The Effect of Different Types of Corrective Feedback on EFL Learners' Accuracy in Using English Articles by the Eleventh Grade Science Students of SMA N 3 Bontang

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Abstract

This article reports on a study that investigated the effectiveness of direct-focused corrective feedback and metalinguistic focused feedback on EFL learners' accuracy in using English articles. The study employed a pretest–posttest design with five treatment sessions. The design of this study was quasi-experimental design. The sample of this study were 60 of the eleventh grade science students. They were assigned into two groups, direct-focused corrective feedback group and metalinguistic-focused feedback group. The linguistic target was English articles. A fill in the blank exercise were employed to measure any development in learners' ability to use articles. The results revealed that both direct-focused corrective feedback and metalinguistic focused feedback lead to greater learners' accuracy of using English articles. The direct-focused feedback is found more effective than metalinguistic-focused feedback.

Keywords: Corrective Feedback, Direct Corrective Feedback, Metalinguistic Explanation, English Articles
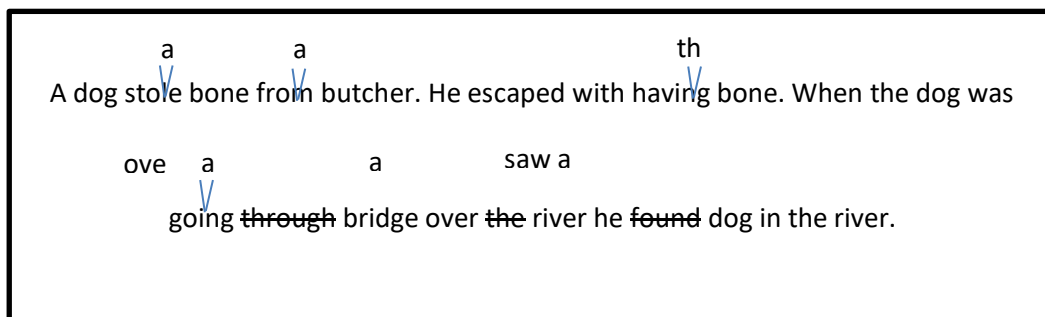
1. Introduction

Scholars defined Written Corrective Feedback (WCF) in various ways. Wang and Jiang (2014) simply defined it as error correction or grammar correction. Others perceived WCF as written feedback given by the teacher on a student's paper with the aim of improving grammatical accuracy as well as written feedback on idiomatic usage (Ducken, 2014) or Sun (2013) states "various ways a reader can respond to a second language writer by indicating that some usage in the writing does not conform to the norms of the target language". There are various types of corrective feedback that are used by teachers to mark their students' writing and the types of WCF teachers use, it has been reported, are based on the teachers' wants and needs (Lee, 2004).

Direct Feedback & Indirect Feedback

According to Bitchener & Ferris (2012), direct feedback is a feedback which provides some form of explicit correction of linguistic form or structure above or near the linguistic error and usually involves the crossing out of an unnecessary word/phrase/morpheme, the insertion of a missing word/phrase/morpheme, and/or the provision of the correct form or structure. Example 1 illustrates direct feedback.
An example of direct corrective feedback (Ellis, 2009, p. 99)

A dog stole *a* bone from *a* butcher. He escaped with having *the* bone. When the dog was going ~~through~~ *ove* bridge over ~~the~~ *a* river he ~~found~~ *saw a* dog in the river.

Indirect feedback is a feedback which indicates an error has been made but it does not provide a correction or explicit meta-linguistic information. (Bitchener, J. & Ferris, D. R., 2012).

An example of indirect corrective feedback (Ellis, 2009, p. 100)

A dog stole X bone from X butcher. He escaped with XhavingX X bone. When the dog was going XthroughX X bridge over XtheX river he found X dog in the river.

X = missing word

X____X = wrong word

As already noted, direct feedback straightly helps learners to correct their errors, while indirect feedback can only indicate their errors without directly correcting it. Direct feedback probably better than indirect feedback with student writers of low levels of proficiency (Ferris & Roberts, 2001).

