Direct and indirect written corrective feedback in the context of genre-based instruction on job application letter writing

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Despite the fact that a considerable proportion of today's writing programs operate according to the principles of genre-based instruction, research has not adequately dealt with the teaching of various genres (e.g., job application letters). Nor has research, to date, attempted to address the issue of written corrective feedback in conjunction with genre-based instruction. This study, therefore, aimed to investigate the impact of written corrective feedback in the context of genre-based instruction on job application letters. To this end, 120 Iranian advanced-level EFL learners at Kish Institute of Science and Technology participated in the present study. After administering the TOEFL test, 80 students scoring within ±1 SD of the mean score were randomly assigned to one of two experimental groups—namely, Direct Feedback Group or Indirect Feedback Group. Having sat a writing pretest, the participants received genre-based instruction on how to compose job application letters. Meanwhile, they were supplied with direct or indirect feedback on their writing. Following this instruction, a writing posttest was administered, the results of which showed that direct corrective feedback was more effective than indirect corrective feedback in the context of genre-based instruction on letters of job application.

Keywords: genre-based instruction, direct and indirect corrective feedback, job application letters, generic moves, English as a foreign language

1.   Introduction

The status of writing within the field of English language teaching (ELT) has considerably changed in the past 60 years. The growth of composition studies has brought about a transformation in two closely connected areas, namely, writing instruction and written corrective feedback. As a result of this transformation, writing is no longer regarded as spoken words taken down. In other words, writing is deemed to be a complex, recursive process, including various operations with preceding and succeeding operations contributing to one another. In order for writing instructors "to have a better understanding and richer awareness of current attitudes towards and common practices in writing instruction [as well as written corrective feedback], it is of paramount importance to historically review the development and progress of this domain of ELT" (Mirzaii, 2012, p. 28).

2.   Writing instruction background

With regard to the instructional aspects of foreign language/second language (FL/SL) writing, the early 1960s was marked by the prevalence of a product approach. Kroll (1998) in a review of literature about that period, argued that the model for teaching writing was composed of four steps. First, rules of writing were presented to students. The students were next provided with a text for classroom discussion and analysis. Third, having supplied the students with an outline based upon the text, the teacher required a writing assignment. Finally, students received comments as to the quality of their completed writing product. This completed product, however produced, i.e., irrespective of the strategies and processes the students used, was considered the principal criterion for assigning scores.

  Likewise, EFL instruction in the 1970s was marked by the predominance of a controlled composition model. According to Hyland (2002), "learning to write in a second language was mainly seen to involve developing linguistic and lexical knowledge as well as familiarity with the syntactic patterns and cohesive devices that form building blocks of texts" (p. 13). In other words, learning to write involved imitation and manipulation of models supplied by the teacher (Mirzaii, 2012). Richards (2002) enumerates the activities in this approach as including familiarization, controlled writing, guided writing, and free writing. Richards also points out that "activities based on controlled composition predominated during the period that sought to prevent errors and develop correct writing habits" (p. 21).

    Subsequently, according to Richards (2002), the focus in teaching writing shifted to a paragraph-pattern approach with an emphasis on the use of topic sentences, supporting sentences, and transitions. In other words, there was a shift in focus from mere attention to the structural aspects of writing—grammar rules and vocabulary items—mainly addressing intra-sentential relationships, to one attending to both structure and content, addressing inter-sentential as well as intra-sentential,

relationships (Mirzaii, 2012). The consequence of this shift, according to Mirzaii, was "an emerging attention, requiring sentences to be cohesive, and the whole text coherent" (p. 32).

In the 1990s, the process approach to writing appeared in the context of writing pedagogy, contrasting a newly emerged classroom ideology with that previously espoused by the product approach. Silva and Matsuda (2002, cited in Richards, 2002) depict the process approach as "a complex, recursive and creative process that is very similar in its general outlines for first and second language writers: learning to write requires the development of an efficient and effective composing process" (p. 261). This composing process would require learners to engage in the operations of rehearsing (also known as prewriting), writing (also referred to as drafting or composing), and revising (also labeled editing) (Richards and Schmidt, 2010).

More recently, foreign language/second language (FL/SL) writing pedagogy has witnessed the emergence of a genre approach to writing instruction. This approach, as depicted by Mirzaii (2012), "looks at the ways in which language is used for particular purposes in particular contexts, i.e., the use of different genres of writing" (p. 34). Bhatia (1993) defines genre as "a recognizable communicative event characterized by a set of communicative purpose(s) identified and mutually understood by the members of the professional or academic community in which it regularly occurs" (p. 43). Similarly, Hyland (2002) points out that "contemporary views of L2 writing see writing as involving composing skills and strategies for drafting and revising but also a clear understanding of genre to be able to structure their writing experience according to the demands of particular contexts" (p. 15).

