English Language & Literature Teaching, Vol. 19, No. 3 Fall 2013

Corrective Feedback Effects in University English Writing Classes

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Shin, Yoonhee & Seong, Myeong-Hee. (2013). Corrective feedback effects in university English writing classes. *English Language & Literature Teaching, 19*(3), 247-270.

This paper investigates the effects of corrective feedback on writing in beginner-level university English writing classes. The research questions were 1) What were the effects of the class on writing? 2) Which errors improved the most and the least? To answer these questions, a test consisting of 15 questions as well as free writing were conducted as pre-tests and post-tests at the beginning and end of the class, respectively. Forty six college students were the participants in this study. The findings are as follows: First, a writing class based on direct and indirect corrective feedback provided by the teacher and peers can be effective in reducing students' grammatical errors and improving their free writing ability; Second, among six grammatical categories (article and determiner, sentence structure, verb, preposition, singular and plural, and subject-verb agreement), subject-verb agreement errors improved the most, while singular and plural the least; Third, corrective feedback on the sentence level contributed to developing free writing ability, especially in the low and intermediate level students. The results imply that reflecting the importance of corrective feedback, it would be desirable to design small class sizes for writing courses.

[corrective feedback/writing/direct feedback/indirect feedback]

I. INTRODUCTION

When it come to language acquisition and learning, errors are common characteristics

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to learners. In other words, everyone learning their first or second language will make errors in the process of learning. Then, the questions are whether error correctiveness is imperative or not in a class of English as a foreign language (EFL) and, if necessary, how it can be implemented in an EFL class effectively.

According to Wikipedia, corrective feedback is a frequent practice in the field of education and in learning generally. It typically involves a student receiving either formal or informal feedback on his or her performance on various tasks by a teacher or peer(s). Truscott (1996) claimed that grammar correction should be eliminated from L2 writing classes when reviewing the previous works by Knoblauch and Brannon (1981), Hillocks (1986), and Krashen (1984), which found that correction had little or no effect on students' writing ability.

However, some specialists such as Ferris (2003), Keh (1990), Long (1996) and Schmidt (1990, 1995) approved of the idea of correctiveness. The group proposed that corrective feedback is necessary to help in reducing students' errors in their writings. One of the proponents, Ferris (2003), said that providing grammar feedback is essential because it helps students recognize their linguistic shortcomings. If a teacher points out a grammatical error that a student has made, and provides, indirectly or directly, the correct form, the student will then understand the mistake she/he has made, learn from it, and her/his ability to write accurately will improve. It is also widely felt that if teachers do not correct their students' grammatical errors, 'fossilization' will occur and eliminating these errors later will become very difficult. Other arguments from proponents of grammar feedback are that the feedback helps in the development of grammatical ability (Omagio, 1986), because students want corrections and they believe they are helpful (Leki, 1990; Walz, 1982). Keh (1990) claimed in the article 'Feedback in the writing process: A model and methods for implementation' that feedback plays an important role in a process approach to writing. It is defined as input that a reader gives a writer in a variety of forms (e.g, comments, questions, suggestions, etc.) for revision. Feedback helps writers figure out problematic areas such as illogical organization and improper vocabulary choice which could lead the audience to confusion. Noticing Hypothesis (Ellis, 1991; Gass & Varonis, 1994; Schmidt, 1990, 1995) recognized the value of corrective feedback, assigning it a facilitative role in drawing learner attention to form. From this perspective, corrective feedback serves as a stimulus for noticing because such feedback triggers learners to recognize the gap between their L1 and the target norm - this process in turn leads to subsequent grammatical restrstucturing. Similarly, Long (1996), in his updated Interaction Hypothesis, suggested the beneficial role of corrective feedback. He claimed that it provides direct and indirect information about what is grammatical. According to the results of Chin's study (2007), teachers' feedback contributed to the development of students' English writing skills because it helped them

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apprehend what to improve or what to avoid in the future, acquire better English usage, and correct their errors. Given this fact, the use of various kinds of feedback would be beneficial for a successful writing course within the limited hours of formal instruction.

In this paper, the types of feedback and the class activities with the main two kinds of feedback executed by the researcher and student peers are introduced. Then students' sentence writings and free writings are analyzed and evaluated as pre-tests and post-tests. Finally, the results are discussed for the following research questions: (1) What were the effects of the class on writing? (2) Which errors improved the most and the least?

II. BACKGROUND

Writing skills are important and useful in everyday situations such as leaving notes for other people, sending e-mails, filling out forms, giving written instructions, and writing thank-you letters and so forth. Muncie (2002) claimed that grammatical instruction is as important as content in EFL writing classes. Ancker (2000) recognized that grammar cannot be divorced from L2 writing instruction. Frodesen and Holten (2003) argued that successful writing must conform to grammar. Kim (2007) in the results of her study suggested that we should make low-proficiency Korean learners have sentence-level production practice which is intensive and focused and make them self-correct targeted errors before providing them with narrowly focused recasts in order to help them to improve writing accuracy.

Feedback, which plays a role in grammatical instruction, refers to the response given by the teacher to encourage the learner to communicate and it "can involve such functions as correction, acknowledgement, requests for clarification and back channel cues such as 'Mmm'. It has been suggested that corrective feedback plays a major role in helping learners to test hypotheses they have formed about this rule system of the target language" (Ellis, 1985, as cited in Oberit, 2003).