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2. Literature Review

Focused Feedback & Unfocused Feedback

Basically, there are two ways for teacher to correct students' errors. Teacher can choose all the errors (unfocused feedback) or only select specific error types for correction (focused feedback). Unfocused feedback deal with every aspect of student errors, when the focused feedback is way simpler since it is only choose some kind of error types.

An example of focused feedback (Choi, 2013, p. 11)

The thesis statement is crucial to an essay. Because it gives readers a the first idea of what will cover in the essay. A good thesis statement contain two parts: the first part should explains the purpose of the essay

a

An Exmple of unfocused feedback (Choi, 2013, p. 11)

Metalinguistic-focused Feedback

The thesis statement is crucial to ~~an~~ essay. ~~Because it~~ It gives readers ~~a~~ the first idea of

what will ~~cover~~ be covered in the essay. A good thesis statement contains two parts:

the first part should ~~explains~~ explain the purpose of the essay

Comment from the instructor: You might want to revise this paragraph to be more

Metalinguistic feedback involves providing learners with some form of explicit comment about the nature of the errors they have made. The explicit comment can take two forms. The first is by giving codes/labels for different kind of errors, and the second is by providing students with metalinguistic explanations of their errors (Ellis, 2009).

For the first type, it is slightly the same as indirect feedback because it also indicates the error. The difference is, it helps the students to know what kind of error they have made by giving abbreviated labels for different kinds of errors.

For the second type, metalinguistic feedback consists of providing students with metalinguistic explanations of their errors. It can be in the form of notes as the teacher write down the explanation below the students' text, or in the form of oral explanation about the errors. In Bitchener and Knoch (2010), metalinguistic feedback takes the form of an oral explanation explaining the use of English definite and indefinite articles. They report that the learners who received direct feedback in their study failed to develop awareness of the rule whereas those receiving the explicit grammatical explanation demonstrated a much better understanding. In this current study, metalinguistic feedback take the same form as in Bitchener and Knoch.

Research on the Effectiveness of Written Corrective Feedback

Since there are some types of feedback, some studies were conducted to gain deeper understanding about the effectiveness of each type of feedback.

Direct vs. Indirect Feedback

Van Beuningen, De Jong & Kuiken (2008) studied about the effect of direct and indirect corrective feedback on L2 learners' written accuracy. The study was conducted at two Dutch secondary schools with multilingual students populations. The total number of participants were 62 students and they were assigned into four groups (direct, indirect, practice, and self-correction). The results of the study showed that written corrective feedback lead to greater accuracy than the two control groups (practice and self-correction), and the direct group was outperformed the indirect group.

Further, Sheen (2007) investigated the relative effect of two types of direct feedback (error correction and written metalinguistic explanation) with 91 intermediate ESL learners and found that those who received WCF outperformed those who received no feedback. She

also found no difference between the two feedback options in her immediate post-test. Similarly, Bitchener (2008) investigated the effectiveness of other direct feedback combinations, and found that no difference was observed between the three treatment combinations. Lately, hashemnezhad & Mohammadnejad (2012) examined the effect of direct and indirect feedback and the result showed that direct feedback group outperformed indirect feedback group.

Considering all the studies above, it is clear that corrective feedback is more effective than no feedback in bringing improvements on the accuracy of EFL learners. Moreover, the studies showed that direct feedback leads to the greater accuracy than the indirect feedback.

Focus vs. Unfocused Feedback

Ellis, Sheen, Murakami, & Takashima (2008) conducted a study focusing on the effect between focused and unfocused written corrective feedback to see whether there is significant different result or not. The findings showed that both are equally effective and there is no significant difference between focused and unfocused feedback. However, they argued may be it is because the sample size was fairly small.

More, two studies (Sheen, Wright, & Moldawa, 2009; Bitchener, 2008) also tried to see the relative effectiveness of focused and unfocused corrective feedback. In contrast with Ellis Sheen, Murakami, & Takashima (2008), they found that focused feedback group outperformed to all groups but the unfocused feedback group did not have significant effect.

