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WRITTEN CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK MAJOR TYPES: WHAT TYPE TO USE? WHEN TO USE?

Mohammad Halabieh

UniSZA/ Faculty of Languages and Communication/ Malaysia.

*Corresponding Author Email: mmahalabieh95@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Circa 1970s corrective feedback has been studied by numberless scholars. Thus, a heavy literature has been condensed on shelves by time pass. Roughly more than 60 papers dealing with the types of CF were reviewed via conducting a search on Google Scholar, Academia, and Science Direct. The key words searched for were types of corrective feedback, direct corrective feedback, indirect corrective feedback, coded corrective feedback, uncoded corrective feedback, focused corrective feedback, unfocused corrective feedback, explicit corrective feedback, and implicit corrective feedback with a time span from 2013 to 2018. The rational of having different types was explained. Moreover, the major written corrective feedback types were demonstrated in addition to some of their ideal domains to be applied in. It was found that certain types of corrective feedback have precedence over other types in specific domains. Since only paper-based corrective feedback were reviewed, the researcher recommends further research to cover other types of corrective feedback i.e. oral corrective feedback and technology-based corrective feedback. Besides, he advises teachers to use the appropriate type of corrective as the context requires.

KEYWORDS

Types of corrective feedback, coded corrective feedback, direct corrective feedback, focused corrective feedback, explicit corrective feedback.

1. INTRODUCTION

Almost fifty years of research on corrective feedback have motivated several scholars to discover many types of corrective feedback, in addition most of them recommended the best context to use each type. Thus, the sheer number of studies that dealt with corrective feedback types need to be reviewed in order to make them approachable to the coming researchers in the future. Moreover, teachers need to know how to opt for the proper types that serve their ends. Hence, this paper tries to discover the major written types of corrective feedback and their, *yet known*, ideal contexts of implementation.

2. METHODOLOGY

The researcher searched on Google Scholar, Academia, and Science Direct for these key words: types of corrective feedback, direct corrective feedback, indirect corrective feedback, coded corrective feedback, uncoded corrective feedback, focused corrective feedback, unfocused corrective feedback, explicit corrective feedback, and implicit corrective feedback. He limited his research with a time span between 2013 and 2018. He examined roughly more than 60 papers that deal with corrective feedback types; besides, he extracted the ideal domains of use for each type, if any mentioned in the findings.

3. CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE

Several definitions for corrective feedback have been suggested. Lightbown and Spada state that it is any indication to the students that their use of the learnt language is not correct (Lightbown and Spada, 2013). Moreover, corrective feedback is needed whether the errors were

written or oral; it was simply defined as “responses to learner utterances that contain an error either oral or written” (Ellis and Shintani, 2014). Generally, any indication for negative evidence in L2 is considered a corrective feedback (Wang, 2017). A general purpose of providing corrective feedback is to cause a positive change in the target, i.e. the learner (Xhama, 2018). Klimova adds that constructive written CF could drive students to promote their linguistic skills (Klimova, 2015). However, students should understand the feedback and invest it in improving their language (Akdeniz et al., 2016).

The significance of CF originates from its “dialogic nature” that enables teachers as well as students to reflect on their teaching and learning (Dann, 2015). As for teachers, they consider corrective feedback as an invaluable tool that drives learners to revise their writing; in addition to, raising students’ interest in writing; CF is perceived as a useful strategy to achieve that goal (Agbayahoun, 2016). CF has a massive impact on various aspects; a group researchers found that students who received CF achieved high scores in their examinations, understood concepts deeply, involved in classroom activities, punctually handed their school homework on and shared their opinions with their peers (Ahmad et al., 2013).

4. TYPES OF CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK

Choi admits that despite the great difference between CF types, not much studies has focused on differentiating between them (Choi, 2017). Moreover, no agreed-on type was discovered to be the most efficient one, nor did any experiments focus on the correlation between learners’ language proficiency and the precedence of a specific type. Notwithstanding, recently some scholars have begun discussing the

diversity of CF types (Ferris et al., 2013). Differentiating between them is highly significant because hinging on the suitable type would affect the efficiency of CF provision. Learners are more liable to commit the same mistakes unless they receive an appropriate CF type (Asassfeh, 2013).