Aliakbari and Toni (2009) said that different techniques and strategies exist regarding error correction. Regarding the context on which these techniques and strategies are used by teachers, they have to pay attention to and take care of grammar on the level of the learners, their linguistical background and especially on their needs. Corrective feedback as suggested by Ellis (2008) has been mostly implemented in our EFL class. They are direct corrective feedback, indirect corrective feedback, metalinguistics corrective feedback, unfocused and focused corrective feedback, electronic corrective feedback, and reformulation.

First, in direct feedback, the teacher provides students with a number of different forms, i.e, crossing out an unnecessary word, phrase, or morpheme, inserting a missing

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word or morpheme, and writing the correct form above or near to the erroneous form, as illustrated below in example (1).

(1) A dog stole^bone from^butcher. He escaped with ~~having~~^bone. When the dog was going ~~through~~ ^bridge over ~~the~~ river he ~~found~~ ^dog in the river. (Ellis, 2008)

Second, in the indirect corrective feedback, without actually correcting an error, the learner gives feedback by underlining the errors or using cursors to show omissions as in example (2) below or by placing a cross in the margin next to the line containing the error.

(2) A dog stole x bone from x butcher. He escaped with xhavingx x bone. When the dog was going xthroughx x bridge over xthex river he found x dog in the river.
x=missing word x_x=wrong word (Ellis, 2008)

Third, metalinguistic corrective feedback provides learners with some form of explicit comment with two forms about the nature of the errors they have made. The two forms of the explicit comment are: one is the use of error codes such as art=article, prep=preposition, sp=spelling, ww=wrong word, t=tense, etc; the other is metalinguistic explanations of their errors, e.g, numbering errors and providing metalinguistic comments at the end of the text like example (3) below.

(3) A dog stole bone from butcher. He escaped with having bone. When the dog was going through a bridge over the river he found dog in the river. (Ellis, 2008)

Fourth, as example (4) below attests, teachers can elect to correct all of the students' errors, in which case the CF is unfocused. Alternatively, they correct just one type of error in focused feedback; for example, article errors or preposition errors, but not all of them.

(4) A dog stole bone from butcher. He escaped with having bone. When the dog was going through bridge over the river he found dog in the river.

①, ②, ⑤, and ⑥- you need 'a' before the noun when a person or thing is mentioned for the first time.

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③-you need 'the' before the noun when a person or thing has been mentioned previously.
④-you need 'over' then you go across the surface of something you use 'through' when you go inside something (e.g. 'go through the forest'). (Ellis, 2008)

Fifth, in the electronic feedback, an extensive corpora of written English can be exploited as an assistance to students writing. It also can be utilized as a form of feedback.

Sixth, he suggested reformulation. The aim of the final option is to provide learners with a resource that they can use to correct their errors but whether and how to correct are the students' responsibility.

In addition to the above methods, direct feedback by peers, which refers to feedback given by one student to another is also employed in the EFL class. In this setting, students learn from each other and two or more students work together to check, comment, and edit each other's work. According to Atay and Kurt (2007), in the feedback sessions by peers, students do not just listen to the teachers' instructions, but work with their peers to practice more in writing. In this case, student anxiety becomes lower and learning motivation is elevated. Futhermore, sharing opinions with peers is helpful in building and increasing one's confidence. Direct feedback by the teacher and peers and indirect feedback, which are employed the most in the EFL class, can be summarized as in the following Table 1.

TABLE 1
Description of Feedback Types Used in This Study

Type	Description	Strength	Weakness
Direct CF	· Directly provided by the teacher and peers	· Explicit guidance · More practice in writing by working with their peers · Lowers students' anxiety · Effective in promoting acquisition of specific grammatical features (Sheen, 2007) · Increases learning motivation (Atay and Kurt, 2007)	· It may not contribute to long-term learning because it requires minimal processing on the part of the learner. · Students have limited linguistic knowledge
Indirect CF	· Indicates an error through indirect method such as underlining or circling	· Guided learning and problem solving · Encouraging students to reflect about linguistic forms · Effective in enabling students to correct their errors (Lalande, 1982)	· If students do not know the correct form, they can't correct using this strategy.

Each feedback method has its individual strengths and weaknesses, so that each can cooperate reciprocally when more than two feedback methods are implemented

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simutaneously. Sheen (2011) mentioned that the feedback that teachers provide to students should be selective and focused on the different factors on students' writing context and time. Consequently, it could be better to use two or three types of feedback simultaneously because each type of feedback has some strong points and some weak points. In response, direct feedback by a teacher and peers and indirect feedback, which have been the most exploited in L2 classes, were employed in this study.

III. METHOD

1. Participants

The participants for the study were 46 students (male: 13, female: 33) enrolled in either a 'Practical English' course or a 'How to Make Sentences' course as one of the liberal arts requirements at a university located near Seoul, Korea. While the 'Practical English' course was made up of 28 juniors majoring in leisure design, the 'How to Make Sentences' course was composed of 19 students (sixteen freshmen, one junior and two seniors) and their majors varied. Although the liberal arts course was opened for all of the students, most of them were freshmen because freshmen were given the opportunity to register for the liberal arts course first. The maximum number of students for the course was 20 students. The average TOEIC score of the students was 490 out of 990.

