



Universiteit
Leiden
The Netherlands

The effectiveness of comprehensive corrective feedback in improving L2 written accuracy.

Beuningen, C.G. van; Jong, N.H. de; Kuiken, F.; Graham, S.; Wagstaffe, J.P.

Citation

Beuningen, C. G. van, Jong, N. H. de, Kuiken, F., Graham, S., & Wagstaffe, J. P. (2019). The effectiveness of comprehensive corrective feedback in improving L2 written accuracy. *Oasis-Database.org*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/75463>

Version: Not Applicable (or Unknown)

License: [Leiden University Non-exclusive license](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/75463>

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

The effectiveness of comprehensive corrective feedback in improving L2 written accuracy

What this research was about and why it is important

Corrective feedback is widely used to improve second language (L2) students' accuracy when writing. However, its effectiveness is debated. This study investigated whether **direct** comprehensive corrective feedback, in which all linguistic errors are *corrected* in a student's writing, or **indirect** corrective feedback, in which only the presence of errors is *indicated* to the students using an error code, can lead to improvements in the accuracy of their writing. The results suggest that both direct and indirect corrective feedback can produce sustained improvements in L2 students' level of written accuracy.

What the researchers did

- The researchers tested 268 multilingual students who were studying 2nd year secondary in a Dutch school. The majority of the participants were from either a Moroccan Arabic, Turkish or Surinamese background, but had lived and studied in a Dutch context from a young age. As such, the study was conducted in a highly immersive L2 environment.
- The participants were students from six classes (from four schools). They were given a 'mini' biology lesson, before being asked to produce a piece of writing on a biology related topic.
- Within each class, participants were randomly assigned to one of four sub-groups:
 - **Experimental group 1:** *direct comprehensive corrective feedback* – participants were given direct corrective feedback on all the linguistic errors in their writing
 - **Experimental group 2:** *indirect corrective feedback* – participants were given indirect corrective feedback indicating the presence of linguistic errors in their writing, but were left to self-correct them
 - **Control group 1:** *self-editing* – participants were given no feedback, but were required to revise their own work
 - **Control group 2:** *extra writing practice* – participants were given neither corrective feedback, nor encouraged to self-edit, but were rather given an extra writing assignment, in order to give them more writing practice
- In **week 1 (pre-test)**, all participants were asked to produce the first piece of writing.
- In **week 2 (treatment/control)**, the researchers either (a) gave direct or indirect feedback before asking the participants to revise the piece of writing they had produced, (b) asked the participants to revise their own writing without any corrective feedback, or (c) gave them a new writing assignment to complete, according to the group they were in.
- In **week 3 (post-test)** and **week 6 (delayed post-test)**, the researchers gave all the participants a new writing assignment, and then compared the resulting essays with those produced in week 1, to see if linguistic accuracy had improved.

What the researchers found

- Participants were able to effectively use both direct and indirect corrective feedback to revise their writing.
- Participants in both the direct and indirect groups showed measurable and sustained improvements in the accuracy of their writing as compared to the students in either of the control groups.
- Direct corrective feedback was most beneficial for improving grammatical accuracy (*e.g. articles, inflections, etc.*).
- Indirect corrective feedback was most beneficial for improving non-grammatical linguistic accuracy (*e.g. word choice*).
- Both direct and indirect corrective feedback improved accuracy in the writing produced in week 3 and week 6, but the indirect feedback produced larger gains in week 6, suggesting the improvement may have been more durable.

Things to consider

- These results should *not* be understood to suggest that increased writing practice does not play a role in improving linguistic accuracy in L2 writing. However, it is clear that both direct and indirect corrective feedback are effective pedagogical tools that teachers of L2 writing could make use of in their lessons.
- This study was carried out in a highly immersive language environment, in which the participants were exposed to the target language all day. It is unclear whether these results would be replicated in a purely L2 or foreign language teaching setting.
- Although this study was conducted in schools, the tasks were administered by the researchers, not the usual class teachers. It is possible that this may have influenced the results, although it is hard to say to what degree.