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Error feedback in second language writing

Carol Ann Miller-Cornell

ERROR FEEDBACK IN SECOND LANGUAGE

WRITING

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A Thesis

Presented to the

Faculty of

California State University,

San Bernardino

_____

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

in

English:

Teaching English as a Second Language

_____

by

Carol Ann Miller-Cornell

September 2007

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates students' perceptions and responses to grammatical coded feedback provided by their writing instructor in a multiple draft setting. Data include students' drafts before and after feedback, students' interview comments, and the writing instructor's interview comments. Comparisons were made between the writing instructor's coded feedback and students' response to the feedback. This study also examines how students perceived the feedback, how they used it to edit their essays, and how it helped them to improve their grammar skills.

Five second language (L2) students in an introductory composition class at CSUSB participated in the study. Three drafts of one of the essays written for the quarter were examined. The results showed that students improved dramatically from the first to the final draft of their essay. Findings also showed that students wanted, expected, appreciated, and understood the coded feedback given by their writing instructor, but they often had difficulty locating errors when marginal coded feedback was given.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Review of Literature

Error correction is a subject that has been hotly

debated by researchers in the field of second language

writing. These researchers argue back and fourth about the

negative and positive aspects of error correction, but too

little attention has been paid to the voices of students

and their perceptions of the error feedback they receive

from writing instructors.

Writing instructors spend a considerable amount of

time and effort giving feedback on student papers (Conrad &

Goldstein, 1999), and grammar orientated feedback is

believed to be one of the most time-consuming aspects of

their work (Ferris, 1999). Furthermore, second language

(L2) students are consistently voicing the fact that they

want, expect, and value grammatical feedback on their

written work (Ferris & Roberts, 2001). However, many L2

students exhibit mounting frustration at the lack of

constructive feedback given by writing instructors and

complain that they have difficulty interpreting the

abstract forms and vague prescriptions writing instructors incorporate into their feedback (Zamel, 1985).

The purpose of conducting this study is to fill in the gaps in the research on error feedback by studying L2 students' perceptions of error feedback given by writing instructors. Error correction is an important part of the writing process; therefore more student-focused methods and strategies need to be found. The research questions for this study focus on how students react to error feedback and whether or not they find it useful for self-editing their work. The research questions are as follows:

1. How do students interpret the grammatical codes, underlining, marginal and end comments used by instructors?

2. How do they change or not change their papers in response to this feedback, and are these changes accurate?

3. What kinds of error feedback do students find useful or not useful for their short term editing and their long term self-editing abilities?

4. What processes do students use to correct their errors? (e.g., do they correct them on their own or consult a friend, a tutor or an instructor?).

Before I present my study, however, it is necessary to look at the studies on error correction presented by researchers and theorists. Attitudes toward error correction have changed considerably in the last fifty years and, to this day, are still evolving. The following is a brief history of error correction.

A Brief History of Error Correction

In an article on error correction, Anson (2000) provides an historical survey of error correction and discusses how it was perceived in the past. During the 1970s experts shifted their attention away from form and product in composition and moved it toward the process of writing, pushing error correction from the forefront of writing instruction. Encouraged by research that emphasized the negative effects of error correction, this movement away from a preoccupation with correctness, reinforced by "broad intellectual trends of postmodernism," became more accepted (Anson, 2000, p. 5). For teachers who wanted their students to understand the connection between writing and social construction, it became necessary to ignore problems at the surface level of text because experts decided that "systematic instruction in grammar,

usage, mechanics, and punctuation [was] on the wane in freshman composition courses" (Anson, 2000, p. 5-6).

Lee (1997), another researcher, believes attitudes as far as error correction are concerned have moved in the past from strict avoidance of error correction before the 1960s to criticism of error correction in the late 1960s to a more accepted view of error correction in the 1990s. The debate on error correction, however, "[remained] unresolved in the 1990s" (Lee, 1997, p. 495). From the 1990s to the present, many lively debates on the negative and positive effects of error correction have occurred.

One expert in particular whom Lee (1997) points to is John Truscott. Truscott (1996) takes a radical stance against grammar correction, claiming that grammar correction should be abandoned in L2 writing classrooms because it is "ineffective and harmful" to L2 writers (Lee, 1997, p.465). But Lee (1997) contends that Truscott's argument has "little impact" on writing instructors because they are much more concerned not with whether to correct or not to correct, but "what to correct and how to correct" (Lee, 1997, p. 466).

Theories of Error Correction

Many theorists of error correction for second language students (L2) have focused on how the strategies and techniques used for error correction are detrimental to student writers. Other theorists, however, have focused on the importance of error correction and provide a multitude of techniques that writing instructors can use to inspire their students to become better writers.

Yates and Kenkel (2002) argue that many errors in L2 student writing occur because of the "interaction between [students'] developing linguistic competence and their basic principles of ordering information in texts which [they] already know" (Yates & Kenkel, 2002, p. 29). In their article, they examine studies of error correction conducted by other published researchers and demonstrate how these researchers misinterpret student texts.

Yates and Kenkel (2002) believe that L2 writing instructors should also be language instructors and suggest an interlanguage perspective, one which emphasizes the students' knowledge of communication and language. In their article, they claim that their analysis of other published research demonstrates how the learners' text can be misinterpreted and argue that these researchers offer

few insights into how "text concerns interface with sentence-level grammatical choices" (Yates & Kenkel, 2002, p. 31). One researcher they point to is Reid (1998). They claim that although Reid (1998) acknowledges that student errors reflect the student's underlying system, she fails to consider the sentence-level difficulties that emerge from creating information within and across sentences (Yates & Kenkel, 2002, p. 32). Furthermore, they argue that Campbell (1998) devotes less than one page of her article to discuss how instructors should respond to sentence-level errors in the student's text (Yates & Kenkel, 2002, p. 31). They also criticize Zamel (1985), stating that her recommendations that writing instructors focus more on "writing" and less on "language" are misleading. They argue that

> L2 writing instruction cannot be divorced from
> L2 language instruction because it is the L2
> students' lack of knowledge about the language
> to achieve their writing purposes which makes
> responding to actual L2 writing so difficult,
> yet so important. (Yates & Kenkel, 2002, p.
> 46)

The comments on student papers discussed by Lee (1997), according to Yates and Kenkel, are difficult to follow and are unhelpful to student writers because they tend to assume that the learner has access to target language competence (Yates & Kenkel, 2002, p. 45).

Yates and Kenkel propose that teachers read students' texts from the "composing perspective" of students. This perspective requires that writing instructors understand how much knowledge students have about communication and language (Yates & Kenkel, 2002, p. 35). To emphasize their claim, they point to Truscott (1999) and his minimal criteria for error correction that needs to be considered. Truscott states that:

> Effective correction would have to be based on an understanding of complex learning processes, rather than relying on simplistic ideas of transferring information from teacher to learner, as it currently does. Nor is there any attempt to deal with the problems created by developmental sequences or with the issue of pseudolearning.
>
> (Yates & Kenkel p. 30)

Another theorist, Myles, (2002) argues that focusing on the L2 writing process as a pedagogical tool is only

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appropriate if the writing instructors' attention is focused on the linguistic development of L2 writers (Myles, 2002, p. 1). She argues that the process approach is only appropriate for L2 writers if they get sufficient feedback on their writing errors and are proficient enough with the language to implement revision (Myles, 2002, p. 1). Myles adds that social factors affect language learning; some of the social factors she mentions are motivation, positive attitude, and concrete goals. She lists four social reasons why L2 writers may continue to exhibit errors in their writing:

A negative attitude toward the target language

A continued lack of progress in the L2

A wide social and psychological distance between [learners] and the target culture, and

A lack of integrative and instrumental motivation for learning (Myles, 2002, p.4).

Myles also discusses the cognitive factors that affect L2 learners, stating that L2 writers often vacillate between certain processes, namely construction (planning what to write), transformation (transforming language rules for intended meaning), and execution (actually producing the text. She also adds that coherence problems may arise

because L2 writers are unsure about structuring information, organizing text, or storing information. Students who have not been instructed in strategies to monitor their writing errors or have not received conceptional feedback at the discourse level will probably not reap the full benefits from the instruction (Myles, 2002, p. 7). Myles believes that it is the writing instructor's responsibility to help L2 writers develop strategies for self-correction and regulation, and claims that if this feedback is not included in instruction, L2 writers will be disadvantaged in improving both writing and language skills (Myles, 2002, p. 8).

Ferris (2004) argues that writing instructors must be prepared to effectively treat student errors; this preparation may require instructors to take classes or obtain a library on grammar issues relevant to L2 writers. This preparation should also include practice in identifying and responding to errors in student's texts and must also include developing and teaching mini-lessons on grammar and editing strategies. (Ferris (2004), p. 59).

Ferris argues that the effective treatment of student errors should include a variety of "carefully integrated

components" (Ferris, 2004. p. 59). The most important component, according to Ferris, is providing feedback that will help students and not discourage them. When providing this feedback, Ferris mentions another component: the importance of considering the student's needs, their background, and the instructional context. Keeping in mind the needs of each student, Ferris adds, the instructor must choose from a variety of feedback options: direct or indirect feedback or less informative approaches (Ferris, 2004, p. 59).

Another component Ferris emphasizes is the need for writing instructors to explain the importance of linguistic accuracy and editing skills to students. Students will also need grammar instruction, strategy training, practice, accountability, and opportunities to engage cognitively in editing as a problem-solving process (Ferris, 2004, p. 59).

Ferris stresses a number of practical suggestions for the treatment of error. First, writing instructors must prepare themselves to give error feedback while designing their courses and execute the feedback consistently. Secondly, Ferris states that instructors should provide indirect feedback because it engages

students cognitively in problem solving as they self-edit. Exceptions can be made for lower-level students who may not have the linguistic competence to self-correct (Ferris, 2004, pp. 59-60).

Thirdly, Ferris states that a variety of error feedback may be necessary because students may be more capable of self-editing morphological errors than lexical errors, complex errors, or global problems with sentence structure; therefore, various treatments will be required for different types of errors (Ferris, 2004, p. 60). Fourthly, Ferris argues that students must be required to revise or self-edit their texts after feedback is given, preferably in class where they can consult with either their peers or the instructor (Ferris, 2004, p.60).

Ferris also recommends supplemental grammar instruction, either in class or through instructor recommended reading materials. She also adds that it is helpful for students to maintain on-going error charts to make them more aware of their error patterns. She claims that maintaining error charts heightens the student's awareness of their weaknesses and of their improvement (Ferris, 2004, p. 60).

Lee (2004) tends to agree with Ferris, arguing that error correction can be most effective when it focuses on patterns of errors, rather than dozens of errors; he claims that focusing on dozens of errors (comprehensive feedback) only confuses students (Lee, 2004, p. 14). With comprehensive feedback, writing instructors tend to over-mark errors; as a result, students become overwhelmed and give up. In surveys he conducted, Lee explores the existing practices concerning error correction in Hong Kong writing classrooms in an attempt to discover both the teachers' and the students' perspectives on error correction.