2. Instrument and Procedure

The instruments for the study were a sentence writing and free writing as pre-tests and post-tests. For the sentence writing test, fifteen sentences comprising of five basic sentence structures such as S+V, S+V+C, S+V+O, S+V+IO+DO, and S+V+O+OC were given (Appendix 1). The pre-test was offered during the first class and the post-test was administered one week before the end of the course. All 46 students took the pre-test and post-tests which were then analyzed by the researchers. For the free writing, students were instructed to write about 'my hobby' at the second class for the pre free writing and two weeks before the end of the course for the post free writing. The amount of time given to students were the same in the pre and post free writing. The free writings were read and evaluated by the researchers and an English native speaking professor.

To analyze the pre and post sentence writing, the error analysis method by Ellis (1994) was used (Table 2). Ellis (1994) suggested these five steps : 1) collection of samples of learner language, 2) identification of errors, 3) description of errors, 4) explanation of errors, and 5) evaluation of errors. The explanation and how to use these

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steps in the study are shown in Table 2. In analyzing the grammatical errors that the students conducted, the grammatical categories which researchers employed varied. Corder (1973) classified the errors in terms of the difference between the learners' utterance and the reconstructed version. In this way, errors fall into four categories: omission of some required element; addition of some unnecessary or incorrect element; selection of incorrect elements; and disordering of the elements. Lim (1990) analyzed grammatical errors made by Mandarin speaking students into eight grammatical categories: tenses, articles, prepositions, spelling, pronouns, wrong choice of words, singular and plural forms and agreement.

The error anaysis method by Ellis (1994) can be summarized as follows (Table 2).

TABLE 2
The Error Analysis Method

Step	Explanation	Usage in the study
1.Collection of samples of learner language	. Deciding what samples to use for the analysis and how to collect the samples	. Pre and post sentence writing tests
2. Identification of errors	. Comparing the learners' sentences and the correct ones so that the learners' errors can be recognized	. Read the collected data to find out the grammatical errors students committed by checking their errors
3. Description of errors	. Classifying the learners' errors into linguistic categories	. Based on the main sources of errors, interlingual and intralingual transfers, and the errors were classified into six categories
4. Explanation of errors	. Calculating how often the errors occur and explaining the errors	. In order to calculate the frequency of the errors the following formula was employed: $P = \frac{nl}{N} \times 100\%$ (P: percentage of each error nl: total of a given error, N: total of the whole errors) . To identify the percentage of each error easily the result of the analysis was tabled and graphed
5. Evaluation of errors	. Evaluating and drawing conclusion	. Based on the analysis, a conclusion was drawn

In this study, errors made by students were analyzed by six grammatical categories such as verb related errors, subject-verb errors, preposition errors, article/determinative errors, sentence structure errors, and singular/plural errors by two researchers and one English native speaking professor.

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3. Description of the Course

The objective of the 15-week, 'How to Make Sentences'course for three credits was to give students ideas such as how different English and Korean are, how English sentences are constructed, and which words go together and to provide practice sentence writing. Students received three hours of teaching per week for 15 weeks. Total teaching time was 45 hours over a period of 15 weeks.

The first class was spent introducing the class, during which the students were informed of the basic purpose of the course. At the end of the first class, students had the pre-test with 15 questions (Appendix 1). The post-test, the same as the pre-test, was conducted in the fourteenth class, one week ahead of the final examination. The eight and the fifteenth classes were spent for the mid term and final examination respectively. One week was needed for each of 12 units of the textbook. The textbook used for the course was 'First Step for Writing', which is comprised of 12 units. Each unit has different topics and consists of reading for ideas, focusing on grammar, learning sentence structures, identifying common mistakes, and writing practice sections. Table 3 shows the class schedule.

TABLE 3
The Schedule of the Class

Week	Contents
1	Intruction to the course. Pre-test
2	Unit 1: About Me
3	Unit 2: My Friend
4	Unit 3: My Family
5	Unit 4: My Day
6	Unit 5: My Favorite Sports
7	Unit 6: My Dream Job
8	Mid-Term
9	Unit 7: Letter
10	Unit 8: E-Mail
11	Unit 9: Having a Pet
12	Unit 10: Shopping for Groceries
13	Unit 11: Invitation
14	Unit 12: Poster. Post-test
15	Final

For this study, direct and indirect feedback, the most frequently used in class, with explicit grammar explanation, exercising the grammar, and sentence-level production practice using the grammar were employed. The class had three sections (Table 4).

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TABLE 4
Class Activities Used in This Study

Task	Activities		
	Teacher	Student	Feedback
Section 1 (Focus on Grammar)	• Introduce sentence structure along with explicit grammar explanations • Walk around, read students' sentences, crossout the errors and write the correct usage • Underline or circle where the errors occur and have students correct them	• Make sentences with the instructed sentence structures	. Direct feedback by the teacher . Indirect feedback
Section 2 (Reading for Ideas and Common Mistakes)	• Walk around and answer the questions students make	• Read and answer the questions • Check the answers with their partners • Find and discuss errors with their partners	. Direct feedback by the teacher .Direct feedback by peers
Section 3 (Learning Sentence Structure)	• Walk around and indicate and underline the errors students made •Explain and correct the errors if the students can't	• Translate the sentences in Korean into English • Discuss with their partners if they don't know • Eight students are called to write eight sentences each • The others read and think whether the sentences are correct or not	. Direct feedback by the teacher . Indirect feedback . Direct feedback by peers

In the first section, students were taught sentence structure along with explicit grammar explanation in the 'Focus on Grammar Part'. After the grammar was explained, students were instructed to make sentences using what they had learned. For example, when students were taught the sentence structures 'want+N, want+to infinitive, want+O+to infinitive or past participle' they made sentences using those structures. Direct feedback was conducted by the teacher by crossing out the errors in grammar and usage and writing the correct usage somewhere in the students' textbook. Direct feedback by peers was also employed. Indirect feedback was also conducted by underlining or circling where the errors occured. For example, when one student wrote *'I want eating an apple' instead of 'I want to eat an apple', the word 'eating' was underlined by the teacher (indirect feedback) or the correct answer 'to eat' was given (direct feedback).