Lately, Farrokhi & Sattarpour (2012) conducted a study on the effects of focused and unfocused direct written corrective feedback on improvement of grammatical accuracy of L2 learners. The study showed that focused written feedback has more positive effect on these learners' acquisition of the targeted structures than the unfocused written feedback.

Research Questions

1. Does direct-focused corrective feedback lead to more accurate use of English articles by the eleventh grade science students of SMA Negeri 3 Bontang?
2. Does metalinguistic-focused feedback lead to more accurate use of English articles by the eleventh grade science students of SMA Negeri 3 Bontang?
3. Is there any significant difference in the effect between using direct-focused corrective feedback and metalinguistic-focused feedback on learners' accuracy in using English articles by the eleventh grade science students of SMA Negeri 3 Bontang?

3. Methods

Design

The study followed a pretest–posttest design, with five treatment sessions between the pretest and posttest. The participants (N=60) were assigned into two groups, direct-focused corrective feedback group and metalinguistic-focused feedback group. The participants' ability to use articles was measured in fill in the blank exercise. First of all, the pre-test was administered. After that, the treatments was conducted. The DCF group received direct-focused feedback as the treatment, meanwhile the Meta-focused group received oral metalinguistic explanation feedback. It followed by a post-test, with five treatment sessions before the post-test.

Participants

The 60 participants were the eleventh grade science students in SMA N 3 Bontang. The researcher chose two classes which has similar average writing scores. The scores was taken from the English teacher. The classes involved in this study were XI IPA 2 and XI IPA 3. The average score of XI IPA 2 is 72.2 and the average score of XI IPA 3 is 73.6. Therefore, XI IPA 2 was assigned as DCF group and the XI IPA 3 was assigned as Meta-focused group.

Instrument

Fill in the blank exercise as in Bitchener (2008) was used as the pre and post test in this study. They were chosen because they can simply illustrate students' accuracy in using English Articles.

A sample of fill in the blank exercise
1. This morning I bought ... newspaper and … magazine. … newspaper is in my bag but I don't know where I put … magazine.

For the treatments, five pictures were used as in Bitchener & Knoch (2010). They were chosen because it is important to create a context in students' mind. Therefore, it will stimulate them to use the English articles naturally in their writing.

Target Structure

The target structure of this study is English articles. English articles is chosen because of some reasons. First, EFL learners continue to make errors in the use of the English article system (Bitchener et al., 2005). Difficulties occur when deciding whether the definite or indefinite article should be used (Shintani, Ellis, & Suzuki, 2014). Second, English articles is considered as "treatable" error categories (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012).

In this study, the use of English articles is focuses on four functional uses, which are:
- The referential indefinite article "a/an". It is used when referring something for the first time (first mention), e.g.: there is a woman in front of the door. The woman is wearing blue jacket and red skirt.
- The referential definite article "the". It is used when referring to something that has been mentioned before (subsequent mentions), e.g.: there is a woman in front of the door. The woman is wearing blue jacket and red skirt.
- Non-generic "a/an", e.g.: it was an exciting party.
- Non-generic definite "the", e.g.: The baby is crying loudly.

Treatment

This study was divided into three main steps which relate and support each other. The first step was the pre-test, the second step was the treatments, and the third step was the post-test. First of all, all the participants completed the pre-test. The pre-test was in the form of fill in the blank exercise.

In meeting 1, both groups were given writing task 1. The participants were given a picture to describe. The picture was about beach scene. Purposely, there were some activities inside the picture (e.g.: someone sells ice cream, children playing sand, etc.) to stimulate them in describing it, and for the English articles to appear naturally in their writing. They were

given 20 minutes to provide short descriptions of the picture in English. The text consisted around 12-15 sentences about what the students see in the given picture. After they finished their writing, the text was collected by the researcher.

In meeting 2, both groups received their first feedback on their text about beach scene. The feedback was given by the researcher. Group A got the direct-focused feedback, while group B received the oral metalinguistic explanation feedback. After they received the feedback, they got five minutes to study their mistakes and then five minutes to rewrite their text based on the feedback and then asked to complete the writing task 2 (park scene).