In the surveys he conducted, he discovered that most writing instructors used comprehensive feedback, which tends to exhaust both writing instructors and students (Lee, 2004, p. 14). Lee further claims that many of the writing instructors selected errors on an "ad hock basis' because they did not know how to do "selective marking systematically" (Lee, 2004, p. 15). Lee, like Ferris (2004), believes that writing instructors need to look for ways to link error correction systematically with grammar instruction…(Lee, 2004, p. 15).

As a result of his surveys, Lee found that over half of the instructors' feedback was inaccurate, casting doubt on their competence to do error correction. Lee agrees with Ferris (1999) when she states that "poorly done error correction will not help student writers and may even mislead them" ((Lee, 2004, p. 15). Lee believes that writing instructors need more training and practice with error correction, adding that teacher education courses need to focus more on helping writing instructors cope with the "time-consuming and painstaking task" of error correction (Lee, 2004, p. 15).

Lee also discovered that error codes were very popular among teachers in the survey and suggests that because they used them comprehensively, the codes were less effective (Lee, 2004, p.15). He believes that codes should be used sparingly, adding that error types and codes should be explained and discussed in grammar lessons so that students are able to understand and apply them and, thus, reinforce their learning. He stresses that codes should be used sparingly and should focus on specific patterns of errors (Lee, 2004, p. 15).

As for the students' perspectives, Lee reports that half of the students surveyed thought that it was the

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instructors' responsibility to locate and correct errors. A few students said they did not like the job of error correction and thought it was the instructors' job; others said they were too lazy. Most, however, emphasized the instructors' competence, saying "I don't think I can locate the errors, or "since my proofreading is not so good, I think teachers should locate the mistakes for me" (Lee, 2004, p. 14). From the students surveyed, many surmised that the one who is more proficient should do the job, so instructors should do the error correcting for them (Lee, 2004, p. 14).

Research Findings on Error Correction

In 1985, Zamel investigated teacher's responses to L2 student writing, examining teacher's comments, reactions, and markings on students' assignments. The responses of 15 teachers were analyzed; each teacher responded to three or more students, and each student submitted two different papers. She studied 105 papers in all. Her findings were consistent with those that had been found in the responses of L1 writing teachers. According to Zamel (1985), L2 writing teachers

> misread student texts, are inconsistent in their
> reactions, make arbitrary corrections, write

contradictory comments, provide vague

prescriptions, impose rules and standards, [and]

respond to texts as fixed and final products.

(Zamel, 1985, pp.85-86)

Zamel (1985) believes that as a result of her research, L2

writing instructors need to look closely at their

responding behavior and make changes so that students can

better understand the markings and comments used in their

feedback. She suggests that writing teachers "reread their

own responses to make sure their suggestions are clear,

replace vague commentary with references to abstract rules

and principles with text-specific strategies, directions,

guidelines, and recommendations," and ask students to point

out any responses they fail to understand (Zamel, 1985, pp.

94-95). In conclusion, Zamel (1985) argues that L2 writing

instructors should not take control of or offer judgmental

commentary when marking student' writing; instead, they

should position themselves as consultants and facilitators

to writers (Zamel, 1985, p.96).

One year later, Robb, Ross, and Shortreed (1986)

contrasted four methods of giving indirect and direct

feedback to L2 students, comparing four types of feedback:

Direct correction (completely corrected), coded (using an

abbreviated code), uncoded (highlighting errors), and

marginal (errors totaled and written in the margin). They

studied 134 Japanese college freshmen in four sections of

English composition. The analysis included 676

compositions and focused on three composite factors:

accuracy, fluency, and syntactic complexity. The

researchers found that in terms of accuracy, direct

correction did not "tend to produce results commensurate

with the amount of effort required of the instructor"

(Robb, et al., 1986), p.88). On the fluency measures, they

found that "overt correction 'causes' foreign language

students to be overly concerned with surface structure to

the extent that fluent writing is constrained" (Robb, et

al., 1986, p. 89). They found no significant differences,

however, on the complexity measures and believed that the

reason for this was that the correction group received

feedback that was too obscure for them to deal with. This

finding suggests that L2 writers "can assimilate only a

small portion of corrective feedback into their current

grammatical system" (Robb, et al., 1986, p.89).

Ferris, in her 1995 study, argues that teacher

feedback is most effective on the preliminary drafts of

student essays rather than on the final draft. She claims

that most of the research in the past has focused on single drafts rather than multiple drafts of student essays (Ferris, 1995, p. 33). In her 1995 survey, she studied 155 L2 students in ESL classes at California State University, Sacramento who wrote multiple drafts; most of the students came from Vietnam, Hong Kong, or Mexico (Ferris, 1995, p.37). The results of the survey show that students were more likely to pay attention to teacher comment on earlier drafts of their essays than on final drafts. Furthermore, students perceived they received more comments on grammar, followed by organization, content, mechanics, and vocabulary, and they directed more attention to grammar problems than to anything else (Ferris, 1995, p. 40). Students also reported seeking help from outside sources, including instructors, tutors, other students, grammar books, or dictionaries. More than 50% of the students surveyed said they had problems understanding the feedback received from teachers. Of these students, some said they had trouble reading their teachers' handwriting; other students said they had problems with comprehending their teachers' feedback, claiming that difficulties arose in deciphering the terminology and the symbols incorporated into the feedback (Ferris, 1995, p. 47).

On the other hand, Truscott (1996), argues forcefully against error correction in L2 classrooms and lists four reasons why it should be abandoned: (1) none of the research shows that grammar correction is effective; (2) the lack of effectiveness is precisely what should be expected, "given the nature of the correction process and the nature of language learning"; (3) grammar correction has harmful effects on writers; (4) the arguments for continuing grammar correction lack merit (Truscott, 1996, p. 328). Truscott (1996) points out that researchers fail to look "critically at the nature of the error correction process," and they refuse to consider the "practical problems involved in grammar correction ((Truscott, 1996, p. 328). He claims that researchers pay too little attention to the negative effects of grammar correction, and do not take into consideration such issues as the effect on students' attitudes toward writing, as well as the time and energy it takes to teach grammar in the classroom (Truscott, 1996, p. 328).

Robinson (1998) agrees with Truscott, stating that the evidence gathered so far on the effectiveness of instructor feedback on students' written work is "to put it mildly, discouraging" (Robinson, 1998, p. 50). Robinson refers to

a study conducted by George Hillocks (1986), who examined

fourteen "carefully constructed studies" of instructor

feedback, cutting across all grades, and found that these

studies "strongly suggested" that instructor feedback had

little or no impact on student writing (Robinson, 1998, p.

50). In these studies, instructor feedback was found to

make no "significant difference" in the quality of student'

writing between "experimental and control groups"

(Robinson, 1998, p. 50). Robinson (1998) refers to yet

another study conducted by Finlay McQuade (1980) who taught

an editorial skills course to high school students,

focusing on grammar and mechanics. McQuade claimed that

students greatly appreciated this course because they

believed it would help them to pass their college entrance

exams. The study revealed, however, that the course made

no difference on the exams, did not reduce students'

errors, and produced "posttest papers that were worse than

"pretest" papers ((Robinson, 1998, p. 51).

Contradicting these arguments, Ferris (1999) argues

that mounting evidence shows that "effective error

correction -- that which is selective, prioritized, and

clear" can and does help L2 students improve their writing

(Ferris, 1999, p. 4). In her article, Ferris responds to

Truscott's argument that error correction should be abandoned in the L2 classroom and questions some of his assertions. First, Ferris claims that Truscott uses only the "vaguest terms" to define the term "error correction," and she vehemently disagrees with his claim that the distinctions between the many forms of error correction are insignificant (Ferris, 1999, p. 3-4). Stressing this significance, she argues that it is crucial that teachers know what form of error correction is being discussed as there are many less effective methods of teaching error correction. Ferris claims that selective, clear, and prioritized error correction can and does help student writers (Ferris, 1999, p. 4).

Secondly, Ferris (1999) states that there are problems with the review section in Truscott's paper, claiming that the subjects in his studies are not comparable. Furthermore, Ferris argues that Truscott overemphasizes the negative effects of the research and disregards research results that contradict his thesis (Ferris, 1999, p.4).

Ferris (1999) also disagrees with several key points cited by Truscott. One point in particular concerns the study by Kepner (1991) as cited by Truscott. Ferris claims that in Kepner's studies, the subjects received feedback on

journal entries only, not on papers they were expected to revise. Because there was no revision required, students probably disregarded the feedback without being penalized. Ferris also argues that Truscott disregards the findings of Fathman and Whalley (1990) and Lalande (1982) which both found "positive effects for error correction" (Ferris, 1999, p. 5).

In 2001, Ferris and Roberts conducted a study that addresses the topic of how explicit error feedback should be in order to help students self-edit their texts. In this study, they investigated 72 university ESL students using three types of feedback: 1. Errors marked with codes from five different error categories; 2. errors underlined but not marked or labeled; 3. no error feedback at all. The results of this study show that both groups receiving error feedback "substantially outperformed" the control group (no feedback group) (Ferris & Roberts, 2001, p. 171). Furthermore, no significant differences were found in the editing success between the "codes" and "no codes" group (Ferris & Roberts, 2001, p. 172). The fact that there were no significant differences between the group who received errors coded and those who received errors underlined suggests that less explicit feedback can be equally

effective for helping students self-edit their texts in the short run. The researchers stress, however, that less explicit feedback may not provide "adequate input to produce the reflection and cognitive engagement that helps students to acquire linguistic structures and reduce errors over time" (Ferris & Roberts, 2001, p. 177).

Chandler (2003) argues that students who correct grammatical and lexical errors after receiving feedback on each assignment reduce errors in subsequent essays without reducing fluency (Chandler, 2003, p. 267). She studied two classes of undergraduate students from East Asia. One class (the control group) contained 16 students, the other (the experimental group) consisted of 15 similar students (Chandler, 2003, p. 271). Both classes were taught by the same teacher, and both received error feedback. Each student completed five assignments, each five pages long. The experimental group revised each assignment and corrected errors before submitting the next assignment, whereas the control group corrected errors at the end of the semester after all five assignments had been written (Chandler, 2003, p. 272). The results of this study show that the experimental group significantly improved in accuracy over the 10-week semester, but the control group

showed no improvement in accuracy. Both groups, however, increased in fluency over the same period (Chandler, 2003, p. 279).

In a second study in the same paper, Chandler (2003) addresses the question of how writing instructors should provide error feedback, posing the question: Should teachers correct errors for students or should they mark errors for students to correct? This second study was done using the same course and the same teacher but in a different year. In this study, one class contained one Hispanic and twenty Asian undergraduate students, and the second class contained fifteen East Asian students. Each student was asked to write forty pages over the semester. Five assignments were given, and students wrote the equivalent of eight pages for each assignment, revising each assignment after feedback was given. Four types of error feedback were given in four different orders for the first four assignments: Correction (direct), Underlining with description, Description of type only, and Underlining.