In the second section, students read the 'Reading for Ideas' part and answered the questions, followed by the 'Common Mistakes' part. In this section, students worked together, not individually. Direct feedback by peers was used more during this part. For instance, when students encountered the sentence *'I am majoring at child development at an university in the U.S.' in the 'Common Mistakes' part, they discussed to find and

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correct errors ('majoring at'-> 'majoring in', and 'an university' -> 'a university') (direct feedback by peers). Due to students' limited linguistic knowledge, direct feedback by the teacher was sometimes conducted.,

Finally, in the third section, students were asked to translate sentences from Korean into English with the knowledge they had received in the first and second section. The author walked around the class and the errors students made were only indicated and underlined, but the actual corrections were left to the students. When the students couldn't correct their errors, they were allowed to discuss the errors with other students within close proximity. Then, randomly chosen students were requested to write their sentences from the textbook onto the board. The other students read the sentences on the board and discussed whether they were correct or not. If there was anything wrong, the students corrected them. If students didn't correct any errors, the writer pointed their errors and corrected them. Due to time limitations, writing practice I and II were not dealt with in class and studetents were allowed to do them freely at home with reference to the 'Reading for Ideas' section.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Effects of Corrective Feedback in Writing Class

For the first research question, (1)What were the effects of the class on writing?, the sentence writings in the pre-test and the post-test were analyzed in term of six grammatical categories by the two researchers and three students' free writing selected by their TOEIC scores (the highest, average, and the lowest score of the participants in this study) were read and evaluated by the two researchers and an English native speaking professor.

1) Effect of the Class on Sentence Writing

After analyzing the pre-test and post-test, Table 5 presents percentage and mean of the incomplete sentences and correct answers that the students made in the pre-test and post-test.

TABLE 5

Percentage and Mean of Incomplete Sentences and Correct Answers (n=46)

	Incomplete Sentences		Correct Answers	
	Pre-test	Post-test	Pre-test	Post-test
Total	76	49	47	187
%	11.0	7.1	6.8	27.1
Mean	1.7	1.1	1.0	4.1

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All 46 students took the pre-test and post-test made up of 15 questions. Among all 690 answers, students made 76 (11.0%) incomplete sentences in the pre-test. However, they made 49 (7.1%) incomplete sentences in the post-test, a decrease of 3.9% from the pre-test. In comparison, only 47 (6.8%) answers in the pre-test were correct. In the post- test students wrote 187 (27.1%) sentences correctly, showing a 20.3% increase. In other words, in the pre-test each student produced only one correct answer out of 15 questions. In contrast, they had about four correct answers in the post-test.

In conclusion, this course was effective to make complete sentences correctly. Table 6 reveals the errors in a hierarchical order along with the error count, percentage and mean in the pre-test and the post-test.

TABLE 6

No. of Errors, Ranks in Errors, Percentage, and Mean (n=46)

	Verb		SVA		Pre		Art/Det		S-S		Sin/Plu	
	Pr	Po	Pr	Po	Pr	Po	Pr	Po	Pr	Po	Pr	Po
Total	242	123	86	34	191	115	317	171	293	161	157	97
%	18.8	17.5	6.7	4.9	14.9	16.4	24.7	24.4	22.8	23	12.2	13.8
Mean	5.3	2.7	1.9	0.7	4.2	2.5	6.9	3.7	6.4	3.5	3.4	2.1
Hiera-rchy	3	3	6	6	4	4	1	1	2	2	5	5

A total of 1,286 grammatical errors were detected in the pre-test and 701 in the post-test, down 585(45.5%) errors from the pre-test as shown in Table 5. Interestingly enough, rank in the frequency of errors in both the pre-test and the post-test were exactly the same.

According to the table, article and determinative errors with 317 (24.7%) in the pre-test and 171 (24.4%) in the post-test were the most frequent ones the students committed. Taiwanese English learners showed a similar tendency in the English article system. Homey (1998 cited in Chen, 2006), who investigated compositions written by 80 Taiwanese EFL students and found errors in the use of articles had the highest error percentage, the same as this study. The results in this study revealed that the most frequent article errors were omission or addition of articles. Some errors students made are as follows ("pre-19" refers to "student 19 in the pre-test"):

*(1) There are bed and desk in his room. (pre-19)
*(2) I often play a soccer with friends after school. (pre-22)
*(3) Next week, my mother will make a bread and cookies. (post-6)

In Lightfoot's (1998) study of the usage of the English article by Japanese second

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language learners, it was found that the most frequently occurring error type was omission and this aspect was likely to have been caused by direct interference from the article-less Japanese language.