3. Written corrective feedback

Closely connected to the issue of writing instruction is written corrective feedback. Feedback, in a broad sense, is conceptualized as information provided by an agent (e.g., teacher, peer, book, parent, self, experience) regarding aspects of one's performance or understanding (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Feedback, in general, can take various forms, one of which is known as corrective feedback. Put in general terms, written corrective feedback aims at providing information as to the correctness or incorrectness of what is written versus well-established language conventions. In contrast to written corrective feedback, other types of feedback address different aspects and/or features of writing than correctness or incorrectness. In the case of argumentative writing, for instance, feedback may be provided in the form of suggestions for possible improvements. As a case in point, a writing instructor could suggest that student writers strengthen their arguments by adding supportive evidence. Similarly, feedback could be given by raising questions, thus attempting to help a student writer to further develop ideas as in "Can you think of a more cost-effective way of dealing with the problem of air pollution in metropolitan cities?"

Although the provision of written corrective feedback has long been deemed integral to FL/SL writing instruction programs, it has not always been provided in the same manner, i.e., various writing instructors have opted for varied written corrective feedback types. Having inspected both teacher handbooks (e.g., Ur, 1996) and published empirical studies of written corrective feedback (e.g., Chandler, 2003; Ferris, 2006; Robb, Ross, & Shortreed, 1986), Ellis (2009) presents a typology of teacher options for correcting errors in students' written work. Those strategies identified by Ellis, along with others distilled from the literature, are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Written Corrective Feedback Strategies (adapted from Ellis, 2009)

Corrective Feedback Strategies	Description
Direct corrective feedback	The teacher provides the student with the correct form.
Indirect corrective feedback	The teacher indicates that an error exists but does not provide the correction.
a) Indicating + locating the error	This takes the form of underlining and use of cursors to show omissions in the student's text.
b) Indication only	This takes the form of an indication in the margin that an error or errors have taken place in a line of text.
Metalinguistic feedback	The teacher provides some kind of metalinguistic clues as to the nature of the error.
a) Use of error code	The teacher writes codes in the margin (e.g., ww for wrong word; art for article).
b) Brief grammatical description	Teacher numbers errors in text and writes a grammatical description for each numbered error at the bottom of the text.
Electronic feedback	The teacher indicates an error and provides a hyperlink to a concordance file that provides examples of correct usage.
Reformulation	This consists of a native speaker's reworking of the student's entire text to make the language seem as native-like as possible while keeping the content of the original intact.

Considering the effectiveness of various types of written corrective feedback, Vyatkina (2011) notes that "research on written corrective feedback in second language teaching has generated few recommendations on best practices" (p. 63), and that despite the constant growing of the body of research on the effectiveness of written corrective feedback, the findings of these studies appear to be inconclusive. Consequently, the pedagogical implications derived from such studies are conspicuously disparate,

ranging from claims that corrective feedback is ineffectual, unhelpful, or even harmful to student writing development (Sheppard, 1992; Truscott, 1996, 2004; Vengadasamy, 2002) to vehement contentions supporting the provision of written corrective feedback (Binglan & Jia, 2010; Bitchener, Young, & Cameron, 2005; Chandler, 2003; Ferris, 2004).

4. Genre of job application letters

Taking into account the most recent approach to writing—i.e., the genre approach—Swales (1990) refers to genre as "some set of communicative purposes" (p. 58) that determine the structure of the discourse as well as influence and constrain the choice of content and style. To give a few examples of different types of genre, Harmer (2004) names newspaper advertisements, letters, literary fiction, and film criticism. Further specifying various letter genres, Harmer notes that "newspaper letters are a recognizable genre, different from the notification letter, and different again from holiday postcards or application letters" (p. 17).

With respect to application letters, they are identified by Henry and Roseberry (2001b) as a "kind of genre whose communicative aim is to obtain an interview for a job by highlighting the most relevant information in the candidate's curriculum vitae" (p.155). Further, Henry and Roseberry (2001a, 2001b) introduce moves as the building blocks of genre, in general, and of application letters, in particular. More specifically, they define *move* as "a text segment made of a bundle of linguistic features which give the segment a uniform orientation and signal the content of discourse in it" (p. 157). In line with this definition, Henry and Roseberry enumerate the moves constituting job application letters (see Appendix B).