The results of this study show that the most explicit correction (direct) produced the fewest errors on the revision of the first draft, resulting in 1.1 errors per

100 words, while the next most explicit correction

(underlining with description) produced the next fewest,

3.1 errors on revision Feedback marked with Description

of error type yielded 4.9 errors per 100 words, while

underlining produced revisions with 4.6 errors per 100

words (Chandler, 2003, p. 286).   When the researcher

compared each student's error rate on the previous

assignment after each type of feedback was given to the

error rate on the next assignment, she found that

Correction and underlining with description resulted in

"more accurate writing on the next assignment, while the

other two treatments, which involved describing the error

type, had the opposite effect" (Chandler, 2003, p. 286).

Chandler (2003) also reported that the results of this

study showed that there was a significant improvement in

both accuracy and fluency in subsequent writing of the same

type over the semester.

Despite writing instructors' efforts to provide

grammar correction to L2 students and their belief that it

will improve student writing, there is little agreement

concerning which methods are the most effective. Ferris

(2004) believes that effective feedback helps students

improve their writing and recommends indirect feedback for

L2 writers because it promotes problem solving. Chandler (2003), however, claims that explicit (direct) feedback works best for L2 writers. Lee (2004) contends that comprehensive feedback (correcting every error) confuses and overwhelms L2 writers, likewise, Robb et al. (1986) believes that L2 writers can assimilate only a small portion of error feedback. Truscott (1996) and Robinson (1998), on the other hand, argue that error feedback is harmful and has little or no impact on student writing.

CHAPTER TWO

THE STUDY

Subjects and Methodology

This study begins with an explanation of the educational context in which the students received error feedback, followed by the student selection process and a description of the students' backgrounds. The next stage of the study explains the data collection process.

Subjects and Educational Context

The students in this study attended California State University, San Bernardino (CSUSB). One of the requirements of CSUSB is that students take an English Placement Test (EPT) upon entering the university. Their performance on this test determines which English class they will need to take. If they receive a score of 151 or higher on the EPT, they are considered college level writers and placed in ENG 101. If, however, they receive a score below 142, they are placed in the two-quarter English 85A and English 85B classes because their score demonstrates that they need more assistance with writing at the college level.

The Course

The participants in this study were all enrolled in English 85B, which is an introductory composition class for multilingual students (both immigrant and international). The course was the second half of a 20-week introductory composition course which included Eng 85A and Eng 85B. The same instructor who taught Eng 85B taught Eng 85A the previous quarter. The main goal of this class is to teach reading, writing, vocabulary, and grammar skills and to prepare these L2 students for English 101. The course is graded on a Credit (CR)/ Satisfactory (SP)/ No Credit (NC) basis. Those students who receive a CR for the class are considered to be ready for English 101.

Another goal of this course is to teach students to understand, organize, develop, and support arguments. In addition, they learn how to self-edit grammatical errors, vary their sentence style, and improve their vocabulary. The class was taught in the Winter 2005 year and met for 70 min three times a week for a period of one quarter (10 weeks).

During class periods, various issues concerning arguments linked to fast food were read and discussed. Students were shown how to organize, develop, and support

arguments and how to write their own arguments in clear, focused paragraphs. Students also participated in pre-writing activities and watched videos on fast food production. Mini-lessons on grammar, usage, and punctuation were given at appropriate times; these were usually linked to either the readings, discussions of assignments, or editing questions from students.

Students were required to write 14 journal entries during the quarter. These journals were directly connected to the reading and were collected, read, and commented on by the instructor but not graded. Students were also required to write three out-of-class essays; each assignment included a rough draft, a first full submission, and a revision. The instructor gave both content and error feedback on each draft of the essay. In addition, the instructor provided brief positive comments at the end of the essay and more specific comments, praising word choice, images, transitions, and other elements in the margins. The instructor also provided students with an Evaluation Guidelines sheet (see appendix A). This evaluation sheet was attached to their second and final submission so that students would know which areas of the essay needed improvement and which areas were satisfactory. At the

beginning of the course, the instructor gave each student a handout explaining the codes she used for marking and correcting errors in their essays. A letter grade was given only on the final product and was based on the elements described on the evaluation sheet.

In-class time was allotted for sessions of peer review; during this time, students read other students' papers and critiqued them for content and grammatical errors before they were submitted. Students were also allotted time to self-edit their papers before turning them in to the instructor. Students were also required to submit an Error Frequency/Correction sheet with each essay (see appendix B and C). The reason for the error sheets was to assist students in finding patterns of grammatical errors and to help them to focus on errors most prevalent in their writing. For example, students may have difficulty with missing or unnecessary prepositions, so counting and focusing on these errors draws attention to this particular grammatical error, showing them where one of their frequent errors are. After prioritizing their errors on this sheet, students were sometimes required to write them down on grammar cards so that they could learn from them and avoid these errors in future essays.

In addition, students were required to attend four sessions in the Writing Center to work on their essays with a tutor. The instructor also scheduled individual conferences with students to discuss their progress in the class and to suggest strategies for revising their essays.

Student Selection Process

The student selection process began with a presentation of the study. I went to the Eng 85B classroom and presented my study to the students. During this presentation, I briefly described what the study was about and what was required for participation. During the presentation, I gave each student an Informed Student Assent form, which explained the study in depth (see appendix D). After allowing them time to read the information, I asked the class as a whole if they would like to volunteer to participate in the study. Six students volunteered to participate, but one student later declined to be interviewed and another withdrew altogether. Altogether, five students volunteered for the study, including the student who declined to be interviewed. I asked the participants to sign the Informed Assent forms and gave each student a Language Background Survey Sheet to fill out (see appendix E). I returned to the class two

days later and picked up the signed Informed Student Assent forms and the completed Language Background Survey sheets from the participants.

The Subjects

Upon reviewing the survey sheets, I found that the five participants came from various backgrounds and cultures. One student originated from Turkey, another from Mexico, and the remaining three students were from Japan.

The Turkish student, a twenty-three year old international student, had lived in the United States for five months. He was a graduate student who was taking Eng 85B class voluntarily as a refresher course. He had previously attended high school and college in another country. The first language in which he learned to speak, read, and write was Turkish.

The Mexican student, an immigrant, was twelve-years-old when she came to the United States and had been in the U.S. for seven years. She attended elementary school in Mexico and high school in the U.S. She was in her second quarter at CSUSB. Her first language was Spanish.

The first Japanese student, an international student, had lived in the U.S. for two years and was twenty-six years old. She attended a language institute in the U.S..

but completed other schooling (junior high, high school, college, and a language institute) in Japan. She learned to speak, read, and write in Japanese.

The next Japanese student, also an international student, was eighteen years old when he came to the U.S. and had lived in the U.S. for eight years. He attended college and a language institute in the U.S. but completed elementary, junior high, high school, and a language institute in Japan. The first language he learned to speak, read, and write was Japanese.

The final student in the study, a nineteen-year old Japanese student, had lived in the U.S. for one year. He was an international student who had attended a language institute in the U.S. but completed his junior high and high school education in Japan. The first language he learned to speak, read, and write was Japanese.

Data Collection Process

Data for this study included all three drafts of one of the three essay assignments students wrote for the course (i.e., a total of nine drafts per student) with instructor comments and student Error Frequency/Correction sheets. After students turned in their Assent forms, I collected their folders containing their drafts and their

Error Frequency/Correction sheets, then, later, removed the participants' names from the drafts to protect their anonymity, replaced their names with a code, copied them, and returned them to students the next class period. I selected all three drafts of the first essay for my data because the first set of essays contained more feedback than the second and third essays.

When I returned the folders the next class period, I gave the participants a sign-up sheet for interviews. The participants chose a time that was suitable for them, and the interviews were scheduled for the following week. The interviews were tape recorded and lasted approximately forty-five minutes.

During the interview process, it was crucial to find out if the participants understood the instructor's codes for their errors, so each interviewee was asked to answer the Sample Interview Questions for Students (see appendix E). Interviewees were also asked to identify the codes the instructor had used on the errors they had made on their second submission and to orally correct the errors connected to these codes (i.e., "WF" (word form), "R O" (run-on), "V" (verb)," N E" (noun ending), "C" (comma), "Fr" (fragment), "Prep" (preposition), "W C" (word choice),

"art" (article), etc). For example, I would point to a fragment that was marked "Fr"" in the margin and ask the student what the code meant and how he or she would correct the error. As the interview progressed, I compared these corrections to any changes they made on their Error/Correction/Frequency sheets and on the final draft of their essay to make sure that they comprehended the codes and had made the necessary changes to correct their errors.

After the interview was over, I examined the students' drafts to see how they changed their essays in response to the instructor's feedback and checked to see if the changes were accurate. I began by examining and counting the errors the instructor had coded. Following this, I totaled up the accurately corrected errors and arrived at a percentage for each student.

CHAPTER THREE

RESULTS

Interviews with Instructor and Students

This chapter presents the results from the study. I
begin with the findings from my interview with the
instructor. This is followed by results from the student
interviews.

Interview with the Instructor

The interview with the writing instructor was
conducted after the students' grades were posted to ensure
the participants' anonymity. The interview was tape
recorded and took approximately forty-five minutes. After
signing an Audio Consent form, the instructor was asked to
explain her philosophy on error correction in her 86B class
(see Sample Interview Questions for Writing Instructor,
Appendix G, question 1).

As the interview began, the instructor responded to
question (1) regarding her teaching philosophy on error
correction. She explained that she incorporates explicit
grammar instruction into her lesson plans but tries to make
the experience meaningful by connecting the grammar
instruction to the class work or to the essays students are

currently working on. Most of her grammar instruction, however, is linked to student editing. For example, if she finds an abundance of run-ons in their writing, she gives a mini lesson on run-ons, and then she asks students to look specifically for run-ons as they edit the essay they are currently working on in class.

Another aspect of her philosophy was revealed when I asked the instructor what her approach was to error feedback (see question 2). Concerning her approach, she responded by saying that she tries not to overwhelm students by marking all grammatical errors; instead she focuses on specific patterns of errors. Her reasons for marking this way are twofold. On the one hand, this process allows her to see what types of error patterns students are making, and, on the other, it helps students recognize their own pattern of errors when they see them on their essay and mark them on their error sheets. For example, if there is a pattern of verb errors in the essay, students mark each verb error and place check marks beside these errors on their Error Frequency sheets. They then count the check marks in this category, and then place them on their Error Correction sheets for correction. This

method is intended to help students participate in the grammar correction process and teach them self-editing skills.

In addition, the instructor gives students a handout that explains the codes she uses for marking grammatical errors, so students can resort to the grammatical information on the code sheet to find and correct errors on their own. She also stated that she uses her most explicit feedback in her end comments because she believes that end comments encourage more independent editing ability.

