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A Critical Study of Metalinguistic Corrective Feedback in the Essays by XII Students of JNV Patan

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Abstract

Corrective feedback (CF) is a vital aspect in the field of English language teaching, which is complex and continually evolving. English language teachers dedicate significant time and effort to provide feedback on students' writing performance. There is an ongoing debate regarding the efficacy of the teachers' CF to improve the learners' English writing competency. Empirical studies on CF in the Indian context are scarce. This study looks at how direct focused metalinguistic and non-metalinguistic written corrective feedback (WCF) affects the use of noun inflections in English descriptive essays written by Class XII students of Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya, Patan. The study involves two experimental groups and one control group of ten students each; the first group received metalinguistic WCF; the second received non-metalinguistic WCF; and the control group received no feedback. A pretest-treatment-post-test-delayed post-test format was utilized to extract the data. The findings suggest that the teacher's targeted direct metalinguistic WCF led to inconsistent improvements in the learners' written output. However, this approach has certain limitations, including issues related to time frame, scaffolding, personalized feedback, as well as sustained teacher's monitoring, and other factors pertaining to learners' proficiency, personality, retention, and revision.

Keywords: Factors, JNV, meta-analysis, noun inflections, written corrective feedback

1. Introduction

Based on the previous research and definitions given by scholars, we can define "corrective feedback (CF)" as any form of feedback that provides students with information regarding the quality of their language output and motivates them to rectify their errors (Bitchener & Knoch, 2010; Singh & Halim, 2023, p. 153). Lyster et al. (2013) contend that CF plays a crucial role in classroom interactions (Sun, 2024, p. 38).

In this context, Bazerman (2004) argues that WCF constitutes a pedagogical genre integral to the writing process (Kloss & Quintanilla, 2022, p. 89). In the 1990s, scholars and educators in the field of SLA observed that students in L2 environments demonstrated strong abilities in speaking and reading skills but struggled significantly with their writing assignments. This led to the conclusion that mere exposure to the TL is not sufficient. Learners need feedback on their interlanguage errors (Lightbown & Spada, 2013; Tanveer et al., 2018, p. 166).

Selinker (1972) notes that interlanguage can be accurately described as a dynamic and innovative linguistic system developed by a learner during the transition from their L1 to L2 or TL. This inter-language emerges through various learning strategies, including language transfer, over-generalization, and simplification, and possesses its own set of rules. Consequently, it can also be regarded as a distinct language in its own right (Aljumah, 2020, p. 202).

Errors committed by the learners offer valuable insight into their language-processing capabilities and highlight the areas where they require support. According to the theory of universal grammar (UG) put forth by Noam Chomsky, errors encountered in SLA are interpreted as manifestations of the learner's efforts to utilize the inherent grammatical frameworks (LAD) that are universal across all human languages (Lamcja & Vora, 2024, p. 64).

Errors are an inherent aspect of learning a new language as a L2 or as a FL (Darus & Subramaniam, 2009, p. 486). It is essential for both educators and learners to acknowledge that errors are an unavoidable aspect of the educational journey (Davies & Pearse, 2002; Hamouda, 2011, p. 128). By examining the errors committed by students, we can identify the areas in which they are experiencing difficulties, the concepts they may have misunderstood, and the additional support they may require (Lavery, 2001; Hamouda, 2011, p. 128). The debate surrounding conscious learning focuses on the topic of EC. Henrickson (1978) identified the "five fundamental questions" and examined the existing literature that pertains to these inquiries (Krashen, 1982, p. 116; Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Tedick & Gortari, 1998, p. 1;):

a. Should errors be corrected?
b. When is it appropriate to correct learners' errors?
c. Which specific learners' errors warrant correction?
d. What techniques should teachers use to correct students' errors?
e. Who is responsible for correcting learners' errors?

Hendrickson (1978) reviewed research and concluded that students should be corrected, although his findings did not support this idea. His 1978 and 1981 study showed that addressing every error was no better than focussing on those that caused communicative concerns. In both the approaches little impact was reported. Thus, Truscott claimed that grammatical correction was ineffective (1996, p. 330).

In a linguistically diverse country like India, students can be classified into urban, semi-urban, and rural categories. Within these categories, learners can belong to diverse socio-economic, linguistic, and complex cultural backgrounds (Sindkhedkar, 2012, p. 192). Rao (2018) asserts that Indian educators predominantly concentrate on facilitating students' success in examinations, resulting in the oversight of the vital goal of teaching English. Conventional teaching methods remain prevalent in educational settings. Pawlak (2014) observes that EC is a common practice defined by a standard format in which

the teacher asks a question, the student replies, and then receives feedback (p. 6). EC is inadequately focused in teacher training programs. A study on teachers' evaluation in India (Bambawale et al., 2018; Borg et al., 2022) indicates that, despite the recognition of its importance and the availability of suitable tools, there exists a level of ambiguity concerning its objectives and execution (p. 29). This study aims to fill the existing research gap in the area of EC while considering the ongoing discussion regarding its effectiveness in enhancing writing skills. I have identified a few factors that may influence the optimal results of WCF. Further research is required to evaluate the role of WCF in assisting learners with the correction of their L2 errors.

2. Literature Review

The examination of the effectiveness of CF has engaged theorists, researchers, and educators in the field of SLA since the release of Truscott's (1996) study, which characterized CF as both ineffective and detrimental for learners aiming to enhance their L2 skills. A persistent debate has emerged among proponents and detractors regarding the efficacy of WCF as a tool to improve writing accuracy (Ellis, 2012; Khanlarzadeh & Nemati, 2016; Lee, 2020; Bozorgian & Yazdani, 2021, p. 66). Truscott argued that focusing on EC might distract educators from other essential processes in language acquisition, advocating for a focus on writing practice instead (Lim & Renandya, 2020, p. 3).

Truscott (1996) discusses concerns about teachers' ability to provide consistent feedback and learners' willingness to use it effectively. Truscott also suggested that if learners aren't ready to integrate CF, meaningful learning may not occur. This aligns with Krashen's Natural Order Hypothesis, which posits that learners acquire grammar in a fixed sequence, not dictated by curricula (Lim & Renandya, 2020, p. 3). This aligns with Piaget's perspective that a learner acquires knowledge when s/he is developmentally prepared, as learning is contingent upon development (Kumar, 2002, p. 56).

