



REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: IJAR-57991

Title: EFFECTS OF DIRECT AND INDIRECT CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK ON VIETNAMESE EFL NINTH GRADERS: A CASE OF PAST CONTINUOUS TENSE LESSONS .

Recommendation:

Accept as it is

Accept after minor revision.....

Accept after major revision

Do not accept (*Reasons below*)

Rating	Excel.	Good	Fair	Poor
Originality		√		
Techn. Quality		√		
Clarity		√		
Significance		√		

Reviewer's ID: JPR-212

Detailed Reviewer's Report

This manuscript presents a well-designed, methodologically sound, and clearly reported quasi-experimental study on a genuinely under-researched population: young Vietnamese EFL learners (ninth graders) and their response to direct versus indirect written corrective feedback (WCF) on the past continuous tense. Unlike many previous studies that focus on university-level learners or English majors, this study addresses a significant empirical gap. The mixed-methods design, the inclusion of both short-term and long-term measures (delayed posttest at week 5), and the attention to learners' emotional perceptions are notable strengths. The finding that both feedback types were equally effective—and that both showed significant long-term decay—has clear pedagogical implications. The paper is well-organized, the statistical analysis (Mixed ANOVA, independent t-tests) is appropriate and correctly interpreted, and the discussion engages thoughtfully with relevant theoretical frameworks (Noticing Hypothesis, Affective Filter, Truscott's skepticism). Only minor revisions are required before acceptance.

Minor Revisions (Recommended):

- Clarify Inconsistent Terminology:** The paper uses multiple abbreviations for written corrective feedback interchangeably: WCF, CF, and sometimes "corrective feedback." While not confusing, consistency would improve professionalism. Recommend using "WCF" throughout, as introduced in the abstract. Similarly, "Direct CF" and "Indirect CF" appear alongside "Direct WCF" and "Indirect WCF" – standardize to one form (e.g., Direct WCF / Indirect WCF).
- Correct Duplicate Text in Data Analysis Section:** On page 3, the "Data Analysis" subsection appears twice verbatim. The first instance (lines 92-98) describes the instruments; the second instance (lines 101-107) repeats almost identical text. This appears to be a copy-paste error during manuscript preparation. The duplicate section should be removed, leaving only one clear, consolidated description of the data collection and analysis procedures.
- Improve Figure Quality and Referencing:**
 - Figures 1 and 2** are referenced in the text but are not fully visible in the provided PDF. The captions ("Figure1.Descriptive Frequencies for Student Perceptions for Feedback" and "Figure2.Student Perceptions about the Usefulness of Feedback") appear, but the actual bar charts or data visualizations are missing or corrupted. The authors must ensure that the final submission includes complete, legible figures. Alternatively, if figures cannot be

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recovered, the quantitative perception data (means and standard deviations already in Table 3) could be presented in a simple bar chart or described more fully in text.

- Within the text, the figures are referenced as "Figures 1 and 2" (line 139), but there is no inline reference to these figures in the surrounding paragraph. Add a sentence such as: "As illustrated in Figure 1, students in both groups rated feedback usefulness highly."

4. **Minor Writing and Formatting Corrections:**

- **Abstract:** The phrase "mixed- method" should be "mixed-methods" (hyphenation consistent). The clause "learners' emotional awareness" appears without full context – consider "learners' emotional responses to feedback" for clarity.
- **Line 50:** "evaluative linguistic input an instructor provides" – add "that" after "input" for readability: "evaluative linguistic input that an instructor provides."
- **Line 54:** "categorisation" – use consistent spelling. The paper mixes British ("categorisation") and American ("realize," "generalizability") English. Choose one variant and apply throughout. For an international journal, American English is typically preferred, but either is acceptable if consistent.
- **Line 64:** "positive, pragmatic views" – comma is correct but consider "positive and pragmatic views" for flow.
- **Line 73:** "washback pressures" – this term is appropriate but may be unfamiliar to some readers. A brief parenthetical definition ("i.e., the influence of high-stakes exams on classroom practices") would be helpful on first use.
- **Line 92-98 and 101-107:** As noted above, remove the duplicate "Data Analysis" section. Consolidate the unique information (e.g., the mention of "five to seven sentences" appears only in the first instance; the mention of "different thematic contexts" appears only in the second). Merge these into a single, coherent paragraph.
- **Line 119:** "higher trend" is awkward. Replace with "increase" or "upward trend."
- **Line 168:** "intermediate language" – should this be "interlanguage" (the standard SLA term for a learner's transitional linguistic system)? Yes. Change to "interlanguage."
- **Line 171-176:** The example of Student 5 is excellent and adds valuable qualitative depth. However, the scoring (0 points, 1 point) is introduced here but not explained in the methods section. Add a brief note in the Data Analysis section explaining the scoring rubric for the writing tasks (e.g., "Each correct use of the past continuous tense received 1 point; maximum possible score per assignment was 7").
- **Line 193:** "unaware of red ink" – this phrase is slightly unclear. Do you mean "they do not perceive red ink as personal criticism"? Rephrase for clarity.
- **Line 210:** "diverse morphological characteristics" – the past continuous tense is a morphosyntactic structure, not strictly morphological. Change to "morphosyntactic" or "rule-based grammatical structures."
- **Line 215:** "encouraging environment" – this is introduced as a finding but not explicitly measured. The questionnaire measured "emotional response" (including anxiety/disappointment), which is a reasonable proxy, but the phrase "encouraging environment" is an inference. Soften to "a non-threatening learning context" or "an environment perceived as supportive."