As the interview progressed, I asked the instructor what her response was to different grammatical errors on student papers (question 3). For example, does she use the same response for all students, or does she use responses that match the students' need levels? She responded by informing me that she tries to take into consideration the students' levels as a writer, and then marks errors accordingly. For example, some students may have too many errors or too many global issues that interfere with comprehension, so, in these cases, there would be no point in marking errors because the essays would need to be completely re-written. On the other hand, other students

may be so advanced that attention needs to be paid to minor errors so that students can progress to polishing their essays.

Concerning the question of which error correction strategies have the most impact on the accuracy of student writing (Question 4), the instructor said she uses a combination of error correction strategies, utilizing both direct and indirect feedback. If, for example, she thinks students are unable to correct errors on their own, such as errors with idiomatic expressions or prepositions, she uses direct feedback and makes the appropriate changes for the word, phrase, or sentence. But, in other cases, she gives indirect feedback to students who can make the appropriate changes on their own. For the most part, however, she prefers to give indirect feedback because it encourages students to think about and analyze the word, phrase, or sentence that needs changing and helps them to process the information more deeply.

Continuing with the question of which type of error correction has the most impact on students (question 4), the instructor stated that it depends on the level of the student. For example, if students are more advanced, they succeed in finding the error if the feedback is placed in

the margin. In this case, they usually find and correct

the error in the sentence on their own. But if the

students are less advanced, they need more assistance.

These students tend to prefer more explicit feedback, so

the errors are either corrected directly or coded as they

occur in the sentence. Furthermore, to draw students'

attention to the patterns of errors they are making, the

instructor provides end comments regarding the errors.

Moving to the next question, I asked the instructor if

students responded better to coded or uncoded feedback

(question 5). She responded by saying that most students

would respond better to coded feedback if the course

focused specifically on grammar instruction. But because

grammar instruction, other than mini-lessons, was just a

small part of the course, some students may not have the

knowledge required to understand the codes. She continued

by saying, however, that some L2 students, especially

international students, have an excellent background

concerning the rules of English grammar, so these students

would be more open to the codes and find coded feedback

more useful. Concerning uncoded feedback, the instructor

believes that while uncoded feedback, underlining

specifically, is much less time-consuming, it does not

encourage as much linguistic meta-knowledge development as coding does because coding makes students more aware of specific areas of grammar they need to work on.

Next, I asked the instructor if she believed the Error Frequency/Correction sheets helped students improve the accuracy of their writing over time (question (6). She responded by saying that she had surveyed students previously, asking them if they found the Error Frequency/Correction sheets useful. Most students said that they found them useful because they helped them focus on their most prevalent errors. However, the instructor said that although she had no empirical evidence that the Error Frequency/Correction sheets helped students improve their writing, she assumes that the act of copying their incorrect sentences and then writing their sentences correctly encourages students to focus on the errors and the corrections they need to make.

Finally, I asked the instructor to explain some of the errors she marked on students' essays (question 6) and why she had marked them this way. The first essay used as an example contained a noun ending error. The instructor had written the code "N E" in the margin rather than directly

over the noun, so apparently she expected the student to correct the error in this sentence, which I have underlined:

Example 1:

> The granola bar in <u>questions</u> is something different from ordinary ones.

The instructor said she placed the code in the margin because the student was advanced and was considered capable of finding the error on her own. This was the case for this particular student because she had found the noun and removed the "s" from the idiomatic expression "in question" and had corrected the error.

Moving to the next essay, I directed the instructor's attention to the next errors to be discussed. These errors were found in the following sentence:

Example 2:

> <u>Targeting people who are in a diet and would like to be in shape without sacrificing a good meal.</u>

In this sentence, the student has created a fragment (no subject or verb) and a preposition error ("in" instead of "on"). For these errors, the instructor had placed the code "FR" in the margin and the code "PREP" over the top of the word "in." The instructor stated that she placed the

code "FR" in the margin rather than directly over the error because she wanted the student to think about the punctuation and find the error on her own. She also stated that she placed the code "Prep" directly over the word "in" rather than directly correcting the error because she knew this student often substituted the preposition "in" for "on" and visa-versa; therefore, she expected the student to think about the error and make the appropriate changes on her own. In her final draft, the student had attempted to eliminate the fragment in her final draft by connecting the fragment to another sentence but had failed to change the preposition "in" to "on," as we can see in the following example:

Example 3:

> By giving this information advertisers basically tell to their target consumer this product would help you stay in shape and keep you healthy, *and may end up targeting people who are <u>in</u> a diet and would like to be in shape without sacrificing a good meal.*

In the next essay, it was clear that the student had difficulty with preposition errors. He had written the sentence:

Example 4:

> We can easily feel this message by looking (0)
>
> the general scene of this ad.

For this error, the instructor had placed the symbol "^"
between the words "looking" and "the" to show the student
where the missing preposition needed to be placed. She
stated that she used this symbol because the student was a
graduate student who was not required to take the class but
was taking it as a refresher class, and she believed he had
the knowledge to correct the error without the presence of
a code. Checking the final draft of his essay, it was
clear that he understood this symbol because he had
inserted the missing preposition "at" in the appropriate
place, writing:

Example 5:

> We can easily feel this message by looking *at* the
>
> general scene of this ad.

Interviews with Students

The interviews with students were conducted
independently at a time of their choosing. The interviews
were tape-recorded and took approximately forty-five
minutes. During the interview process, they discussed
their grammatical errors and answered the Sample Interview

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Questions for Students listed in appendix F. The students'
names have been replaced with a code number to protect
their anonymity.

The first student to be interviewed was participant
01. She signed the Audio Use Informed Consent form and the
interview proceeded. When the interview began, the first
topic of discussion was her Error Correction/Frequency
sheet for her writing. On her Error sheet, she had
previously listed her most frequent grammatical errors as
word form errors, run-on sentences, noun errors, verb
errors, and word choice errors, and to a lesser extent
fragments, missing commas, and prepositions.

In this first essay, students had been asked to find
an advertisement for a product and then describe the
strategies used by the advertiser to sell this product. As
the interview began, the student was asked to respond to
each of the student interview questions listed in appendix
B. When asked whether or not she understood all the
instructor's comments about the grammatical errors on her
essay (question 1-3), she replied that she did. Turning to
the second submission of her essay with the instructor's
comments, she was asked to explain some of the marks and
codes that were written on her essay. For example,

pointing to the abbreviated code "W F" (word form) which was placed over the top of the word "know" on the essay, she was asked what the code meant and how she could correct the error. She responded by replying that the abbreviation "W F" stood for "word form" and the appropriate word "knowing" was needed in the sentence. Turning to her error correction sheet, it was evident that she could correct this error because she had written the word "knowing" correctly and used it in a complete sentence. On the final draft of her paper, however, she had repeated the same error in the same sentence, writing:

Example 6:

> Is hard to buy something without even <u>know</u> how is
> used.

Because this draft was her final draft, the instructor changed her marking strategy; instead of using the code "W F," she wrote out the entire sentence above the student's words as follows:

Example 7:

> It *is* hard to buy things without even *knowing* how
> to use them.

Continuing with the interview, the student was asked if she corrected her errors on her own or if she sought

help from a friend, a tutor, or an instructor (questions 4,7). She responded by saying that each time she receives corrections on her essay, she scrutinizes each sentence for errors, correcting them herself throughout the paper. After this process is completed, she takes her essay to the Writing Center and asks a tutor to explain any errors she fails to understand.

As the interview progressed, I asked the student which comments or marks helped her the most when correcting her errors (question 6). She responded by saying that she found the codes for run-ons (R O) and word forms (W F) the easiest to correct. Her error correction sheet demonstrated that she knew how to correct the run-ons. This was also the case on the final draft of her essay. For example, on her second submission, she had previously written the following, which the instructor had coded as "RO" in the margin:

Example 8:

> Using this system advertiser can provide with an
> effective ad that would target the type of group
> they are looking for as the Lean cuisine ad does,
> their advertisers have to follow this model to
> target the middle age American Woman.

On the final draft, however, she had attempted to eliminate the run-on by using a semi colon after the words "looking for" instead of a comma, writing the following:

Example 9:

> Using this system advertisers can provide with an effective ad that would target the type of group they are looking for; also the lean cuisine ad does it, *and the advertisers have to follow this model to target the middle age American woman.*

Improvement can also be seen in her verb forms as she progresses from her second submission to her final draft. The following sentence is found in her second submission and contains errors in two verb forms, which the instructor had coded with a "V" in the margin:

Example 10:

> As an example the Lean Cuisine ad is able to delivers a message such as if you care about your health eats right with less carbohydrates.

On her final draft she has corrected the two verb forms and has written the following:

Example 11:

> As an example the Lean Cuisine ad is able to
>
> *deliver* a message such as if you care about your
>
> health *eat* right with less carbohydrates.

As the interview neared its end, I asked the student how positively or negatively she felt about the instructor's grammatical comments in her essay (questions 8-9). She responded enthusiastically by saying she felt very positive about the comments and marks because she realized that the correction process was helping her develop into a better writer.

After the interview ended, I compared the two drafts, the second submission and the final draft of this student's essay. It was clear that this student had made significant improvement with her final draft. She had a total of thirty-eight errors on her second submission. These errors included nine word forms, ten punctuation errors, seven verb forms, three articles, three word choice errors, two noun endings, two prepositions, one missing word, and one spelling error. On her final draft, she accurately corrected a total of twenty-two of these errors, either by changing her words or phrases, restructuring her sentences, or re-writing parts of her essay. A total of sixteen

errors were left uncorrected. Table 1 illustrates the
errors corrected by Participant 01 that were coded by the
instructor:

Table 1

Participant 01's Corrections on Her Final Draft										
Grammatical errors:	WF	PUNC	VF	ART	WC	NE	PREP	MW	SP	Total
Errors:	11	10	5	3	3	2	2	1	1	38
Errors corrected:	5	5	4	2	2	2	2	0	0	22 58%
Errors uncorrected:	6	5	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	16 42%

To conclude, I focused on the evaluation sheets that
had been returned to the student with each draft. I
concentrated on the language/grammar segment, which
included sentence structure, punctuation, spelling, and
other grammatical elements. The scores listed were based
on an evaluation scale that ranged from (1) weak, (2) fair,
(3) good, and (4) excellent. On this student's first
evaluation sheet returned with her second submission, she
received a 2+ on the language/grammar segment of the sheet.
The instructor included a comment in the language/grammar
segment, which prompted the student to pay attention to the
missing "ed" and run-ons in her essay. Next, I turned to

the evaluation sheet for her final revision and found that this student had progressed from a 2+ to a 3 in the language/grammar segment. She received a B for her overall grade on the final draft of her first essay.

