THE EFFECT OF WRITTEN CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK ON GRAMMATICAL ACCURACY OF PASSIVE VOICE TENSES AND UNACCUSATIVE VERBS OF PAKISTANI ESL UNDERGRADUATES

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by

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ESL	English as a Second Language
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
WCF	Written Corrective Feedback
DCF	Direct Corrective Feedback
ICF	Indirect Corrective Feedback
ME	Metalinguistic Explanation
MOE	Ministry of Education and Training
HEC	Higher Education Commission
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
ICC	Interclass Correlation Coefficient
GJT	Grammaticality Judgement Task
EWP	Elicited Written Production
OPT	Oxford Placement Test

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KESAN MAKLUM BALAS PEMBETULAN BERTULIS TERHADAP KETEPATAN TATABAHASA KATA KERJA PASIF DAN KATA KERJA BUKAN AKUSATIF SARJANA MUDA ESL PAKISTAN

ABSTRAK

Kajian literatur yang dijalankan adalah mengenai maklum balas pembetulan bertulis (WCF) penuh dengan kajian yang telah mengkaji keberkesanan WCF pada kata kerja pasif dan kata kerja bukan akusatif (terlatih dan tidak terlatih), walaupun menghadapi cabaran bagi pelajar bahasa Inggeris dalam pembinaan ayat pasif. Oleh itu, kajian semasa dijalankan untuk mengkaji kesan WCF terhadap ketepatan tatabahasa bagi kata kerja pasif (sedang berlaku, telah berlaku dan akan berlaku) serta kata kerja tidak akusatif (terlatih dan tidak terlatih) bagi pelajar Sarjana Muda ESL Pakistan. Kajian ini adalah berlandaskan kepada tiga matlamat: 1) mengkaji sama ada penyediaan WCF meningkatkan ketepatan tatabahasa bagi kata kerja pasif; 2) meneliti sama ada penyediaan WCF meningkatkan ketepatan tatabahasa bagi kata kerja bukan akusatif (terlatih dan tidak terlatih); 3) memeriksa jenis WCF yang paling berkesan dalam membantu pelajar Sarjana Muda ESL Pakistan meningkatkan ketepatan tatabahasa bagi kata kerja pasif dan kata kerja tidak akusatif (terlatih dan tidak terlatih). Bagi memenuhi matlamat ini, penyelidik menggunakan reka bentuk penyelidikan kuasi-eksperimen iaitu lima kelas terbaik bagi Bahasa Inggeris Fungsian dengan jumlah 172 peserta telah diambil dan kemudiannya dibahagikan secara rawak kepada lima kumpulan, antaranya maklum balas pembetulan langsung (n=35), maklum balas pembetulan tidak langsung (n=38), maklum balas pembetulan langsung + penjelasan

metalinguistik (n=32), maklum balas pembetulan tidak langsung + penjelasan metalinguistik (n=34), dan kumpulan kawalan (n=33). Data dikumpul melalui ujian penulisan, ujian pengeluaran bertulis yang dikeluarkan, dan tugasan pertimbangan tatabahasa. Semua peserta menyelesaikan keseluruhan ujian pada ujian pra, ujian pasca dan ujian pasca tertunda. Walau bagaimanapun, hanya kumpulan rawatan yang menerima WCF semasa tiga sesi rawatan, manakala kumpulan kawalan tidak menerima sebarang maklum balas tentang kesilapan mereka. Data dianalisis secara kuantitatif menggunakan ANOVA dan ANOVA dua hala. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahawa keberkesanan WCF dalam membantu pelajar Sarjana Muda ESL Pakistan meningkatkan ketepatan tatabahasa bagi kata kerja pasif dan kata kerja tidak akusatif (terlatih dan tidak terlatih). Kumpulan rawatan secara ketara mengatasi kumpulan kawalan dari segi kata kerja pasif dalam jangka masa pendek. Walau bagaimanapun, dalam jangka masa panjang, jenis maklum balas pembetulan tidak langsung WCF yang paling tidak jelas tidak dapat mengekalkan ketepatannya. Begitu juga dengan keputusan yang mendedahkan bahawa dalam membaiki kata kerja bukan akusatif (terlatih dan tidak terlatih), kumpulan rawatan mengatasi kumpulan kawalan pada kedua-dua ujian pasca dan ujian pasca tertunda, tidak termasuk kumpulan maklum balas pembetulan tidak langsung. Dapatan kajian ini akan terus memajukan bidang WCF dan membantu sarjana L2 mengembangkan repertoir kesusasteraan WCF. Begitu juga dengan penemuan ini yang menawarkan implikasi pedagogi untuk guru, pelajar dan penggubal dasar L2.