Findings of a few studies indicate that teachers' CF significantly impacts students' understanding of the language and plays particularly an important role to improve their writing skills (Mao & Lee, 2022; Mohammadkarimi, 2022; Miao et al., 2023; Fitriyah et al., 2024, p. 167). Research indicates that students frequently encounter feedback that does not meet their expectations, leading to a decline in their engagement and interest in writing (Alshahrani & Storch, 2014). Wan Mohd Yunus (2020) identified inconsistencies between students' preferences and the feedback practices employed by teachers in composition classes, particularly regarding the volume, nature, and perceived importance of the feedback provided. Additionally, a study conducted by Aridah et al. (2017) found that both students and teachers appreciated direct feedback, although students placed a higher value on it than teachers were typically able to provide. Thus, the efficacy of EC in L2 writing instruction has sparked considerable debate within academic literature (Ferris, 2011; Lee, 2008; Carless, 2020; Fitriyah et al., 2024, pp. 166-167).

Kang & Han (2015) as well as Russell & Spada (2006) performed meta-analysis of the corpus to demonstrate the overall effectiveness of WCF. Nevertheless, there has been no comprehensive research on WCF that examines the long-term impacts by differentiating between immediate and delayed post-tests or addressed what Ferris (2004) refers to as 'the big question': whether WCF contributes to the enhancement of accuracy in subsequent writing. From 2015 to 2020, there has been a significant increase in research activity in this field (Brown et al., 2023, p. 2). However, opinions remain divided on the extent to which feedback positively influences the enhancement of students' writing accuracy, as noted by Belmekki (2018, p. 956). Leow (2023) proposes collaborative measures to engage teachers in WCF research, as this area of study presents significant potential benefits for both researchers and educators (p. 122).

2.1 Types of Corrective Inputs

Ellis (2009) and Ferris (2011) divide CF into two main groups: direct feedback (Lalande, 1982; Robb et al., 1986; Giri, 2018, p. 92; Santos et al., 2010; Shintani & Ellis, 2013; Bakri, 2015, p. 250) vs.

indirect feedback (Robb et al., 1986; Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Chandler, 2003; Giri, 2018, p. 92; Bitchener & Knoch, 2008; De Jong & Kuiken, 2012; Bakri, 2015, p. 250); and focused vs. unfocused feedback (Chandler, 2003; Ferris, 2006; Sheen, 2007; Giri, 2018, p. 92). Table 1 presented a structured overview of the strategies employed for both direct and indirect feedback. Table 2 describes the types of feedback.

Table 1. Feedback providing strategies (based on ideas from Ferris, 2004; 2008; 2011 & 2014; Bitchener, 2008; Ellis; 2009a; Zaman & Azad, 2012; Van Beuningen, 2008 Giri, 2018, p. 91).

Direct Feedback	**Indirect Feedback**			
	Indicating location of errors only	*Identifying error-types only*	*Indicating location and error-types*	*Indication of error only*
Teacher identifies, assesses, and rectifies errors made by the student.	*The instructor identifies incorrect forms by underlining or using color highlights on specific sections of the text.*	*Teacher recognizes various types of errors in the margins by employing numerical or error codes (refer to the appendices for examples).*	*Teacher determines the location and types of errors by employing highlighting techniques and coding systems.*	The instructor points out that there are incorrect forms present in a specific section of the text, yet fails to specify their locations or the nature of these errors.

Table 2. Types of Feedback (Ellis, 2009a, p. 98; Giri, 2018, p. 92).

Types of CF	*Description*	*Studies*
Metalinguistic CF	The instructor offers a metalinguistic hint regarding the type of mistake.	Various studies have examined the effects of using error codes (e.g. Lalande 1982; Ferris and Roberts 2001; Chandler 2003) Sheen (2007) compared the effects of direct CF and direct CF + metalinguistic CF.
A: Use of error code	Teacher writes codes in the margin (e.g. ww = wrong word; art = article).	
B: Brief Grammatical Description	The instructor identifies errors in the text and provides a grammatical explanation for each numbered mistake at the conclusion of the document.	
The Focus of the feedback	This pertains to the teacher's approach to address students' errors, specifically whether the teacher endeavors to rectify all or the majority of the errors made by students, or if the teacher opts to focus on one or two particular types of errors for correction. This differentiation can be applied to each of the aforementioned options.	Most studies have investigated unfocused CF (e.g. Chandler 2003; Ferris 2006). Sheen (2007), drawing on traditions in SLA studies of CF, investigated focused CF.
Focused CF	Focused CF is intensive.	
Unfocused CF	Unfocused CF is extensive.	

This study follows the guidelines set by Lee (2012, 2021; Fitriyah et al., 2024, p. 168) to assess the effectiveness of teachers' WCF, which are based on the principles of effective feedback provision. These guiding principles cover several crucial aspects, as outlined below:

a. I paid balanced attention to the content, language, organization, and other relevant issues:

b. WCF was focused and selective:
c. WCF strategies, tailored to students' needs provided, that promoted the development of editing skills over time:
d. Constructive written commentary facilitated successful revisions by students:
e. The exclusion of grades or scores;
f. I provided feedback in multiple-draft classroom settings;
g. Opportunities were created for follow-up discussions through conferencing;
h. Students actively participated in the feedback process.
i. I encouraged students to utilize the available learning resources, including technology.
j. Feedback was learner-centered and personalized.

2.2 The Error Categories

Written errors can be categorized into various types. Researchers have classified these errors into four primary categories: global, local, treatable, and untreatable errors, to aid learners in enhancing their writing skills. Global errors are those that hinder the overall comprehensibility of the text, while local errors refer to mistakes that do not significantly affect the text's clarity (Gozali, 2018, p. 153). Global or local errors can be global in one context and local in another, depending on the teacher or reader. Another classification involves treatable and untreatable errors (Ferris, 2011). Treatable errors are defined by Ferris as those governed by specific rules, such as subject-verb agreement, verb tenses, or capitalization. In contrast, untreatable errors are characterized as "idiosyncratic features," which include issues related to word choice or unidiomatic sentence structures (Tran, 2013, p. 3).

