writing. The numbers of corrected errors in the third column echo the positive environment about the value of error feedback and indirect correction. The third column in table 3 shows the number of mistakes corrected by the students (4, 5, 5, 4 and 4) respectively. Compared to the number of errors, the results above show that students are on their way to the ultimate goal, that is, avoiding mistakes and correcting them whenever they occur.

D. Discussion and Analysis of the Second Question/Low Achievers

Table 4 above contains the number of words, the number of mistakes and the number of corrected mistakes for the experimental group/ low achievers on the five writing tasks students did over six weeks: an email about your class, a paragraph about where you live, a paragraph about meals in your country, a paragraph describing a holiday and a letter to a pen friend. The average numbers of words in the five writing tasks in the first column are (49, 50, 52, 53 and 66) respectively. It is clear from the table that there is very slight increase in the number of words written in each writing task which reflects poor progress. Students started with an average of 49 words and ended up with an average of 66 words. This slight increase in the number of words may refer to the non -serious nature of low achievers. This idea is emphasized by the many empty slots in table 4 above. The second column shows the average numbers of the mistakes students made in the five writing tasks which are (5, 4, 7, 8, and 5) respectively. As table 4 shows, the number of mistakes is almost linear; they start with 5 and ended with 5 which indicates that indirect feedback and self correction are not the right strategies for them. The time the students spent trying to match the numbers under the mistakes on their writing papers with the types of mistakes in the list of the common mistakes and the claimed investigation, group work and teacher consultation they did to correct the mistakes is not more than a loss of time and consequently their performance didn't show noticeable improvement. The numbers of corrected errors in the third column echo the modest environment about the value of error feedback and indirect correction for low achievers. The third column in table 3 shows the number of mistakes corrected by the students (3, 4, 5, 6 and 4) respectively. Compared to the number of errors the results above show that students are very slow and their way to the ultimate goal that is avoiding mistakes and correcting them whenever they occur is unpaved.

E. Discussion and Analysis of the Third Question

As shown in tables (5&6) above, the common mistakes made by the students in the experimental groups of high and low achievers are almost the same with varying numbers and percentages. These differences refer to the proficiency level of students and the amount of writing students had in the five writing tasks. Spelling, word missing, wrong word, verb tense, punctuation and subject -verb agreement are the most high- frequency mistakes. The results of this study agree with a few studies recently conducted about error analysis and common mistakes made by tertiary students (Tan (2008); Liu (2008); Tahaineh, (2010); Al-Buainain (2012); Camps, Villalobos and Shea (2012)). These studies came up with different classifications of errors and referred them to a variety of reasons and suggested different solutions to deal with them. For Tan (2008) the top four most commonly made errors were word choice, verb form, missing subject and verb tense. These mistakes were caused by limited vocabulary size, poor grammar knowledge and interference from the first language. Liu (2008) had four categories of mistakes on the paragraph level: paragraph development, coherence, unity, and inconsistency in point of view. He referred them to four kinds of negative interlingual transfer. Camps, Villalobos and Shea (2012) have grouped the mistakes according to the native speaker's understanding or not understanding of the message. Tahaineh, (2010) stated that the improper use of prepositions is prominent among EFL Arab learners even at advanced stages of their learning and referred it to transfer and overgeneralization. The studies above have more or less the same reasons and the same suggestions for dealing with these mistakes.

This study is no exception concerning the types of mistakes, the reasons and the suggestive remedial work. The reasons behind the mistakes are possibly lack of exposure to appealing texts where students can acquire vocabulary items according to their level. The lenient approach of dealing with mistakes in writing where students see the mistakes corrected in red on their papers and don't bother themselves to look at them while doing later tasks is one more reason of repeating the same mistakes. Lack of motivation for writing on the part of students makes them lose invaluable chances of progress in using language. Writing on weekly basis is not enough for students to adopt writing as a habit. Most importantly, mother tongue interference is a source of errors while writing in a foreign language. Errors like the missing verbs to be, the misuse of the present perfect occur because these concepts are not available in Arabic language. The wrong use of prepositions happens because they are arbitrary and don't follow certain rules; Arab students generally say: "I am afraid from the lion" instead of saying "I am afraid of the lion".