THE EFFECT OF WRITTEN CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK ON GRAMMATICAL ACCURACY OF PASSIVE VOICE TENSES AND UNACCUSATIVE VERBS OF PAKISTANI ESL UNDERGRADUATES

ABSTRACT

The impetus for undertaking the current study was that the literature on written corrective feedback (WCF) is replete with studies that have examined the efficacy of WCF on passive voice tenses and unaccusative verbs (trained and untrained), despite the challenges English language learners face in the construction of these grammatical structures. Therefore, the current study was conducted to investigate the effects of WCF on the grammatical accuracy of passive voice tenses (present, past, and perfect) and unaccusative verbs (trained and untrained) of Pakistani ESL undergraduate learners. The study has three aims:1) examining whether the provision of WCF improves the grammatical accuracy of passive voice tenses; 2) examining whether the provision of WCF improves the grammatical accuracy of unaccusative verbs (trained and untrained); 3) examining which type of WCF is most effective in helping Pakistani ESL undergraduates improve the grammatical accuracy of passive voice tenses and unaccusative verbs (trained and untrained). To fulfil these aims, the researcher employed a quasi-experimental research design in which five intact classes of Functional English totaling 172 participants were recruited and later randomly assigned into five groups: direct corrective feedback (n=35), indirect corrective feedback (n=38), direct corrective feedback + metalinguistic explanation (n=32), indirect corrective feedback + metalinguistic explanation (n=34), and control group (n=33). The data was collected through writing tests, elicited written production tests, and grammaticality judgment tasks. All the participants completed all the tests at pre-

test, post-test, and delayed post-test. However, only the treatment groups received WCF during the three treatment sessions, while the control group did not receive any feedback on their errors. The data was analyzed quantitatively using ANOVA and two-way ANOVA. The results demonstrated the efficacy of direct corrective feedback, Indirect corrective feedback, direct+metalinguistic corrective feedback and indirect+metalinguistic corrective feedback WCF in helping Pakistani ESL undergraduates improve the grammatical accuracy of passive voice tenses in the short run, while the effect of the ICF group faded in the long-run in terms of English passive voice tense. The results further demonstrate that excluding the indirect corrective feedback type, all other types of WCF were effective in helping Pakistani ESL undergraduates improve their grammatical accuracy of unaccusative verbs (trained and untrained) both in the short and long run. The findings of the study will further push forward the field of WCF and help L2 scholars expand the repertoire of WCF literature. Similarly, the findings offer pedagogical implications for L2 teachers, learners, and policymakers.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

English is the world's most commonly taught and spoken language (Cao & Wei, 2019). It is widely used as an international language for business, education, travel, and science and technology (Cao & Wei, 2019; Rezaei et al., 2019). With the importance that English enjoys around the globe, millions of people are learning it to improve their economic and social status (Rezaei et al., 2019). Over one-third of the world's population speaks English as their first or second/foreign language (Rezaei et al., 2019). Substantiating the importance of English, Tajeddin et al. (2020) stated:

> English, nowadays, is not only spoken by its native speakers in English-speaking countries but also spoken by non-native speakers in countries like India, the Philippines, and Singapore and internationally by non-native speakers from a wide range of countries. (p.128)

English also enjoys a significant position in Pakistan as it is used in business, marketing, law, communication, media, aviation, and education (Malik, 1996; Rahman, 1996; Mahboob, 2002; Asif, 2010; Anbreen, 2015). English is regarded as a second language (ESL) in Pakistan (Anbreen, 2015; Abbasi et al., 2019; Rasool & Winke, 2019; Siddiqui & Keerio, 2019; Shamim & Rashid, 2019) that is also taught as a compulsory subject at the undergraduate and graduate levels (Ashraf, 2006; Anbreen, 2015; Rasool & Winke, 2019; Abbasi et al., 2019). Among the four English skills, writing skills are considered the most pivotal for learners' success (Haider, 2012; Dar & Khan, 2015; Fareed et al., 2016) because learners regularly interact with each other through writing, and this makes it of utmost importance. Besides, writing enables

learners to learn vocabulary, idioms, and different grammatical structures (Raimes, 1983), enabling them to express their opinions and ideas effectively.

Writing is a natural process that requires learners to be proficient in vocabulary, syntax, and grammar to form coherent and cohesive text (Erkan & Saban, 2011; Ismail, 2011; Selvaraj & Aziz, 2019). For instance, Mathieson (2017) states that passive structure is important in writing because it makes a text accurate and fluent both at secondary and higher education levels. Besides, studies have reported that the use of passive voice by writers makes a text easy to understand (Kies, 1985; Biber et al., 1999; Seoane, 2009; Amadi, 2018). However, many ESL instructors believe that passive voice is a challenging grammar structure, and learners face difficulty in its construction (Talmy, 1998; Amadi, 2018; Li & Roshan, 2019). For instance, ESL learners make a number of different errors while making a sentence in passive, including using the wrong form of past participles and omission of the verb to BE (was/were/is/are/am/have been/ has been) (Sultana, 2015; Irawan, 2019; Li & Roshan, 2019). Besides, ESL learners wrongly make the passive voice of unaccusative verbs– these are intransitive verbs whose subject is not a semantic agent (e.g., *the accident was happened*) (Mu, 2012). This phenomenon is called overpassivization, making passive of unaccusative verbs (Ju, 2000; Mu, 2012) while the active form is required.

ESL undergraduate learners in Pakistan also find it challenging to use passive structure in their writing (Khan & Sarfaraz, 2009; Farooq et al., 2012; Nawaz et al., 2015; Sultan, 2015; Sultana, 2018; Sheikh, 2020), mainly because of limited grammatical knowledge. For instance, Sultana (2015) reported that Pakistani undergraduates wrote wrong passive sentences as they failed to include the verb to BE, such as ***'no action taking as yet.'*** Khan and Sarfaraz (2009) reported that Pakistani ESL learners wrongly passivize unaccusative verbs (e.g., the mother was died).