A logical question may be raised, what is the rationale of having various types of corrective feedback? McKay suggests that sticking to a specific strategy for correcting errors is unwise since each student is unique with special needs (McKay, 2013). Several different standards were suggested by scholars to depend on while selecting the appropriate type. Learners' proficiency plays a major role (Bitchener and Storch, 2016). Farjadnasab proposes that it hinges on how much CF contributes to learners' writing accuracy; thus, the degree of writing improvement is correlated with CF type (Farjadnasab, 2017). Moreover, some students' personal features, i.e. experience and beliefs, influence the success of using a particular type (Cinkara and Galaly, 2018). In other studies, researchers go further and suggest that the students' personality type, i.e. extrovert or introvert, could influence the type of corrective feedback (Banaruee et al., 2017). Thus, different types are likely to be mixed according to the context of corrective feedback provision in order to serve teachers' ends.

In this paper, the researcher will classify the types into binaries i.e. the type and its opposite. Then, the types are arranged according to their use by teachers, from the least frequently used to the most frequently used. In other words, the first was coded vs uncoded, then implicit vs explicit. After that the focused vs unfocused and finally direct vs indirect.

5. CODED VS UNCODED CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK

Coded corrective feedback suggests that the teacher uses codes to indicate the type of error; students should know the codes meaning to correct their mistakes, for example: The students study good. The teacher writes ADV above good. As for uncoded corrective feedback, the teacher does not use codes to indicate the type of error. Instead, he provides the student with the correct form immediately, for example: The students study good. The teacher writes well above good. Concerning these two types, most scholars reached that coded CF develops learners' performance (Riwayatningsih, 2017). Both suggested that besides it helps learners' self-correct their mistakes, coded CF enables students to solve their grammatical problems as well as develops their writing (Tantarangsee, 2014; Zareil and Rahnama, 2013). As well as, recommended using coded CF in order to develop their students' writing quality, asserting that their awareness is promoted with noticing and understanding (Saukah et al., 2017). As for teachers, the majority of teachers use coded CF (Rafiei and Salehi, 2016). However, their role, in addition to underlining and encircling the mistakes, is to create codes (McKay, 2013). Van Erk-Koivisto is in-line with McKay adding that teachers could generate their own codes; nonetheless, they should be meaningful to their students in order to avoid ambiguity and confusion (Van Erk-Koivisto, 2017). As it was demonstrated, no studies recommended the uncoded CF. Hence, further research is needed on this type. Moreover, no significant difference between these two types suggested, recommended long-term researches to reach the best type (Abdul, 2014).

6. EXPLICIT VS IMPLICIT CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK

Explicit corrective feedback, as its name implies, is extremely clear and evident and it is perceived easily by the students, for example: he play football. The teacher writes: (he plays football.) on the other hand, implicit corrective feedback is not crystal clear; the students have to notice it and know how to improve their performance, for example: I would like to be a great teacher in English language in the future. The teacher writes: (I would like to be a great English language teacher in the future.).

Asassfeh found no difference between the two types; both types approximately have the same impact on students' ability to define and correct their grammatical errors (Asassfeh, 2013). However, the majority of scholars who have studied CF from explicit/ implicit overview, considered explicit CF made students' grammar more accurate (Jokar and Soyoo, 2014). Moreover, it decreases adults' second language

fossilization (Kang and Han, 2015; Shintani and Suzuki, 2014). Nevertheless, Horbacauskienė & Kasperaviciene stated that despite its efficacy, it is found that it is not preferable by relatively advanced level students (Horbacauskienė and Kasperaviciene, 2015). On the contrary, Vásquez et al (2016) found the implicit CF more beneficial; they concluded that besides implicit CF enables students to observe their progress, it promotes learner's responsibility and motivates him to self-correct.