2.3. Previous Research on WCF

Semke (1984) conducted a quasi-experimental study that involved 141 EFL students learning German in the United States. Participants were divided into three treatment groups: one group was given direct WCF, another group received direct CF accompanied by commentary, and the third group was provided with indirect feedback represented by codes. A control group was provided with comments only. The findings indicated that there were no significant differences in terms of correctness, fluency, or overall language proficiency among the experimental groups. In fact, learners noted adverse effects when tasked with self-correction using indirect WCF (Tanveer et al., 2018, p. 168).

Sheen (2007) studies at how two different types of WCF affect learning English articles. She also looks into the connection between language analysis skills and the effects of WCF on learning articles, which are a specific part of English language. The study utilized a pretest-treatment-post-test design with 91 learners from various L1 backgrounds. Sheen's research involved three groups: a direct-only correction group, a direct metalinguistic correction group, and a control group. The findings of her research revealed that WCF positively influences the learning of English articles, with direct correction accompanied by metalinguistic feedback proving to be more effective than WCF lacking such feedback. Additionally, learners possessing a high level of language analytic ability showed greater benefits, regardless of the type of corrective feedback, as noted by Jayathilake (2013, p. 141).

Lee (2008) addressed the topic WCF by examining the practices of teachers in secondary classrooms in Hong Kong. The findings showed that examination culture heavily influences teachers' CF, which primarily focuses on errors. Lee posits that various contextual elements, including teachers' beliefs, values, and socio-political factors related to power dynamics and teacher's autonomy, shape these feedback practices. Consequently, this raises an important issue for future research, as these practices may have implications for the effectiveness of WCF (Jayathalike, 2013, p. 141).

Satake (2024) conducted a study on around 20-year-old 55 Japanese university students to explore whether teacher and peer feedback yields different impacts on learners' L2 errors when utilizing a corpus. The research revealed that EC through corpus use, guided by teacher feedback, proved particularly effective for addressing omission and agreement errors (p. 12).

2.4. Aim of the Research Study

This study aims to identify the factors that influences the effectiveness of direct, focused WCF with metalinguistic cues in improving the usage of noun inflections in the essay writing of the class XII students who are L2 learners of English from JNV, Patan, Gujarat. While research on WCF in SLA has been extensive there is a lack of focus on comprehending the perspectives of WCF concerning the grammatical errors committed by JNV students. This study aims to bridge this research gap and tackle a question Hendrickson posed in his 1978 study: What is the appropriate method for correcting errors? (see Section 1).

The research discusses a small-scale longitudinal study examining the impact of focused direct metalinguistic WCF on noun inflections (pluralization) in students' essays in pretest-post-test and delayed test conditions (Timofeeva-Timofeev, 2021; Balanga et al., 2016; Kloss & Quintanilla, 2022, p. 89). This research is inspired by Sheen's (2007) study on WCF's effect on learners with different backgrounds, this paper explores the relationship between language analytic abilities and WCF's impact on grammar (Jayathilake, 2013, p. 141). Ellis (2009) differentiates between direct WCF, where errors are corrected explicitly, and metalinguistic WCF, which provides implicit feedback on the nature of the error (Kloss & Quintanilla, 2022, p. 89). This study focuses specifically on grammatical errors in noun inflections, excluding discourse and semantic errors, and suggests opportunities for further research in this area.

3. Research Method

The study used a longitudinal experimental design, incorporating three types of assessments: pretest, immediate post-test, and delayed post-test, to measure the effectiveness of WCF methods for language acquisition (Bitchener, 2008). The study's strength lies in its measurement of structural acquisition and its reliability in quantitative assessments of language acquisition accuracy (Kloss & Quintanilla, 2022, p. 90). The linguistic intervention lasted eight weeks, with a pretest administered in the first week, individual feedback provided in the second week, and group feedback sessions in the third week. The teacher-researcher provided both oral and written feedback. The written metalinguistic CF involved detailed explanations while the oral feedback involved a detailed lecture to the entire class (Bitchener et al., 2005; Bitchener, 2008; Bakri, 2015, p. 248). After students returned each assignment, the teacher set aside class time for them to review the corrections they received. An unexpected post-test was taken in week four, followed by a delayed post-test in the eighth week.

In a questionnaire, participants provided information about the grade in which they began learning English, their preferred type of CF, their expectations regarding feedback types (teacher, peer, or self), immediate or delayed correction, and whether to correct one linguistic structure or multiple grammatical aspects in written compositions.

3.1 Participants

The study encompasses a limited sample of 30 students, comprising 15 boys and 15 girls, who are enrolled in grade XII at JNV located in the Patan district of Gujarat. The participants share a similar demographic background and exhibited a low-intermediate level of proficiency. The researcher selected participants by employing the following inclusion criteria:

a. They are part of the outgoing cohort entering tertiary education, a critical stage in their academic careers.
b. All the participants are native Gujarati speakers.
c. Participation has been voluntary.
d. During the 2022-23 academic session, they participated in and successfully passed the All-India Secondary School Examination (X Board). Their results ranged from 53% to 86%, with

an average subject score of 70.6 in English Language and Literature (184). The Central Board of Secondary Education conducts this exam.

e. All the participants have been attending the same Vidyalaya for six years.
f. At the time of data collection, their ages ranged from 15 to 17.
g. They had been studying English as a second language.

23.33% of the sample participants began studying English at the foundational stage, 63.33% at the preparatory stage, and 13.33% at the middle stage, as outlined by the NEP 2020 (MHRD, 2020, p. 11; Mohanty, 2023, p. 9). The researcher randomly assigned participants to three groups: Experimental Group 1(EG-01), which received direct written corrective feedback (WCF) with metalinguistic cues; Experimental Group 2 (EG-02), which also received direct WCF; and a Control Group 3 (CG-03), which received no WCF. Each group consisted of 5 boys and 5 girls.

3.2 Data Collection

Data were collected through three assessments measuring students' longitudinal linguistic accuracy in noun forms. The pre-test required participants to write a 150–200-word descriptive essay on one of three topics: "online shopping," "the importance of discipline in a student's life," or "if I were the principal of my school for a day." Participants had 30-40 minutes to complete the task, which was conducted under supervision without internet access. The same topics were used for the post-test and delayed post-test.