Sentence structure errors were 293 (22.8%) in the pre-test and 161 (23.0%) in the post-test, ranking second among six categories. The errors in this area were due to incorrect word order, addition of unnecessary words and phrases, or omission of necessary words and phrases leading to sentence fragments such as sentence 3 which lack a subject and a verb. Sentence fragments are not complete sentences on thier own. A sentence in Korean may omit the subject, whereas every English sentence must include a subject, thus, this is a common mistake among Korean ESL students. The errors related to sentence strucure are illustrated as follows:

*(1) She learned interesting something. (pre-34)
*(2) Her father wants to her to be a teacher. (post-8)
*(3) Very hot. (pre-28)

Verb related errors came third with 242 (18.8%) and 123 (17.5%) in pre and post-tests respectively. These errors included verb form, overuse of the verb 'be', -s omission or choosing wrong verbs. Examples are given below:

*(1) He had been study English for 5 hours last Saturday. (pre-31)
*(2) Are you always wake up at 7:00 a.m. (post-14)
*(3) My father was watching a newspaper in living room. (pre-17)

The word 'watching' in sentence (3) is incorrect. The error would be from the process of translating Korean into English. Basically, it seems that students think in Korean first and then translate it into English when they write. While translating into English they often feel confused. In English the choice of verbs depends on objects like 'read a newspaper' 'watch TV'; however, in Korean the same verb is used in these phrases. Consequently, students have a lot of trouble choosing a correct verb and make errors like sentence (3).

Preposition errors marked fouth with 115 (16.4%) in the post-test, down 76 (39.8%) from 191 (14.9%) in the pre-test. The results associated with preposition errors in this study were little different from other studies. These errors were the second highest in other studies by Horney (1998 cited in Chen, 2006) who investigated compositions written by Taiwanese EFL students and Tabatabal (1985) who investigated 32 compositions written by 20 Iranian students. Choosing incorrect words, omitting, or adding articles where no articles were needed occured often. Some errors made by

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students are as follows:

*(1) My father reads a newspaper at the living room. (post-23)
*(2) He studied English during five hours on last Saturday. (post-28)
*(3) Do you get up 7 everyday? (pre-23)

Singular and plural errors at 157 (12.2%) in the pre-test and 97 (13.8%) in the post-test hold the fifth place of most errors. The frequent errors were omittion or addition of a plural suffix. Some examples students made are as follows:

*(1) I often play soccer with my friend after school. (pre-31)
*(2) He was study English for five hour last Saturday. (pre-23)
*(3) My mother will make us breads and cookies next week. (post-33)

Subject-verb agreement errors at 86 (6.7%) in the pre-test and 34 (4.9%) in the post-test were the least frequency of six grammatical error categories. To match the suject of the sentence, verbs need to be conjugated in English. The most common error in this field was to use the base form of the verb despite the singular subject, for example:

*(1) Her father want her be a teacher in the future. (post-5)
*(2) We closes at 5 on Saturday. (pre-18)
*(3) There is a bed and a desk in his room. (post-24)

In example sentence (1), the correct verb form is 'wants' in the third person singular in the present tense. On other occasion, like sentence (2), the verb is wrongly used with a plural subject. The students failed to make the agreement between subject and verb in sentence (1) and (2) because Korean language doesn't conjugate verbs with the subject. Beyond these, many students have problems with the type of construction in sentence (3) where verbs are followed by true subjects. Instead of using a plural verb 'are', the wrong form of the verb 'is' has been used in the sentence. Without having competence in identifying the subject whether it is singular or plural, students aren't able to produce the correct form of the verb.

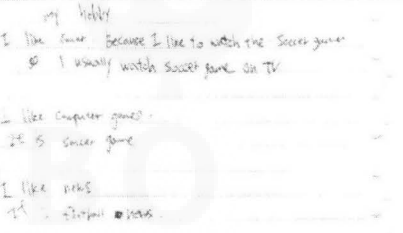
In sum, this course was effective not only to make complete sentences correctly but also to reduce the number of grammatical errors by 585 (45.5%) in sentence writing: article and determinative errors by 146 (46.1%), sentence structure errors by 132 (45.1%), verb errors by 119 (49.2%), preposition errors by 76 (39.8%), singular and plural errors by 60 (38.2%), and subject-verb agreement errors by 52 (60.5%).

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2) Effect of the Class on Free Writing

To find out the effects of feedback of sentence writing on free writing, students' free writings were collected at the second class for the pre-writing and two weeks before the end of the course for the post-writing. The amount of time given to students was the same in the pre-writing and post-writing. Based on TOEIC score, three students' writings presumed as representing the other students were chosen, then read and evaluated by the researchers and an English native speaking professor. The average TOEIC score of the participants in this study was 490 out of 990 as mentioned already. The highest one was 845 and the lowest one was 265. These three examples were scanned, but they were not clear to read. Therefore, they have beenn rewritten. The first writing by student 1 is as follows (Table 7).

TABLE 7
Student 1 Writing

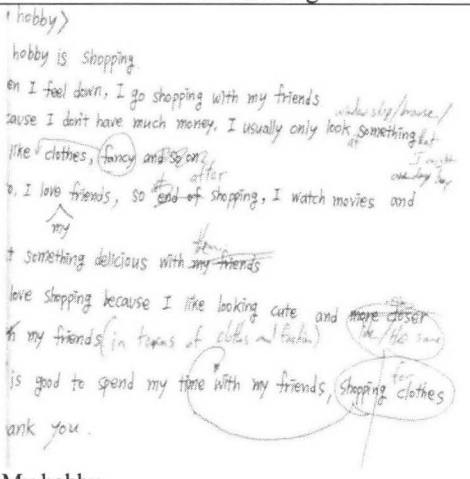
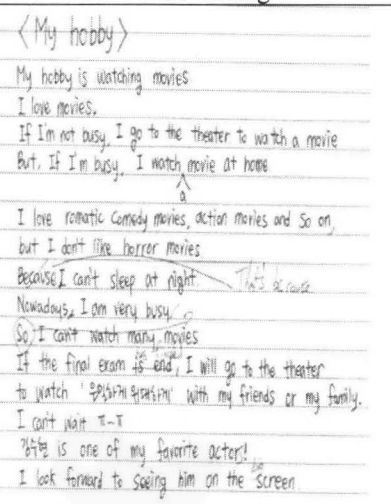
Pre-writing	Post-writing
	
My hobby I like Soccer and Listen to the music.	My hobby I like soccer. Because I like to watch the soccer game I usually watch soccer game on TV. I like computer games. It is soccer game. I like news. It is football news.