Some related the efficacy of each type with a certain variable. For instance, Banaruee, Khoshshima and Askari suggested that it depends on the students' personality type, extrovert and introvert (Khoshshima and Askari, 2017). As for the extroverts, they tend to benefit more from explicit CF, particularly in case it was a positive one in the medium of classroom social interactions. On the other hand, implicit CF suits introverts more on the condition that it was directed to the whole class, instead of the individual who made the errors. Moreover, some researchers suggested another variable, i.e. physical vs virtual setting (Hejazian and Alavi, 2016). They stated that explicit CF is more beneficial than implicit CF in physical and virtual groups.

7. FOCUSED (SELECTIVE) VS UNFOCUSED (COMPREHENSIVE) CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK

In the focused corrective feedback, the teacher should focus on a specific feature of the language to be corrected, for example: Ahmad goed to schol after he studied his lessons good. The teacher is elective. He corrects only the verbs, in case he is focusing on the past simple tense. He writes: (Ahmad went to schol after he studied his lessons good.). Unlike the unfocused corrective feedback, the teacher should not focus on a specific feature of the language to be corrected, for example: Ahmad goed to schol after he studied his lessons good. The teacher corrects comprehensively. He writes: (Ahmad went to school after he studied his lessons well). These types are famous by two different terms: focused/ selective vs unfocused/ comprehensive. As for the latter, it is the most preferred by teachers (Fazilatfar et al., 2014). However, the former, i.e. focused type, is over-studied; thus, further studies are required in order to discover the main features of the unfocused CF more. The table below shows the previous studies that recommended focused CF and its domains of effectiveness.

Table 1: Results of previous studies recommending focused CF and its domains of effectiveness	
(Marzban and Arabahmadi, 2013)	Focused CF highlights the items that may cause problems.
(Budianto, 2018)	Teachers should focus on a specific feature of the language to be corrected
(Sun, 2013)	focused CF is more beneficial
(Saeb, 2014); (Marzban and Arabahmadi, 2013)	focused CF improves accuracy
(Banaruee et al., 2017) suggested that it	Focused CF develops grammatical correctness
(Shintani and Ellis, 2013; Stefanou and Révész, 2015; Kao, 2013)	focused CF has been found efficient to master English articles

However, certain context-related difficulties may face the focused CF viz, consuming time for correction and big numbers of students (Agbayahoun, 2016).

8. DIRECT VS INDIRECT CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK

While practicing direct corrective feedback, the teacher underlines or circles the error and above he writes the correct form, for example: The students study good. The teacher writes: well above good after underlining or circling it. Whereas indirect corrective feedback, the teacher only underlines or circles the error without providing the correct form, for example: The students study good. The teacher underlines or circles good only. A midway was taken between both types since no demarcation line could be drawn concerning their positive effects (Kang and Han, 2015). Moreover, Smedberg found that both types are equally

effective because they, both, decreased grammatical errors (Smedberg, 2017). Furthermore, Wang found no significant difference concerning “greater gains or a higher level of correction” whether for “short-term revision or long-term accuracy” (Wang, 2017).

On the first hand, several scholars found that direct CF is more beneficial and effective (Lee, 2014; Rustipa, 2016; Ahmad et al., 2015; Guénette and Lyster 2013). As well as, Stefanou and Revesz suggested that after receiving direct CF, learners with advanced “grammatical sensitivity and knowledge of metalanguage” achieved a progress (Stefanou and Revesz, 2015). After facing difficulties in understanding their instructors’ comments or symbols, learners recognized that direct CF is far “productive” than the indirect (Tangkiengsirisin and Kalra, 2016). Mulyani highlighted the benefits of direct CF. She suggested that 1) direct CF decreased students’ confusion concerning their teachers’ comments, 2) it drew their attention to the real origins of the committed mistakes and explained to them how to correct them, and 3) it “tested the students’ understanding of their writing” (Mulyani, 2018).