3.3 Type of Corrective Treatment Given

This study focuses on the teacher's direct WCF, excluding peer, self-correction, or computer-based feedback. The assessment targeted learners' written grammatical accuracy, not their beliefs or attitudes. Students were prohibited from accessing the previous assignments or feedback once they started to compose a new essay. To address the study's focus, the researcher corrected additional errors beyond noun forms in the two experimental groups. Table 3 summarizes the three assessment tests used in the study (Kloss & Quintanilla, 2022, p. 92).

Table 3. Type of feedback given to the students

Groups	Identification	Type of feedback received
EG-01	Direct Metalinguistic Focused WCF	Received general comments. Additionally, changing "in our life" to "to our lives" acknowledges the plural aspect of "lives," indicating that discipline affects everyone in various ways, thereby making the sentence more inclusive and accurate."
EG-02	Direct Non-Metalinguistic Focused WCF	Participants received explicit comments regarding the correct form of nouns needed in the text. For example, they were instructed, "You should have used 'options' instead of 'option.'"
CG-03	Control Group	Received general comments, such: "could have done better," etc.

3.4 Administering the Test

According to Best and Khan (1993), a questionnaire is a tool where respondents answer questions or select items to indicate their responses, suitable for gathering factual information. An attitude scale is used for collecting opinions. Questionnaires can be administered verbally or by post (Nzama, 2010, p. 51). Before the pretest, I distributed a 10-question questionnaire with multiple-choice options.

The initial questions were designed to gather background information, gauge their familiarity with the English pedagogical methods used by the educator, and identify any challenge they faced in acquiring LSRW skills across various educational levels. I enquired about their linguistic exposure to English in their domestic environments. Responses were uniform throughout the group. Of the 30

respondents, roughly 22 expressed ignorance regarding the exact pedagogical strategies employed in classroom instruction. Approximately 20 pupils reported experiencing difficulties when acquiring English as L2 during middle school. Eight individuals recognized secondary education as a challenging period, and one student indicated difficulties at both the elementary and primary levels. Out of the 30 respondents, around 23 reported their difficulty in English spoken skills. 13 pupils indicated challenges in acquiring writing abilities, one student experienced issues in reading comprehension, and five students reported struggles with mastering listening skills. The survey permitted participants to choose multiple options. Among the 30 pupils surveyed, 17 indicated that they never had the opportunity to converse in English at home. Eleven students reported that they occasionally communicate in English at home; however, none claimed to do so routinely. Two students reported that they occasionally participate in English conversations at home.

A significant majority, 29 students, acknowledged that WCF positively impacts the improvement of learners' grammatical knowledge. 8 students preferred peer correction, 3 self-correction, and 19 (63.3%) preferred teacher correction for all errors (Amara, 2015, p. 62) refer Figure 1.

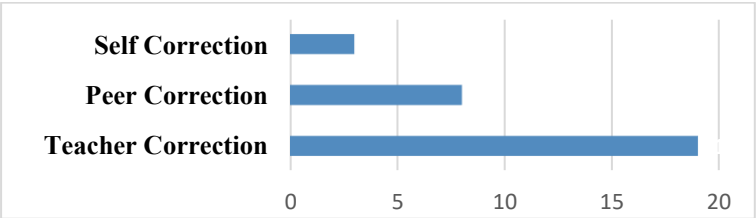

Figure 1. Preferred source of correction

Approximately 90% (27 students) indicated a preference for immediate correction. In contrast, only 10% (3 out of 30 students) preferred delayed correction, refer Figure 2.

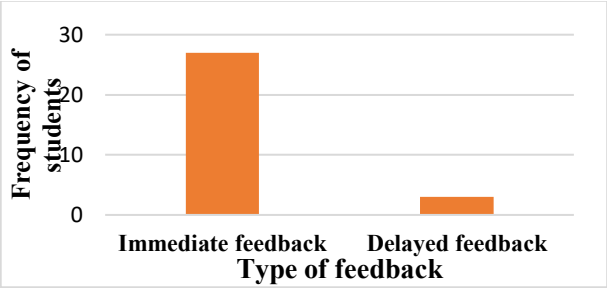

Figure 2. Preferred correction type

80% (24 students) of respondents emphasized the need for learners' motivation, engagement with feedback, and willingness to revise as critical factors influencing the effectiveness of WCF. 20% (6 students) believed that these factors sometimes affect its efficacy, refer Figure 3.

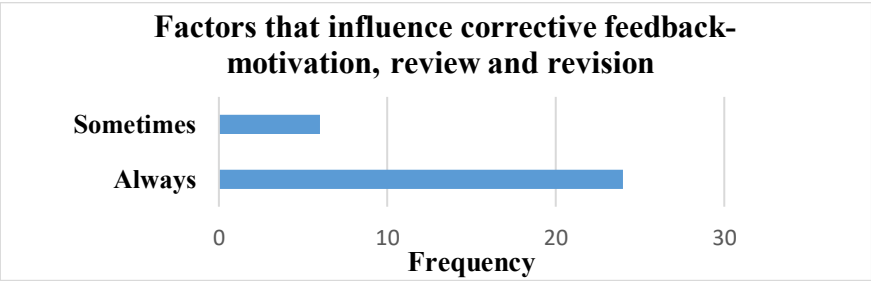

Figure 3. Factors that influence corrective feedback

Out of 30 students, 27 indicated a preference for corrections addressing multiple aspects, while only 3 students suggested focusing on a single linguistic aspect at a time, such as articles, tense, or verbs refer Figure 4.

