



Written and Oral Corrective Feedback in Task-Based Writing: A Case Study of Puyang Middle School

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Abstract. This research probes deeply into the teaching effects of WCF and OCF with an experiment of six junior high school students in a class of Puyang middle school in Dujiangyan City. Through empirical data, charts and diagrams, six questionnaires, findings indicate: 1) under this empirical environment, WCF is more efficient for the inferior students while OCF for the superior students; 2) written comments from the teacher is essential for WCF while there are more influential factors for OCF; 3) WCF and OCF make a function between them is due to the active degree of teacher-student interaction.

Keywords: Rural junior students · written corrective feedback · oral corrective feedback · task-based writing

1 Introduction

In foreign researches, as for empirical studies of Corrective Feedback (CF) in L2 writing, there are different research directions mainly involving the types, subjects and influential factors of error correction. Some experts designed the corresponding empirical experiments to argue whether grammar correction needed to be abolished or not with reflections of its effective and ineffective aspects [1, 2]. A typology of different types of Written Corrective Feedback (WCF) was presented to investigate the influence of WCF [3]. In recent studies, WCF is not so better than less and called for a focused approach to WCF with examination of benefits to students [4]. A model of error treatment towards Oral Corrective Feedback (OCF) in EFL teaching programme was designed [5]. It was the same for both teachers and students whose attitudes can affect the final empirical results [6]. The researching focus was transferred from teacher to interaction between teachers and students with comparison of reflections between students and teachers [7]. A model incorporating cognitive, affective components was designed to search for the influences of negative and positive attitudes on OCF [8]. By contrast, in China, the past researches mainly focus on the isolated study of WCF and OCF. Actually, empirical researches of OCF have been carried out in oral lessons while those of WCF in grammatical error correction in writing. Practically, traditional L2 teachers often shunned distributing sustainable writing tasks or assignments because the work of correction was too heavy for

them and no effective way of feedback can be offered as a standard. With the elapse of time, modern researches has been pushed into the deep area with Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC). This study is aimed to take on a comparative experiment between WCF and OCF to probe into their discrepancy and efficiency.

2 Research Designs

2.1 Research Questions

In terms of different teaching situation and teaching objects, the teacher can choose a proper CF for students on promoting their English writing. Therefore, the following research questions can be established:

- (1) Which type of students can WCF and OCF be more properly and effectively for?
- (2) What are the effects and discrepancies of WCF and OCF?

In this research, there are three groups involving the first-level group, the second-level group, and the third-level group. For the first-level group, two students named Becky and Mark excellent in English writing are individually answered by WCF and OCF through an analysis of vocabulary, grammar and content. For the second-level group, another two students called Tracy and Grace medium in English writing are separately reflected by WCF and OCF also through an analysis of vocabulary, grammar and content. For the third-level group, another two students named Wendy and Cathy inferior in English writing are individually responded by WCF and OCF through an analysis of vocabulary, grammar and content. In the whole process, there are WCF and OCF for three groups of different levels in English writing. This study researches the effects and discrepancy of written connective feedback and OCF for students of the same level.

2.2 Research Procedures

This part will introduce collective procedures and importance of writing test paper. After students has learned the Unit 4 of PEP involving vocabulary, reading, and oral activities, a task-based writing was distributed to them. Therefore, they need to finish their writing with at least 150 words following the corresponding writing requirements. The teacher chose two excellent students Becky and Mark who reflect the top level of the class in English writing for this task to respectively impose WCF on Becky and OCF on Mark, which is Group A. Additionally, Group B are the middle-leveled students who reflects the average English writing level of the class. Also the teacher gave Tracy WCF and empower Grace OCF. Another Group C are the low-level students Wendy and Cathy who demonstrate the comparatively lower level of the class. Then the teacher gave WCF to Wendy and OCF to Cathy (see Table 1). Finally, 12 writing test paper can be got to provide the basic researching data. Writing test paper is the most fundamental and reliable sources of information, which can form the data basis for this study.

Table 1. Data analysis of Group A, B and C

Group A: the superior				
Student	Wrong Words	Grammatical Mistakes	Content	The way of feedback
Becky	Less 1.3% → 0.9%	Less 5 points → None	Much Better	Oral
Mark	Less 0.7% → 0.3%	More 6 points → 7 points	Better	Written
Group B: the centered				
Tracy	Less 0.9% → 0.7%	Less 7points → 4 points	Better	Oral
Grace	Less 1.1% → 0.5%	Less 9points → 1 point	Better	Written
Group C: the inferior				
Wendy	Less 3.8% → 2.8%	Less 4points → 2 points	Better	Oral
Cathy	Less 1.7% → 0.9%	Less 2 points → None	Much Better	Written

3 Results and Discussion

3.1 Proper and Effective WCF and OCF

For the superior students, OCF is more efficient than WCF. From the error rate of vocabulary, OCF has the same function with WCF because excellent students have a strong foundation in English vocabulary. From grammatical errors, OCF embraces a better effect than WCF does because more details can be expressed by OCF compared with WCF. From content, OCF can be more effective for students than WCF because through oral communication the teacher can know what students think of and make a response to them from the connectivity and hierarchy of their writing. For the central students, OCF embraces a various effects compared with WCF. From the data of error rates in vocabulary, WCF gets a better response from students to correction compared with OCF because the students at the medium level of English writing have less solid basis of vocabulary memorization. From the grammatical mistakes, OCF can be more proper than WCF. From content, OCF and WCF almost throw the similar influence. For the inferior students, OCF is less effective than WCF. From the error rates of vocabulary, WCF can be more beneficial than OCF. From grammatical errors, WCF and OCF almost embrace the similar effects for both students. From the content, although there are some inappropriate points in both revisions from WCF and OCF in expressive fluency and clearance, the revision by WCF show more logic compared with the other revision by

OCF. With the decreasing writing level, WCF performs better and better with the negative correlation of writing level and WCF.