Despite the need for the explicit teaching of rhetorical structures in EFL/ESL (English as a foreign language/English as a second language) writing programs, which was identified by Selinker, Swain, and Dumas in as early as 1975 and supported by Crookes (1986), Hyland (1990), and Marshall (1991), a scant number of research studies have, to date, attempted to investigate the efficacy of genre-based instruction (e.g., Gao, 2007; Henry & Roseberry, 1999, 2001b; Kim & Kim, 2005; Swami, 2008). Moreover, with regard to written corrective feedback, it could be argued that while this issue has attracted enormous interest from researchers and teachers alike (Mirzaii, 2012), as a recent review of the literature (Hyland & Hyland, 2006) indicates, it is not yet feasible to draw firm conclusions as to which feedback type best improves students' writing ability. Further, research has principally concentrated on the effectiveness of feedback on grammar and has, as such, neglected feedback on the moves related to specific genres. More specifically, research on genre-related writing has mainly investigated the impact of instruction, and has, therefore, not addressed the equally important question of how written corrective feedback can improve a specific genre and its relevant moves.

Taking into account the aforementioned, this study attempted to address two gaps in the literature. First, it aimed to incorporate genre-based instruction on composing job application letters. Second, and more importantly, this study attempted to compare the effects of two different types of written corrective feedback—direct feedback and indirect feedback—on EFL learners' achievements in composing job application letters.

5.   Research questions and hypotheses

With respect to the hypotheses, it should be stated that because past research is indicative of the effectiveness of written corrective feedback in enhancing writing, the first two hypotheses were written in the form of directional hypotheses. This could further be supported by the fact that the literature generally views written corrective feedback in a positive light and tends to favor the provision of this kind of feedback. Nevertheless, as the related literature does not provide conclusive evidence in regard to the efficacy of specific types of written corrective feedback, e.g., direct vs. indirect, on EFL/ESL learners' writing proficiency, the third hypothesis was stated in the form of a null hypothesis. The following questions and hypotheses were, therefore, used in the context of genre-based instruction on the moves of job application letters:

Q(1): Do participants receiving direct corrective feedback perform better on the posttest as compared with the pretest?

H(1): Participants receiving direct corrective feedback perform better on the posttest as compared with the pretest.

Q(2): Do participants receiving indirect corrective feedback perform better on the posttest as compared with the pretest?

H(2): Participants receiving indirect corrective feedback perform better on the posttest as compared with the pretest.

Q(3): Do the posttest writing scores of the participants receiving direct corrective feedback and those of the participants receiving indirect corrective feedback show a statistically significant difference?

H0(3): The posttest writing scores of the participants receiving direct corrective feedback and those of the participants receiving indirect corrective feedback do not show a statistically significant difference.

6. Method

6.1   Participants

The participants of the study were randomly selected from EFL advanced-level learners studying at Kish Institute of Science and Technology in Iran. Regarding the participants' demographic information, they were all male learners and varied in age from 18 to 46 years with an average of 25. The vast majority of learners in this language institute intend to master English for either work-related or study-related purposes. To graduate from the Institute, learners, upon completing their studies at the advanced proficiency level, have to successfully pass a mock version of the Certificate in Advanced English, which is provided by University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations and administered by Kish Institute of Science and Technology. As stated above, a considerable proportion of these learners look for better job opportunities and would like to work for foreign companies inside or outside of Iran. The ability to compose well-written, persuasive job application letters is of immense significance in this context.

To arrive at a random sample, the researchers utilized cluster sampling in assigning the participants to the study. In other words, the unit of selection did not involve individuals, but classes of individuals that were randomly selected from all existing advanced-level classes at all branches of the institute. The entire sample was composed of 120 male EFL learners. Upon administering the language proficiency test, 80 learners whose scores were within one standard deviation above or below the initial sample mean score were recognized as eligible and included in the study. Subsequently, these participants were evenly assigned to one of two experimental groups, the Direct Feedback Group (hereafter DFG) or the Indirect Feedback Group (hereafter IFG). Each group included 40 participants.

6.2   Instrumentation

The instruments utilized in this study included 1) a validated, standardized test of language proficiency, i.e., TOEFL, as a means of eliminating too much variability in the sampling of participants' language proficiency; 2) an analytic marking scheme, which was based on Jacobs et al. (1981) Composition Profile, used to score the participants' letters with respect to their content performance; and 3) an analytic marking scheme, developed by the researchers, as a means of grading the participants' letters regarding their generic (genre-related) performance.

6.2.1   Language proficiency test

In order to homogenize the initial sample of participants, the researchers took a model TOEFL test from the Longman Introductory Course for the TOEFL test (Philips, 2001). The model test was initially composed of 40 Use of English items, 50 Reading items, and 40 Listening items. For the purposes of the study, this model test was subsequently adapted. In so doing, the Listening subtest was excluded owing to a number of

logistical limitations imposed upon the study. Moreover, the remaining 90 items were administered to a pilot group of 40 EFL advanced-level learners. As a result of this procedure, seven Reading items, as well as eight Use of English items, which were recognized as too difficult through item difficulty analyses, were excluded. The final version of the test, thus, included 75 items.

