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Incorporating Oral Corrective Feedback into the Business English Writing Class*

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This study investigated the feasibility and effectiveness of incorporating oral corrective feedback into the content-based business English writing class. Two types of oral corrective feedback, recasts and metalinguistic feedback, were integrated into business English writing classes to help low intermediate-proficiency Korean university students improve the ability to use the simple past, present progressive, and present perfect tenses correctly in their written production. Prior to the treatments, the subjects had basic grammatical knowledge of the target verb tenses, but they had only limited control over them in their written production. Three groups were formed: recast group that received corrective recasting, metalinguistic group that received metalinguistic clues, and control group that received no oral corrective feedback. The study demonstrated that it was feasible to incorporate recasts and metalinguistic feedback into content-based business English writing classes and that metalinguistic feedback had greater and more endurable effects than recasts on promoting the correct use of the target verb tenses in written production. It can be concluded that oral corrective feedback, metalinguistic feedback in particular, can be used in the business English writing classroom to help students gain greater control over already partially acquired forms and therefore improve their writing accuracy.

[business English writing class/writing accuracy/oral corrective feedback/ metalinguistic feedback]

I. INTRODUCTION

Many researchers have claimed that accuracy is needed in order to communicate more effectively in written language (Frodesen & Holten, 2003; Leki, 1991; Little, 1994;

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Muncie, 2002). In particular, in the business English context, appropriateness and accuracy of language use is often vital if communication is to be carried out successfully (Donna, 2000). According to Beason (2001), errors in business writing not only impede effective communication of meaning but also can have a negative impact on the image of a writer or organization. Therefore, it is generally agreed that accuracy is an important goal for business English writing classes.

English for Business Purposes (EBP) is one area of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), which is designed to meet specific needs of language learners. EBP attempts to meet the needs of people hoping to communicate effectively in the international business community and is therefore centered on business content and language skills. One pedagogical approach to ESP is content-based instruction (CBI). CBI, a significant approach to second language acquisition (Brinton et al., 2003), is the integration of language learning and content of subject matter. It is designed to provide learners with instruction in content and language. The research on content-based instruction has found the benefits of CBI (Iancu, 1997; Pally, 2000; Stoller, 1999). One of the most important advantages of CBI is to make learning a language more interesting and motivating by incorporating content that is interesting and relevant to learners into language classes. The selection and sequencing of language items is dictated by content material. As shown in Doughty and Varela (1998), focus on form can be incorporated into a content-based class to promote accuracy because focus on form captures learners' attention to linguistic elements in lessons whose overriding focus is on meaning or communication. Many studies have found that focus-on-form leads to more accurate use of the target form (Camhi & Ebsworth, 2008; Doughty & Verela, 1998; Loewen, 2005; Williams & Evans, 1998).

Corrective feedback, a focus on form technique, has frequently been discussed in connection with writing accuracy. Although some studies claimed that error correction is ineffective and harmful and should therefore be abandoned (Truscott, 1996; 2007), an increasing number of studies have found that written corrective feedback is beneficial to improving writing accuracy (Ashwell, 2000; Bitchener, Young & Cameron, 2005; Bitchener & Knoch, 2008; Ellis et al., 2008; Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Sheen, 2007). However, as far as the researcher knows, there is no research showing that oral corrective feedback used in the oral classroom can be used in the writing classroom to improve writing accuracy.

The purpose of the present study was to investigate the feasibility and effectiveness of incorporating oral corrective feedback into content-based and, therefore, communicative business English writing classes. The study was intended to incorporate two types of oral corrective feedback, recasts and metalinguistic feedback, into business English writing

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classes and compare the effectiveness of two types of corrective feedback in improving accuracy in using several English verb tenses in written production.

II. BACKGROUND

1. Oral Corrective Feedback

Lyster and Ranta (1997) identified six types of feedback used by teachers in the oral classroom:

1. Explicit correction
2. Recast
3. Clarification request
4. Metalinguistic feedback
5. Elicitation
6. Repetition

Ellis (2006) classified feedback types identified by Lyster and Ranta (1997) into two groups: input-providing feedback and output-pushing feedback. Input-providing feedback supplies the target form corresponding to the error through recasts and explicit correction. Output-pushing feedback does not explicitly provide the target form and instead pushes learners to repair the error for themselves through clarification requests, repetition, metalinguistic clues, and elicitation. Yang and Lyster (2010) called four types of output-pushing feedback prompts.