Similarly, Akbar et al. (2018) reported that 55% of the Pakistani ESL learners, from the total of 160 in their study, found passive a problematic structure to use in their writing. Fareed et al. (2016) reported ESL university undergraduates make the most errors in grammar, including wrong use of the past participle and verb to BE. This limitation of ESL learners makes written corrective feedback (WCF) an essential pedagogical practice for teachers to help learners improve grammatical accuracy (Hyland & Hyland, 2006; Bitchener, 2012). According to Bitchener and Storch (2016, p.1), WCF is a written response of teachers to the errors made by learners. Hyland (2003) stated that WCF is a regular pedagogical practice of L2 teachers in writing classes and is central to learning to write in a second language.

Since WCF has the potential to help learners improve grammatical accuracy, it has gained popularity in second language writing globally (Ferris, 1999; Bitchener, 2008; Van Beuningen et al., 2008, 2012; Rummel & Bitchener, 2015; Karim & Nassaji, 2018; Han & Hyland, 2019; Lee, 2019; Mao & Crosthwaite, 2019). A similar situation is reported in the Pakistani ESL context, where past studies (Nasir et al., 2015; Nusrat et al., 2019b) have proven that WCF helps learners improve grammatical accuracy of select grammar structures, such as prepositions, past tense, and articles. Besides, as reported by Qasim (2016), Gul et al. (2016), and Shahzadi (2017), Pakistani ESL learners regard WCF as an important part of classes as it helps them improve grammatical accuracy. While these studies have proven the efficacy of WCF, the ability of WCF in helping learners improve the grammatical accuracy of English passive voice tenses and unaccusative verbs have not been explored (Nemati et al., 2019).

ESL learners in writing classes are bound to make errors (Ismail, 2011; Fareed et al., 2016), and the responsibility for rectifying them lies with the course teachers

(Myles, 2002; Zuo, 2017). Therefore, correcting and commenting on the written work of L2 learners is a central task of language teachers (Chen et al., 2016). The point to ponder is whether ESL teachers should provide WCF to learners' second language errors has gained considerable empirical and theoretical attention among second language researchers (Benson & DeKeyser, 2018; Suzuki et al., 2019). From a theoretical perspective, Truscott's famous rebuttal (1996; 1999) heated the debate about whether WCF should be provided. Ferris (1999, 2004,2006) raised her concern that a substantial amount of research is needed to conclude that WCF is harmful and should be abolished.

Post the famous Truscott's debate, L2 research scholars (Chandler, 2003; Sheen, 2007; Bitchener, 2008; Ellis et al., 2008; Nasir et al., 2015; Nusrat et al., 2019a) have conducted studies proving that WCF is, indeed, effective in helping learners improve grammatical accuracy. While these studies have proven the efficacy of WCF, L2 research scholars have also demonstrated that a number of different variables can moderate the effectiveness of WCF, such as type of grammar structure (simple vs complex), feedback explicitness, and the timing of test (delayed vs immediate (Shintani et al., 2014; Suzuki et al., 2019). Suzuki et al. (2019) have argued that future WCF studies should fill this vacuum in research and examine how these factors moderate the efficacy of WCF.

With no defined WCF policy in the Pakistani education system, such as using focused or unfocused WCF (Gul et al., 2014), teachers at schools, colleges, and universities resort to different feedback practices (Qasim, 2016). Some teachers play the role of "error hunter," where their only aim is to highlight their students' answer scripts as much as possible, using unfocused WCF. Bitchener and Ferris (2012) argued that "too much feedback/unfocused at any time might be de-motivating or too

burdensome for cognitive processing" (p. 128). In the Pakistani ESL context, most of the studies have focused on exploring the perception of teachers and students about WCF (Ghazal et al., 2014; Gul et al., 2016; Panhwar et al., 2016; Qasim, 2016; Shahzadi, 2017). While these studies have concluded that WCF is desirable among ESL learners in writing classes, they have provided an incomplete picture – the ability of WCF in helping learners improve the grammatical accuracy of different grammar structures such as English passive voice tenses and unaccusative verbs (trained and untrained). To date, there are a limited number of studies in a Pakistani ESL context (Nasir et al., 2015; Nusrat et al., 2019a) that have examined the efficacy of WCF on grammar structures, and these studies are narrow in scope as they have targeted the same grammar structures (prepositions and articles), echoing what Benson and DeKeyser (2018) argued that since 1990s WCF studies have targeted the same grammar structures and also reaffirming what Bitchener and Ferris (2012) stated that WCF studies have mostly targeted simple grammatical structures, leaving the area open – whether WCF can improve the grammatical accuracy of a complex grammar structure, such as English passive voice and unaccusative verbs? Besides, these studies have also not considered how different moderating variables, such as feedback explicitness, writing outcome (new writing), and complex grammar structure, influence WCF, which Suzuki et al. (2019) stated tend to influence the working of WCF.

To sum up, the limited grammatical accuracy of English passive voice tenses and unaccusative verbs of Pakistani ESL learners as reported by (Farooq et al., 2012; Sultana, 2015; Nawaz et al., 2015; Sultana, 2018; Khoso et al., 2018; Mahnoor et al., 2020), and the challenges these learners face in these structures, such as the omission of the verb to Be while making passive sentences (e.g., The horse has ridden) and

overpassivization of unaccusative verbs (e.g., the accident was happened) have prompted the researcher to conduct a study, exploring how effective WCF is in helping Pakistani ESL undergraduates improve the grammatical accuracy of English passive voice tenses (present simple, past simple, and present perfect) and unaccusative verbs (trained and untrained)– as these structures have not been explored in the previous WCF studies (Nemati et al., 2019).