6.2.2   Composition quality scoring scheme

In order to evaluate the content performance of the participants with regard to application letter writing, the scoring scheme proposed by Jacobs et al. (1981) was used. This analytical scheme assesses writing on the basis of five broad categories—content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics of writing. These broad categories are further subclassified into more detailed components which form the basis of assigning grades to compositions (see Appendix A). It should be noted that scores awarded on the basis of this scheme could range from 34 to 100. To validate this scoring scheme, a pilot study was conducted through which 40 EFL advanced-level learners were required to compose a letter of application. Following this pilot, three experienced EFL teachers scored the letters using the Jacobs et al. scoring scheme. The inter-rater reliability coefficient was then computed to be 0.85.

6.2.3   Generic performance scoring scheme

In order to appraise the generic (genre-related) performance of the participants regarding application letter writing, it was necessary to devise a scoring scheme. To this end, the list of application letter moves, proposed by Henry and Roseberry (2001b), was selected. This list is composed of eleven moves (see Appendix B). For the purposes of this study, the researchers scored each move on the basis of two criteria : (1) presence/absence of the move and (2) the move being well-/ill-ordered. As a result of this procedure, every move that was both present and well-ordered received a score of 2. Therefore, a score of 22 was the maximum score a writer could obtain (see Appendix C for the application of the two scoring schemes). Further, in order to calculate multi-rater consistency, a sample of 40 application letters, produced by 40 EFL advanced-level learners, was scored using this scheme. The inter-rater reliability coefficient was computed to be 0.78.

6.3   Procedure

The participants of the study were selected from among EFL advanced-level learners studying at one of the branches of Kish Institute of Science and Technology in Iran. The initial sample comprised 120 learners participating in eight classes. To arrive at homogeneity in terms of language proficiency, the researchers administered the TOEFL exam. Upon the administration of this test, 80 learners whose scores were within ± 1 standard deviation of the whole sample mean score were recognized as the participants

of the study. These participants were then randomly assigned to two experimental groups— DFG (Direct Feedback Group) or IFG (Indirect Feedback Group).

In the next step, the two groups took a pretest which required them to write an in-class 150-word application letter within a time limit of 25 minutes. The topic for both groups was the same, i.e., writing an application letter to a company looking for a driver. Subsequently, the letters were scored in terms of both content and generic performance. The two scores of each participant were then summed and recorded as the pretest score.

After the administration of the pretest, the first major phase of the study—instruction phase—began. In this phase, the two groups were provided with explicit genre-based instruction on writing application letters in line with Kay and Dudley-Evans (1998). Overall, seven sessions were devoted to teaching the participants how to write letters of application. On average, each session lasted 30 minutes. Further, the only medium of communication was English, since the participants were at the advanced level of language proficiency and had no difficulty understanding the teacher's instruction. To control for teacher variability, the two groups were taught by the same teacher, one of the researchers, throughout the study.

In the first session, the participants were familiarized with the main purpose and format of application letters. For this purpose, a number of samples as well as templates of application letters were presented (see Appendix D and Appendix E), and the teacher asked students to read the letters to themselves. In the second and third sessions, the teacher gave an overall description of genre and introduced the application letter as an example of genre. The general concept of move and specific moves in the application letter were subsequently explained. The fourth session involved the participants in writing an application letter. In doing so, they were given the opportunity to refer to the teacher in order to receive suggestions and tips on how to write application letters.

In the fifth, sixth, and seventh sessions, the participants were given more practice in writing two application letters, applying for the job of their interest. In order to make them feel comfortable with the topics, they were allowed to choose the topic of their letters themselves. While practicing writing letters of application, the teacher moved around the class helping students enhance their letters in terms of content as well as moves. It should be noted that attempts were made not to correct any errors. In other words, up to this point in the study, the teacher focused on explicitly teaching the generic features of the application letter.

The second major phase of the study involved giving feedback to the participants on their application letters. In so doing, the participants in the two groups were supplied with either direct or indirect feedback on the letters of application they had previously composed. In the case of direct corrective feedback, not only were errors or missing parts, in terms of both composition quality and moves quality, identified, but also the participants were provided with the correct forms of those errors. In other words, the teacher located and gave the correct form or order, focusing on both missing or erroneous moves and errors in terms of composition quality. For instance, if an opening

move was absent, the teacher inserted Dear Sir or Dear Madam at the top of the letter (see Appendix F for a DFG participant sample letter and accompanying direct feedback).

The second experimental group, on the other hand, was provided with indirect corrective feedback in keeping with Ellis (2009). In so doing, the teacher noted the number of absent and erroneous moves at the bottom of the writer's letter. None of the errors were located. Moreover, with composition quality in mind, the teacher also indicated the number of errors in terms of content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics of writing at the end of each line of the letter. For example, having read a participant's application letter and noting the missing/erroneous moves, the teacher wrote at the bottom of the letter that "two moves are missing and four are erroneous." (see Appendix G for an IFG participant sample letter and accompanying indirect feedback). The letters were then returned to the participants, and they were required to figure out which moves were missing and which ones were erroneous. The participants were encouraged to look over the samples they had previously been supplied with during the instruction phase and to compare those samples with their own letters to help them recognize shortcomings in their writing. Subsequently, the participants again attempted to correct erroneous moves and add missing moves.