The feedback types of interest to the current study were recast and metalinguistic feedback. Lyster and Ranta (1997) showed that recast was the most commonly used type of feedback and metalinguistic feedback was effective at eliciting self-repair. Lyster and Ranta (1997) defined recast as "the teacher's reformulation of all or part of a student's utterance, minus the error" (p. 46). An example of this would be:

(1) Student: And they have a happy life after and many years they have a lot of kids around the…
Teacher: They had…
Student: They had a lot of kids around the palace.
(Yang & Lyster, 2010)

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According to Lyster and Ranta (1997), metalinguistic feedback is defined as "either comments, information, or questions related to the well-formedness of the student utterance, without explicitly providing the correct answer" (p. 46). For example,

(2) Student: I went to the train station and pick up my aunt.
Teacher: Use past tense consistently.
Student: I went to the train station and picked up my aunt.
(Yang & Lyster, 2010)

2. Previous Research on Oral Corrective Feedback

Although some researchers have argued that recasts do not promote any learning (Ellis, 2007; Ellis, Loewen & Erlam, 2006; Sheen, 2006), recent some studies regarding recasts have reported the effectiveness of recasts in improving learners' correct use of a target form. Han (2002) showed that the subjects in the recast group demonstrated considerable improvement in tense consistency in oral and written output in laboratory settings. Ishida's (2004) study conducted in one-on-one conversation sessions found the beneficial effect of intensive recasts on the use of the Japanese aspectual form *–te i-(ru)*. Doughty and Varela (1998) showed that recasts had effects on promoting accuracy of past time reference in the classroom settings. On the other hand, some studies have demonstrated the superiority of metalinguistic feedback. Carroll and Swain (1993) and Carroll (2001) found metalinguistic feedback to be the most effective type of corrective feedback in the production of sentences involving dative verbs and noun formation.

Some recent research has investigated the differential effects of recasts and metalinguistic feedback (Ellis, 2007; Ellis et al., 2006; Loewen & Nabei, 2007). Ellis et al. (2006) and Ellis (2007) compared the differential effects of recasts and prompts, which were operationalized as a repetition of the error plus a metalinguistic clue such as *you need past tense.* Ellis et al. (2006) demonstrated the overall superior effects of metalinguistic feedback over recasts on the acquisition of the simple past tense *–ed* in English. Ellis (2007) showed that prompts were overall more effective than recasts in improving the correct use of past tense *-ed* and comparative *-er* in English. On the other hand, some studies have shown that a significant difference does not occur between recasts and metalinguistic feedback (Kim & Mathes, 2001; Sanz, 2003). Kim and Mathes (2001) showed no significant difference between the effectiveness of recasts versus metalinguistic feedback in helping students learn how to use English dative verbs.

Some studies have suggested that the differential effects of oral corrective feedback pertain to different structural targets. In other words, the type of acquisition corrective feedback aims to assist may mediate the differential effects of feedback. Ellis (1997)

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distinguished between two types of acquisition: (a) acquisition as the internalization of new forms and (b) acquisition as an increase in control over forms that have already been internalized. According to Panova and Lyster (2002), recasts facilitate the internalization of new forms, whereas prompts enhance control over already-internalized forms. That is to say, recasts may assist the learning of completely new forms, while prompts including metalinguistic feedback may help learners to gain greater control over forms they have already partially mastered (Ellis et al., 2006; Panova & Lyster, 2002; Yang & Lyster, 2010).

III. METHODOLOGY

1. Target Forms

Verb tenses are absolutely necessary to fluency and accuracy in English spoken and written communication. It is important to use tenses correctly in order to be able to communicate accurately about time. However, verb tenses are one of the most difficult things for ESL or EFL students to master. According to Hinkel (2004), even after many years of learning English, advanced nonnative students have difficulty with the uses of tenses. Using English tenses can be very difficult, for several reasons. First, many languages including Korean, unlike English, lack tense, i.e. do not have grammatical time reference. Therefore, it is hard for English language learners from these countries to use English tenses correctly. Second, there is no direct relationship in English between tense and time reference. For example, the present simple tense can be used to talk about both the present and future. Third, an English verb tense can have several semantic functions. For example, there are basically three functions of the present perfect tense: experience, change, and continuing situation.

There are 12 verb tenses in English. Of these tenses, the simple past, present progressive, and present perfect were selected as the target grammar items. These tenses are typically introduced in the early stages of learning English and have been exposed considerably often to students throughout their school years. Therefore, learners at the college level are likely to be already familiar with and have grammatical knowledge of these tenses. However, the researcher has observed that many Korean college students make errors in using them in their written output, even though they have studied English for many years. Consequently, these tenses were chosen as the target items in the present study.