Student 1 was a male majoring in leisure design. His TOEIC score was 265, which was the lowest level among the 46 students who participated in the study. Comparing the post-writing with the pre-writing, the big differences were the number of sentences and the production of a complex setence with a subordinate conjuction in the post-writing. He made six sentences in the post-writing, which increased from only one setence in the pre-writing, although there were still several grammatical errors in the post-writing such as 'I like computer game' instead of 'I like computer games'. Besides, one complex sentence with a subordinate conjuction appeared in the post-writing. He appears to be unable to organize sentences to make a paragraph, but at least he seemed to understand the usage of conjuctions through the 'Focus on Grammar' section in this course.

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Second writing by student 2 was as follows (Table 8).

TABLE 8
Student 2 Writing

Pre-writing	Post-writing
	
My hobby My hobby is shopping. When I feel down, I go shoppingwith my friends. Because I don't have much money, I usually only look something. I like clothes, fancy and so on. Also, I love my friends. So end of shopping, I watch movies and eat something delicious with my friends. I love shopping because I like looking cute and more closer with my friends. It is good to spend my time with my friends, shopping clothes Thank you.	My hobby My hobby is watching movies. I love movies. If I'm not busy, I go to the theater to watch a movie. But, If I'm busy, I watch a movie at home. I love romatic comedy movies, action movies and so on. But I don't like horror movies. Because I can't sleep at night. Nowadays I am very busy. So I can't watch many movies If the final exam is end, I will go to the theater to watch '은밀하게위대하게'with my friends or my family. I can't wait 김수현 is one of my favorite actor! I look forward to seeing him on the screen.

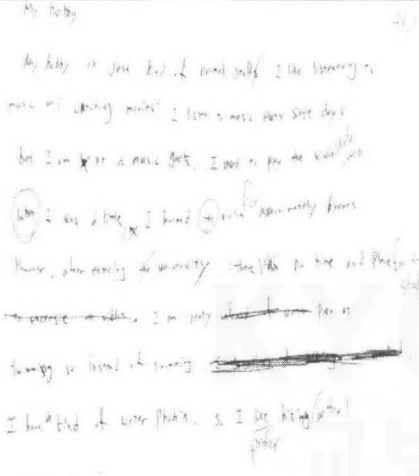
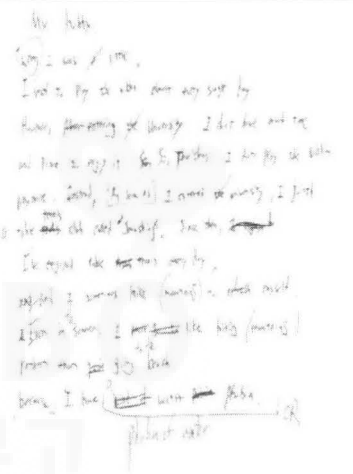
Student 2 was a female majoring in clinical pathology. Her TOEIC score was 455, which was below the average by just a little bit. The reduction of the grammatical errors and better organization of sentences were notable in the post-writing. First, the grammatical errors were siginificantly reduced in the post-writing. Second, in the pre-writing she talked about this and that, not focused on one topic. For example, she started her writing with shopping as her hobby, but she suddenly wrote about her friends in the

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middle of the paragraph. At the end, she talked about shopping again. This lack of sentence fluency in the pre-writing confused her readers. However, in the post-writing she focused on only one subject, movies, and steadly wrote out each sentence and thought one by one. She organized her ideas better, having readers understand her writing more easily in the post-writing. Although the course dealt with only sentence level writing, the parts in the text book 'Reading for Ideas and Common Mistakes' seemed to help her organize her sentences to create a paragraph.

The third writing by student 3 is as follows (Table 9).

TABLE 9
Student 3 Writing

Pre-writing	Post-writing
	
My hobby My hobby is just kind of normal stuffs. I like listening to music and watching movies. I listen to music every single day. But I am not a music geek. I used to play the violin well. When I was a little, I learned the violin approximately 6 years. However, after entering the university There is no time and place to exercise the violin. I am really poor at swimming. So instead of swimming. I have kind of water phobia. soI like hiking.	My hobby When I was a little, I used to play the violin almost every single day. However, After entering the university I don't have much time and place to enjoy it. So, thesedays I don't play the violin anymore. Instead, As soon as I entered the university, I joined table tennis club called 'Jmashins'. Since then, I've enjoyed table tennis every day. And I sometimes hike mountain to refresh myself. Even in summer, I like hiking mountain rather than going beach. Because I have water phobia.