In the last step, the two groups completed a posttest task. The posttest task was on a different topic than the pretest but with the same form as the pretest (i.e., writing an in-class 150-word application letter within a time limit of 25 minutes). The topic for both groups was the same, i.e., writing an application letter to a company looking for an interpreter. The letters were scored in terms of both content and generic performance. The two scores of each participant were then summed and recorded as the posttest score.

7. Results

As was stated in the previous section, in order to homogenize the participants with respect to language proficiency, the researchers administered a modified version of the TOEFL test to a sample of 120 EFL advanced-level learners. Following this, 80 learners, whose scores were within ±1 SD of the whole sample mean score, were included in the study. These participants were then randomly assigned to either of the two experimental groups, DFG (Direct Feedback Group) or IFG (Indirect Feedback Group). To assure homogeneity in terms of the ability to compose application letters, the researchers administered a pretest (see above for a full account). Further, in order to statistically investigate the impact of the two feedback types, a posttest, similar to the pretest, was given. The corresponding descriptive statistics are reported in Table 2.

As Table 2 indicates, both groups performed nearly equally well on the pretest, with DFG scoring 68.31 and IFG gaining a mean score of 67.01. Regarding measures of dispersion of the pretest, whereas IFG score range was 34, that of DFG was lower, i.e., 30. Accordingly, DFG participants performed more uniformly on the pretest as their

corresponding standard deviation was 6.79 in comparison with that of IFG, 6.91. With respect to the improvement the two groups made in the course of the study, while IFG scored 75.29 on the posttest (mean score difference = 8.28), DFG participants performed much better, gaining a higher mean score difference, 22.42. However when the corresponding standard deviations were calculated, both groups' performances proved to be relatively uniform on the posttest. In other words, both groups made an improvement during the study, which was consistent with the first and second hypotheses.

Table 2. DFG and IFG Pretest and Posttest Descriptive Statistics

Group	Test	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard deviation	Variance	N
DFG	Pretest	51	81	68.31	6.79	46.10	40
	Posttest	71	98	90.73	5.72	32.71	40
IFG	Pretest	47	81	67.01	6.91	47.74	40
	Posttest	65	90	75.29	6.05	36.60	40

In order to investigate which group performed better on the posttest, a single ANCOVA test was run. In so doing, to control for the possible influence of the pretest results and in order to see whether or not this variable was statistical, the pretest was taken as the covariate.

Table 3. ANCOVA Test Results of Between-Subjects Effects

Sources	Type III sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.	Noncent. parameter	Observed power
Corrected model	4778.31	2	2389.16	68.86	0.000	137.72	1.000
Intercept	5145.49	1	5145.49	148.30	0.000	148.30	1.000
Pretest	4.26	1	4.26	0.123	0.727	0.123	0.064
Posttest	4717.73	1	4717.73	135.97	0.000	135.97	1.000
Error	2671.64	77	34.70				
Total	558902.00	80					
Corrected total	7449.95	79					

The line that lists the covariate, pretest, indicates that the aggregate pretest score was not a statistical covariate, and, hence, did not have a strong effect size ($F_{1,77}= 0.123$, $p > 0.05$, observed power = 0.064). This meant that pretest scores did not have a strong effect on how the participants performed on the posttest. To compare the mean scores of the two groups, the corresponding pairwise comparison, a further output of the ANCOVA test, is indicated in Table 4 below.

Table 4. DFG and IFG ANCOVA Test Pairwise Comparison

	Mean difference	Std. Error	Sig.	95% confidence interval for difference	
				Lower bound	Upper bound
Pair PostDFG-PostIFG	15.41	1.32	0.000	12.78	18.04

Since the covariate, pretest variable, did not show a statistical difference, there was no need to adjust the posttest scores. Further, it should be noted that the above pairwise comparison can be interpreted similarly for any other post-hoc tests. As Table 4 indicates, the effect of the condition was less than $p=0.05$ (Sig. = 0.000). Therefore, because the posttest mean score of DFG was higher than that of IFG, the posttest mean score difference was statistically significant. This, in turn, led the researchers to reject the third hypothesis.

8. Conclusions and discussion

This study investigated the impact of two types of written corrective feedback, direct and indirect written corrective feedback, in the context of genre-based instruction on EFL learners' achievements in composing job application letters. In the course of the study, participants in both groups received genre-based instruction on writing job application letters. Subsequently, the DFG participants were provided with direct feedback on their written products, whereas the IFG participants received indirect feedback on their written products. As such, the only way in which the two groups differed was the type of feedback they were supplied with on the job application letters they composed for the purposes of this study.