1.2 Background of the Study

Any study can be best understood if it has considered the local context in which it takes place. The researcher in this background to the study discusses the position and status of the English language in Pakistan and the English language policy in Pakistan's education system. This section also covers the importance of writing skills and grammatical accuracy of passive voice and unaccusative verbs of Pakistani ESL undergraduate students, WCF's use in second language writing, and the WCF in the Pakistani higher education system.

1.2.1 Status and Position of English Language in Pakistan

Kachru (1985), based on the three concentric circles model, explained the spread of English. The circle has three layers: the inner circle, the outer circle, and the expanding circle. He explains that the inner circle refers to countries where English is spoken, such as New Zealand, Canada, the USA, and the UK. “The outer circle is the representation of the non-native varieties (ESL) that have surpassed the extended period of colonization” (p.366). The countries part of the outer circle are India, Pakistan, Malaysia, and others (Anbreen, 2015). In countries such as China, English is used as a foreign language (Rahman, 1996; Anbreen, 2015). According to the

definition of different circles, Pakistan lies in the outer circle (Xiaoqiong & Xianxing, 2011; Anbreen, 2015). In Pakistan, English is an official language and is considered a second language (Anbreen, 2015; Abbasi et al., 2019; Rasool & Winke, 2019; Siddiqui & Keerio, 2019; Shamim & Rashid, 2019). Besides, English is compulsory at undergraduate and educational institutions, including schools and colleges (Ashraf, 2006; Anbreen, 2015; Abbasi et al., 2019; Rasool & Winke, 2019).

Rahman (1997) and Younas et al. (2020) explain that the cultural, economic, and political needs and social significance given to English language by the ruling class have made this language more important than Urdu. English is a prerequisite for executive positions and provides an extra edge to the elite youth in the international job market (Anbreen, 2015). The dominance of English in Pakistan can be seen in almost all areas of life: higher education, technology, media, aviation, defence, and industries (Malik, 1996; Mahboob, 2002; Rahman, 2004; Mansoor, 2005; Coleman, 2010; Khan, 2011; Anbreen, 2015). Regarding the importance given to English, Ashraf (2006) conducted a study in Pakistan that revealed that English is subject to power and status, where people invest in English education to move up in Pakistani society's social structures. Similarly, Mansoor (2003) also concluded that the English language in Pakistan is considered a sign of upward mobility.

1.2.2 English Language Policy in Pakistani Education

Pakistan’s language policy has never been streamlined because it has undergone many changes since its independence in 1947 (Memon, 2015). The language policy of Pakistan has changed continuously with every new government. After Pakistan's independence, the national language and state language was Urdu, declared by the founder of Pakistan (Mahboob, 2003; Coleman, 2010; Durrani, 2012).

In 1948, the medium of instruction at primary schools was Urdu. The state-run English medium schools were established simultaneously with Urdu-medium schools. However, the elite children were sent to English-medium schools, while the rest were sent to government schools (Mahboob, 2003). In 1959, the 'Sharif Commission,' i.e., the commission on national education, was formed. The commission made Urdu the medium of instruction in primary and secondary education and English for the tertiary level. A significant shift in the Pakistan education policy floated in 1977, which reversed the role of English in education and promoted Islamisation and Urduisation (Mehboob, 2003; Coleman,2010). The 1977 commission made English taught from grade 4 (from the age of 8), and by 1989 Urdu should be used as a means of communication in exams (Coleman, 2010). It was also decided that Urdu should be used in higher education, making Urdu more influential. However, with the expansion of private elite and non-elite schools, parents were inclined to make their children learn English through these English medium schools. The democratic government in 1989 decided to revise the education policy to an extent where English was made a compulsory subject for students entering grade 1. However, the policy did not bring much of a change, nor did the prospective governments do much to change the language matter in the education sector. In 2007, a white paper on education policy was introduced, which recommended that the English medium be used for Science and Mathematics for students from grade 6 onwards. It would become compulsory for the students to study English from grade 1 onwards. The ministry of education 2009 formulated a new education policy, making English a compulsory subject from grade 1 and a medium of instruction in all government schools for Science and mathematics. Finally, in 2017, a new education policy was formulated, making one change that

national or regional languages should be used as a medium of instruction at the primary level. Table 1.1 gives an idea of the language policy of Pakistan.

Table 1.1 English language policy of Pakistan

Year	Event	Policy	Implementation
Before- 1947	Colonial rule	For masses, Urdu medium; for elite, English medium	According to the policy
1947	Independence	National language was Urdu	For masses, Urdu medium; for elite English medium
1959	Sharif Commission	Urdu should be used in primary and secondary education, while English should be used in higher education.	Unchanged
1973	New Constitution	Urdu will take over English in 15 years; Respective provinces will develop their own language policy.	Unchanged
1977	Military coup	Islamisation &Urduisation	From year 4, the teaching of English starts; schools should get ready to take exams in Urdu by 1989; the boom in the growth of non-state owned schools was observed
1989	Benazir Bhutto elected	From year 1, English will be taught.	No substantial change
1998	New education policy	No statement relating to language policy	English medium private schools started growing
1999	Military coup	Teaching of English from year 1 subject to the availability of the teachers	No considerable change

Table 1.1 (Continued)

Year	Event	Policy	Implementation
2007	White Paper	Teaching of English starting year 1; teaching of Science and math be done in English starting year 6	No considerable change in Punjab; teaching of Science should be in English starting year 10
2009	National Education Policy	English should be used to teach Science and Math in year 4 and 5. Science and math be taught in English from 2014.	Science to be taught in English in Punjab from year 4 from April 2009
2017-2025	National Education Policy	From grade one, English will be taught as a compulsory subject. All subjects at primary level shall be taught either in local or Urdu language	In progress

Adapted from Coleman (2010).