On another hand, Choi highlighted the disadvantages of direct CF. Moreover, since it prevents learners from any chance to think about their errors, Elashri argued that it is “the least effective methods of giving feedback to students” (Choi, 2017; Elashri, 2013). Although it is highly favoured by teachers and students, its effect is restricted to short-term; besides, it does not show the real performance of learners’ comprehension (Budianto, 2018). As for indirect CF, Hedgcock and Ferris asserted its role in helping the learners to promote their “L2 proficiency and metalinguistic knowledge” (Hedgcock and Ferris, 2013). Furthermore, since it is recognized “an effective manner of discovering and correcting errors”, teachers and learners prefer it the most (Vásquez et al., 2016). This binary, direct/ indirect, is the most researchable; hence, scholars have reached an ideal domain for each type, as shown in the table 1 below:

Table 2: Results of previous studies confirming the effectiveness of Indirect CF	
(Smedberg, 2017; Jamalinesari et al., 2015)	Indirect CF is beneficial concerning grammatical errors
(Ahmad et al., 2015)	Indirect CF is highly effective in treating wrong word errors and noun ending errors
(Göksoy and Nazli, 2016)	Indirect CF is effective in dealing with vocabulary and spelling errors
(Westmacott, 2017)	Indirect CF supports and develops students’ autonomy
(Erlam et al., 2013)	Indirect CF is useful for learners to repair their grammatical errors on their own
(Eslami, 2014)	Indirect CF helps low-intermediate EFL students “self-correct” their errors in simple past tenses; besides, it develops acquiring the sounds of language for a long-term.
(Ferris, 2014)	Indirect CF excels direct CF concerning long-term effect.
(Mulyani, 2018)	Indirect CF has a long-term effect due to the efforts students exerted to detect the mistakes and how to deal with.
(Hosseiny, 2014; Shintani, et al., 2014)	Indirect CF helps students to reflect on their errors
(Maleki and Eslami 2013)	Indirect CF leads to more levels of accuracy for the long term.
(Alhumidi and Uba, 2016)	Indirect CF promotes students’ writing skills.

Table 3: Results of previous studies confirming the effectiveness of Direct CF	
(Perez et al., 2013)	After receiving direct CF, students improved in grammar use in the revision of their writing.
(Hosseiny, 2014)	Direct CF helps students to “cope with complex linguistic errors”.
(Asassfeh, 2013)	Direct CF could have a long-term effect on low proficiency learners because no processing is required
(Marzban and Arabahmadi, 2013)	Intermediate learners benefited much from direct CF because they could not self-correct their writings. Moreover, direct CF promotes writing skill; it betters writing hortatory exposition writings
(Osanloo and Kolahi, 2016)	Direct CF had a positive impact on students’ writing in both process-based instruction and product-based instruction

Besides, direct CF shows an excessive beneficial effect on various grammatical structures, as shown in the table below:

Table 4: Results of previous studies confirming the effectiveness of Direct CF in certain grammatical structures	
Grammatical Structure	Studies
hypothetical conditional	(Shintani et al., 2014),
past tense verb forms	(Almasi and Tabrizi, 2016)
present tenses	(Lee, 2014; Ahmad et al., 2015)
sentence structure, and word choices	(Sermsook, et al., 2017; Hosseiny, 2014; Ahmad et al., 2015)
Articles	(Sarvestani and Pishker 2015; Sermsook, et al., 2017; Almasi and Tabrizi, 2016; Ahmad et al., 2015)
Prepositions	(Almasi and Tabrizi 2016; Sermsook, et al., 2017)

9. CONCLUSION

As demonstrated in this paper, implicit vs explicit and coded vs uncoded are the least researched types. Thus, no clear-cut background on them is crystalized. On the other hand, focused vs unfocused and direct vs indirect are to some extent well researched. Hence, several efficient domains of each type are discovered; this would help teachers in providing the most useful corrective feedback in their classes. In general, there is no consensus on the efficacy of a certain type. However, this could be due to different contexts of conducting these studies. A more meticulous research is needed to establish solid grounds for corrective feedback provision. Furthermore, teachers should be elective in their CF application in their classes since each type, in a certain domain, excels other types as was shown in the tables above.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As shown in this paper uncoded and implicit corrective feedback need to be studied more broadly. Besides, further reviews for other types of corrective feedback are recommended especially for those not tackled in this paper such as oral corrective feedback and technology-based corrective feedback. Moreover, the researcher advises teachers to pay attention to the context when providing corrective feedback in order to reap fruitful results.

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