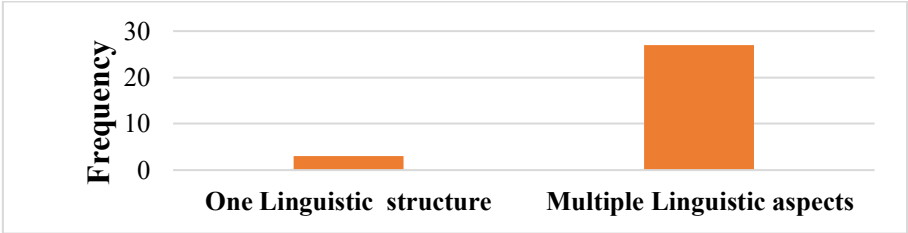

Figure 4. Focused vs Unfocused corrective feedback

4. Results

Error reduction is the dependent variable in this quasi-experimental study, which has three groups: two experimental and one control. In the descriptive essay, pre-test, immediate post-test, and delayed post-test outcomes measured error reduction (Kloss & Quintanilla, 2022, pp. 92–93). MS Excel was used to count, process, and analyse errors using descriptive and inferential statistics to explore frequency distributions and associations. Spearman's rank correlation assessed group relationships. One-factor ANOVA tests identified statistically significant error, mean differences between groups.

4.1 The Measure of Central Tendency, Frequency, and Percentages for the Pre-test

After administering the pre-test to each sample group, group EG01 averaged with 3.3 errors, with a minimum of 0 and a maximum of 8 errors, and a SD of 2.26 dispersion units from the mean. In contrast, group EG02 recorded an average of 2.3 errors, with a minimum of 0 and a maximum of 6 errors, and a SD of 2.213 dispersion units. Lastly, group CG03 exhibited an average of 2.6 errors, with a minimum of 1 and a maximum of 6 errors, and a SD of 1.713 dispersion units. From an analytical perspective, a comparison of the three groups based on their SDs reveals a similar pattern of data dispersion. This implies that, despite the varying averages, the research consistently observes errors throughout its duration and scope (Kloss & Quintanilla, 2022, p. 93).

Figure 5. Measure of central tendency, frequency, and percentages for the pre-test

Examining the frequencies and their graphical representation (see Figure 5.) in percentage terms, the researcher found that among the 30 participants in the pre-test, 3.3% committed 8 errors, 6.7% made 6 errors, 13.3% recorded 5 errors, 10% had 4 errors, another 10% made 3 errors, 23.3% committed 2 errors, 23.3% made 1 error, and 10% of the students made no errors. Figure 5 illustrates the distribution of errors, indicating that the majority of the assessed individuals committed between 1 and 2 errors, which accounts for 46.6% of the total sample.

Spearman's variation, which measures how different the distributions are between groups, it was observed that there was a difference of r2 = 2.6777 between group EG01 and group EG02. This indicates that the variability in group EG01 is nearly double that of group EG02. Additionally, group EG01 exhibited a difference of r2 = 0.1698 when compared to group CG03. Lastly, the comparison

between group EG02 and group CG03 showed a slight increase in difference, with a coefficient of r2 = 0.0476.

Following the implementation of the linguistic intervention, the students participated in an immediate post-test during the fourth week. The analysis of central tendency yielded the following results: Group EG01 exhibited an average of 1.8 errors, with a minimum of 0 and a maximum of 4 errors, resulting in a SD of 1.23 units from the mean. In contrast, Group EG02 recorded an average of 1.5 errors, with a minimum of 0 and a maximum of 3 errors and a SD of 0.97 units. Lastly, Group CG demonstrated an average of 2 errors, with a minimum of 1 and a maximum of 5 errors, accompanied by a SD of 1.49 units.

Upon examining the frequencies and their percentage representation (see Figure 6) of all subjects, we found that 3.33% committed 5 errors in the immediate post-test, 6.67% made 4 errors, 10% recorded 3 errors, 36.67% made 2 errors, 30% made 1 error, and 13.33% made no errors. The majority of participants assessed during this phase of the study exhibited between 0 and 2 errors, accounting for approximately 80%.

Figure 6. Measure of central tendency, frequency, and percentages for immediate post-test

In Spearman's variance, group EG01 has a difference of 0.00235 from group EG02, indicating a small gap—less than one occurrence—between the two groups. Similar to group CG03, group EG01 differs by 0.2410. In contrast, group EG02 and group CG03 differ significantly, with a coefficient of 0.00132.

Central tendency analysis of sample delayed post-test data yielded the following results: Group EG01 had 2.3 errors, ranging from 0 to 6, with a SD of 1.7029 dispersion units relative to the mean. Group EG02 had a SD of 0.2333 dispersion units and an average of 0.9 errors, ranging from 0 to 2. Finally, Group CG03 had 2.3 errors, ranging from 0 to 4, and 0.395 dispersion units.

3.33% of delayed post-test participants made 6 errors, 10% made 4 errors, 10% made 3 errors, 33.33% failed 2 times, 26.67% failed once, and 16.67% made no errors. Figure 3 shows the descriptive distribution of the data, showing that 76.67% of those tested during this phase had between 0 and 2 mistakes, refer Figure 7.

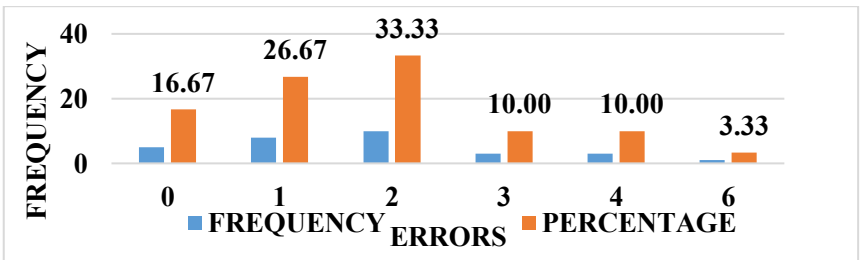

Figure 7. Measure of central tendency, frequency, and percentages for delayed post-test

The SD comparison of the groups showed a difference between Group EG01 and Group EG02, mirroring the differentiation between Group EG02 and Group CG03. Notably, Group CG03 had a spread from EG01 that was about twice as big as that of Group EG02. This shows that mistakes happen often in both the time and space contexts of the research. The calculation of Spearman's variance showed that Group EG01 differed from Group EG02 by 0.0119. Additionally, Group EG01 differed from Group CG03 by 0.2470, indicating a close relationship between these groups. In contrast, when comparing Group EG02 with Group CG03, the difference increased to 0.0133.