In meeting 3, both groups received their second feedback and then asked to study their feedback and after that completed the writing task 3 about street scene. The treatment were same in meeting 4 and meeting 5, they received the feedback first and then asked to study and rewrite their text. The difference was only on the pictures that they had to describe. The picture used in meeting 4 was about shopping scene and the picture used in meeting 5 was about airport scene. Then in the last week both groups received their last feedback and then asked to study their feedback and after that completed the post-test. In sum, research plan of this study is illustrated in the table.

Table 1.1

	Group A	Group B
Pre-test		
Meeting 1 - 5	Direct-focused feedback	Oral Metalinguistic Explanation
Post-test		

4. Result

The Result of Pre-Test

The mean score of the DCF group's pretest was 59.17. The mean score was categorized as a fair score based on the conversion table of 2013 curriculum. Meanwhile, the mean score of Meta-focused group's pretest was 61.49. The mean score was categorized as a fair score. The both groups score frequency distribution are presented in the figure below:

Figure 1.1 Pre-test score frequency distribution
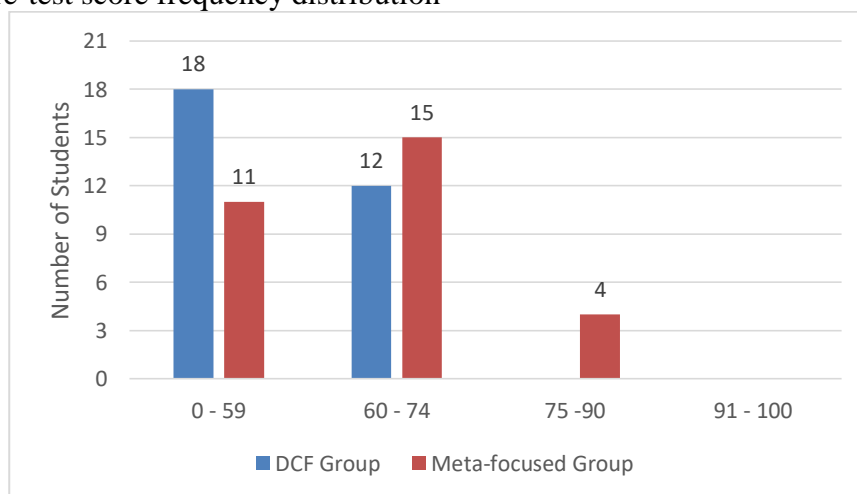
Based on the figure 1.1 above, it can be stated that there was no student got excellent score. There were only 4 students (6%) got good scores in Meta-focused group. Most of the students got fair (45%) and poor (48.33%) scores.

The Result of Post-Test

The mean score of the DCF group's posttest was 80.12. The mean score was categorized as a good score. Meanwhile, the mean score of Meta-focused group's posttest was 75.83. The mean score was categorized as a good score. The both groups score frequency distribution are presented in the figure below:
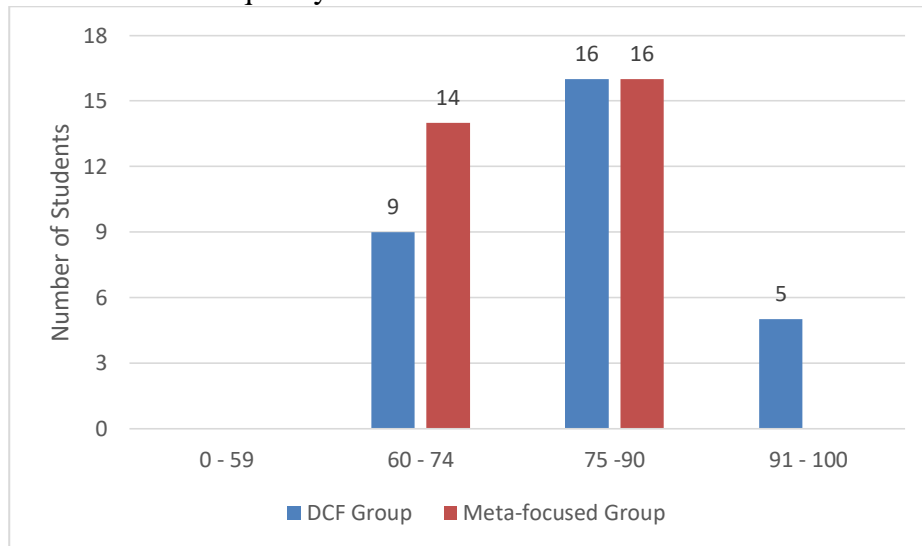
Figure 1.2 Post-test score frequency distribution