VI. CONCLUSION

Teachers should recognize the value of providing effective feedback for the improvement of L2 learners' writing skills. Such feedback can motivate and advance students' learning if it emphasizes development and enhancement rather than grading. To make use of its full potential, it must focus on students' metacognition where they become shareholders in the teaching learning process. When feedback involves students and makes them work on discovering and correcting their mistakes, it contributes to minimizing these mistakes and enhancing students' performance in writing. In order to reach such goal, teachers have to work hard on enabling students to get familiar with the mistakes so that they can self correct them or hopefully avoid doing them. The findings of this research proved that the level of students has much to do with deciding which kind of feedback is more appropriate for them. High achievers are a rich environment for indirect and implicit feedback where they can pay much effort to know where they are mistaken and how to correct their mistakes. On the other hand, low achievers tend to be more direct and straightforward in their approach; direct and explicit feedback is more appealing to them.

VII. RECOMMENDATION

For further research involving feedback (direct, indirect, coded, implicit, explicit or any combinations), researchers should take into consideration the students attitudes towards the kind of feedback. Without motivation on the part of students, any kind of error feedback will be meaningless and a loss of time. Furthermore, implicit or indirect types of feedback need a considerable amount of time to show clear significant results; the more students are trained, the more they get acquainted with the codes and the types of mistakes (Junyi (2005); Errel (2007). In addition, researchers are advised not to deal with all mistakes at the same time especially for low achievers; two or three mistakes at a time may be a good idea to help students gradually get familiar with the mistakes and avoid them.

APPENDIX (1). COMPFORM

A composition form with spaced, consecutively numbered, word-length lines for students to write their essays or paragraphs on

Writing Task

LEVEL: ……………..   YEAR: ………………..   NAME: ………………………………………………………
No. of Writing task: ………. No. of Words: ……. No. of Mistakes: ……… No. of Corrected Mistakes: ……

……………………	……………………	……………………	………………………	………………………..
1	2	3	4	5
……………………	……………………	……………………	………………………	……………………..
6	7	8	9	10
……………………	……………………	……………………	………………………	……………………..
11	12	13	14	15
……………………	……………………	……………………	………………………	……………………..
16	17	18	19	20
……………………	……………………	……………………	………………………	……………………..
21	22	23	24	25
……………………	……………………	……………………	………………………	……………………..
26	27	28	29	30
……………………	……………………	……………………	………………………	……………………..
31	32	33	34	35
……………………	……………………	……………………	………………………	……………………..
36	37	38	39	40
……………………	……………………	……………………	………………………	……………………..
41	42	43	44	45
……………………	……………………	……………………	………………………	……………………..
46	47	48	49	50
……………………	……………………	……………………	………………………	……………………..
51	52	53	54	55
……………………	……………………	……………………	………………………	……………………..
56	57	58	59	60
……………………	……………………	……………………	………………………	……………………..
61	62	63	64	65
……………………	……………………	……………………	………………………	……………………..
66	67	68	69	70
……………………	……………………	……………………	………………………	……………………..
71	72	73	74	75
……………………	……………………	……………………	………………………	……………………..
76	77	78	79	80
……………………	……………………	……………………	………………………	……………………..
81	82	83	84	85
……………………	……………………	……………………	………………………	……………………..
86	87	88	89	90
……………………	……………………	……………………	………………………	……………………..
91	92	93	94	95
……………………	……………………	……………………	………………………	……………………..
96	97	98	99	100
……………………	……………………	……………………	………………………	……………………..
101	102	103	104	105
……………………	……………………	……………………	………………………	……………………..
106	107	108	109	110
……………………	……………………	……………………	………………………	……………………..
111	112	113	114	115
……………………	……………………	……………………	………………………	……………………..
116	117	118	119	120