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Of several functions of the present progressive and present perfect, only one function of each tense was targeted. Therefore, the tense functions targeted in the study are the following three functions:
The function of the simple past is to talk about things that occurred and finished in the past. For example:

(3) The company was floated on Wall Street.

The function of the present continuous is to talk about things that are happening these days in our lives. For example:

(4) All three brands are doing well at the moment.

The function of the present perfect is to express actions that started in the past and have continued until now. For example:

(5) They have expanded their line of all natural products since then.

In sum, the target items selected for the study were the simple past, the present perfect to describe continuing situation, and the present progressive to describe temporary actions over a longer period of time.

2. Research Questions

The study was intended to incorporate two types of oral corrective feedback, recasts and metalinguistic feedback, into content-based business English writing classes and answer the following two research questions:

1. Is the oral corrective feedback provided to students in business English writing classes effective in helping Korean EFL learners improve accuracy in using the simple past, present progressive, and present perfect tenses in their written production?
2. Is there any difference in the effect of recasts and metalinguistic feedback on increasing students' accurate use of the target tenses?

3. Subjects

The original pool of participants was 52 students enrolled in 'Business English' course at a university in Seoul, Korea. All of them were juniors majoring in business

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administration. 'Business English' was a compulsory subject for these students in their junior year. The students had more than 8 years of experience in learning English, so at the time of the study, they had significant previous experience in learning English verb tenses.

Two kinds of pretests were used to test the students' grammatical knowledge of the target verb tenses and the ability to use them correctly in their written production. To test their basic knowledge of the target verb tenses, a multiple-choice test was used. The test demonstrated that they had basic grammatical knowledge of the target verb tenses: On the multiple-choice test that required them to select the appropriate verb tense forms to complete the sentences, they scored a mean of 70% on the target verb tenses. To test their use of the target verb tenses in their written production, a translation test was used. They had to use the target verb tenses to translate Korean sentences into English. Through the test, it was found that almost all the students had trouble using the target verb tenses correctly in their written production. They made errors in the use of the target verb tenses, so they scored a mean of about 25% on the target verb tenses (see Table 1). In sum, the students had basic grammatical knowledge of the target verb tenses, but they had limited control over them in their written production.

The translation test was used to exclude the students who had no or full control over the target verb tenses in written production. Two students who scored zero points and two students who got a perfect score were eliminated. Therefore, of 52 students who attended 'Business English' classes, 48 students were regarded as the subjects of the present study. The trial TOEIC taken at the end of their sophomore year revealed that the English language proficiency of 48 subjects was low intermediate (TOEIC score 360-625).

4. Design

In order to determine the effectiveness of two types of oral corrective feedback, recasts and metalinguistic feedback, in the context of content-based business English writing classes, it was necessary to employ a quasi-experimental design, with a pretest, an immediate posttest and a delayed posttest. The 48 subjects were randomly divided into three groups for the experiment: recast group that received corrective recastings, metalinguistic group that received metalinguistic clues, and control group that received no oral corrective feedback. Sixteen students comprised each group. The study was conducted in the regular 'Business English' classes over a five-week period in the first semester of the 2011 academic year.

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5. Procedure

The aim of 'Business English' course was to enable students to develop their written communicative competence in business English. This course consisted of two-hour reading and two-hour writing per week. The reading class was aimed at helping students understand key business concepts and developing students' comprehension of business texts. The goal of the writing class was to improve the students' business English writing. Because one of the main requirements of business writing is grammatical correctness, one of the aims of the writing class was to help the students increase grammatical accuracy.

During the first week of class, the course introduction was given to the students and they learned business letter form, letter styles, and letter parts. Then the pretests were carried out. *Business Focus* by Grant and McLarty (2004) and *English for Business Studies* by MacKenzie (2010) were selected as the coursebooks used as the reading texts. *Business Focus* features real companies in order to prepare students to work for companies. *English for Business Studies* covers a wide range of business topics, including management, production, marketing, and finance. During the second week of reading class, the students read some articles from *Business Focus* which deal with company information on some international companies. While reading the articles, the target tense verb forms appeared. The key vocabulary and sentence structures were explained, but the researcher left the verb tenses and forms untouched. Following a lunch break after the reading class, a writing class was conducted. The second week of writing class dealt with company introduction letters related to the contents dealt with in the reading class. Providing some sample letters to the students, the researcher explained how to write a company introduction letter. A company introduction letter is a standard letter that is written to introduce a company to a target audience. When writing a company introduction letter, company details are given. The brief background information about the company should be provided, including when it was established, how long it has been in business. This information takes the form of such as,

(6) a. The company **was** founded on Wall Street in 1965.
b. We **have engaged** ourselves in the export of various kinds of blue jeans for the past 35 years.