1.2.3 The Writing skills of Pakistani ESL Undergraduates

Writing is an important skill for ESL learners (Selvaraj & Aziz, 2019; De Silva, 2015). It is important in Pakistan as English is a second and official language widely used in education, law, aviation, media, and the judiciary (Rahman, 1996; Anbreen, 2015). Therefore, having excellent writing skills has always been emphasized. English is also taught as a compulsory subject from grade 1 until graduation in the Pakistani education system (Asif, 2010). According to the Higher Education Commission (2012), a Pakistani ESL undergraduate student has to study different courses of English: English (1), English (2), Business Communication, and Oral Communication. Among the four English skills, significance of writing skills is undeniably essential because of the wide use of English around the globe. Good command of writing is a prerequisite for success in the 21st century; similarly, Pakistani ESL enrolled in different disciplines at the undergraduate level need to have an excellent command of writing (Mansoor, 2005; Asif, 2010; García, 2018) due to a number of different

reasons. Firstly, the medium of instruction for all the undergraduate programs at private and public sector universities in Pakistan is English (Kanglong & Afzaal, 2020). Therefore, learners must have command over writing to pass written exams or secure good grades (Malik, 1996; Mahboob, 2002; Shamim, 2008; Dar & Khan, 2015; Anwar & Ahmed, 2016; Siddique & Singh, 2016). Besides, these learners must write regularly to make their assignments, presentations, and reports in their classes, making writing skills pivotal.

Secondly, the ability to express one's ideas in L2 has increased immensely due to globalization and has also been regarded as a key to educational success (Tillema, 2012). Many people in Pakistan desire a foreign qualification to access a much better job market (Zafar, 2008). Vakil (2013) discerns that thousands of Pakistani students go to foreign countries to get higher education. He reported that the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia, and Canada are the most common destinations for most Pakistanis. Thirdly, in addition to getting admission to foreign universities, excellent writing skills are now a must for a Pakistani graduate to acquire and flourish in a job both locally and internationally because Science and technology have brought everyone closer; businesses have expanded far beyond the borders, leading in the demand to learn English exponentially. According to the Annual Analysis Manpower Export Report 2019 by the Bureau of Emigration & Overseas Employment, 11114848 Pakistani are working abroad; this substantiates the need to learn English (Shamim, 2008). Rahman (2002) and Mansoor (2005) explain that the ruling class initially used English as a gateway to get prestigious jobs in public sectors, such as the army, civil services, and lucrative jobs in multinational companies (Shamim,2008). Similarly, Raja (2019) argues that writing skills are essential for Pakistani graduates. He

explained that most of the office tasks are conducted in English, so the employees need to have excellent communication skills to write emails, memos, and other office tasks.

However, despite studying English as a compulsory subject at the university level and the continuous increase in the users of the English language from 11.7 % to 25% from 2003 to 2020 (Bolton & Bacon-Shone, 2020), the writing skills of Pakistani ESL undergraduates are of inferior and low quality to the extent that the Pakistani ESL undergraduates use wrong grammar, including wrong use of the subject-verb agreement, omission of the verb to Be and incorrect use of past participle in English passive voice tenses (Asif, 2010; Haider, 2012; Fareed et al., 2016; Zafar, 2016; Khoso et al., 2018). Research scholars (De Silva, 2015; Fareed et al., 2016) further assert that improving English writing is challenging and becomes further complex in a context where English is considered a second language. The Pakistani ESL undergraduates have inferior writing skills, mainly because of limited grammatical knowledge (Sultana, 2015; Fareed et al., 2016; Garcia, 2018; Khoso et al., 2018), which inhibits their ability to write error-free sentences. Research scholars such as (Jacobs & L, 1981; Hall, 1988; Crossley, 2020) believe that an effective text must be coherent, orderly, organized, accurate, include more sophisticated lexical items and have more syntactic complexity. Nik et al. (2010) argue that if a text does not have these, then the text becomes incomprehensible for the readers to understand. With inferior writing quality, Pakistani ESL undergraduates face considerable challenges in other subjects because the English language is the primary means of communication in exams across the universities, making it difficult for the learners to express themselves explicitly in writing (Haider, 2012; Sajid & Siddiqui, 2015; Fareed et al., 2016; Khoso et al., 2018).

To conclude, Pakistani ESL undergraduates' writing skills are of inferior quality and need immediate attention to progress in their educational and professional

careers because of the extensive use of English across different education disciplines in Pakistan (Asif, 2010; Haider, 2010; Sajid & Siddiqui, 2015). While writing in English, Pakistani ESL undergraduates face several challenges ranging from using correct grammatical structures to organizing their draft content to a limited vocabulary repertoire. The studies probing the difficulties Pakistani ESL undergraduates face in writing have concluded that these learners possess limited knowledge of grammar (Fareed et al., 2016; Sheikh, 2020).