4.2 Analysis of Results in the Use of Nouns

The research method employed the counting of errors committed by the students to analyze the presence of noun inflection errors in the essays. This approach assesses the degree of accuracy with which students utilize the selected linguistic forms, specifically singular and plural noun forms. Table 4 presents the total number of errors in noun inflections identified in students' descriptive essays during the pretest, immediate post-test, and delayed post-test.

Table 4, in the first column, outlines the intervention groups: Group EG01, which received CF through metalinguistic cues; Experimental Group EG02, which received direct feedback; and the control group, which received no feedback except general comments.

The total number of errors across the three groups in the pretest was 82. In the second measurement, errors decreased to 53, but in the final measurement, they increased slightly to 55. This pattern indicates that Group EG01 reduced its errors in noun usage, while the control group experienced a considerable increase in errors.

Group EG01's pretest errors dropped from 33 to 18 in the post test, supporting Kloss et al. (2020)'s claim that implicit correction helps students recognise and remedy their mistakes. Five errors were added to the error count by the delayed post-test, reaching 23, refer Table 4. The metalinguistic technique emphasises reflective practice during correction, which may not guarantee error repair retention. Lim & Renandya (2020, p. 11) observed moderate learning retention effects in a delayed post-test at least two weeks after CF treatment.

Table 4. The total errors of noun forms identified in pretest, post-test and delayed post-test

Evaluation Moment	Pre-Test				Post Test				Delayed Post Test			
Groups	EG01	EG02	CG03	Total	EG01	EG02	CG03	Total	EG01	EG02	CG03	Total
N⁰	33	23	26	**82**	18	15	20	***53***	23	9	23	***55***
Total%	40.24	28.05	31.71	100	33.96	28.30	37.74	100	41.82	16.36	41.82	100

4.3 One-Factor Analysis of Variance

The researcher conducted a one-way ANOVA to compare the averages of the three groups involved in the experiment and assess the differences among the group means (Sarvestani, 2016, p. 114; Kloss & Quintanilla, 2022, p. 95). The research hypothesis posits that there is a difference between the groups, while the null hypothesis states that there is no difference. The significance level in the pretest was above 0.05 ($p < 0.5508$), indicating no significant differences before the treatment. Similarly, the immediate post-test also showed no significance ($p < 0.6702$), see table 5, leading to the acceptance of the null hypothesis (H01 and H02) and the rejection of the research hypothesis (H1 and H2) for the pre-test and immediate treatment.

In contrast, the delayed post-test revealed a significant difference, attributed to repeated practice ($p < 0.0322$), leading to rejecting the null hypothesis (H03) and acceptance of the research hypothesis (H03). These findings align with the results of Fathman and Whalley (1990) and Ashwell (2000), who noted improvements in the writing skills of the control group over time, which they attributed to continuous writing practice. Conversely, groups that received either direct or indirect CF on their

written drafts demonstrated slightly better performance than those who did not receive feedback; however, these differences were not statistically significant, as highlighted by Tanveer et al. (2018, p. 168), refer Table 5.

Table 5. One-way ANOVA for pre, post, and delayed post-test

	Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Pretest	Between Groups	5.266667	2	2.633333	0.609777	**0.550787**	3.354131
	Within Groups	116.6	27	4.318519			
	Total	121.8667	29				
Posttest	Between Groups	1.266667	2	0.633333	0.406176	**0.670196**	3.354131
	Within Groups	42.1	27	1.559259			
	Total	43.36667	29				
Delayed Post Test	Between Groups	13.06667	2	6.533333	3.911308	**0.032232**	3.354131
	Within Groups	45.1	27	1.67037			
	Total	58.16667	29				

The significance level observed in EG01 for the pretest, post-test, and delayed post-test was greater than 0.005 ($p < 0.1789$). Likewise, in EG02, the significance also exceeded 0.005 ($p < 0.1179$). In the control group, the significance was similarly above 0.005 ($p < 0.6731$). Consequently, we must accept the null hypotheses (H01, H02, and H03) while rejecting the research hypotheses (H1, H2, and H3), refer Table 6.

Table 6. One-way ANOVA for EG-01, EG02, and CG03 groups

	Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
EG01	Between Groups	11.66667	2	5.833333	1.835664	0.178863	3.354131
	Within Groups	85.8	27	3.177778			
	Total	97.46667	29				
EG02	Between Groups	9.866667	2	4.933333	2.316522	0.117898	3.354131
	Within Groups	57.5	27	2.12963			
	Total	67.36667	29				
CG03	Between Groups	1.8	2	0.9	0.401653	0.673145	3.354131
	Within Groups	60.5	27	2.240741			
	Total	62.3	29				

5. Discussion

Many students improved their essays after the test with fewer noun errors, content, and organization. This improvement during the teacher's comments suggests that direct metalinguistic CF is beneficial. JNV teachers should use persistent, individualized WCF to improve students' performance in the short and long terms. Some students wrote post-test essays by rote. The teacher's drive and personalized attention helped this improvement, as did the pupils' desire to impress her. However, memorising plagiarism is not learning (Friston, 2005; Rumelhart & McClelland, 1986; Metcalfe, 2017, pp. 478-479).

When faced with the task of writing an essay on a new topic, students encounter a dilemma: they can either formulate original sentences, which are susceptible to grammatical errors and are often avoided due to the "avoidance phenomenon" (Schachter, 1974; Al-Shobhi, 2019, p. 57), or use online or peer aid to acquire and retain material (Ellis, 2004, p. 531; Bozorgian & Yazdani, 2021, p. 168). L2 teachers know that a single piece of writing by a language learner can have many errors, making it impracticable to fix them all. Thus, teachers must determine whether to focus on target structures or all errors in a student's writing piece. Teachers focus on recently learned structures when giving CF. Regardless of concentration, unfocused feedback corrects student writing errors (Tran, 2013, p. 4). We must also consider learners' linguistic skills, personality, memory, focus, willingness to revise, patience, and passion in learning.

The post-test demonstrated that the teacher's direct metalinguistic WCF and comments significantly enhanced the accuracy of L2 writing. The delayed post-test did not always show these gains. The average pretest error rate was 2.733, dropped to 1.766 in the post-test, and rose to 1.833 in the delayed post-test. The current study supports Erel and Bulut (2007), who found that students who received CF outperformed those who did not (Jayathilake, 2013, p. 141); however, this does not apply across the three-test model.