Figure 1.2 showed that there was no student got poor score. There were 5 students (8.33%) got excellent scores in DCF group. Most of the students got good (53.33%) and fair (38.33%) scores.

Data Analysis

Dependent T-Test of DCF Group

To answer the first research question, the researcher analyzed the data by using dependent t-test in SPSS 21. It used to see the effect or significant difference between the students' accuracy in using English articles before and after treatments. The table below showed the detail computation by using SPSS 21:

Table 1.2 The Difference between Pre- and Post-test
Paired sample statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pre DCF Group	30	59.17	7.542	1.377
Post DCF Group	30	80.12	9.175	1.675

Paired sample test

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Pre DCF - Post DCF	-20.951	11.047	2.017	-25.076	-16.826	-10.388	29	.000

Figure 1.3 Pre- and Post-test of DCF Group Frequency Distribution
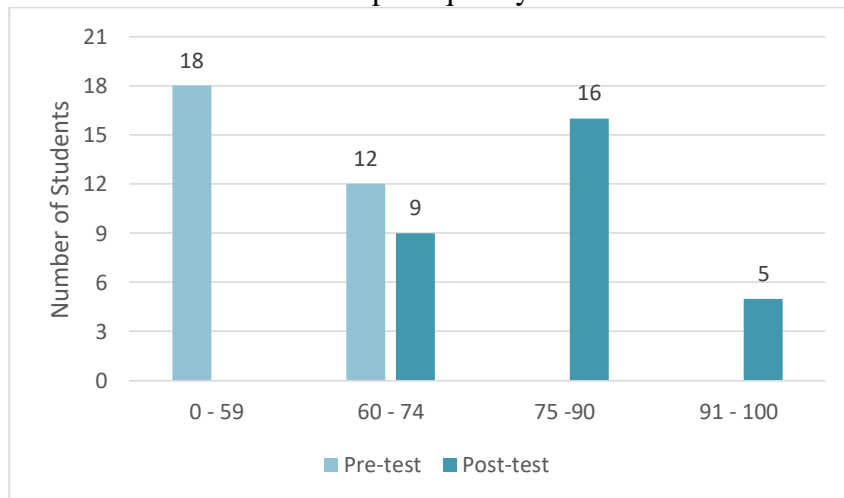
Based on the table 1.2, the data showed that the the mean score of the DCF group before getting treatment was 59.17, the total students was 30 and the standard deviation was 7.542 and standard error mean was 1.377. While after getting treatment (direct-focused corrective feedback), the mean score of the DCF Group was 80.12, the total students was 30 and the standard deviation was 9.175 and standard error mean was 1.675.

Further, it can be seen in figure 1.3 that there were 18 students got poor score and there was no student got score above 75 in the pre-test. After the treatments were given, there was no student got poor score. The score were increasing significantly and there were five students got excellent score positively.

The significant value of the difference between two mean scores was 0.000 < 0.005 and t-value was smaller than -t-table (-10.388 < -1.699). So, it can be concluded that the Null hypothesis (Ho) was rejected and the Alternative hypothesis (Ha) was accepted. It means that direct-focused corrective feedback lead to more accurate use of English articles.

