The Effect of Different forms of Unfocused Written Corrective Feedback on Academic Writing Students' Proficiency

Laurence Craven, PhD Candidate, University of Essex

To aid practitioners with guidance for optimum ways to teach L2 writing, many researchers over the past few decades have studied the effects of error correction. This term is also referred to as corrective feedback and researchers have further examined its effects on language learning and development. Many believed that corrective feedback helps students to improve their writing and their language development, until Truscott (1996) published his critique of the practice. Since then, a multitude of studies of corrective feedback have been conducted, with varying and sometimes conflicting results, Van Beuningen et al. (2012). In light of the existing gaps in the literature, as well as the lack of empirical evidence with regard to the effects of unfocused written corrective feedback, the present pilot study examined the effects of direct, indirect and metalinguistic written corrective feedback on the complexity, accuracy and fluency of English as a foreign language students' academic writing. The inquiry also considered the way attitudes and aptitude mediate the effects of the feedback. The results of the pilot study showed that there were no significant effects of corrective feedback on accuracy and fluency, but students in the group receiving direct feedback made gains in lexical diversity. When looking at gain scores there was no significant difference between the three feedback groups and the control group. The pilot study also found that students with higher aptitude had greater gains in complexity, but the results for attitudes were mixed. In the direct feedback group, students with positive attitudes towards corrective feedback wrote more lexically diverse compositions, but in the indirect feedback group, wrote less complex writing. The results of pilot study shed light on various ways to improve the methodology for the main study involving using less measures of complexity and using a more accurate measure than TTR (type-token ratio), a measure of lexical complexity, as well as adding an extra round of feedback and giving students a post-feedback support session. The main study will also use an amended attitudes questionnaire.

References

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