Bitchener et al., (2005) provided 53 language learners with direct explicit CF in addition to 5 minutes of oral conferencing with metalinguistic information, direct explicit CF alone, or no feedback at all over a 12-week period. The group that received direct, explicit CF accompanying oral conferencing had positive impacts, although the outcomes varied by target structure (Bozorgian & Yazdani, 2021, p. 67). Like Metcalfe et al. (2009), this study indicated that grades 3–5 students outperformed in delayed CF. Recently, research has focused on moderating variables thought to affect the efficacy of WCF. Brown et al. (2023, p. 2) list these factors, including students' skill level (Guo, 2015), the types of feedback they receive (Seiffedin & El-Sakka, 2017), the number and types of errors they fix (Pashazadeh, 2017), their grammar knowledge (Nemati et al., 2019), and how much they revise based on the feedback.

5.1 Factors Affecting WCF

According to Truscott (1996) individual variables including gender, age, educational background, ability, field-independence, tolerance for uncertainty, and anxiety may affect feedback benefits, teacher's attribute and learning environment may also matter. These and other unknown factors may also interact complexly (p. 336). EC methods' limitations and efficacy must be acknowledged. According to some studies CF may increase anxiety and decrease motivation. These conclusions were less reliable because many research lacked a control group. Without comparing experimental and control groups, the effects of the CF approach are hard to assess (Giri, 2018, p. 89). The present and previous studies have identified factors that may influence the efficiency of WCF, as detailed below.

5.1.1 Time Factor

Time is a crucial factor in improving learners' written accuracy after CF. I observed that students showed improved accuracy in post-test submissions but they reverted to previous errors in the delayed

post-test. Hyland (2003) links new errors to factors such as carelessness, habitual errors, and difficulties in rewriting without fully understanding the corrections (Stannard, 2008; Hamouda, 2011, p. 135).

Time constraints in classroom writing often limit the cognitive resources required for optimal performance (Hyland & Hyland, 2019). However, these constraints could also reduce multitasking and enhance the focus and efforts for accurate performance of attentional resources (Brown et al., 2023, p. 8). However, there is no conclusive evidence to support the effectiveness of properly timed correction, making its potential purely hypothetical (Truscott, 1996, p. 337).

5.1.2 Personalized Feedback by the Teacher

The nature of the relationship between the teacher and an individual student significantly influences the effectiveness of personalized feedback. When teachers provide feedback with empathy and attention, students tend to value it more, which can positively impact their performance. Research on perceptions toward CF suggests that a majority of students favour feedback on overarching writing concerns, such as organization and idea development, rather than focusing on minor grammatical errors. This preference is especially pronounced when students believe that such errors may impact their assignment grades (Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010; Brown et al., 2023, p. 25).

5.1.3 Proficiency of the Learner

Learner proficiency, memory, and personality traits are key factors in the effectiveness of CF. Scholars such as Ellis (2009), Ferris, and Roberts (2001) argue that CF's effectiveness depends on learner's proficiency (Russell & Spada, 2006; Li, 2010; Lim & Renandya, 2020, p. 7). Ellis (2009) suggests that novice learners benefit more from direct feedback due to their need for substantial support, while advanced learners can self-identify errors, making indirect feedback more appropriate. Liu (2008) also notes that less proficient learners struggle with self-correction, making direct feedback more effective (Lim & Renandya, 2020, p. 3).

Students' working memory aids recall the pretest content and feedback, this allows them to improve by avoiding past errors. Zhao (2013) defines working memory as a cognitive construct that holds and processes information for complex tasks (Bakri, 2015, p. 255). However, students with low motivation may ignore feedback, regardless of its quality (Griffiths, 2008; Virlan, 2022, p. 197).

Different types of CF may suit different learners or have varying effects based on skill levels, as noted by Patra (2022), Shao et al. (2023), Fu and Li (2023), and Sun (2024, p. 39).

5.1.4 Reviewing

Revision poses a major challenge for many students, as many lack the time, energy, or motivation to revise essays, engage with new content, or unlearn structures recommended by teachers. This lack of practice and self-correction leads to minimal improvement, even when other learning factors are met. Ferris (1997) studied 47 advanced ESL learners to explore the impact of teacher's feedback on revision. The results showed that while students sometimes ignored feedback, the teacher's comments significantly influenced their revisions, facilitated their learning (Jayathilake, 2013, p. 140).

Chanquoy (1997b) suggested that revision during the writing process mainly addresses surface errors like spelling and punctuation. In contrast, revising after writing encourages more careful reading and reflection, as it reduces cognitive strain on working memory (Chanquoy, 2001, p. 20).

5.1.5 Sustained Monitoring

Continuous teacher monitoring can help students make behavioural changes and encourage self-correction, but the demands of an exam-driven culture limit teachers' ability to track individual progress effectively (Lee, 2008; Jayathalike, 2013, p. 141).

Most immersion teachers focus primarily on subject content, with academic achievement taking precedence due to school and parental expectations. However, as Lyster and Ranta (1997) argue, "Subject-matter teaching does not on its own provide adequate language teaching" (p. 41). Studies (Chaudron, 1986; Harley, 1989; Kowal & Swain, 1997; Lyster, 1987, 1994; Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Salomone, 1992; Swain & Lapkin, 1986; Tedick & Gortari, 1998, p. 1) link immersion students' low proficiency to the lack of systematic language teaching in meaningful contexts and insufficient attention to students' errors. While learners favoured teacher correction, it was impractical for educators to devote extensive time to address the errors (Hamouda, 2011, p. 136).

5.1.6 Peer Corrective feedback

Peer group learning has been effective in many cases. Raimes (1983) found that when students have time to identify and correct their own errors before teacher's CF, it becomes more engaging and effective (Giri, 2018, p. 90). Pratt et al. (2005) argued that peer feedback positively influences classroom dynamics. This is supported by research from Kavaliauskiene and Ausiene (2012), Gascoigne (2004, 2008), and Giri (2018, p. 90).