The next student to be interviewed was participant 02. This student was also responding to an advertisement for a product. After signing the Audio Consent form, she discussed her Error Frequency/Correction sheet that was attached to her first essay. This sheet indicated that the student was having difficulty with articles, noun endings, and prepositions, and, to a lesser degree, word form errors.

I began the interview by asking the student if she understood all the codes and marks for her grammatical errors (questions 1-3). She stated that she understood most of them but had difficulty finding some of them in a sentence. Looking at her second submission with instructor comments, she expressed her confusion concerning the following sentence, which the instructor had coded as having an article, a preposition, and a verb error: Example 12:

> These elements in the advertisement are usually
> transformed depending on the target consumers,

and when the target is children, the several

aspects of development psychology might be

helpful to get the children's attention.

In this case, the instructor had placed the code "art" in

the margin, and, as we can see, there are five articles in

this sentence. Therefore, the student showed confusion

about which article was at fault. As a result of her

confusion, she chose the wrong article, and eliminated the

article before the word "children's" instead of the one

before the words "several aspects." This student, however,

had no difficulty with the preposition and verb errors in

this sentence, perhaps because the instructor had placed

the codes directly over the words "to" and "get." When I

asked her to correct the error, she quickly changed the

preposition "to" and the verb "get" to "for" and "getting."

When I compared this sentence to the one in her final

draft, I found that she had gone to great lengths to revise

this sentence, correcting most of the errors the instructor

had pointed out. Her revised sentence read as follows:

Example 13:

These elements in the advertisement are usually

transformed depending on the target consumers,

and when the targets are children, considering

<u>the</u> several aspects of developmental psychology

might be helpful *for capturing* children's

attention.

As we can see, this student removed the article before the word "children's" but retained the article the instructor had previously referred to, the article before the words "several aspects." This mistake on the student's behalf is understandable considering that there are five articles in this sentence. As we moved through the errors in her essay, it became clear that this student had difficulty when the code was placed in the margin, rather than directly over the word or phrase. Although she had a good grasp of the meaning of the code, she had difficulty linking the code with the error in the sentence, especially when more than one word of the same form that could carry the same code was found in the sentence.

Moving to the next question, I asked the student if she corrected her errors on her own or if she received help from others (question 4). She said she usually corrected her errors on her own by going through her essay sentence by sentence, but if she had difficulty, she requested help from the instructor, either in class or in conferences.

As the interview continued, the student responded to question six, saying that the comments and markings that helped her most were the codes for articles and noun-endings. She had difficulty, however, locating the article errors, and sometimes the preposition errors, if there were multiple articles or prepositions in the same sentence. This was especially the case when the code for these errors was placed in the margin. She said the noun endings are much easier because there are fewer nouns to choose from in any particular sentence. She had the most difficulty with word choice codes because she had trouble finding more suitable words in the dictionary that expressed the meaning she wished to convey.

Next, we discussed question seven, which concerns the process she uses when reading the instructor's comments on her essay. In response to this question, this student said that she first reads the instructor's end comments on her essay, then she tries to interpret the instructor's comments on specific grammar errors. After this is accomplished, she goes through her grammar mistakes, attempting to correct them one by one.

In response to question eight, regarding whether this student perceived the comments on her errors negatively or

positively, she stated that she felt very positive about the feedback, saying that she realized the instructor's intention was to help her improve her writing skills and that she was very grateful for the assistance she was getting. In answer to question nine, which asked whether or not the instructor's feedback on grammatical errors helped to improve her writing skills, she said yes, emphatically. She continued by saying that the fact that the instructor pointed out all her errors was very helpful to her, stating that in her experience, tutors at the Writing Center did not always focus specifically on grammatical errors, considering them minor, whereas the instructor pointed out all her grammatical errors and labeled them for correction, a process which she found very useful for improving her writing.

When I compared this student's second submission to her final draft, I did, in fact, find that her writing had improved measurably. She had eighteen errors marked on her second submission: these included six articles, three prepositions, three noun forms, two word forms, two word choices, and two verb forms. She successfully corrected fifteen of these errors, leaving three errors uncorrected.

Table 2 illustrates the errors corrected by participant 02 that were coded by the instructor:

Table 2

Participant 02's Corrections on Her Final Draft

Grammatical errors:	ART	PREP	NF	WF	WC	VF	Total	
Errors:	6	3	3	2	2	2	18	
Errors corrected:	5	3	2	2	1	2	15	83%
Errors uncorrected:	1	0	1	0	1	0	3	17%

The instructor's appraisal of her effort on the evaluation sheet attached to her final draft was very positive in that this student earned a 3+ (compared to a 3 on her previous draft) on the language/grammar section. Because of her efforts, she earned an overall grade of "A" on her final revision.

Participant 03 was the next student to be interviewed. This student was also responding to and analyzing an advertisement for a particular product. As with the other participants, we began the interview by discussing his Error Frequency/Correction sheet. Although this student had very few errors on his first essay, he had listed his

most frequent errors as follows: run-on sentences, articles, word choice, and preposition errors.

Using the same process as previously illustrated, I asked this student if he understood the codes and marks the instructor had used for his grammatical errors (questions 1-3). As we went through his second submission, pointing to each error, it was clear that he understood the codes the instructor had used on his essay. For example, in one particular paragraph, I pointed to the code for a run-on (RO) sentence that the instructor had written in the margin and asked him if he could fix the run-on. The sentence was written as follows:

Example 14:

> This phrase has a good sense of humor and clever,
> that is, bread is usually eaten by hand, but
> according to the slogan, you can eat it with a
> spoon.

This student quickly corrected the sentence by eliminating the words: "that is," breaking the sentence into two parts, adding a period after the word "clever" and a capital letter to begin a new sentence with the word "Bread." When I looked at his final draft, I found he had corrected the sentence to read:

Example 15:

> This phrase has a good sense of humor and is
> tricky. *Bread is usually eaten by hand, but*
> *according to the slogan, you can eat it with a*
> *spoon.*

Moving to the next question, I asked this student if he corrected his errors on his own or if he received help from others. He responded by saying that he prefers to solve problems by himself, but if he comes across an error he fails to understand, he asks the instructor. Concerning what type of comments or marks helped him the most when correcting his errors (question 6), he said that the comments on prepositions helped him the most because he had the most difficulty with them and found them the hardest to correct. This student, however, had no difficulty correcting the preposition error I pointed to in his second submission, which the instructor had coded "Prep" directly over the word "from." He had previously written:

Example 16:

> Considering <u>from </u>these aspects of this
> advertisement, the target consumers are those who
> want to get nutrition quickly and effectively.

In this case, this student had created an unnecessary preposition, and when I pointed to the error, he quickly crossed out the word "from." When I looked at his final draft, I found that he had eliminated the word "from" and had created the following grammatically correct sentence:

Example 17:

> Considering these aspects of this advertisement, we can see that the target consumers are those who want to get nutrition quickly and effectively.

Next, I asked the student to explain what process he uses when he reads the instructor's comments on his errors (question 7). He answered saying that he reads his essay out loud, listening carefully to the sound of his words, and when a particular word sounds out of place, he usually locates the error and corrects it.

Following this, I asked the student how negatively or positively he felt about the instructor's comments on his errors (question 8). He responded by saying that he felt very positive about the comments and was very grateful for them because they helped him in revising and polishing his essay. Following this question, I asked him if he believed the instructor's feedback on his grammatical errors helped

him improve his writing skills. He said that, in looking back, he believed his writing had gradually improved and had become more sophisticated due to the feedback, and that he had now reached a point where he has very few grammatical errors in his essays.

When the interview was over, I compared the student's second submission to his final draft. Going through his second submission, I found he had ten errors that had been coded for correction by the instructor. These included three word choice errors, two run on sentences, two articles, two verb forms, and one preposition. When I compared his second submission to his final draft, it was clear that he had made progress, because I found he had successfully corrected eight of these errors, leaving only two errors uncorrected. Table 3 illustrates the corrections made by participant 03 on his final draft:

Table 3

Participant 03's Corrections on His Final Draft							
Grammatical errors:	WC	RO	ART	VF	PREP	Total	
Errors:	3	2	2	2	1	10	
Corrected errors:	3	1	1	2	1	8	80%
Uncorrected errors:	0	1	1	0	0	2	20%

The evaluation sheet attached to his second submission and his final draft reflected this student's progress. On his second submission, he received a 3- (fair to good) on the language/grammar segment of the evaluation sheet compared to 3 (good) on the same segment for his final draft. For his effort in revising his essay, he received a grade of B on his final revision.

The final student to be interviewed was participant 04. As with the other participants, he was also responding to an advertisement for a product. This student's Error Frequency/Correction sheet showed that he was having the most difficulty with word choice (WC), word form (WF), missing words (MW), articles (ART), and to a lesser degree, run-on sentences (RO) and prepositions (PREP).

As with the other participants, I asked him if he understood all the codes and marks on the grammatical errors on his essay, and he said that, for the most part, he did. To verify this, I began by pointing to the code "SP" (spelling) above the word "costumers," (the correct word was consumers) and asked him what this code meant. He hesitated, looking carefully at the word beneath the code. After some initial prodding, he told me the code "SP" meant

that he had made a spelling error and quickly changed the word to "consumers," telling me that he was confused by the words "customers" and "consumers."

Next, I pointed to the code 'WC" above the word "determines" and asked him how he could correct the error in the following sentences:

Example 18:

> First of all, the company <u>determines</u> especially teenager and middle-ages as the target consumer of the ad of the food. When companies sell a product, they have to determine the target consumers of the ad of the food, and consider how to hook them.

After re-reading these sentences on his second submission, the student informed me that he had re-structured both sentences in order to make them more coherent on his final draft. Taking out his copy of his final draft, he read what was written on his final draft:

Example 19:

> Primarily, what companies do is carefully *considering* how to receive publicity of people. One of the most important strategies to attract people is composing effective restricted

information such as "Low fat", "free", and "30

calories" or making catch phrases on the

advertisement.

As we can see, his re-write, even though it contains some

grammatical errors, (i.e. the word "considering" and some

misplaced commas) is more specific than his previous draft.

Looking at the markings on his final draft, I saw that the

instructor had crossed out the "ing" ending on the word

"considering" and had placed arrows pointing to the commas

which were supposed to be located inside the quotation

marks.

Continuing with the interview, I asked this student if

he corrected his errors on his own or if he got help from

others (question 4). He said that, for the most part, he

corrected his errors on his own, but sometimes, if he was

unsure, he asked a tutor in the Writing Center to proof-

read his work before he submitted his essay.

Moving to the next question, I asked him which kind of

comments or marks helped him the most when correcting his

errors (question 6). He said the instructor's codes for

word forms (WF) helped him the most because he found them

the easiest to correct. He also found the codes for commas

(C) helpful because the instructor had given a mini-lesson

on punctuation. He had problems, however, with word choice (WC) because he found it difficult to choose another word that contained the exact meaning he wished to express. Furthermore, he had difficulty with the codes for articles (ART) because he had difficulty deciding whether he was missing an article or if he had an unnecessary article in the sentence. He also had difficulty finding the exact location for the article.