3.2 Effects and Discrepancies of WCF and OCF

In order to deepen this research and fill more details, the longitudinal comparison should be carried on in the way of WCF or OCF among students of different levels from the highest to the lowest. OCF produces a clearer influence on the final results for ESL students to observe effective approaches to WCF [9]. Later, a longitudinal empirical experiment has been carried on to search for contributions of WCF to develop environment among three treatment groups [10]. From the study of OCF and WCF by the same researchers, this study mainly focus on the comparison between WCF and OCF. Firstly, WCF is less directive compared with OCF. WCF in form of revision on paper cannot make the reviser interact with students at the first time but it can leave some time for students to correct their errors. Secondly, OCF can motivate students' learning desire in the face-to-face method. Both feedback can be beneficial for correcting errors in vocabulary, grammatical mistakes, and reorganization of writing mindset. WCF can show higher efficiency in some students while OCF can also show its higher efficiency in other students (see Fig. 1 and Fig. 2).

As for similarities of WCF and OCF, it can be seen from trend, efficiency, and usage. From the chart, both feedback can be beneficial for correcting errors in vocabulary, grammatical mistakes, and reorganization of writing mindset. Although the output form of two types of feedback is distinctive, writing levels of all students are almost improved in vocabulary, grammar and content except for Mark whose grammatical errors almost without no changes. From my perspective, there are almost no benefits on Mark for its absorption in grammatical correction from WCF. However, all aspects of all students in

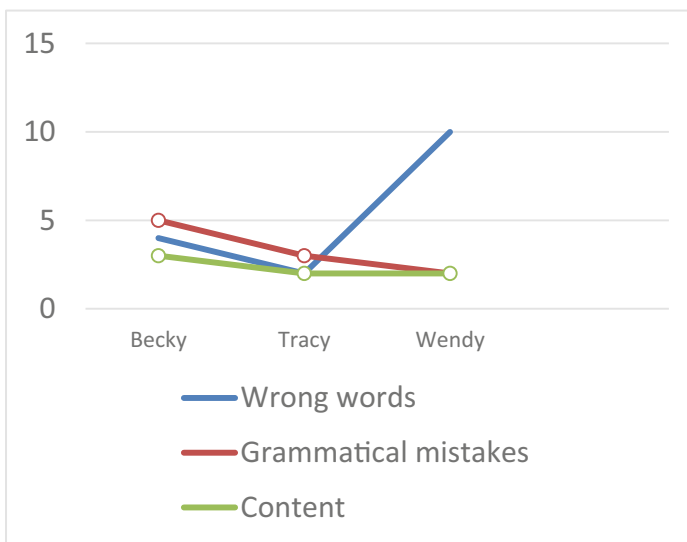


Fig. 1. Variation tendency of Oral Corrective Feedback

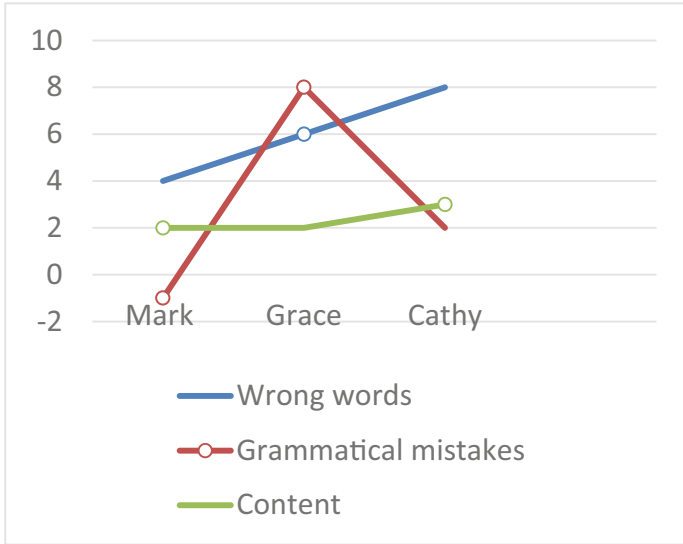


Fig. 2. Variation tendency of Written Corrective Feedback

vocabulary, grammar and content have been improved from WCF or OCF. Additionally, WCF can show higher efficiency in some students while OCF can also show its higher efficiency in other students. Therefore, they are both of target and make a function for their target. Moreover, they can be used to give the CF for students from the teacher.

4 Conclusions

From those three groups, it can be hard to see that whether WCF or OCF is more efficient in English writing. However, the specific and proper application of WCF and OCF can be distinguished in this study. For students of different levels in English, there are three conditions for the comparison of WCF and OCF. The first one is that OCF is more effective than WCF for the superior students in English of the class because of their solid basis. The second condition is that WCF almost embraces the same efficiency compared with OCF for the central students in English of the class. The third one is that WCF imposes stronger influence on the inferior students in English of the class because of their comparably weaker foundations. Moreover, factors mediating WCF and OCF can be controlled to influence the factual error correction. Finally, with the finding and discussions of the comparison of WCF and OCF, the actual application of WCF and OCF can be verified again.

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