However, peer CF has limitations. Some students may avoid criticizing peers to prevent offense, as noted by Chen (2013) and Lu & Bol (2007), leading to less critical feedback. Additionally, students sometimes struggle to identify errors (Ferris, 2002; Giri, 2018, p. 102; Satake, 2024, p. 11). Despite this, peer involvement reduces teacher-centric learning, lowers anxiety, and creates a more supportive classroom environment (Rollinson, 2005, p. 25; Marzban & Sarjami, 2014, p. 298).

5.1. Significant Research Findings regarding WCF

Following a review of the research on WCF, we have identified several findings that correspond with the current study and could be significant for educators aimed to improve students' writing skills.

5.2.1 Language Analytic Ability (LAA)

Language development recognizes Language Analytical Ability (LAA) as a key individual difference factor. Variations among learners and the types of CF they receive can significantly affect the progress of L2 writing skills. Sheen (2007) found greater improvement in the group that received direct correction with metalinguistic explanations. Additionally, learners with higher LAA benefited more from both types of CF, as noted by Bozorgian and Yazdani (2021, p. 68).

In any language learning environment, learners exposed to the same instructional methods achieve varying results. Cognitive and emotional factors, which influence individual differences, help explain this disparity. Carroll (1991; Ellis, 2004, p. 531; Bozorgian & Yazdani, 2021, p. 68) pioneered studies on language aptitude, and introduced a four-component model comprising:

a. Phonemic coding ability refers to the ability to encode foreign sounds for later recall.
b. Grammatical sensitivity is defined as the ability to identify the grammatical roles of words within sentences.
c. The inductive learning ability involves recognizing patterns of correspondence and relationships between form and meaning.
d. The rote learning ability is characterized by the capacity to create and retain associations between different stimuli.

5.2.2 Leow's (2020) Feedback Processing

Ronald P. Leow's 2020 framework builds on his 2015 model of second language (L2) learning in instructed second language acquisition (ISLA), emphasizing the interaction between L2 development and learners' output. CF can help learners reorganize their inaccurate interlanguage, which may still contain errors but has the potential to either replace or coexist with previous L2 knowledge (Leow, 2020, pp. 104-105).

The occurrence of old outputs, where errors reappear after CF, suggests that learners may not fully process the CF or engage with it superficially. It may also indicate a lack of trust or understanding of the CF. For example, a student in my research correctly used the modal verb "would" after receiving metalinguistic CF but misapplied it in a delayed post-test, reflecting Leow's findings that L2 learners often retain inaccuracies in their interlanguage (Leow, 2023, p. 113).

5.2.3 CAF (A Collaborative Approach to Providing Feedback)

The Collaborative Approach to Feedback is an educational model that fosters a collaborative learning environment, where participants learn from each other's experiences. Based on Dewey's (1916) ideas of active learning, CAF incorporates four key principles: peer learning, tribes, constructivism, and student engagement through blended learning. Peer learning allows individuals to learn interactively across subjects (Slavin, 2011; Giri, 2018, p. 100).

Studies by Radeeki and Swale (1988), Leki (1991), and Chandler (2001; 2003) found that students preferred self-correction. In CAF, students actively contribute to feedback by collaborating in small groups throughout the writing process. However, the CAF model also presents both advantages and challenges (Giri, 2018, p. 101).

6. Conclusion

The researcher concludes that a single method of CF is insufficient to improve the written language competency due to individual differences and learners' proficiency levels. As many scholars argue, there is no universal approach to CF (Ellis, 2009; Guenette, 2007). Each educational context and group of students is unique, and a strategy effective in one setting may not work in another (Hyland & Hyland, 2007; Giri, 2018, p. 90).

The present study suggests moderate effectiveness of direct focused WCF combined with metalinguistic interventions. However, a limitation is the participants' insufficient grammatical proficiency, which might hinder the understanding of metalinguistic feedback (Kloss & Quintanilla, 2022, p. 98). Additionally, this feedback should support self-regulation and be tailored to students' writing needs (Gallego et al., 2015; Myhill et al., 2018). Another limitation is the lack of a new composition topic, as the ability to revise does not reflect lasting impact of feedback beyond revision (Storch, 2010, p. 32).

Educators are encouraged to use any form of WCF suited to their students. The study reinforces that WCF remains a controversial topic, with factors like genre and grammar structure influencing its effectiveness (Kloss & Quintanilla, 2022, p. 99). Future research should explore comprehensive CF and involve a larger, more diverse sample from various linguistic, demographic, and educational backgrounds to better assess the impact of metalinguistic WCF on writing proficiency.

7. Recommendations for Educators regarding Classroom Engagement

Errors can significantly enhance learning by activating working memory, it improves recall and accuracy, promotes active engagement, focusing attention, and helps educators identify areas for targeted instruction (Metcalfe, 2017, p. 484). Tedick and Gortari's (1998) study, builds on Lyster and Ranta's (1987, 1994, 1997) work, did not definitively determine the impact of teachers' CF on students' errors and language acquisition nevertheless, these studies offer valuable recommendations for educators based on their classroom experience:

a. Context Consideration: EC may not be suitable during early stages of language development; focus should be on encouraging communication of ideas.
b. Awareness of Current Practices: Educators should engage in non-judgmental discussions with colleagues and use audio/video recordings to enhance reflection on their CF practices.

c. Variety of CF Techniques: Effective teachers recognize the need for diverse CF methods to accommodate individual learning styles and differences.
d. Focus on Learners: Teachers should allow adequate time for students to process information and internalize rules, avoiding rushing through lessons. The least effective technique is to simply provide the correct answers (Tedick & Gortari, 1998, p. 4).

Tatawy (2002; Ergunay, 2008, p. 5) proposed several conditions for the effectiveness of corrective feedback in second language acquisition.

a. Teachers should be systematic and consistent in their approach.
b. CF must be clear and comprehensible for learners.
c. Give students enough time to make self-corrections.
d. There should be a close alignment among the teacher's objectives, the incorrect structure, and the learners' perception of CF.
e. EC should focus on one error at a time.
f. The developmental readiness of the learners is crucial.

Additionally, Anderson (2010) explored the effectiveness of "tiered corrective feedback," which he defined as the different stages of focused CF that begin with an emphasis on a single grammatical feature and progress incrementally. Anderson's findings indicate that corrective feedback is most impactful when it targets up to two categories of errors (Marzban & Sarjami, 2014, p. 295).

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