Details of what the company does and its temporary, present actions, such as (7), should be included.

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(7) a. We **produce** a large range of different products, such as cookers, dishwashers, and washing machines.
b. We **are selling** a lot of products in Asia this year.

The products or services offered by the company should be described, such as (8).

(8) We **offer** you services that are of the highest standard and at extremely competitive rates.

As seen in (6-8), not only the simple present tense but also the simple past, present continuous, and present perfect tenses are frequently used in the company introduction letter. The contents, organization, and vocabulary for company introduction letters were explained, but the researcher made no mention of verb tenses and forms.

After learning how to write a company introduction letter, the students were divided into three groups for the experiment. Each group was assigned a classroom and led by the researcher or an instructor. The purpose of the study was explained to two instructors and they agreed to collaborate. Raimes (1987) commented that second language writers lack not only linguistic proficiency in L2 but practice in generating ideas and organizing them in L2. According to Uzawa (1996), translation tasks may be useful for second language learning by promoting more use of accurate language and may also "provide opportunities for unskilled writers to learn how to present and organize ideas in their L1 (and L2) by translating a L1 text prepared by a skilled or professional writer" (p. 289). Based on Uzawa (1996), a translation task was designed to help students to learn how to present and organize all the necessary information for a company introduction letter in English and to promote the correct use of the target tenses. All three groups were given some information about a letter and the body of the letter written in Korean. Then the students were asked to translate the Korean company introduction letter into English. The key vocabulary and sentence structures needed in translating the letter were briefly explained.

The control group was led by one instructor and translated the company introduction letter without the instructor's paying attention to errors in the target verb tenses. The instructor answered the questions regarding vocabulary and sentence structures the students asked. The recast group was led by another instructor and the metalinguistic group by the researcher. The learners in the recast and metalinguistic groups were permitted to ask for any vocabulary and sentence structure they needed and received oral corrective feedback from the instructor and researcher while translating the letter. Walking around the classroom, the instructor and researcher gave the students oral corrective feedback on verb tense forms. Whenever we saw errors in the target verb

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tenses occur during translation, we drew attention to the errors and immediately provided oral corrective feedback. In both feedback groups, errors were repeated and oral corrective feedback was provided in a loud voice to gain the students' attention and address all the students in each group. No other errors were addressed.

The recast group received what Doughty and Varela (1998) called corrective recastings. As can be seen in (9), the instructor repeated the error with rising intonation and then provided the correct tense form of the verb with falling intonation.

(9) Learner (written language): We expand our operations in Europe at the moment.
Instructor (spoken language): We expand?
We are expanding

The metalinguistic group received metalinguistic clues regarding the correct use of verb tenses. The researcher repeated the error with rising intonation before giving a metalinguistic clue. Metalinguistic feedback was provided in Korean. When an inappropriate verb tense was used, a metalinguistic clue about the appropriate verb tense was given without mentioning the name of the tense. For example:

(10) Learner (written language): We engaged ourselves in the export of various kinds of blue jeans for the past 35 years.
Researcher: We engaged?
What tense do you have to use when you write about something that started in the past and has continued until now?
(English translation of Korean oral feedback)

When the appropriate verb tense was attempted but the tense form was not correct, a metalinguistic clue about the correct tense form was given. For example:

(11) Learner (written language): We expanding our operations in Europe at the moment.
Researcher: We expanding?
The present progressive requires an auxiliary verb.
(English translation of Korean oral feedback)

The translated letter was submitted and then the students were asked to translate another company introduction letter. Because the company introduction letters were not long, the students had enough time to translate the two letters in class. The second translation task was carried out in the same way. The same procedure as provided in the second week of 'Business English' class was followed in the third week of 'Business

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English' class. In other words, the students translated four company introduction letters over a period of two weeks. Immediately after the third week of writing class was over, the immediate posttest was administered. The delayed posttest was administered 2 weeks after the treatment.