The statistical test (see Results section) proved that, prior to the two treatments, there was no statistically significant difference between the abilities of the two groups in writing job application letters. At the outset of the study, the participants in the two groups did not differ significantly in terms of their ability to compose job application letters. Further statistical analyses were indicative of the improvements both DFG and IFG made as a result of the treatments they had received. Finally, regarding performance on the posttest, which reflected the incremental improvements of the participants during the study, the ANCOVA test pairwise comparison showed the

superiority of the DFG mean score. Put differently, DFG participants made a significant improvement in terms of composing letters of job application.

Since the two experimental groups were taught how to write application letters through genre-based instruction, adopting the same procedure and within the same time interval, this mean gain difference could be attributed to the type of feedback the two groups received on their written products, i.e., either direct or indirect feedback. While both groups in the first major phase of the study received similar instruction on how to compose letters of job application, they were provided with two different written corrective feedback types in the second major phase of the study. Herein seems to lie the cause of the difference between their performances on the posttest.

The results of this study indicate that written corrective feedback can better writing. These results are consonant with the findings of a number of earlier studies (Beuningen, Jong, & Kuiken, 2008; Binglan & Jia, 2010; Bitchener & Knoch, 2008; Bitchener, Young, & Cameron, 2005; Chandler, 2003). Concentrating upon how this kind of feedback can benefit language forms, Bitchener and Knoch (2008) maintain that written corrective feedback "helps students to acquire and demonstrate mastery in the use of targeted linguistic forms and structures" (p. 409). The current study seems to corroborate this claim. With respect to the type of feedback that the participants were provided with, our findings echo the previous findings of Beuningen, Jong, and Kuiken (2008) who proposed that the provision of direct corrective feedback tends to be more effective in enhancing the accuracy of EFL/ESL writing. Moreover, these results are consistent with Hashemnezhad and Mohammadnejad (2012) who noted that "feedback on form in the form of direct feedback is more beneficial than indirect feedback especially for proficient learners" (p. 230).

In addition, like other genres, the genre of job application letters is conventionally composed of a certain number of generic moves that are widely shared and recognized by members of a particular community. The current study shows that written corrective feedback has great potential for improving generic writing. However, whether this conclusion could be extended to other genres of writing is not obvious and would require further research. It should be borne in mind that for other, more open-ended genres, indirect feedback might be equally if not more effective in enhancing the quality and ordering of generic moves. As a case in point, for a genre such as a science-fiction narrative, indirect feedback taking the form of critical questions and comments might better aid the writer to revise in a more persuasive way than direct corrective feedback.

A number of limitations were imposed upon this study which future research can address. First, thanks to the fact that both groups received genre-based instruction, its impact on writing job application letters could not be isolated and subsequently analyzed. Second, despite the fact that a number of researchers (Chaisiri, 2010; Kim, 2006; Lee, 2012; Lin, 2008) have investigated the effectiveness of genre-based instruction on the quality of foreign/second language learners' composition, certain genres of various types, such as scientific argumentation, science-fiction narratives,

letters of complaint, notification letters, holiday postcards, and literary fiction, appear to have received scant attention. Further research could be conducted on such genres with attention to how genre-based instruction can benefit different genres. Third, in regard to the main focus of this study, determining how written corrective feedback can benefit genre-related writing and help improve the structuring of relevant moves in job application writing, a detailed investigation of the related literature reveals that no research, to date, has studied the impact of written corrective feedback on the order and quality of genre-related moves. Of the various types of written corrective feedback introduced in the literature, the present study was limited in that it merely focused upon the analysis of two such feedback types and their respective effects on writing job application letters. Future research could, thus, supply feedback through such written corrective feedback types as metalinguistic feedback, electronic feedback, or reformulation, and study how they impact upon the quality of various genres. Finally, as newly acquired knowledge is transferred to similar contexts, further research is required to investigate whether learners, upon receiving written corrective feedback, are able to maintain the ability to compose certain types of genre over a more extensive period. This could be determined by means of giving both immediate and delayed posttests.