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Enabling learners to write grammatically correct sentences has always been a goal of every language teacher and learner (Ellis, 2003) because of the wide use of writing in L2 classes and beyond (Selvaraj & Aziz, 2019). However, achieving this goal is a troublesome task for ESL undergraduates (Myles, 2002; Sultana, 2015; Fareed et al., 2016; Singh et al., 2017; Golparvar & Khafi, 2020)– and it becomes further challenging where English is used as a foreign or second language (De Silva, 2015). English writing is a complex skill, which requires mastery of grammar (Erkan & Saban, 2011; Ismail, 2011; Selvaraj & Aziz, 2019), and L2 learners, including Pakistani ESL undergraduates, find grammar difficult because of its complex rules (Fareed et al., 2016; Mahnoor et al., 2020). For instance, many advanced and low proficiency ESL undergraduate learners, including Pakistani, find writing a passive sentence difficult (Celce- Murcia & Larsen- Freeman, 1999; Hinkel, 2004; McDonough et al., 2015; Nawaz et al., 2015; Sultana, 2015; Larsen-Freeman et al., 2016; Moreb, 2016; Aws Nabeel, 2017; Roshan, 2017; Akbar et al., 2018; Bochari et al., 2020; Mahnoor et al., 2020). A number of different studies across different ESL contexts (Sultana, 2015; Aws Nabeel, 2017; Bochari et al., 2020; Ji Hyon, 2020;

Mahnoor et al., 2020) concluded that ESL undergraduates make errors while writing a sentence in passive voice, including omission of the verb to Be, wrong form of the past participle and wrongly forming passive of unaccusative verbs, thereby resulting in overpassivization errors.

Bochari et al. (2020) reported that ESL undergraduate learners make a number of different errors while constructing a sentence in the passive voice; they use the wrong form of the past participle. For instance, I ***will be look after by my sister.*** They also use the wrong verb to Be, such as ***Indonesian doesn't spoke by the students in the class.*** Aws Nabeel (2016) also reported that ESL undergraduate learners find passive difficult and make a number of different errors, including incorrect use of past participles and omission of the verb to Be. For instance; 1) ***the horse has been ride;*** 2) ***the horse has ridden;*** **3)** ***the water were poured.*** Similarly, Sultana (2015) reported that Pakistani ESL undergraduates find it challenging to write correct passive sentences as they failed to omit the verb to BE, for instance, (1) ***no action taking as yet;*** 2) ***as internet launched.'*** Khoso et al. (2018) also reported that ESL undergraduate learners in Pakistan find a passive a challenging structure; these learners often omit the verb to Be while forming a passive sentence. More recently, Mahnoor et al. (2020) conducted a study to investigate ESL undergraduates' errors in their writing. The study concluded that learners find passive a difficult structure, and they make a number of errors, including the wrong form of the past participle and omission of the verb Be, for instance, (1) ***a picture is drawing by me;*** (2) ***the*** letter not written by you.

Similarly, ESL undergraduate learners wrongly make passive of unaccusative verbs, thereby resulting in overpassivization errors (Oshita, 1997; Montrul, 1999; Ju, 2000; Mu, 2012; Sultana, 2015; Choi, 2019; Ji Hyon, 2020). Kim (2009) reported that learners failed to correct the overpassivized errors in sentences and repeated the same

mistakes. For instance, 1) ***water is consisted of hydrogen and oxygen; 2) the confidential information was fallen into the wrong hands.*** Similarly, Sultana (2015) reported that Pakistani ESL undergraduates wrongly passivize unaccusative verbs such as water pollution**.** Khan and Sarfarz (2009), analyzing the writing of Pakistani ESL undergraduates, unveiled that learners made errors, like, ***my mother was died.*** The study further concluded that learners used 71 unaccusative verbs, out of which 57 were ungrammatical. Mu (2012) stated that English unaccusative verbs are reported to induce overpassivization errors among L2 learners; as a result, these learners tend to accept and produce ungrammatical passive sentences (**The accident was happened*) while rejecting and avoiding grammatical active sentences (*The temperature increased*) with unaccusative verbs" (p.1).

To rectify the errors made by learners, ESL teachers across the globe, including in Pakistan, provide WCF on learners' errors to help them improve their grammatical accuracy (Mao & Crosthwaite, 2019). Although a great strand of research has proven that WCF is effective in helping learners improve grammatical accuracy, most of these studies since the 1990s, including the Pakistani, have targeted the same linguistic structures– English articles and prepositions (Bitchener et al., 2005; Sheen, 2007; Bitchener, 2008; Bitchener & Knoch, 2008, 2010a, 2010b, 2012; Nasir et al., 2015; Tanveer et al., 2018; Ekiert & Gennaro, 2019; Guo & Barrot, 2019; Nusrat et al., 2019). Benson and DeKeyser (2018) state that not much is known about the effectiveness of WCF on other linguistic structures. In this regard, Nemati et al. (2019) argued:

> The majority of the L2 studies to date investigating the effect of feedback on enhancing L2 writing have exclusively focused on definite and indefinite articles. However, there are other structures and forms

> which are as important as articles in enhancing the quality of L2 writing, namely tenses, modal auxiliary verbs, active and passive forms, connectives, and conditional sentences. (p.6)

To sum up, English passive voice and unaccusative verbs are important in L2 writing as they make a text accurate and fluent (Mathieson, 2017) and easy to comprehend by the readers (Kies, 1985; Biber et al., 1999; Seoane, 2009). However, not much is known about how the provision of WCF can help Pakistani ESL undergraduates improve the grammatical accuracy of English passive voice and unaccusative verbs (trained and untrained).