6. Testing and Scoring

The multiple-choice test that was used in the pretest to test the students' basic knowledge of the target verb tenses consisted of 30 sentences. Fifteen sentences targeted the target verb tenses and the remainder targeted other tenses. Of the 15 sentences, 5 targeted the simple past, 5 the present progressive, and 5 the present perfect. Here are some examples of multiple choice items:

(12) Fill in the blanks with the correct form of the verb.

a. Sales ( ) from March to September last year.
① increase ② have increased ③ increased ④ have been increasing

b. Currently, the company ( ) Latin America to discover its cultural history.
① helps ② is helping ③ has helped ④ helped

c. We ( ) our products to Japan since 2005.
① export ② are exporting ③ have exported ④ exported

The students' responses were scored as either correct (1 point) or incorrect (0 points). Then percentage correct was calculated.

The students' ability to use the target verb tenses in written production was measured three times: before, immediately after, and 2 weeks after the treatment. The same kind of translation tests were used to test the students' use of the target verb tenses in their written production. The translation tests used in the pretest and the immediate and delayed posttests consisted of 25 Korean sentences. They consisted of 15 sentences that required the use of the target verb tenses (5 targeting the simple past, 5 targeting the present progressive, 5 targeting the present perfect) for correct translation and 10 sentences requiring other tenses. Examples targeting the target verb tenses are given in (13).

(13) Translate the following sentences into English.

a. 그들은 2000 년에 그 신제품을 일본에서 출시했다.
(They launched the new product in Japan in 2000.)

b. 우리는 올해 아시아에서 많은 제품들을 팔고 있다.

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(We are selling a lot of products in Asia this year.)

c. 그 제품의 공식적 출시 이래로 시장점유율은 늘었다.

(The market share has increased since the official launch of the product.)

Lardiere (2003) justified the use of suppliance in obligatory contexts as a method of analysis in the investigation of the second language acquisition of past tense. According to this obligatory context analysis, only 15 items containing the obligatory contexts in which the target verb tenses were required to translate them correctly were considered for scoring. Each translation was allocated a score of 1 if the appropriate verb tense was used and the tense form was correct. A zero score was allocated if an inappropriate verb tense was used or even though the appropriate verb tense was attempted, the tense form was not correct. Subject-verb agreement errors in the present progressive and present perfect tenses were disregarded: Auxiliary errors (have/has; is/are) were admissible. Scores were expressed as the percentage of correct items.

IV. RESULTS

As stated before, all the groups scored a mean of over 70% on the target verb tenses on the multiple-choice test. Based upon this result, it was supposed that the subjects had basic grammatical knowledge of the target verb tenses.

A one-way ANOVA was conducted on the translation pretest scores to make sure whether the groups showed no significant difference in the ability to use the target verb tenses correctly in their written production prior to the treatments. Table 1 shows the results of the pretest in each group.

TABLE 1

Results of ANOVA for Pretest

Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	F	P-value
Recast	16	27.08	8.93		
Metalinguistic	16	24.16	8.39	0.46	0.628
Control	16	24.99	8.94		

All means are reported as percentages of correct items.

$P<.05$: statistically significant

The analysis revealed that there was no significant difference between the groups on the mean scores, indicating that the groups were equivalent in terms of their ability to use

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the target verb tenses correctly in their written production at the outset. This result suggests that any difference found on the posttests can be attributed to the treatments.

To test for a statistically significant difference between the pretest score and the immediate posttest score, paired t-tests were conducted. The results are shown in Table 2

TABLE 2

Results of T-Tests for Difference between Pretest and Immediate Posttest

Group	Test	Mean	Standard Deviation	T	P-value
Recast	Pretest	27.08	8.93	3.387	0.002
	Immediate	39.16	11.12		
Metalinguistic	Pretest	24.16	8.39	11.995	0.000
	Immediate	71.25	13.26		
Control	Pretest	24.99	8.94	1.662	0.107
	Immediate	30.00	8.07		

All means are reported as percentages of correct items.

P<.05: statistically significant

As can be seen in Table 2, all three groups showed increase from the pretest to the immediate posttest. The score for the control group increased from the pretest to the immediate posttest, but made no significant gains. Both the recast and metalinguistic groups significantly improved their scores from the pretest to the immediate posttest. However, the post hoc pairwise comparison between group means on the immediate posttest showed a significant difference between the recast group and the metalinguistic group (Table 3). The metalinguistic group significantly outperformed the recast group.

TABLE 3

Pairwise Comparison for Groups on Immediate Posttest

Comparison	Mean Difference	Standard Error of Means	P-value	99% Confidence Interval	
				Lowest Values	Highest Values
Recast – Metalinguistic	32.09	4.32	0.000	40.93	23.25
Recast – Control	9.16	3.43	0.012	2.14	16.17
Metalinguistic – Control	41.25	3.88	0.000	33.32	49.18

P<.05: statistically significant

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All the groups showed decrease from the immediate posttest to the delayed posttest. Figure 1 shows the change of the group mean over the three test administrations.