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Appendix A: Jacobs et al.'s (1981) ESL Composition Profile

ESL COMPOSITION PROFILE

STUDENT   DATE   TOPIC

SCORE	LEVEL	CRITERIA	COMMENTS
CONTENT	30-27	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: knowledgeable • substantive • thorough development of thesis • relevant to assigned topic	
	26-22	GOOD TO AVERAGE: some knowledge of subject • adequate range • limited development of thesis • mostly relevant to topic, but lacks detail	
	21-17	FAIR TO POOR: limited knowledge of subject • little substance • inadequate development of topic	
	16-13	VERY POOR: does not show knowledge of subject • non-substantive • not pertinent • OR not enough to evaluate	
ORGANIZATION	20-18	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: fluent expression • ideas clearly stated/supported • succinct • well-organized • logical sequencing • cohesive	
	17-14	GOOD TO AVERAGE: somewhat choppy • loosely organized but main ideas stand out • limited support • logical but incomplete sequencing	
	13-10	FAIR TO POOR: non-fluent • ideas confused or disconnected • lacks logical sequencing and development	
	9-7	VERY POOR: does not communicate • no organization • OR not enough to evaluate	
VOCABULARY	20-18	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: sophisticated range • effective word/idiom choice and usage • word form mastery • appropriate register	
	17-14	GOOD TO AVERAGE: adequate range • occasional errors of word/idiom form, choice, usage but meaning not obscured	
	13-10	FAIR TO POOR: limited range • frequent errors of word/idiom form, choice, usage • meaning confused or obscured	
	9-7	VERY POOR: essentially translation • little knowledge of English vocabulary, idioms, word form • OR not enough to evaluate	
LANGUAGE USE	25-22	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: effective complex constructions • few errors of agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, prepositions	
	21-18	GOOD TO AVERAGE: effective but simple constructions • minor problems in complex constructions • several errors of agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, prepositions but meaning seldom obscured	
	17-11	FAIR TO POOR: major problems in simple/complex constructions • frequent errors of negation, agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, prepositions and/or fragments, run-ons, deletions • meaning confused or obscured	
	10-5	VERY POOR: virtually no mastery of sentence construction rules • dominated by errors • does not communicate • OR not enough to evaluate	
MECHANICS	5	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: demonstrates mastery of conventions • few errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing	
	4	GOOD TO AVERAGE: occasional errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing but meaning not obscured	
	3	FAIR TO POOR: frequent errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing • poor handwriting • meaning confused or obscured	
	2	VERY POOR: no mastery of conventions • dominated by errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing • handwriting illegible • OR not enough to evaluate	

TOTAL SCORE   READER   COMMENTS

Appendix B: Obligatory and Optional Moves in Genre of Job Application Letter (adapted from Henry & Roseberry, 2001b)

Generic Move	Description
1) Opening	The writer identifies the target and invites the audience to read the letter.
2) Referring to a job advertisement	The writer refers to the advertisement in which the position appeared.
3) Offering candidature	The writer states an interest in applying for the position
4) Stating reasons for applying	The writer gives reasons for wanting the position.
5) Stating availability	The writer indicates when he or she would be available to take up the position.
6) Promoting candidature	The writer presents selected information demonstrating qualifications and abilities relevant to the desired position.
7) Enquiring employment terms	The writer indicates expectations regarding salary, working hours, and other relevant matters
8) Naming referees	The writer names referees who support the candidature.
9) Enclosing documents	The writer lists the documents enclosed with the letter.
10) Polite ending	The wrier ends the letter in a conventional manner
11) Signing off	The writer signs his or her name in a respectful manner, thus claiming ownership of the letter.

Appendix C: Example of the Application of Scoring Schemes (Composition Quality and Generic Performance)

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to apply for the position of English Interpreter, which I saw its advertisement in Tehran Times on October 20. My previous jobs include working as a translator for a French company. I have an excellent command of English and French (as you can see from my inclosed CV, I got 112 on TOFEL iBT and 84 on DALF, C1).

Furthermore, since I did my studies in the field of English-Translation in Tehran University, I suppose I can fill the vacancy very well. Moreover, I am a very calm and sociable by nature and these qualities I think are necessary for an interpreter.

As I mentioned earlier in this letter, you can find my CV attached. This includes all further information you may possibly need to know about me. I really appreciate your consideration of my candidatare and I hope I will soon hear from you.

yours truly,
(Signature).

Generic Performance		
Move type	Score (Rater 1)	Score (Rater 1)
Move 1	2	2
Move 2	2	1
Move 3	2	1
Move 4	1	1
Move 5	0	0
Move 6	2	2
Move 7	0	0
Move 8	0	0
Move 9	2	1
Move 10	2	2
Move 11	2	2
Total (0-22)	15	12