1.4 Research Objectives

1. To investigate how effective WCF is in helping Pakistani ESL undergraduates improve the grammatical accuracy of:
   (i) Present Simple Passive Voice
   (ii) Past Simple Passive Voice
   (iii) Present Perfect Passive Voice
2. To investigate how effective WCF is in helping Pakistani ESL undergraduates improve the grammatical accuracy of:
   (i) untrained unaccusative verbs
   (ii) trained unaccusative verbs
3. To investigate which type of WCF is most effective in helping Pakistani ESL undergraduates improve the grammatical accuracy of passive voice tenses (present, past and perfect) and unaccusative verbs (trained and untrained)

1.5 Research Questions

1. How effective is WCF in helping Pakistani ESL undergraduates improve the grammatical accuracy of:
   (i) present simple passive voice
   (ii) past simple passive voice
   (iii) present perfect passive voice
2. How effective is WCF in helping Pakistani ESL undergraduates improve the grammatical accuracy of:
   (i) trained unaccusative verbs
   (ii) untrained unaccusative verbs
3. Which type of WCF is most effective in helping Pakistani ESL undergraduates improve the grammatical accuracy of passive voice tenses (present simple, past simple, present perfect) and unaccusative verbs (trained and untrained)?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The current study examines the effectiveness of WCF on the grammatical accuracy of passive voice tenses (present, past and simple) and unaccusative verbs (trained and untrained) of Pakistani ESL undergraduate learners. The current study is significant from a number of different perspectives for L2 teachers, scholars and learners. For L2 scholars, the current study is significant in three ways. First, passive voice tenses and unaccusative verbs were a part of the current study, which have not received due attention in previous WCF studies (Li & Roshan, 2019; Nemati et al., 2019; Mujtaba et al., 2022). The current study demonstrated the efficacy of WCF on passive voice tenses and unaccusative verbs (trained and untrained). This is a welcome

contribution for L2 teachers and scholars because one of the arguments against WCF is that it does not help learners improve the grammatical accuracy of complex structures (Truscott, 2007; Truscott, 2020).

Second, the current study investigated the efficacy of WCF in both short run and long run, and this provides another rebuttal to Truscott's (1996, 2007) argument that states that the efficacy of WCF, if any, can only be retained in the short run, and in the long run the effects of WCF dilute. The short-run effects refer to the effects observed in the post-test, while the long-run effects refer to the effects retained or sustained in the delayed post-test (Phakiti, 2014, 2015; Samiei & Sim, 2016). This is another significant contribution of the current study as it is one of the few studies that examined the long-run effects of WCF on complex grammar structures– passive voice tenses and unaccusative verbs (trained and untrained). Third, most WCF studies have employed one treatment session (see Liu & Brown, 2015), meaning providing WCF only once. Mao and Lee (2020) argue that this is not a reflection of a real classroom practice where teachers provide WCF more than once, and they also provide written comments (Mujtaba et al., 2019). The current study provided WCF three times to the participants, making the findings ecologically valid for language classes. The practice of providing WCF three times is in line with previous WCF studies (Karim & Nassaji, 2018; Ekiert & di Gennaro, 2019; Kim & Emeliyanova, 2019; Mujtaba et al., 2022). Kim and Lee et al. (2021) contend that more WCF studies should be conducted that reflect a real classroom setting. In this regard, the current study filled an important gap in the literature.

In addition to L2 scholars, the findings of the current study may prove valuable for ESL learners and teachers. For instance, Pakistani ESL undergraduate learners find passive and unaccusative difficult structures to master; these learners make a number

of different errors, such as the omission of the verb to BE, the wrong form of the past participle, and overpassivization of unaccusative verbs (Sultana, 2015; Khoso et al., 2018). However, with the provision of WCF, ESL teachers can help their learners improve the grammatical accuracy of passive voice tenses and unaccusative verbs (trained and untrained). Another significance of the current study is that it has examined the efficacy of different types of WCF. The current study found that both DCF +ME and ICF+ME were effective in both short run and long run. However, the improvement exhibited by DCF+ME was greater than ICF+ME during the short run and long run. This is important because WCF studies in the Pakistani ESL university context have mainly focused on two types of WCF: DCF and ICF, and have neglected other forms, such as metalinguistic explanation (Nasir et al., 2019). Ferris (1999) states that other types of WCF, such as direct +metalinguistic explanation and indirect +metalinguistic explanation, are valuable in treating learners' errors. Therefore, based on the results of the current study, ESL teachers can now more effectively use WCF in their classes. The Pakistani ESL teachers may now be more cognizant of which type of WCF to use in classes to yield maximum benefit.

Lastly, the current study is significant for Pakistani ESL teachers because it enables them to understand both short run and long run effects of WCF. The current study demonstrated the efficacy of WCF in both short and long runs and found that not all types of WCF were effective in the long run. This would provide deeper insights to language teachers to better plan their WCF strategies. For instance, if the goal is to help learners improve their grammatical accuracy in the short run, the teachers can use indirect WCF as it saves time and is less demanding for the teachers.

Finally, the results of the current study may prove to be beneficial for policymakers at the government level, particularly the ministry of education (MoE).

The results of the current study will apprise the MOE of the importance of WCF and encourage them to plan and organize different training sessions, explicitly focusing on the efficacy of the different types of WCF. The Pakistani ESL university teachers mostly focus on DCF, and other types of WCF are rarely used. However, it is argued that what is effective for one learner may not be effective for others (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012). Through these training sessions, ESL university teachers can understand how different types of WCF can be used in classes to help learners improve the grammatical accuracy of different structures.