Dependent T-Test of Meta-focused Group

To answer the second research question, the researcher analyzed the data by using dependent t-test in SPSS 21. It used to see the effect or significant difference between the students' accuracy in using English articles before and after treatments. The table below showed the detail computation by using SPSS 21:

Table 1.3 The Difference between Pre- and Post-test
Paired sample statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pre ME Group	61.49	30	11.493	2.098
	Post ME Group	75.83	30	5.909	1.079

Paired sample test

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Pre ME – Post ME	-14.345	11.821	2.158	-18.759	-9.931	-6.647	29	.000

Figure 1.4 Pre- and Post-test of Meta-focused Group Frequency Distribution
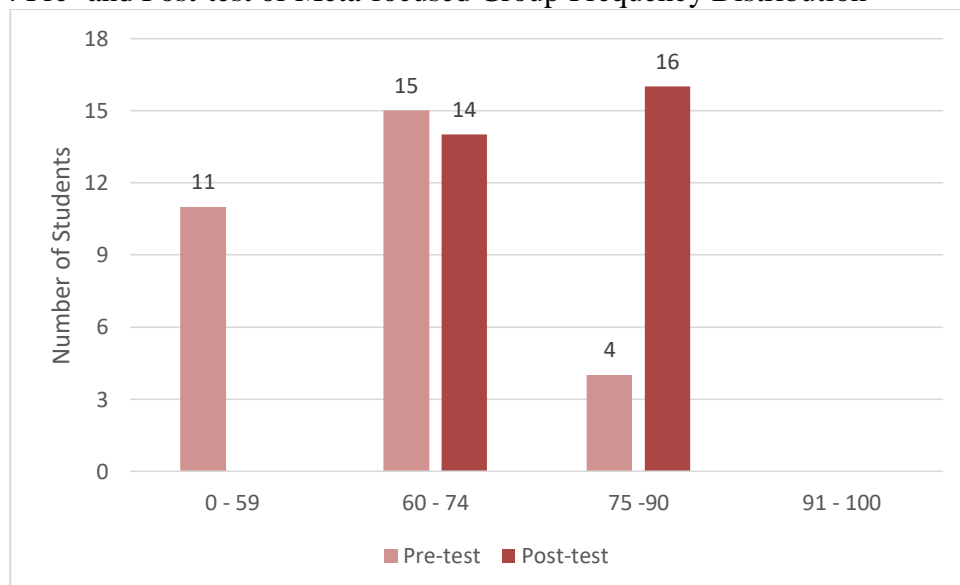
Based on the table 1.3, the data showed that the the mean score of the Meta-focused group before getting treatment was 61.49, the total students was 30 and the standard deviation was 11.493 and standard error mean was 2.098. While after getting treatment (metalinguistic-

focused feedback), the mean score of the Meta-focused group was 75.83, the total students was 30 and the standard deviation was 5.909 and standard error mean was 1.079.

Further, it can be seen in figure 1.4 that there were 11 students got poor score in the pre-test. After the treatments were given, there was no student got poor score. The score were increasing and there were 16 students got good score in the post-test instead of only four students in the pre-test.

The significant value of the difference between two mean scores was 0.000 < 0.005 and t-value was smaller than -t-table (-6.647 < -1.699). So, it can be concluded that the Null hypothesis (Ho) was rejected and the Alternative hypothesis (Ha) was accepted. It means that metalinguistic-focused feedback lead to more accurate use of English articles.

Independent Sample T-Test

To answer the last research question, the researcher used independent t-test to see whether there is a significant difference or not between using direct-focused corrective feedback and metalinguistic-focused feedback on learners' accuracy in using English articles.

$$t = \frac{\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2}{\sqrt{\left(\frac{SS_1 + SS_2}{n_1 + n_2 - 2}\right)\left(\frac{1}{n_1} + \frac{1}{n_2}\right)}}$$

$$= \frac{4.29}{\sqrt{\left(\frac{3453.462}{58}\right)\left(\frac{1}{30} + \frac{1}{30}\right)}} = \frac{4.29}{\sqrt{(59.542)(0.067)}} = \frac{4.29}{\sqrt{3.989}} = \frac{4.29}{1.997} = \mathbf{2.15}$$

The result of the calculation showed that the value of t calculated was 2.15. The value of t-table with df for n=58 (60-2=58) at the degree of significance 5% was 1.672. It shows that the result of t calculated is higher than t-table (2.15 > 1.672). Since the t calculated is greater than t-table, it means that the alternative hypothesis (Ha) is accepted. It can be concluded that there was a significant difference between using direct-focused corrective feedback and metalinguistic-focused feedback on learners' accuracy in using English articles by the eleventh grade science students of SMA Negeri 3 Bontang.