FIGURE 1

Group Mean Change over Time

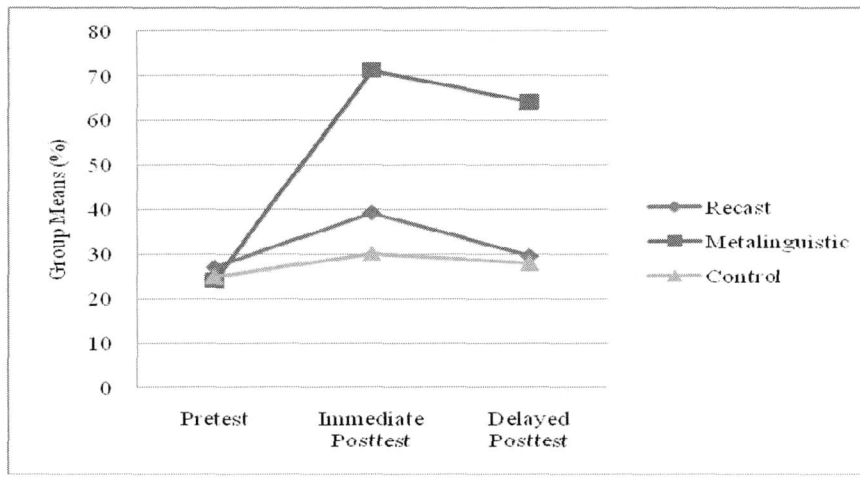


Table 4 shows the results of the delayed posttest in comparison with the pretest and immediate posttest.

TABLE 4

Results of T-Tests for Difference between Immediate and Delayed Posttest and between Pretest and Delayed Posttest

Group	Test	Mean	Standard	T	P-value
Recast	Immediate	39.16	11.12	2.49	0.018
	Delayed	29.58	10.59		
	Pretest	27.08	8.93	0.72	0.475
	Delayed	29.58	10.59		
Metalinguistic	Immediate	71.25	13.26	1.60	0.119
	Delayed	64.16	11.64		
	Pretest	24.16	8.39	11.13	0.000
	Delayed	64.16	11.64		
Control	Immediate	30.00	8.07	0.78	0.440
	Delayed	27.91	6.97		

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	Pretest	24.99	8.94	1.02	0.312
	Delayed	27.91	6.97		

All means are reported as percentages of correct items.

$P<.05$: statistically significant

Although the metalinguistic group showed decrease, the delayed posttest score was not significantly different from the immediate posttest score. Consequently, the delayed posttest score was still significantly higher than the pretest score. Meanwhile, the recast group showed a significant decrease from the immediate posttest to the delayed posttest, so the delayed posttest score was not significantly different from the pretest score. The post hoc pairwise comparison between the group means on the delayed posttest showed that the metalinguistic group differed significantly from the recast and control groups, while the recast group did not differ significantly from the control group.

TABLE 5

Pairwise Comparison for Groups on Delayed Posttest

Comparison	Mean Difference	Standard Error of Means	P-value	99% Confidence Interval	
				Lowest Values	Highest Values
Recast – Metalinguistic	34.58	3.93	0.000	42.61	26.53
Recast – Control	1.67	3.17	0.601	4.80	8.15
Metalinguistic – Control	36.25	3.39	0.000	29.31	43.18

$P<.05$: statistically significant

The test scores of the metalinguistic group which showed significant improvement on the immediate and delayed posttests in comparison with the pretest were scrutinized further according to the three different tenses.

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TABLE 6

Results of T-Tests for Each Tense in Metalinguistic Group

Tense	Test	Mean	Standard Deviation	T	P-value
Simple Past	Pretest	28.75	16.27	9.092	0.000
	Immediate	76.25	13.10		
	Immediate	76.25	13.10	1.804	0.081
	Delayed	68.75	10.24		
	Pretest	28.75	16.27	8.318	0.000
	Delayed	68.75	10.24		
Present Progressive	Pretest	26.25	14.08	7.210	0.000
	Immediate	71.25	20.61		
	Immediate	71.25	20.61	0.933	0.358
	Delayed	65.00	17.12		
	Pretest	26.25	14.08	6.990	0.000
	Delayed	65.00	17.12		
Present Perfect	Pretest	16.25	10.87	10.398	0.000
	Immediate	66.25	15.86		
	Immediate	66.25	15.86	1.547	0.132
	Delayed	57.50	16.12		
	Pretest	16.25	10.87	8.483	0.000
	Delayed	57.50	16.12		

All means are reported as percentages of correct items.