To sum up, the current study is significant to different stakeholders, such as L2 scholars, ESL teachers, learners, and policymakers. The findings of the current study will push forward the line of research in WCF by providing new empirical evidence regarding its effectiveness both in short and long terms. The findings of the current study may be significant to the global readership as there is a paucity of studies in the literature that has examined the effectiveness of WCF on passive voice tenses and unaccusative verbs (Nemati et al., 2019; Li & Roshan, 2019; Mujtaba et al., 2022). Many advanced and low proficiency learners face difficulty in passive voice and unaccusative verbs (Celce- Murcia & Larsen- Freeman, 1999; Nawaz et al., 2015; Sultana, 2015; Akbar et al., 2018; Bochari et al., 2020; Mahnoor et al., 2020). The findings will also help ESL undergraduate learners and teachers understand WCF's significance in improving the grammatical accuracy of passive voice and unaccusative verbs. It is equally beneficial for policymakers to initiate training programs focusing on the effectiveness of the different types of WCF.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

Like other WCF studies, the current study is coupled with some limitations that must be addressed. First, the current study recruited five intact classes of Functional English courses totaling 172 participants from one private sector university in Karachi. Although the data was confined to only one institution and the sample size was relatively small to generalize the findings to other higher education institutions in Pakistan, the findings obtained from the current study may be applicable to the participants of the other institutions because Functional English is taught as a compulsory subject in higher education institutions of Pakistan. Second, the treatment group teacher may not have been familiar with the types of WCF used in the current study. However, this limitation was guarded by providing the treatment group teacher with extensive training by an external field expert. In addition, the treatment group teacher provided WCF on the writing samples of the pilot study participants, which was later checked by the expert and clarification was provided to the teacher. Lastly, the current study employs convenience sampling of data collection, which may limit the generalizability of the result to the entire population. However, researcher scholar argues that it is difficult for second language researchers to access the entire population (Mackey & Gass, 2005).

1.8 Definition of Key Terms

The following are the definitions of the key terms used in the context of this study.

Written Corrective Feedback (WCF)

WCF refers to the input given to learners on their errors by their teachers (Bitchener & Storch, 2016).

Indirect Corrective Feedback

Indirect corrective feedback (ICF) refers to correction of learners' errors by underlining them (Van Beuningen et al., 2008).

Direct Corrective Feedback

Direct corrective feedback (DCF) refers to correction of learners' errors by writing the correction form after crossing out the wrong one (Ellis , 2008).

Metalinguistic Explanation

Metalinguistic Explanation (ME) refers to providing a written handout explaining the rules of the grammar structure (Shintani et al., 2014).

Grammatical Accuracy

Grammatical accuracy refers to the ability of the learners to use the language without producing errors (Wolfe- Quintero et al., 1998). The WCF studies (Sheen, 2007; Bitchener, 2008; Guo & Barrot, 2019; Li & Roshan, 2019) have examined grammatical accuracy based on how accurate the learners produce the target structure. The current study following the past WCF studies (Bitchener & Knoch, 2010a; Guo & Barrot, 2019) has operationalized the grammatical accuracy as how accurately the Pakistani ESL undergraduates use the passive voice tenses and unaccusative verbs.

Feedback Explicitness

Feedback explicitness is operationalized based on the extent to which the feedback provides information to the learners to act upon and correct their mistakes (Nassaji, 2015).

Complex Grammar Structure

Linguistic complexity is the transformations needed to form the target structure (Spada & Tomita, 2010). Based on this definition, passive voice is a complex grammar structure since it requires two transformations (verb to be and past participle) (Roshan, 2017).

Passive Voice

Passive voice refers to a sentence, clause or verb form where the grammatical subject is typically the recipient or 'goal' of the action denoted by the verb, e.g. A doctor wrote the letter. (Crystal, 2011).

Overpassivization

Overpassivization is the use of passive when it is not required (Yip, 1990). Example of overpassivization error as given in Ju (2000): *during the early 1900s, a black community was thrived in Los Angeles.*

Grammar

Grammar is defined as the description of the structure of a language and how linguistic units, such as words and phrases, are combined to produce sentences in the language (Canale & Swain, 1980).

Unaccusative Verbs

Unaccusative verbs refer to intransitive verbs that appear with a single argument, which is syntactically placed in a subject position but takes the role of a Theme/Patient" (Kim et al., 2016).

Trained Unaccusative Verbs

Trained unaccusative verbs are operationalized based on Mu (2012) that is, these are the verbs that were included in the treatment sessions, meaning the treatment group learners received WCF on these verbs.

Untrained Unaccusative Verbs

Untrained unaccusative verbs are operationalized based on Mu (2012) that is, these are the verbs that were not made part of the WCF treatment sessions.

1.9 Summary

The current chapter presents the background of the study, including the status of English language in Pakistan, the importance of English language in the Pakistani education system, and the language policy in Pakistan. The current chapter also discusses the challenges that Pakistani ESL undergraduates face in English passive voice tenses and unaccusative verbs. The chapter also sheds light on the importance of writing skills and grammatical accuracy for Pakistani ESL undergraduates. The chapter also highlights the WCF studies locally and internationally. Finally, the chapter concludes with the significance of the study and its limitations.