Student 3 who gained the highest score with 845 among the participants in this study was a male studying dermatology health management. He was chosen as representing an

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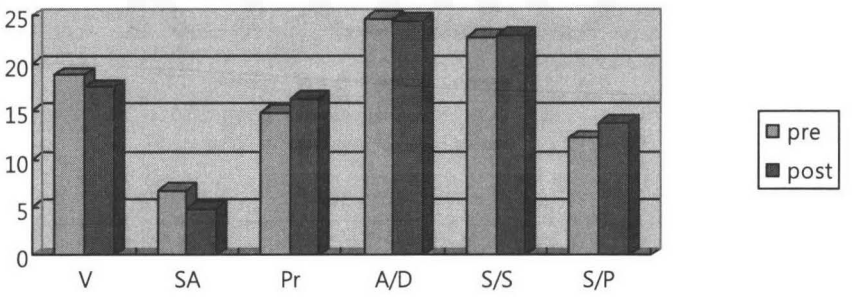
advanced one considering his TOEIC score. In both writings he wrote his ideas from begining to end smoothly even though the end of the pre-writing was somewhat awkward. His fluent sentences made readers understand what he wanted to say clearly and easily. However, the problem was that he committed almost the same grammartical errors such as articles, plural forms, and prepositions in both the pre-writing and the post-writing. It indicates that grammer is a tricky thing for L2 language learners, even those students who have shown proficiency by obtaining a high TOEIC score.

Consequently, since this course was for beginners, it was more helpful to students with low and intermediate proficiency than to those with advanced proficiency in terms of improving grammatical errors, sentence production, and sentence organization .

2. Which errors improved the most and the least?

After the grammatical errors in the pre-test and post-test were analyzed, they were compared according to the percentage of grammatical errors to answer the second research question, "Which errors improved the most and the least?" Figure 1 shows a comparison between the two tests.

FIGURE 1
Comparative Analysis of Grammatical Errors



(V=verb, SA=subject-verb agreement, Pr=preposition, A/D=article/determinative, S/S=sentence structure, S/P=singular/plural)

In accordance with Figure 1, the percentage of the errors of SA (subject-verb agreement), V (verb), A/D (article and determinative), S/S (sentence structure), Pr (preposition), and S/P (singular and plural) was 4.9%, 17.5%, 24.4%, 23.0%, 16.4%,and 13.8% in the post-test, compared with 6.7%(SA), 18.8%(V), 24.7%(A/D), 22.8%(S/S), 14.9%(Pr), and 12.2%(S/P) in the pre-test. While the ratio of SA, V, A/D lowered by 1.8%, 1.3%, and 0.3% respectively from the pre-test, that of S/S, Pr, and S/P was raised

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by 0.2%, 1.5%, and 1.6%. It was shown that SA, V, and A/D related errors improved, but S/S, Pr, and S/P did not. SA errors took up with 6.7% out of 100% in the pre-test; on the other hand, they occupied 4.9% in the post-test which was down by 1.8% from the pre-test. In contrast, the proportion of S/P errors in the pre-test was 12.2%, while on the other, that of S/P errors in the post-test was 13.8% which was up 1.6%. It indicated SA improved the most over the period of 15 week setting, but S/P was the least.

Actually, the most frequent errors students made were SA and A/D related ones. Most of the SVA errors were third person singular present tense, which requires the addition of an '–s' or '-es' to the basic verb form. In the case of A/D errors, the omittion of definite and indefinite articles were most frequent. Naturally, direct and indirect feedback by the teacher and simultaneous peer feedback more often corrected in these areas than all others. Incessant feedback in these areas may help students reduce SA and A/D errors in the post-test. This presumption was supported by the study of Bitchener and Knoch (2009). The result of their study showed that students who received written corrective feedback outperformed those who received no feedback in all four post-tests even though all groups developed differently over time.

Then, why were S/P, Pr, and S/S related errors not improved? Several plausible reasons might be as follows. In terms of grammar rules, English has complex plural rules unlike Korean such as plural suffixes, irregular plural forms, identical S/P forms, and so on. Moreover, English has a number of uncountable nouns which have no plural form '-s'. However, few students are sure which nouns are uncountable. Because of the complexities of the rules involved in S/P, the students tended to be confused and thus forget the rules, resulting in S/P errors when they produce sentences. Therefore, more practice time should be required to develop these aspects of plural formation.

Tetreault and Chodorow (2008, cited in Ting, Mahadhir, and Chang, 2010) said the difficulty in mastering prepositions seems to be due to the great variety of linguistic functions that they serve and choices which need to be made depending on the intention of the writer such as 'we sat at/on/near/by the beach. To choose the correct usage, students have to understand the relationships between everything that is described in the sentence. Since the Korean language doesn't have prepositions in its grammatical system, Korean students, especially those with low proficiency, seem to face difficulties in using proper English prepositions in their writings. This is supported by Kang's finding in an error analysis on students' translation assignments in Macquarie University. A large number of errors in Korean-English translation were found in the use of preposition (Kang, 2007). As a result, the usage of correct prepositions might be one of the toughest points of English grammar for Korean students to improve in a relatively short period of time.

Students very often make use of the previous acquired grammar rules and regulations

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on a new clause, which is the developmental and universal characteristic of language learners. This overgeneralization results in violating the rules of the structure and finally making faulty sentences like the following example. 'Her father wants her dauther to be a teacher in the future' is written as 'Her father wants that her daughter will be a teacher in the future.' The student applied the 'S+think that S+V construction' that was learned previously to the new sentence. Sometimes previous learning can interfere when students are in the process of developing the rules of the sentence structures make new sentences. Completing the application of rules may need more time even though improving sentence structure is very important to clarifty the meaning of the sentence.