Composition Quality		
Component	Score (Rater 1)	Score (Rater 1)
content (13-30)	27	25
organization (7-20)	18	17
vocabulary (7-20)	16	18
language use (5-25)	18	16
mechanics of writing (2-5)	4	4
Total (34-100)	83	80

$$\text{Aggregate score} = \frac{80+83}{2} + \frac{15+12}{2} = 95$$

Appendix D: Job Application Letter Components

Contact Information
The first section of your letter should include information on how the employer can contact you. If you have contact information for the employer, include that. Otherwise, just list your information.
Your Personal Information
First Name Last Name
Street Address, City, State, Zip Code
Phone Number
Email Address
Date
Employer Contact Information
Name
Title
Company
Address, City, State, Zip Code
Opening (1st move)
Dear Mr./Ms. Last Name or Dear Hiring Manager:
Application Letter Content
Your application letter will let the employer know where you saw the advertisement, what position you are applying for, why the employer should select you for an interview, and how you will follow up.
First Paragraph (2nd and 3rd moves)
The first paragraph of your job application letter should include information on why you are writing. Mention the job you are applying for and where you found the position.
Middle Paragraphs (4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th moves)
The next section of your cover letter should describe why you are applying, and when you will be available to start. Next, you should state what you have to offer the company. Make strong connections between your abilities and the requirements listed in the job posting. Mention specifically how your skills and experience match the job. Expand on the information in your resume, don't just repeat it. Subsequently, ask for further details and terms of employment. Finally, name your references to support your candidature.
Final Paragraph (9th and 10th)
Conclude your application letter by referring to the documents you have enclosed and also thanking the employer for considering you for the position. Politely end the letter.
Signature (11th move)

Appendix E: Sample Job Application Letter

Ario Javan   Mostafa Mirzaii
8 Jones Circle,   Marketing Manager
Smithtown, CA 08067   Company 87 Delaware
909-555-5555   Road Hatfield, CA 08065
                                              ariogg@gmail.com
11/05/2012

Dear Mr. Mirzaii,
I am writing to apply for the programmer position advertised in the Tehran Times on March 29, 2013.
The opportunity presented in this listing sounds very interesting to me. I believe that my strong technical experience and education will make me a very competitive candidate for this position. I am currently available to start the job and I believe the key strengths that I possess for success in this position include: 1) I have successfully designed, developed, and supported live use application; 2) I strive for continued excellence; and last that 3) I provide exceptional contributions to customer service for all customers. With a B.S. degree in Computer Programming, I have a full understanding of the full life cycle of a software development project. Regarding working conditions, could you possibly send me information about working hours, the company's locality, and our current representatives in Europe? Further, please take note that Dr. White has known me for a couple of years and can provide you with further information about my personality.
I can be reached anytime via email at ariog@gmail.com or my cell phone, 909-555-5555. Please see my resume, enclosed to this letter, for additional information on my experience.
Thank you for sparing your time and consideration. I look forward to speaking with you about this employment opportunity.
Sincerely yours,
Ario Javan

Appendix F: Sample DFG Participant Letter and Accompanying Direct Corrective Feedback

Dear Mr. Kareem,

             am writing to apply for (or) am writing as I would like to apply for
I am ~~applying for~~ the job of Assistant Manager of your fast-food restaurant which you advertised

in Tehran Times last week.

                believe   Add a comma (,)
As a candidate, I ~~belive~~ I suit the position well since I have been working in various international
                        with   kinds   cuisine

Moreover,
restaurants for the last 5 years so I am already familiar to different kind of cuisine. What is more?
                        about   Add 5th move (stating availability)

here.
I am patient and hard-working and extremely enthusiastic on working in the catering industry. To
                               S   R   M

verify all this, you can contact Mrs. Azeri, the superstar restaurant manager.
 I thank you   candidature
Thanks in advance for considering my candidate.
Yours sincerely
Best regards,

(Signature)

                      Add 7th move (enquiring employment terms,
                      e.g., salary, working hours, number of days
                          off per month, etc.) here.

                  Before 10th move (ending politely), add 9th move
                  (enclosing documents).

Note that the original letter was in hand-written form but the researchers type-wrote it for better legibility. In so doing, it was attempted to present as exact a reproduction of the original letter as feasible.
Note further that corrections relating to composition quality and moves quality are done in green and red, respectively.

Appendix G: Sample IFG Participant Letter and Accompanying Indirect Corrective Feedback

Dear Mr. Kareem,

I am writing as I would like to apply for the position of Assisstant Manager, advertised   1 error
in Tehran Times last week.
I think I'm a suitable applicant as have gathered a valuable experience working as a   3 errors
shop keeper's assisstant in a big supermarket. This can help me deal with all kinds of   1 error
costumers. I should also add that I will be available and ready for start the job on May   2 errors
15. In addition to Persian and English, I can speak German and Arabic fluently and have
a good understanding of French and Russian. Moreover, since I'm really eager on work   1 error
with you, I want to know more about the terms of employment for exmaple specific   2 errors
responsibilities, working hours and so forth.
I'm attaching my resume with this letter so that you can have better understanding of my   2 errors
educational and profession background.   1 error
I profoundly thank you for considering my application,
Best regards,

(Signature)

1 move is missing and 1 move, despite being present, needs to be revised.

Note that the original letter was in hand-written form but the researchers type-wrote it for better legibility. In so doing, it was attempted to present as exact a reproduction of the original letter as feasible.
Note further that indications relating to composition quality and moves quality are in green and red, respectively.