5. Discussion

The researcher first conducted a pre-test to ensure the similarity between two different groups. Based on the result of the pre-test, t calculated was -0.92. The value of t-table with df for n=58 (60-2=58) at the degree of significance 5% was 1.672. It shows that the result of t calculated is higher than - t-table (- 1.672 <   - 0.92). Since the t calculated is higher than - t-table, it means there was no significant different between two groups. In other words, they have relatively same ability before treatment.

In the treatment sessions, at the first time most of the participants in both groups showed slightly same results. Their writings were lack of the use of English articles (see appendix 1). Most of them were directly mention the noun without adding the articles. In the second meeting, the participants started to use articles yet they tend to use definite article 'the' instead of using indefinite article 'a/an'. After that, at the third meeting, they apparently aware that the feedback was focused on the use of articles. They started to use English articles more often in their sentence, yet there were still some mistakes. Just the same as the third, the forth meeting showed only a little change. In the last meeting, they performed better. They used English articles more accurately.

The first research question asked whether direct-focused corrective feedback lead to more accurate use of English articles or not. To answer this question, the test results of all participants in DCF group in the pre- and post were compared. The researcher found that the mean score of pre-test was 59.17 and the mean score of post-test was 80.12. It means that there was an improvement after the students got the treatment (direct-focused corrective feedback). Also, a noticeable difference is found in the range score that the students gained. There was no student got score under 60 after the treatments.

Further, the researcher analyzed the data and got the result of t-value was -10.388 < -1.699. Because of t-value was smaller than -t-table, it can be concluded that the Null hypothesis (Ho) was rejected and the Alternative hypothesis (Ha) was accepted. It means that direct-focused corrective feedback lead to more accurate use of English articles. This result is linear with Hashemnezhad & Mohammadnejad (2012) which found that direct feedback leads to greater accuracy. Also, this result draw an evidence to Ellis, Sheen, Murakami, & Takashima (2008) that focused feedback might be more effective than unfocused feedback.

The second research question asked whether metalinguistic-focused feedback lead to more accurate use of English articles or not. Based on the pre- and post-test of the Meta-focused group, the mean score of the pre-test was 61.49, and the mean score of post-test was 75.83. Similarly to the DCF group, it also showed an increase in the mean score. Then, the data were put into dependent t-test and the result of t-value was - 6.647 (-6.647 < -1.699). Because of t-value was smaller than - t-table, it can be concluded that the Null hypothesis (Ho) was rejected and the Alternative hypothesis (Ha) was accepted. It means that metalinguistic-focused feedback also lead to more accurate use of English articles. This outcome is same as Stefanou & Revesz (2015), which found that metalinguistic explanation helps learners to gain greater accuracy although it was not as good as the direct group.

Since both types of feedback showed good results, a question appear: which one is more effective than another. To answer this question (the third research question), the researcher first calculate the both groups' post-test result to see whether there is a significant difference or not by using independent t-test. Based on the findings of the post-test calculation, the result showed that the value of t calculated was 2.15. Because of the t calculated is higher than t-table (2.15 > 1.672), the alternative hypothesis is accepted. It means that there was a significant difference between using direct-focused corrective feedback and metalinguistic explanation on learners' accuracy in using English articles.