$P<.05$: statistically significant

The paired t-test results on individual tense indicate that the metalinguistic feedback worked equally for each tense. The metalinguistic group made significant gains not only from the pretest to the immediate posttest but also from the pretest to the delayed posttest and showed no significant difference between the immediate posttest and the delayed posttest for all three target tenses.

V. DISCUSSION

The present study set out to investigate the feasibility and effectiveness of incorporating oral corrective feedback into a content-based business English writing classroom. The business English writing class which dealt with how to write company

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introduction letters provided opportunities for use of the simple past, present progressive, and present perfect tenses. Two types of oral corrective feedback were integrated into the business English writing class to promote the correct use of the simple past, present progressive, and present perfect tenses by providing the students with recasts or metalinguistic feedback while carrying out the translation tasks. The first research question examined the effectiveness of the oral feedback given in the writing class and the second research question examined the relative effects of recasts and metalinguistic feedback. The results of the study showed that the control group showed nonsignificant change on the immediate and delayed posttests. The mean for the control group improved slightly but nonsignificantly from the pretest to the immediate and delayed posttests. However, the gains made by the treatment groups on the immediate posttest were substantial. The recast and metalinguistic groups showed significant improvement in the ability to use the target verb tenses correctly in their written production on the immediate posttest. This result indicates that two types of oral corrective feedback had substantially beneficial effects on improving the accuracy in using the target verb tenses in written production immediately after the treatments. However, two types of oral corrective feedback had differential effects. The metalinguitic group showed significantly superior improvement compared to the recast group on the immediate posttest. Furthermore, only the metalinguistic group demonstrated significant gains between the pretest and delayed posttest. It can be said that the beneficial effect produced by the metalinguistic feedback on the immediate posttest had endured, so the subjects in the metalinguistic group maintained the ability they exhibited on the immediate posttest. In sum, the results of this study showed that metalinguistic feedback, one type of oral corrective feedback, implemented into the business English writing class had not only more significant but also immediate and endurable effects on improving the students' ability to use the target verb tenses correctly in their written production. Furthermore, the metalinguistic feedback had equal effects for the three target tenses.

The superiority of metalinguistic feedback over recasts may be attributed to some factors. First, the differential effects of oral feedback treatments may be related to knowledge awareness. According to Corder (1981), error concerns cognition/knowledge. Metalinguistic clues regarding the target verb tenses probably urged the learners to retrieve already existing knowledge in memory. In other words, their attention was probably devoted to the knowledge of the target verb tenses, which led to increasing their awareness of the knowledge. They therefore had a higher level of awareness of the knowledge about the target verb tenses. A higher level of awareness of the knowledge promoted the correct use of the target verb tenses in written production. This claim is based on some studies which have found that a higher level of awareness helps to significantly improve accuracy of written production (Leow, 2001; Rosa & Leow, 2004).

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In the case of recasts, however, some studies have shown that learners simply repeat reformulated forms (Ellis et al., 2006; Yang & Lyster, 2010). In other words, the learners in the recast group were not required to retrieve the knowledge of the target verb tenses because the correct tenses were provided. Their attention was not, therefore, devoted to thinking about the knowledge, so the learners did not have opportunities for increasing their awareness of the knowledge.

Second, the effectiveness of metalinguistic feedback may be associated with the self-correction process this feedback triggers. Varnosfadrani and Basturkmen (2008) pointed out that metalinguistic feedback, more so than recasts, requires learners to correct their errors. Self-correction driven by metalinguistic feedback is a type of *pushed* output, hypothesized by Swain (1985). Swain (1993) suggested that learners "need to be pushed to make use of their resources; they need to reflect on their output and consider ways of modifying it to enhance comprehensibility, appropriateness, and accuracy" (p. 160). The learners in the metalinguistic group were forced to reanalyze and modify their nontarget output by drawing on their linguistic knowledge, while those in the recast group were not pushed to stretch their linguistic resources in order to come up with the correct tense forms. Pushing the learners to produce modified output by using the knowledge they retrieved probably stimulated the development of connections between knowledge and language production. To use Lyster and Izquierdo (2009)'s words, metalinguistic feedback required a deeper level of processing entailing both retrieval and opportunities for production, while recasts did not require similarly deep level of processing. According to Craik and Lockhart (1972)'s levels of processing theory that deeper levels of processing leads to better recall, the metalinguistic group producing a deeper level of processing remembered how to apply the target verb tenses correctly and the forms of the tenses better than the recast group.