Next, I asked him to explain what process he used when correcting his errors (question 7). He explained that he first goes through his sentences containing errors one by one, then, if he has difficulty with an error, he takes his essay to the Writing Center and asks a tutor to explain any errors he does not understand.

As the interview neared its end, I asked this student how positively or negatively he felt about the instructor's comments on his errors (question 8). He said that he felt very positive about the comments on his grammar because the comments helped him to see what specific elements of his grammar needed improvement.

Finally, I asked the student if the instructor's feedback on his grammatical errors helped him improve his writing skills (question 9). He stated that, in looking

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back, he could see that the instructor's feedback had helped him a great deal. Before taking this class, he said, he had no idea how to how to express his ideas and write grammatically, so, according to this student, the feedback helped him to express himself more clearly.

After the interview was over, I compared the student's second submission to his final draft to see if he had made progress. In his second submission, I found fourteen errors, including five word choices, two commas, two articles, one verb form, one word form, one capital letter, one spelling, and one noun form. He had reduced his grammatical errors substantially on his final draft, correcting eleven of the fourteen errors. He left three errors uncorrected. Table 4 illustrates the corrections made by participant 04 on his final draft:

Table 4

Participant 04's Corrections on His Final Draft									
Grammatical errors:	WC	C	ART	VF	WF	CAP	SP	NF	TOTAL
Errors:	5	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	14
Errors Corrected:	4	2	2	1	0	1	1	0	11 78.5%
Errors Uncorrected:	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	3 21.5%

This student's evaluation sheet demonstrated that he had gained knowledge in his use of grammar. On the evaluation sheet attached to his second submission, he had earned a 2+ to a 3- (fair to good) on the grammar segment of the evaluation sheet, but, on his final draft, the instructor had raised his evaluation to a 3 (good) for the grammar segment. For his efforts, this student received an overall grade of "B" on his final revision.

The remaining student, participant 05, was interested in taking part in the study but declined to be interviewed because of time constraints. Like the other participants, he gave me his essay drafts, his Error Correction/Frequency sheets, and his Evaluation sheet so that they could be part of the study. Although this student was not available to answer the interview questions, his data were analyzed using the same method as with the other participants.

I began examining this data by looking at his Error Correction/Frequency sheet. This student had listed his most prevalent errors as follows: noun ending (NE), articles (ART), word choice (WC), run-on sentences (RO), and to a lesser degree prepositions (PREP) and missing words (MW).

Because I was unable to ask this student the questions listed in the Interview Questions for Students, I had to make assumptions concerning the attention the student paid to the instructor's comments and marks on his grammatical errors. I arrived at my conclusions by comparing the instructor's marks on his grammatical errors in his second submission to any changes he made on his final draft.

I began this process by reading carefully through both drafts, highlighting each of the correction marks on his second submission and comparing them to any corrections he made on his final draft that addressed his instructor's feedback. This student had apparently taken his instructor's feedback seriously because he had attempted to correct most of his errors on his final draft. For example, in the following sentences found in his second submission, the instructor had pointed out three errors and had written the code "WC" (word choice) directly over the words "mass communication devices," the code "NE" (noun ending) over the word "response," and the code "RO" (run on sentence) in the margin beside the faulty sentence. The sentences read as follows:

Example 20:

Everyday we see or face different types of

advertisements in different places or in mass

communication devices. When we read the

newspaper, watch TV, even listen to the radio, we

face advertisements. Although we see a lot of

advertisements during a day, our response are

different to them, we are interested to some of

them and sometimes we do not care about the

others.

For his final draft, the student changed his sentences,

correcting his noun ending on the word "response" and

chose other words to replace "mass communication devices."

He neglected, however, to find the run-on sentence. He

wrote the following in his final draft:

 Example 21:

Everyday we see or face different types of

advertisements in different places such as

billboards, newspaper or television. When we

read the newspaper, watch TV, even listen to the

radio, we face advertisements. Although we see a

lot of advertisements during a day, our *responses*

are different to them, we are interested in some
of them and sometimes we do not care about
others.

The run-on sentence occurs when the student neglects to
change the comma to a semi-colon after the word "them,"
leading to the final clause of his sentence. Another
option he could have chosen would have been to place a
period after the word "them" and a capital letter for the
word "We," making his last independent clause a sentence in
itself.

Moving through his second submission, I discovered
other errors marked by the instructor. These were
preposition and article errors, which are typically present
in second language writing. In the following sentences the
instructor had written the code "PREP" and "ART" over each
error:

Example 22:

We can easily feel this message by looking (0) the
general scene of this ad. Blue clear sky and
green hills surrounded with small hills make us
feel as if we were in the clean, fresh
environment.

As we can see, the student is missing the preposition "at" after the word "looking" and has chosen the article "the" instead of "a" before the word "clean." Comparing these sentences to those on his final draft, I found he had corrected both of these errors. His revised sentences read as follows:

Example 23:

> We can easily feel this message by looking *at* the general scene of this ad. Blue clear sky and green hills surrounded with small hills make us feel as if we were in *a* clean, fresh environment.

Moving through his essay, I found three more errors coded by the instructor, which were placed over the errors: one article and two prepositions. The sentences read as follows:

Example 24:

> Some interesting observations and data help us to choose (0) correct commercial approach and the way that appeals (0) the children. Before starting to change this ad, we can use the information of the Fast Food Nation, by E. Schlosser.

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When I compared these sentences to the ones written on his final draft, I found the student had corrected two of the errors, one article and one preposition, but had neglected the third preposition. His new sentences read as follows: Example 25:

> Some interesting observations and data help us to choose *a* correct commercial approach to appeal (0) the children. Before starting to change this ad, we can use the information *from* Fast Food Nation, by E. Schlosser.

As we can see, the student became confused with the preposition "to." We can see his confusion when he took out the word "that" and replaced it with the word "to" on the second and third line of this example. Had he left in the "that, changed "appeal" to "appeals," and placed the "to" in front of the noun phrase "the children," his sentence would be grammatically correct. He did, however, insert his missing article "a" after the word "choose" and replaced the "of" in his last clause with the preposition "from."

As I moved through his essay, I found three more errors; these errors consisted of a word choice (WC), a verb ending (V), and an article (ART) error. The

instructor had inserted the codes "WC," "V," and "ART" over each error. These errors occurred in the following sentence:

Example 26:

> Furthermore, these middle-aged women are seemed
> to be more traditional because as we will see
> clearly, the <u>feature</u> of a little girl <u>bring (0)</u>
> traditional message, that is; "this product is
> for your family, especially for your children."

The instructor apparently wanted this student to choose another word to replace "feature" and to correct the verb "bring" to "brings" on the third line so that subject and verb would be in agreement. This student is also missing the article "a" on the same line; the article "a" should be placed in front of the words "traditional message." The other errors in this sentence (i.e. "are seemed" on the first line and the punctuation error on the fourth line) were not pointed out to the student. Comparing this sentence on his second submission to the one on his final draft, I found the following:

Example 27:

> Furthermore, these middle-aged women are seemed
> to be more traditional because as we will see

clearly, the *image* of a little girl *brings a*

traditional message, that is; "this product is

for your family, especially for your children."

As we can see, this student corrected each error that was

coded by the instructor. He chose the appropriate word

"image" to replace "feature" and changed the verb "bring"

to "brings" to make subject and verb agree. He also

inserted the article "a" in the appropriate place.

As I continued through this student's essay, I found

another set of errors; these errors included an article

and a noun ending error. They were found in the following

sentence:

Example 28:

Now let us create an ad for <u>the</u> children and use

some <u>researchers</u> about <u>the</u> children's behavior.

For this sentence, the instructor had crossed out the two

articles "the" before the words "children" and "children's"

because they were unnecessary. She had also placed the

code "NE" directly over the word "researchers" and had

written the words "based on" and the symbol "^" to show

where these words needed to be inserted. In response to

this feedback, the student had written the following on his

final draft:

Example 29:

> Now let us try to create an ad *for children based*
> *on some research about children's behavior.*

It is clear that the student understood the comments and
codes for this sentence because he changed his wording and
structure according to his instructor's suggestions. He
removed the unnecessary articles and changed the words
"use some researches" to a structurally sound "based on
some research," making the sentence more grammatical.

After highlighting the errors on this student's essay,
I checked his Error Frequency/Correction sheets to see if
he had re-written his sentences that contained errors.
There were a few remaining minor errors, missing articles
and prepositions and a few verb errors, in his corrected
sentences, but, for the most part, his sentences were much
clearer.

Next, I reviewed the errors on his second submission
and compared them to those on his final draft. On his
second submission, I found a total of twenty-three errors,
including seven articles, six word choices, four
prepositions, two noun endings, one missing word, one run
on sentence, one missing comma, and one word form.
Comparing these errors to those on his final draft, I found

he had accurately corrected seventeen of these errors, leaving six errors uncorrected. Table 5 illustrates the corrections made by participant 05 on his final draft:

Table 5

Participant 05's Corrections on His Final Draft									
Grammatical Errors:	ART	WC	PREP	NE	MW	RO	C	WF	Total
Errors:	7	6	4	2	1	1	1	1	23
Corrected errors:	5	4	4	2	1	0	0	1	17 (74%)
Uncorrected errors:	2	2	0	0	0	1	1	0	6 (26%)

Looking at his evaluation sheet attached to his second submission, I found he received a 3- on the language/ grammar section, compared to a 3 on the same section on his final draft. He earned an overall grade of B+ for the revision of his first essay for the quarter.

CHAPTER FOUR

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Interpretations, Responses, and Processes

In section 4.1 of this chapter, I will summarize the results of my analysis and discuss how students interpreted the grammatical codes, marginal comments, and end comments used by the writing instructor. In section 4.2, I will evaluate how students responded to the instructor's feedback and, in section 4.3, assess which kind of error feedback students found useful for their short-term and long-term self-editing abilities. Next, in section 4.4, I will illustrate the processes students used to correct their errors, then, in section 4.5, discuss which feedback they found useful. Finally, in section 4.6, I will discuss the influence of the classroom context on student revision.

4.1: Students' Interpretation of the Grammatical Codes

The results of this study show that most of the students understood the codes and comments concerning grammatical errors in their essays. Overall, I was impressed with the participants' ability to understand the codes when I pointed them out during the interview process. It was apparent that they had either been well informed by

their instructor concerning the codes or they had avidly studied their error code sheet. Perhaps some students had some prior experience using the codes. Their knowledge of the codes is very important because based on the principle that students understand the concept related to the grammatical terms used for correction codes, one researcher, Lee (1997), found that students in Hong Kong who used correction codes "made more improvement in writing than their counterparts who had their errors corrected by the teacher" (p. 467). Furthermore, Ferris and Roberts (2001) found that marking errors and labeling them with a code was the most popular error correction technique among students (p. 177). Although these participants did not correct all the errors in their essays, it was clear during the interview process that they interpreted the codes correctly and had a good grasp of the grammatical changes that needed to be made. Only one student had difficulty interpreting a code orally, (student 04 and the spelling code (SP)) but he had no trouble interpreting the other codes related to other grammatical errors.