APPENDIX (2). MARKCHART

The mark chart that contains twenty error types used in correcting the writing tasks
MARKCHART SAMPLE

No.	Error TYPE	COMPFORM ERRORS								
1	Capitalization									
2	Spelling									
3	Wrong Word									
4	Part of Speech									
5	Wrong Preposition									
6	Conjunction									
7	Word(s) Missing									
8	Article- ind/ def.									
9	Verb Tense									
10	Auxiliary									
11	Agreement									
12	Awkward									
13	Unnecessary word(s)									
14	Word Order									
15	Hyphenation									
16	Over use of and, I, he									
17	Irrelevant									
18	Punctuation									

Teacher's
Comments: …….....
………………………………………………………………………………….…………………………………………..
……………………………………………………………………….…………………………………………………………..
……………………………………………………………………………………..…………………………………… .

REFERENCES

[1]   Abedi, R., Latifi, M., & Moinzadaeh, A. (2010). The Effect of Error Correction vs. Error Detection on Iranian Pre-Intermediate EFL Learners' Writing Achievement." *English Language Teaching*, Vol. 3, No. 4; PP: 168-174.
[2]   Addiba, F. (2004). A Study of Attribution of Low Achievers and High Achievers about the Perceived Causes of Their Success and Failure. MA thesis, PP: 1-71.
[3]   Al- Buainain, H. (2012). Students' Writing Errors in ESL: A Case Study. *QNRS Repository*, 2011(1) PP: 1-37.
[4]   Camps, D, Villalobos, J, & Shea, J. (2010). Understanding EFL Students' Errors: An Insight Towards their Inter-language. *MEXTESOL Journal*, Vol. 36, No. 1, PP: 1-12.
[5]   EREL, O. and BULUT, D. (2007). Error Treatment in L2 Writing: A Comparative Study of Direct and Indirect Coded Feedback in Turkish EFL Context. Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi Sayı: 22 Yıl: 2007/1 (397-415 s.).
[6]   Ferris, D. R. (2004). The "Grammar Correction" Debate in L2 Writing: Where are we, and where do we go from here? (and what do we do in the meantime…?). *Journal of Second language Writing*, 13(1):49-62.
[7]   Hajimohammadi, R. (2011). Impact of self correction on Extrovert and Introvert Students in EFL Writing Progress. *English Language Teaching* Vol. 4, No. 2. PP: 161-168.
[8]   Ibarrola A. L. (2013). Reformulation and Self-correction: Insights into correction strategies for EFL writing in a school context. Vigo. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics* 29, vial n_10 – 2013, PP: 29-49.
[9]   Junyi, X. (2005). How Effective is Error Feedback on Self-Correction in L2 Writing? A case Study in Guangzhou University. *CELEA Journal*. Vol. (28) 6 PP: 49-55.
[10] Kavaliauskiene, G. (2003). Correction and Self-Correction of Written Assignments at Tertiary Level. *Journal of Language and Learning* 1(2), ISSN 1740 – 4983.
[11] Lee, E. (2012). Peer Correction vs. Self Correction in English Writing. Proceedings of the 17th Conference of Pan-Pacific Association Applied Linguistics.
[12] Liu, Y. (2008). The Effect of Error Feedback in Second Language Writing." *Arizona Working Papers in SLA &Teachin*g. Vol. 15. PP: 65-79.
[13] Lv, F. & Chen, H. (2010). A Study of Metacognitive-Strategies-Based Writing Instruction for Vocational College Students. *English Language Teaching*, Vol. 3, No. 3; September 2010 136 ISSN 1916-4742 E-ISSN 1916-4750.
[14] Maarek, S. (2009). The Effectiveness of Correction Symbols as Feedback in Enhancing Self-Correction in Writing. The Case of First-Year Students, University of Constantine. Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master degree in language Sciences. Mentouri University, Constantine. PP: 1-92.
[15] Maftoon, P. & Shirazi, M. (2011). The Effect of Recast vs self Correction on Writing Accuracy: The Role of Awareness. Brain. *Board Research in Artificial Intelligence and Neuroscience*, Vol. 2, No. 1. PP: 17-28.
[16] McCoach, D. B. & Seigle, D. (2001). A Comparison of High Achievers and Low Achievers' Attitudes, perceptions and motivations, *Academic Exchange*, PP: 71-76.
[17] Mourssi, A. (2012). The Impact of Reflection and Metalinguistic Feedback in SLA: A Qualitative Research in the Context of Post Graduates. *The International Journal of Language Learning and Applied Linguistics World (IJLLALW)*. Volume 1 (1). PP: 128-146.