In conclusion it can be said that consistant feedback is important for students to reduce grammatical errors and produce correct sentences. Also, S/P, Pr, and S/S errors might require a longer period of time to improve. Finally, it might be difficult to improve all six grammatical errors during the 15 weeks.

V. CONCLUSION

The purpose of the study has been to investigate the effects of corrective feedback on writing. Based on the results of the study, it's clear that a course giving corrective feedback made a significant effect on reducing the number of grammartical errors classified into the six categories based on the main sources of errors, interlingual and intralingual transfers: verb errors, subject-verb agreement errors, prepositions errors, article/determinative errors, sentence structure errors, and singular/plural errors. After analyzing the results, the study showed that the most frequent grammatical errors were article and determinative errors with 317 (24.7%) in the pre-test and with 171 (24.4%) in the post-test. Out of 1,286 errors in the pre-test, 585 errors or 45.5% decreased in the post-test. Among them, the number of article/determinative errors dropped by 146 (46.1%), followed by sentence structure errors by 132(45.1%), verb errors by 119 (49.2%), preposition errors by 76 (39.8%), singular and plural errors by 60 (38.2%), and subject-verb agreement errors by 52 (60.5%). The subject-verb agreement errors improved the most and singular and plural errors the least. Beyond this, corrective feedback effects of sentence level were contributed to developing freewriting productions, especially in students with low or intermediate proficiency as opposed to those with advanced proficiency in terms of grammatical errors, sentence production and sentence organization since this course was designed for beginners. In accordance with the results of the analysis of sentence and freewriting productions, some suggestions are as follows.

First, Megan (2009) said grammar is one tricky thing to master, and the truth is it can

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never be fully conquered, even by the greatest grammarians. As a result, it is natural for L2 learners to make faulty grammatical sentences. Also, the class might be unable to eliminate all grammatical errors that the students committed for the 15 weeks in one semester. Therefore, teachers don't need to hurry to remove all grammatical errors in a short period of time. Instead, teachers as well as students need to be more patient with a long prospective view. In addition, many of the grammtical errors were from the influence of the learners' first language (interlingual transfer). Therefore, it might be a good idea to let students understand the differences between English and Korean and teach them more grammatical forms that differ from Korean.

Second, the more corrective feedback students obtained, the more students' grammatical errors were reduced. It was proved in subject-verb agreement and article and determinative errors in this study. Students received more corrective feedback in these areas than any other ones since they made plenty of errors in these areas during the class. According to Ferris (2002) who summarized students' reactions to feedback, students feel that teacher feedback on grammar and errors is extremely important to their progress as writers. Therefore, it is noticeable that although the effectiveness of feedback as a pedagogical tool is a controversial issue, students perceive that they can benefit from receiving feedback in developing their writing skills. Reflecting the importance of corrective feedback, it would be desirable to design small class sizes for writing courses in order to give students more corrective feedback by their teachers.

Third, this class has shown be more effective in improving the sentence level production of students with low proficiency than their freewriting production. By practing on the sentence level, they can then develop their freewriting production as proved in this paper and as Kim's study (2007) mentioned in the background section. Paulston and Bruder(1976) also said that at the beginning level we concentrate on the correct language form of sentences and punctuation, but students also learn rudimentary principles of organization. At the intermediated and advanced levels we concentrate on the organization and development of ideas, but the students still need to work on sentence level language skills. Before freewriting productions, sentence level practice appears to be a prerequisite.

Despite this conclusion, some of the limitations of this study should be acknowledged and considered in future studies. First of all, this analysis has been made with a lack of quantitative data because of a small number of participants. Second, the data was collected by classes conducted with an instructor. Last, as the pre-test and post-test were not graded, students might have made sentences quickly and carelessly, which then resulted in more errors. These can limit the generalization of the results. Therefore a more longitudinal study covering several semesters would be necessary in order to observe patterns of consistent improvement.

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APPENDIX 1

Pre/Post Test

학과 _____ 학년 _____ 성별 ____

Put the following into English.
1. 그의 방에는 침대와 책상이 있다.
2. 내 가방에는 책도 공책도 없습니다.
3. 너는 항상 7 시에 일어나니?
4. 여기서 학교까지는 얼마나 걸릴까요?
5. 너무 더워요. 창문도 열어주시겠습니까?
6. 컴퓨터게임을 오래하는 것은 건강에 좋지 않다.
7. 우리는 토요일에는 5 시에 문을 닫습니다.
8. 나의 아빠는 거실에서 신문을 읽고 있다.
9. 그는 지난 토요일에 5 시간 동안 영어공부를 했다.
10. 나는 종종 방과 후에 친구들과 축구를 한다.
11. 그녀는 책을 읽는 동안에 재미있는 무언가를 배웠다.
12. 내 동생은 아르바이트를 하고 시간당 5,000 원을 받는다.
13. 집에 도착하자마자 고기를 냉장고에 넣는 것이 좋겠다.
14. 다음 주에 엄마가 우리에게 빵과 쿠키를 만들어 줄 것이다.
15. 그녀의 아빠는 그녀가 장래에 선생님이 되기를 원한다.

Examples in: English

Applicable Languages: English

Applicalbe Levels: Tertiary

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Received in July, 2013
Reviewed in August, 2013
Revised version received in September, 2013

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