The Role of Corrective feedback in second language writing

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Outline of the presentation

- A) Defining corrective feedback (CF)
- B) Major types of CF
- C) Research on CF
- D) Pedagogical suggestions
A) Defining Corrective Feedback
What is corrective feedback?

Some of the most frequently used terms:
- corrective feedback
- negative evidence
- negative feedback
CF as “an indication to the learners that his or her use of the target language is incorrect” (Lightbown and Spada, 1999p. 172). The learners may get this indication in various ways.
B) Major Types of CF
Types of corrective feedback

There are two major types of written corrective feedback:

i) Direct CF

ii) Indirect CF
4 other types of feedback to correct linguistic errors in students’ written work:

i) Metalinguistic CF
ii) Focused and unfocused CF
iii) Electronic feedback
iv) Reformulation

(Ellis, 2009; p. 98)
C) Research on CF
Research on CF in L2 writing

- Truscott’s (1996) argument against corrective feedback
- Ferris’s (1999) argument for corrective feedback
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Studies that claimed to have found positive evidence in support of the effectiveness of written CF:</th>
<th>Ashwell, 2000; Chandler, 2003; Fathman and Whalley, 1990; Ferris, 1997; Ferris and Roberts, 2001; Gascoigne, 2004; Lalande, 1982; Lee, 1997; Lizotte, 2001; Rob, Ross and Shortreed, 1986; and Sheppard, 1992.</th>
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Some of the most significant design flaws pointed out by researchers are:

1) the lack of a control group
2) not measuring improvement of accuracy in new pieces of writing
3) and providing feedback on all the errors (unfocused feedback) but not on one or only a few types of errors at a time (focused feedback)
Recent written CF studies with improved design tried to address the flaws in early studies.
## Recent Research

<table>
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<th>Category</th>
<th>References</th>
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<tr>
<td>Studies with control group</td>
<td>Bitchener, 2008; Bitchener and Knoch, 2008; Bitchener and Knoch, 2009a; Bitchener and Knoch, 2009b; Bitchener et al., 2005; Ellis et al., 2008; Ferris, 2006; Sheen, 2007; Sheen et al., 2009; Truscott and Hsu, 2008; Van Beuningen et al., 2008.</td>
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<td>Studies without control group</td>
<td>Baker and Bricker, 2001; Ferris, 2006; Hartshorn et al., 2010; Liu, 2008; Storch and Wigglesworth, 2010.</td>
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<td>Studies that measured accuracy on new pieces of writing</td>
<td>Baker and Bricker, 2010; Bitchener, 2008; Bitchener and Knoch, 2008; Bitchener and Knoch, 2009a; Bitchener and Knoch, 2009b; Bitchener et al., 2005; Ellis et al., 2008; Ferris, 2006; Hartshorn et al., 2010; Liu, 2008; Sheen, 2007; Sheen et al., 2009; Storch and Wigglesworth, 2010; Truscott and Hsu, 2008; Van Beuningen et al., 2008.</td>
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<td>Studies that did not measure accuracy on new pieces of writing</td>
<td>Ferris, 2006; Hartshorn et al., 2010.</td>
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<td>Studies that provided focused feedback</td>
<td>Bitchener, 2008; Bitchener and Knoch, 2008; Bitchener and Knoch, 2009a; Bitchener and Knoch, 2009b; Bitchener et al., 2005; Ellis et al., 2008; Sheen, 2007; Sheen et al., 2009.</td>
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<td>Studies that provided unfocused feedback</td>
<td>Hartshorn et al., 2010; Liu, 2008; Truscott and Hsu, 2008; Van Beuningen et al., 2008.</td>
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Is written corrective feedback effective?

- Almost all the recent studies found positive and significant effects of written CF.

(Except Truscott and Hsu, 2008; Liu, 2008, Hartshorn et al., 2010)
Which type of feedback is more effective?