[18] Norouzian, R. and Farahani A. K., (2012). Written Error Feedback from Perception to Practice: A Feedback on Feedback. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, doi:10.4304/jltr.3.1.11-22 © 2012 ACADEMY PUBLISHER. Vol. 3, No. 1, PP: 11-22.

[19] Pitcher, J et al. (2005). The effect of different types of corrective feedback on ESL student writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 14(2005) 191-20, Elsevier Inc. doi:10.1016/j.jslw.2005.08.001.

[20] Rahimi, M. (2010). Iranian EFL Students' Perceptions and Preferences for Teachers' Written Feedback: Do Students' ideas Reflect Teachers' Practice? *The Journal of Teaching Language Skills* (*JTLS* Vol. 2, No. 2, PP: 75-98.

[21] Rana, A. M. K. and Perveen, U. (2013). Motivating Students through Self Correction, *Educational Research International.* Vol. 2, No. 2 PP: 192-146.

[22] Saito, H. (1994). Teachers' Practices and Students' Preferences for Feedback on Second Language Writing: A Case Study of Adult ESL Learners. lESL CANADA. *JOURNAUREVUE TESL DU CANADA.* vol. 11, no.2, spring 1994. PP: 46-70.

[23] Srichanyachon, Napaporn. (2012). Teacher Written Feedback for L2 Learners' Writing Development. Silpakorn University *Journal of Social Sciences, Humanities, and Arts* Vol.12 (1): 7- 17, Language Institute, Bangkok University, Thailand.

[24] Tahaineh, Y. S. (2010). Arab EFL Students' Errors in the Use of Prepositions. *International Journal of Arabic-English Students,* Vol. 1, No. 1, PP: 133 -56.

[25] Tan, H. (2008). A study of EFL learners Writing Errors and Instructional Strategies, Center for General Education, Kun Shan University. PP: 1-5.

[26] Williams, J. (1990). Providing Feedback on ESL Students' Written Assignments. *The Internet TESL Journal,* Vol. 1X, No. 10

[27] Wilson, J. (1999). High and low achievers classroom interaction patterns in an upper primary classroom. Paper presented at the AARE Conference – Melbourne, Australia, 29th November – 2nd December 1999.

[28] Xiano, Y. (2008). Applying Metacognition in EFL writing instruction in China. *Reflections on English Language Teaching,* Vol. 6, No. 1, pp: 19-33.

Salameh S. Mahmoud was born in Palestine, got BA in General English from Nablus/Palestine, high diploma, MA and PhD in Curriculum and Instruction from Amman/Jordan. All his experience is in teaching and coordination at public and private schools in Jordan. In 2005 he moved to KSA as a language instructor in King Abdulaziz Uni. in Jeddah/KSA. During this period, he participated in many committees in addition to teaching. Concerning publishing, in the last four years, he has already published five articles and this is his sixth and currently working on the seventh. Finally, Dr Mahmoud has given many workshops and seminars about teaching methods in Jordan and in KSA. ESP has been one of the author's concerns; he has already finished a book "English for Art and Design" which is now used in a big college in Jeddah.

Khaled K. Oraby was born in Irbid/Jordan, got BA in General English at Yarmouk University in Irbid/Jordan and MA in Linguistics from Science and Technology College. He worked as a teacher of English in Jordan. The co-author's major field of study is linguistics and ESP. All his experience is in teaching. He moved to KSA in 2004 to work as language instructor. Finally, Mr. Orabi has participated in many local committees and workshops.