This study suggests that students respond more effectively to grammatical codes if L2 writing instructors make the grammatical terms involved in the codes absolutely

clear to students at the beginning of the quarter. They can accomplish this by providing students with a code sheet and by explaining what each code means in order to raise students' grammatical awareness of the concepts involved in the process.

4.2: Students' Response to Feedback

Concerning the participants' ability to correct their errors on their final draft, this study found that most participants, four out of five, corrected at least seventy percent of their errors on their final draft. The remaining participant corrected over fifty percent. The following is a brief description and the total percentage for each student.

Participant 01 made significant improvement by correcting a little over fifty-seven percent of her errors. on her final draft. She eliminated many of the faulty sentences that were evident in her second submission and used the appropriate punctuation to correct them. Although her final draft still contained a few run-ons, fragments, and missing commas, she progressed to the extent that she had only five faulty sentences in her final draft, compared to ten in her previous draft. She corrected most of her prepositions and articles and replaced them with the

appropriate substitutes and showed improvement with the construction of her noun endings. However, she still had difficulty with her word forms; for example, in her final draft, she had written the word "design" instead of "designed," "base" instead of "based," "arrange" instead of "arranged," "depend" instead of "depended," and "change" instead of "changed." It is clear this student has difficulty with past and present forms. Perhaps she is afraid to switch tenses because a previous instructor has told her to stay in one tense. If so, she is over generalizing. Or it could be she is having difficulty with the "ed" form when using the passive construction.

Participant 02 far exceeded the seventy-percent mark by accurately correcting eighty-three percent of her errors. Without question, this student worked hard on her revision, and her final essay reflected her effort. She came a long way from her first draft, creating a final essay that was clear, coherent, and well written.

Participant 03 corrected 80% of his errors on his final draft. He eliminated six of these errors by taking out one entire troublesome paragraph. This student had apparently reread his second submission carefully and had attended to the instructor's feedback because there were

significant differences between his second submission and his final draft. He corrected all of his word choice, verb form, and preposition errors, leaving only one run-on sentence and one article error uncorrected.

Participant 04 accurately corrected over 78% of his errors on his final draft. Judging by the corrections he made on his final draft, it was apparent that he understood most of the codes and comments on his grammatical errors. Although he neglected to change a small percentage of his errors and created some new ones, his final draft demonstrated that, overall, he understood the instructor's feedback and worked hard to improve his essay.

The last participant, participant 05, accurately corrected almost 74% of his errors. He apparently understood the instructor's comments and marks because he corrected a majority of his most predominant errors. On his final draft, he corrected all but two of his article and word choice errors and all of his preposition errors, leaving only two articles, two word choice, one run-on sentence, and one misplaced comma uncorrected.

4.3: Which Feedback Was Most Useful

During the interview process, I found that most students did better correcting their errors when the codes

were placed directly over the error (explicit correction) rather than in the margin (marginal correction). Marginal codes often confused students because they were unsure which word, phrase, or sentence was at fault, leading them to mistakenly change the wrong word, phrase, or sentence. One example of this confusion was found with Participant 02 when she had difficulty selecting the appropriate article (there were five in the sentence) when the code "ART" was placed in the margin. Similarly, another participant, participant 04, showed the same confusion when the code for article was placed in the margin because he had difficulty deciding whether he was missing an article or had inserted one unnecessarily. On the other hand, participant 03 showed no confusion and quickly corrected his run-on sentence when the code "RO" was placed in the margin, but finding a faulty punctuation mark is a much easier task than sorting through five articles.

It should be noted, however, that though students understood the codes, some had difficulty finding and correcting coded errors when the code was placed in the margin. This finding suggests that when instructors use marginal codes, they need to be aware that students may not be able to identify the target errors on their own.

4.4: Student Processes for Revision

The Error Correction/Frequency sheet required for each student was very important to these students. The importance placed on this sheet became evident during the interview process when I discovered that the participants involved focused mainly on specific errors. The results show that most participants chose two of their most frequent errors as their main focus, those that they felt were their grammatical weakness area. Participant 01 focused on the codes for word form errors and run-on sentences; these were listed as two of her most prevalent errors on her Error Correction/Frequency sheet. Participant 02 was more concerned with codes for articles and noun endings, which were two of her most prevalent errors. Participant 03 also focused on codes for two of his most frequent errors; these errors were run-on sentences and prepositions. The most frequent error codes Participant 04 was concerned with were word choice and verb errors. Because participant 05 did not participate in the interview process, I could only assume which errors he thought were the most important by looking at his most

frequent errors and by analyzing the way he corrected these errors. This student paid particular attention to articles and word choice in his revision.

This study found that charting written errors appears to help students engage cognitively in the editing process. Charting also gives students accountability and raises their awareness of the grammatical areas that need to be improved. By focusing on two or three errors specifically, students become more confident and less overwhelmed by the editing process.

Regarding which process students used to correct their errors, whether they corrected them on their own or asked for assistance from a tutor, a friend, or an instructor, the results demonstrate that most students first tried to correct their errors on their own. If they had problems, some students, participants 01 and 04, asked a tutor in the Writing Center if they needed extra assistance with their errors, while others asked their instructor for help, either in class or during conferences. The participants were required to visit the Writing center four times during the quarter; therefore grammar issues were probably discussed during these four required sessions.

4.5: Usefulness of Explicit and Marginal Feedback

This study found that the type of feedback given by the writing instructor influenced how well students corrected their errors. The findings show that explicit feedback (codes placed at the location of the error) produced more positive results than marginal feedback (codes placed in the margin). The following is a brief breakdown of the participants' responses to each type of feedback.

Participant 01 received marginal feedback on nine errors. Of these nine errors, she corrected four, which left five errors uncorrected. She responded better with explicit feedback. She received explicit feedback on twenty-nine of her errors; of these errors, she accurately corrected eighteen, leaving ten errors uncorrected. Table 6 shows the percentage of errors corrected, utilizing both marginal and explicit feedback:

Table 6

<u>Participant 01's Explicit/Marginal Corrections</u>

	Number of errors	Corrected	Uncorrected	%Corrected
Marginal	9	4	5	44.4%
Explicit	29	18	11	62%

Participant 02 received marginal feedback on four of
her errors. Of theses four errors, she accurately
corrected one error, leaving three errors uncorrected. On
the other hand, she accurately corrected all of the
fourteen remaining errors when explicit feedback was given,
as table 7 demonstrates:

Table 7

<u>Participant 02's Explicit/Marginal Corrections</u>

	Number of errors	Corrected	Uncorrected	% Corrected
Marginal	4	1	3	25%
Explicit	14	14	0	100%

Participant 03 received Marginal feedback on only one
error, which he failed to correct. He received explicit

feedback, however, on nine errors and accurately corrected eight of these errors, leaving one error uncorrected, as table 8 demonstrates:

Table 8

Participant 03's Explicit/Marginal Corrections

	Number of errors	Corrected	Uncorrected	% Corrected
Marginal	1	0	1	0%
Explicit	9	8	1	88.8%

Participant 04 received marginal feedback on two errors and corrected one of them, leaving one uncorrected. He received explicit feedback on twelve errors and accurately corrected eleven errors, leaving one error uncorrected. Table 9 demonstrates his percentages:

Table 9

Participant 04's Explicit/Marginal Corrections

	Number of errors	Corrected	Uncorrected	% Corrected
Marginal	2	1	1	50%
Explicit	12	11	1	91.6%

Participant 05 received marginal feedback on two
errors, one of which he corrected. On the other hand, he
received explicit feedback on twenty-one errors, accurately
correcting seventeen, leaving four errors uncorrected.
Table 10 shows these percentages:

Table 10

Participant 05's Explicit/Marginal Corrections

	Number of errors	Corrected	Uncorrected	% corrected
Marginal	2	1	1	50%
Explicit	21	17	4	80.9%

The results of this study demonstrate that the
participants had more positive results when the writing
instructor used explicit feedback. Collectively, the
participants corrected 80% of their errors when the
instructor used explicit feedback, compared to 38.8% when
marginal feedback was used. According to the Ferris and
Roberts (2001) study, students who received indirect
[marginal] feedback on their errors were able to self-
correct over half of their errors. Ferris and Roberts
claim that students "clearly favored" direct, [explicit]
coded feedback and were less able to correct their errors

when indirect feedback was given. They believe that indirect feedback may frustrate students and may not provide "adequate input to produce the reflection and cognitive engagement that helps students to acquire linguistic structures and reduce errors over time" (Ferris & Roberts, 2001, pp. 177-178). Furthermore, Chandler (2003) claims that marginal feedback of error type had the most negative impact on accuracy in subsequent writing in her study, adding that students may find it too "cognitively demanding to identify an error from a description without location" (Chandler, 2003, p. 292).

4.6: The Influence of the Classroom Context

This study found that the classroom context may have contributed to the editing practices of these participants for various reasons. One reason is that the instructor went to great lengths to explain her responding philosophy to students, discussing the codes she used in her feedback and demonstrating her feedback practices. She also explained the code handout issued to each student in depth so students could use it to their best advantage. Another important reason was that the instructor gave students plenty of opportunity for editing, allowing them to construct multiple drafts of their essays. She also gave

students ample opportunity to improve their sentence grammar by encouraging them to ask questions and respond to her feedback when a marked draft was returned to them.

The instructor also gave supplemental mini-lessons periodically while students' worked on their current essays. These mini-lessons included the use of a student paper (with the student's permission) to demonstrate any problems students may be having with grammar and punctuation errors. Ferris (2004) believes that supplemental grammar lessons facilitate progress in accuracy "if it is driven by student needs and integrated with other aspects of error treatment (teacher feedback, {[error] charting, etc)" (p. 60). Also, the instructor allowed ample time for peer review and self-editing at the end of the class period, giving students the opportunity to ask questions about their current essays as they worked on them in class.

Another contributing factor in their progress involved the use of the Error Frequency/Correction sheets distributed to each student, which helped teach them to recognize patterns of errors and assisted them in eliminating a large majority of their most prevalent errors. Ferris (2004) claims that maintaining error charts

heightens student awareness of their weaknesses and their progress (p. 60). This attention to predominant errors can be seen in the changes they made on their final revision. For example, participant 01 corrected almost 50%, participant 02 corrected 75%, participant 03 corrected 88.8%, participant 04 corrected 100%, and participant 05 corrected 73% of the most predominant errors in their final draft.