- No straightforward answer
- Mixed results: Direct vs. indirect feedback
Although Research has not yet been shown what type of FB is more effective, more evidence is there about the usefulness of FB.
D) Pedagogical suggestions
Pedagogical suggestions

- All types of FB could be useful/effective. The effectiveness might depend on:
  a. When should errors be corrected?
  b. Which errors should be corrected?
  c. How should feedback be provided?
a. When should errors be corrected?

- Little empirical evidence to suggest when to correct errors.

- “L2 student writers are both willing and be able to benefit from simultaneous feedback on content and form on the same draft” (Ferris, 2002).

- Tolerating some errors help learners communicate confidently.
FB on preliminary drafts:

FB on subsequent drafts:

(Ferris, 2002)
b. Which errors should be corrected?

- Error FB may be effective if it focuses on patterns of errors.

- Teachers should use different marking strategies for ‘errors’ and ‘stylistic differences’.
Errors vs. Style difference (Ferris 2002; p. 53)

**Errors**

1. **Original student text:** In addition of the challenge...
   **Teacher correction:** In addition to the challenge...

2. **Original student text:** Even they are not truly happy in here, but they still ...
   **Teacher correction:** Even they ...

3. **Original student text:** There are a lot of problems such like family tradition ...
   **Teacher correction:** There are a lot of problems such like family tradition ...
1. Original student text: It shows that culture, custom and language identify our identity.
   Teacher correction: It shows culture, custom and language identify our identity.

2. Original student text: Therefore, I have hope that it would lead me to success.
   Teacher correction: Therefore, I have hope that it would lead me to success.

3. Original student text: As I observe some teachers here they do not have much respect for their parents and elders. In addition, they usually talk back to their parents.
   Teacher correction: In addition, they usually talk back to their parents.
The most common ESL writing errors should be marked, i.e.:

a) Morphological errors  
b) Lexical errors  
c) Syntactic errors  
d) Mechanical
Criteria that can help teachers make decisions about which errors to mark (*Hendrickson, 1978; Ferris 2002*):

i) Errors that impair communication significantly

ii) Errors that occur frequently in individual students’ writing

ii) Errors that have highly stigmatizing effects on the reader
c. *How should errors be corrected?*

1. Directly
2. Indirectly
3. Locating the errors
4. Identifying the errors
5. Using textual corrections and end notes
6. Selecting larger or smaller categories of errors

*(Ferris, 2002)*
Examples of marking strategies: Locating, identifying, textual correction & end notes

1. Direct correction: ...could go anywhere they want.
2. Error location: ..........could go anywhere they want.
3. Error code: ............could go anywhere they want. Vt
4. Error symbol: ..........could go anywhere they want __ ^____

(Ferris, 2002; p. 70-71)
tense

5. Verbal cue: ..........could go anywhere they **want**.

6. Textual correction and end/margin notes:

   Study **hard** and **work hard** differences **language** and **culture** to adopt in ...

Comment in margin:

**Rewrite this sentence. Break into two sentences.**

End note:

I’m not sure I understand this sentence. Can you rewrite it and make it clearer? You might try making it simpler by dividing it into two sentences.

*(Ferris, 2002; p. 70-71)*
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<tr>
<th>Error Type</th>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<td>Word choice</td>
<td>wc</td>
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<td>Verb tense</td>
<td>vt</td>
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<tr>
<td>Verb form</td>
<td>vf</td>
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<tr>
<td>Word form</td>
<td>wf</td>
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<td>Subject-verb agreement</td>
<td>sv</td>
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<td>Article</td>
<td>art</td>
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<td>Noun ending</td>
<td>n</td>
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<td>Pronoun</td>
<td>pr</td>
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<td>Fragment</td>
<td>frag</td>
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<td>Punctuation</td>
<td>punc</td>
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<td>Spelling</td>
<td>sp</td>
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<td>Sentence structure</td>
<td>ss</td>
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<td>Idiom</td>
<td>id</td>
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<td>Plural</td>
<td>pl</td>
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References