5. **Enhance the Questionnaire Description:** The 10-item questionnaire is mentioned (lines 99-100, 106-107), but the actual items are not provided in the manuscript or an appendix. Given that the perception data are central to research question 2, the authors should include the full questionnaire as an appendix or, at minimum, list the 10 items in the text. This allows readers to evaluate content validity. For example:

- "Item 1: The feedback helped me identify my errors in using the past continuous tense."

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- "Item 6: I felt anxious when I saw corrections on my paper." (Reverse-scored) Providing the items would also clarify the constructs "Perceived Usefulness" (Items 1-5) and "Emotional Response" (Items 6-10).
- 6. **Reference Check:** A few references appear to be missing or incomplete:
 - **Michaud et al. (2025)** is cited on line 185 but is not in the reference list. The reference list includes Michaud, McDonough, & Parent (2025) – that appears to be the same source, but the citation in text should match exactly. Verify and correct.
 - **Krashen (1982)** is cited (line 194 and reference list) – correct.
 - **Schmidt (1990)** is cited in the discussion (line 164) but does not appear in the reference list. The Noticing Hypothesis is attributed to Schmidt (1990, 2001). Add: Schmidt, R. (1990). The role of consciousness in second language learning. *Applied Linguistics*, 11(2), 129-158.
 - **Truscott (1996)** is correctly cited and listed.
 - **Ferris (2004)** is correctly cited and listed.
 - **Field (2013)** appears in the reference list but is not cited in the text. If it was used for statistical guidance but not directly cited, either add an in-text citation (e.g., in the Data Analysis section: "Following Field (2013), we tested for sphericity") or remove it.

Optional Suggestions (Not Required for Acceptance):

7. **Consider Adding Effect Size Interpretations:** While partial eta squared (η^2) is reported, providing a brief interpretation (e.g., " $\eta^2 = .104$ represents a medium-to-large effect size per Cohen's guidelines") would help readers unfamiliar with this metric.
8. **Explicitly State the Absence of a Control Group:** The design includes two experimental groups (Direct and Indirect) but no true control group (no feedback). This is appropriate given the pedagogical context (withholding feedback from young learners preparing for exams would be unethical). However, explicitly acknowledging this limitation in the discussion or limitations section would strengthen the manuscript: "This study did not include a no-feedback control group for ethical reasons; therefore, we cannot attribute the observed gains solely to WCF as opposed to practice effects or test familiarity."
9. **Expand Practical Pedagogical Recommendations:** The conclusion mentions "cycles of reinforcement" and "making students revise work." Given the finding that long-term retention decayed significantly, a more detailed practical recommendation would be valuable. For example: "Teachers should schedule a brief review of past continuous tense two weeks after the initial feedback cycle, using a short dictogloss or sentence-combining task that reactivates the corrected forms."

Summary Assessment:

This is a strong, well-executed study that addresses a genuine gap in the WCF literature by focusing on young EFL learners at a critical transition point (ninth grade in Vietnam). The quasi-experimental design is appropriate, the statistical analyses are correct, and the integration of quantitative accuracy data with qualitative perception data is a clear strength. The finding that direct and indirect feedback produce equivalent short-term gains and equivalent long-term decay challenges some theoretical assumptions (e.g., Ferris's preference for indirect feedback) while supporting others (e.g., Truscott's concerns about durability). The paper is clearly written and logically organized.

Only minor revisions are needed: removing the duplicate text in the methods section, correcting the reference list (add Schmidt, 1990; verify Michaud et al. citation), providing the full questionnaire items, and fixing the missing/ corrupted figures. Once these minor issues are addressed, the manuscript will be suitable for acceptance. I recommend "**Accept after minor revision.**"