Third, the level of awareness of the gap between the learner's own production and the target may pertain to the differential effects of the two treatments. Schmidt (1990, 2001) proposed Noticing Hypothesis, according to which noticing plays a crucial role in learning. Schmidt and Frota (1986) proposed the notion of noticing the gap between the interlanguage and the target language. Noticing the gap has been considered to be the essential step to second language acquisition (Ellis, 1991; Lightbown, 1998; Long, 1996). Corrective feedback helps learners notice the gap (Doughty & Varela, 1998; Ellis, 1991; Long & Robinson, 1998; Schmidt, 2001). Providing the opportunity to identify contrasts between correct forms and incorrect forms through recasts may promote learners to notice the gap (Long, 1996; Long & Robinson, 1998; Mackey & Philp, 1998; Oliver, 1995). For metalinguistic feedback, its function to trigger learners' noticing of gaps is concerned with corrected output. Swain (1995) postulated the noticing function of output. Self-correction prompted by metalinguistic feedback , a type of pushed output, can lead

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learners to notice the gap by forcing them to correct their incorrect forms. Although both recasts and metalinguistic feedback allowed the learners to notice the gap between their own production and the target, there was probably difference in level of awareness of the gap between recasts and metalinguistic feedback. The learners in the recast group were able to correct errors by writing down correct forms the instructor said out loud. On the other hand, the learners in the metalinguistic group were pushed to produce correct forms for themselves by drawing on their knowledge. They therefore made a cognitive comparison between their own production and the target, which probably caused them to have a higher level of awareness of the gap in comparison to the learners in the recast group. This coincides with the claim by Ellis et al. (2006).

Fourth, the students carried out four translation tasks over a period of 2 weeks. While the students in the metalinguistic group were carrying out the tasks, the researcher repeated errors whenever she saw errors in their translation and then supplied metalinguistic clues regarding correct use of tenses in a loud voice in order that the attention of all the students might be focused on the oral feedback. Consequently, the students had opportunities to repeatedly retrieve the knowledge of the target verb tenses. According to Roediger and Karpicke (2006), the act of repeatedly retrieving knowledge produces powerful effects on learning and enhances long-term retention.

VI. CONCLUSION AND LIMITATIONS

The present study investigated whether incorporating oral corrective feedback into the content-based business English writing class may be feasible and effective in helping low intermediate-proficiency Korean university learners improve writing accuracy in their use of the simple past, present progressive, and present perfect tenses. The study demonstrated that it was feasible to incorporate recasts and metalinguistic feedback into the content-based business English writing class and that metalinguistic feedback had significantly greater and more endurable effects than recasts on improving the learners' accuracy in using the target tenses in written production. The target verb tenses were not completely new grammatical items. Prior to the treatments, the subjects had basic grammatical knowledge of the target verb tenses, but they had only limited control over them in their written production. Therefore, it can be concluded that oral metalinguistic feedback can be used in the business English writing classroom to help students gain greater control over already partially acquired forms and therefore improve their writing accuracy.

The interaction hypothesis (Long, 1996) states that the development of second language learning is promoted by face-to-face interaction and communication.

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Incorporating oral metalinguistic feedback into the writing class can provide direct interaction between the teacher and the student during writing and therefore can give students opportunities for immediate self-correction by developing their metalinguistic awareness of errors on the spot. Although further research is needed, the results of the study may suggest that direct interaction between the teacher and the student and immediate self-correction may also be beneficial factors for improving writing accuracy.

This study has some limitations. First, the target grammar items selected for this study were grammatical items that the learners had already partially acquired. Further research is necessary to investigate whether incorporating oral corrective feedback (and what type of oral corrective feedback) into the writing class is effective in improving accuracy in the written production of a structure of which learners have little or no knowledge. Second, the target forms in the study were three types of verb tenses. It is unable to say whether the findings of this study are also true of other types of verb tenses. Third, for the present progressive and present perfect tenses, one semantic function of each tense was targeted. It is uncertain that the result of the study is applicable to other semantic functions of the two tenses. Fourth, the subjects of the study were low intermediate Korean adult learners of English. The findings of the study might not apply to Korean learners at other proficiency levels.

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APPENDIX

Translation Task Example

발신 일자: 2011 년 3 월 2 일

수신인: 미국 뉴욕주 뉴욕시 동부 23 번가 313 번지

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March 2, 2011

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