To make it clear, the test results of all participants in pre-and post-test are presented in the figure 1.5

Figure 1.5 The test results of all participants in pre-and post-test
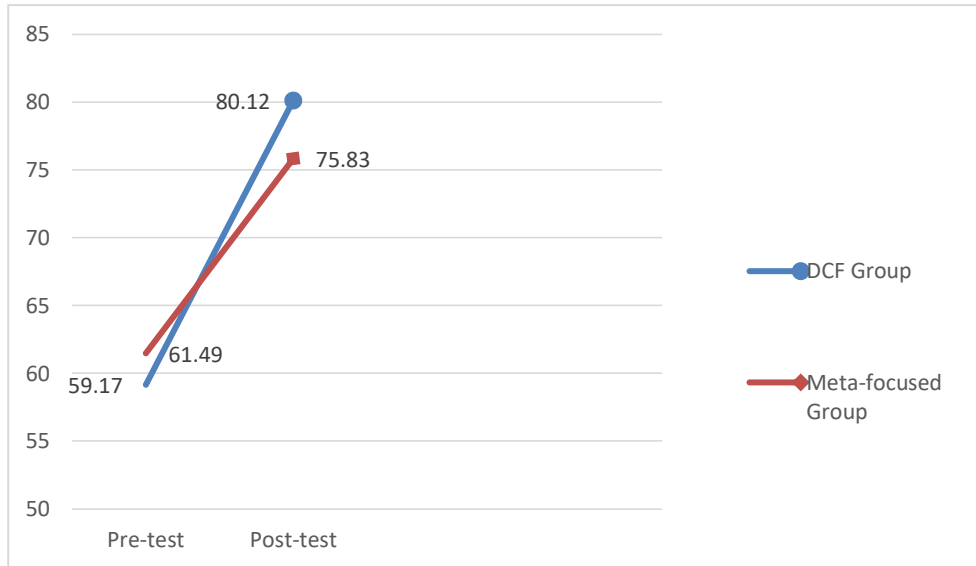
From the figure 1.5 above, we can see that the mean of DCF group was increasing 20.95, higher than the Meta-focused group: 16.66. It means that direct-focused corrective feedback might be more effective than metalinguistic-focused feedback.

This results is linear with the previous studies, Shintani, Ellis, & Suzuki (2014) who revealed that direct-focused corrective feedback is more effective than metalinguistic explanation in the short term. It may be because the students easily know their mistakes and the correct answer of it. Moreover, as in Ellis, Sheen, Murakami, & Takashima (2008), deciding focus feedback may help learners to learn faster and better. This also similar with Stefanou & Revesz (2015) which showed that direct corrective feedback leads to the greater accuracy in the use of English articles.

Based on the explanation above, it is concluded that both direct-focused corrective feedback and metalinguistic explanation lead to the greater accuracy, yet the direct-focused corrective feedback might be more effective. Both helps students to learn their mistakes, and it helps them to understand better.

6. Conclusion

The result of the test with direct-focused corrective feedback as the treatment by the eleventh grade science students of SMA Negeri 3 Bontang was good. It can be seen in the post test result of the DCF group. The mean score of DCF group was 80.12 which was categorized as a good score. The paired sample t-test was -10.388, smaller than t-table (-10.388 < -1.699). It showed that direct-focused corrective feedback leads to greater learners' accuracy of using English articles.

The result of the test with metalinguistic-focused feedback as the treatment by the eleventh grade science students of SMA Negeri 3 Bontang was good. It can be seen in the post test result of the Meta-focused group. The mean score of Meta-focused group was 75.83 which was categorized as a good score. The paired sample t-test was -6.647, smaller than t-table (-6.647 < -1.699). Thus, it also showed that metalinguistic-focused feedback leads to greater learners' accuracy of using English articles.

The result of independent t-test between both groups showed that t calculated was 2.15. The value of t-table with degree of freedom 58 at the degree of significance 5% was 1.672. It is concluded that the result of t calculated is higher than t-table (2.15 > 1.672). It means that

the alternative hypothesis (Ha) is accepted. It can be concluded that there was a significant difference between using direct-focused corrective feedback and metalinguistic-focused feedback on learners' accuracy in using English articles by the eleventh grade science students of SMA Negeri 3 Bontang. The direct-focused corrective feedback is found more effective than metalinguistic-focused feedback. It can be seen from the mean of DCF group which was increasing 20.95 before and after treatment, higher than the Meta-focused group: 16.66.

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