The findings suggest that participants' attitude toward revision, also, had an impact on the final outcome of each student. I found that all of the participants interviewed had a positive attitude toward the revision process and felt it was in their best interest. Participant 01 said that the revision process helped her become a better writer; participant 02 said she realized that her instructor's intention during the revision process was to assist her in her writing and for that she was grateful; participant 03 said the revision process helped him become a more sophisticated writer; participant 04 said that the revision process helped him express his ideas and write more clearly. These participants also understood that the revision process gave them an opportunity to improve their overall grade on their final essay.

Conclusion and Implications

The main purpose of this study was to obtain information on grammar correction from the student' perspective. This study has indicated that the participants involved had an overwhelmingly positive attitude towards the grammar correction practices of their instructor. In some cases, error types were quickly spotted by these participants, while others gave them difficulty. Although they had no problem describing the grammatical errors using grammatical codes, these students had difficulty finding the location of the errors when marginal codes were provided, especially when the errors were articles and prepositions. Therefore, this study found that more direct prompting facilitated more positive results.

This study also found that the significant difference between the preliminary and the final drafts of the essays examined demonstrates that these participants took their own work and the instructor's feedback seriously. The significant difference in the drafts also suggests that certain factors in the process influenced the final outcome. For example, the fact that the instructor permitted students to construct multiple drafts of their

essays impacted the final outcome because it allowed students the opportunity to rewrite their essays and encouraged them to perform for a higher grade. Another factor in the process involved the error correction sheets, which helped to keep students focused on their most predominant grammatical errors, allowing them to gain more confidence in the process without distracting and discouraging them. Other factors include the mini-lessons on grammar, the classroom time spent on self-editing, the peer review sessions, and the students' overwhelming positive attitude toward the self-editing process.

APPENDIX A

EVALUATION GUIDELINES – ESSAY #1

Evaluation Guidelines--Essay #1

Assignment/Audience
• You have completed all requirements of the writing assignment.
• Your essay is sensitive to your audience.

Thought
• Your essay shows that you have thought deeply about your topic.
• You point out things that many people may not have noticed before.

Organization/Unity
• Your essay is organized around a thesis.
• Your body paragraphs are unified and related to the thesis.
• You use transitions to connect ideas between sentences and between paragraphs.

Support/Development
• You support your ideas with specific reasons, details, and examples, which add "spice" to your essay.
• In developing your ideas, you integrate paraphrase and quotation from reading material.

Language/Grammar
• Your essay demonstrates control of sentence structure, punctuation, spelling, and other grammatical elements.
• Your sentences vary in structure and style.
• You use a wide range of vocabulary.

Revision Effort
• Your essay shows that you put in a lot of effort revising.

Evaluation Scale

Excellent	Good	Fair in Some Parts	Weak
4	3	2	1

Evaluation
Assignment/Audience   _____

Thought   _____

Organization/Unity   _____

Development/Support   _____

Language/Grammar   _____

Revision Effort   _____

Other
You incorporated support from a magazine article _____
You use new vocabulary from the readings _____
Overall Grade (on the revision) _____

APPENDIX B

ERROR FREQUENCY SHEET FOR ESSAY # 1

Error Frequency Sheet for Essay #1

Directions: This sheet will help you to discover patterns in your grammatical errors and to prioritize which errors to focus on.
1) Put a check √ in the second column for each error marked on your paper.
2) Select two or three of your most frequent errors put a check √ next to them in the third column   (Top Priority Errors). These are ones you should begin working on first.

	Type of Error	Number of Errors (put a check mark √ for each one)	Top-Priority Errors
Noun Errors	**ne**—noun ending (missing –s, or possessive 's, or unnecessary -s)		
	art --article (missing, incorrect, or unnecessary article-a/an, the)		
Verb Errors	**v**=verb error (tense, subject-verb agreement, wrong ending on verb, unnecessary or missing helping verb)		
Sentence structure/ punctuation errors	**ro**-run-on sentence (two sentences not separated by a period or semi-colon0		
	fr--fragment/incomplete sentence)		
	mw--missing word (ex: who, which, that)		
	rs-repeated subject		
	c=comma (missing or unnecessary comma)		
Other Errors	**prep** (incorrect, missing, or unnecessary preposition)		
	wc--word choice (wrong choice of word)		
	wf--word form (incorrect word ending)		
	rw=rewrite (confusing, need to re-write)		
	sp (mis-spelled word)		
	npar-not parallel		

APPENDIX C

SAMPLE ERROR CORRECTION SHEET

Sample Error Correction Sheet

(Turn in one like this with your essay revisions. You can use plain notebook paper
divided into columns. It does not need to be typed. Please do this on a separate piece
of paper--not on this sheet)

You should include at least seven examples of errors you have corrected for each
essay. You should focus first on your top-priority, most frequent errors from your
error frequency sheet. This means you should have at least two sentences for each of
your top priority errors. You should group errors of the same type together. Keeping
this error correction sheet will help you become aware of types of errors you make and
will eventually help you to spot them and correct them as you are editing your essays.

Error Type	Sentence with the Error	Corrected Sentence
Verb	My sister watch the cat on the weekends. I was taken my time with the homework.	My sister watches the cat on the weekends. I was taking my time with the homework.
Run-on sentence	We were sunbathing under the blue sky a bird flew by. Shopping addicts feel powerful when they purchase a new item, they think that buying things raises their social class.	We were sunbathing under The blue sky, and a bird flew by. Shopping addicts feel powerful When they purchase a new item. They think that buying things raises their social class.

APPENDIX D

INFORMED STUDENT ASSENT

Informed Student Assent

The study in which you are being asked to participate is designed to investigate the relationship between your English 86B instructor's grammatical and vocabulary feedback and your ability to understand and use this feedback. I, Carol Miller, a graduate student in the English department, am conducting this study as part of my thesis. This research has been reviewed by the Institutional Review Board of California State University, San Bernardino.

For this study, I will collect and copy all three drafts of your three essay assignments and your error frequency and error correction sheets. After each assignment is completed, I will collect your essay drafts (with instructor comments) and your error frequency/correction sheets, remove your name, replace it with a code, make copies for myself, and return the original drafts to you by the next class meeting. For each essay, I will study the markings and comments your instructor has given you about grammatical and vocabulary errors in your first two drafts of each essay and take note of any changes you make on your final revision. I will interview your English 86B instructor about her comments and marks on your essays after the instructor has turned in the grades for this class at the end of the Winter quarter 2005. After you submit your final revision, I will interview you about one of the essay assignments to find out how you interpreted the feedback, how you used the feedback, how you perceived the usefulness of the feedback, and why you chose to ignore the feedback. The interview should take approximately forty-five minutes and will be tape-recorded. I will refer to your essays, your error sheets, and your interview remarks in my thesis. I will also ask you to complete a survey about your language background. If you are interested in the results of the study or would like to review the data, you may contact Carol Miller at ccornell.1@netzero.net or Dr. Wendy Smith at wsmith@csusb.edu. The results will be available December 15, 2005.

I am hoping that the findings in this study will provide useful information to both multilingual instructors and students. I hope to discover which types of error feedback best helps students to self-correct their own grammatical errors. I do not expect this study will involve any risk to anyone participating.

Your name will be changed in my thesis and in any presentations or publications resulting from this study, and all information obtained from you will remain confidential.

Your participation in this study is purely voluntary, and you may refuse to participate at any time during the study. Your participation in my study will in no way affect your grade or status in English 86B.

If you decide to participate in this study, please sign below.

Participant's signature _____ I am over 18 years old [ ]

Researcher's signature _____ Date_____

APPENDIX E

LANGUAGE BACKGROUND INFORMATION SHEET

Language Background Information Sheet

Your name _____

Your email address and phone number _____

1. What country were you born in?

2. If you were not born in the United States, how old were you when you came to the United States?

3. How long have you lived in the United States?

3. What was the first language you learned to speak?

4. What was the first language you learned to write?

5. What was the first language you learned to read?

6. How would you describe yourself:

I am a native speaker of English	yes _____	no _____
I am a non-native speaker of English	yes _____	no _____
I speak English as a second language	yes _____	no _____
I am bilingual	yes _____	no _____

I am neither an ESL student, nor bilingual, I am: _____
(what best describes your language background)

7. Check each place where you have studied:

Non-U.S. Elementary School ___ Junior High ___ High School ___ College___ Language Institute ____

U.S. Elementary School ___ Junior High ___ High School ___ College ___ Language Institute ____

8. If you have attended school outside the U.S., state in which country or countries and how

long in each country? --

9. Please list in the chart what languages you know. (Tell how well you understand, speak, read, and write these languages by circling the appropriate number).

1=not much   2=some   3=well   4=more than half the time   5=all the time

Language	Understand	Speak	Read	Write
1. English	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3
2.	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3
3.	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3
4.	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3

10. Please indicate how much you use any language other than English in the following situations by circling the appropriate number.

1=not at all 2=less than half the time 3=half the time 4=more than half the time 5=all the time

a) talking with my parents	1	2	3	4	5
b) talking with my brothers and sisters	1	2	3	4	5
c) talking at work	1	2	3	4	5
d) talking with my friends	1	2	3	4	5
e) reading/writing at home	1	2	3	4	5
f) reading/writing at school	1	2	3	4	5
g) writing to my friends (e.g. email, letters)	1	2	3	4	5
h) reading for pleasure	1	2	3	4	5
i) dreaming	1	2	3	4	5

11. When I take into consideration all the situations where I use language (my home life, my social life, my school life, etc.), I would say that, overall, my best language is_____
   (what language)

12. When I take into consideration all the situations where I use language (my home life, my work life, my social life, my school life, etc.), I would say that, overall, I am the most comfortable:

speaking _____ reading _____ writing _____
(what language)　　　　　　　(what language)　　　　　　　(what language)

13. How did you find out about English 86 as a course for multilingual students?

APPENDIX F

SAMPLE INTEVIEW QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS

Sample Interview Questions for Students

1. Did you understand all the instructor's comments about the grammatical errors on your paper?

2. Can you explain what this particular mark means?

3. How did you correct this particular error?

4. Did you correct these errors on your own, or did you get help from a tutor, a friend, or an instructor?

5. Why did you not correct this particular error?

6. What kind of comments or marks helped you the most when correcting your errors?

7. Can you explain what process you used when you read the instructor's marks on your paper?

8. How positively or negatively did you feel about the instructor's comments on your errors?

9. Do you believe that the instructor's feedback on your grammatical errors helped you improve your writing skills ? If yes, in what ways? If no, why not?

APPENDIX G

SAMPLE INTEVIEW QUESTIONS FOR WRITING INSTRUCTOR

Sample Interview Questions for Writing Instructor

1. What is your teaching philosophy?

2. What is your approach to error feedback?

3. What is your response to different grammatical errors on student papers?

4. What error correction strategies have the most impact on the accuracy of student writing?

5. Do you think it makes any difference in student response if indirect feedback is coded or uncoded?

6. To what extent do error frequency and error correction sheets help students improve in accuracy over time?

7. Can you explain why you marked this error in this student's paper in the way you did?

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