

Impact of direct and indirect written corrective feedback

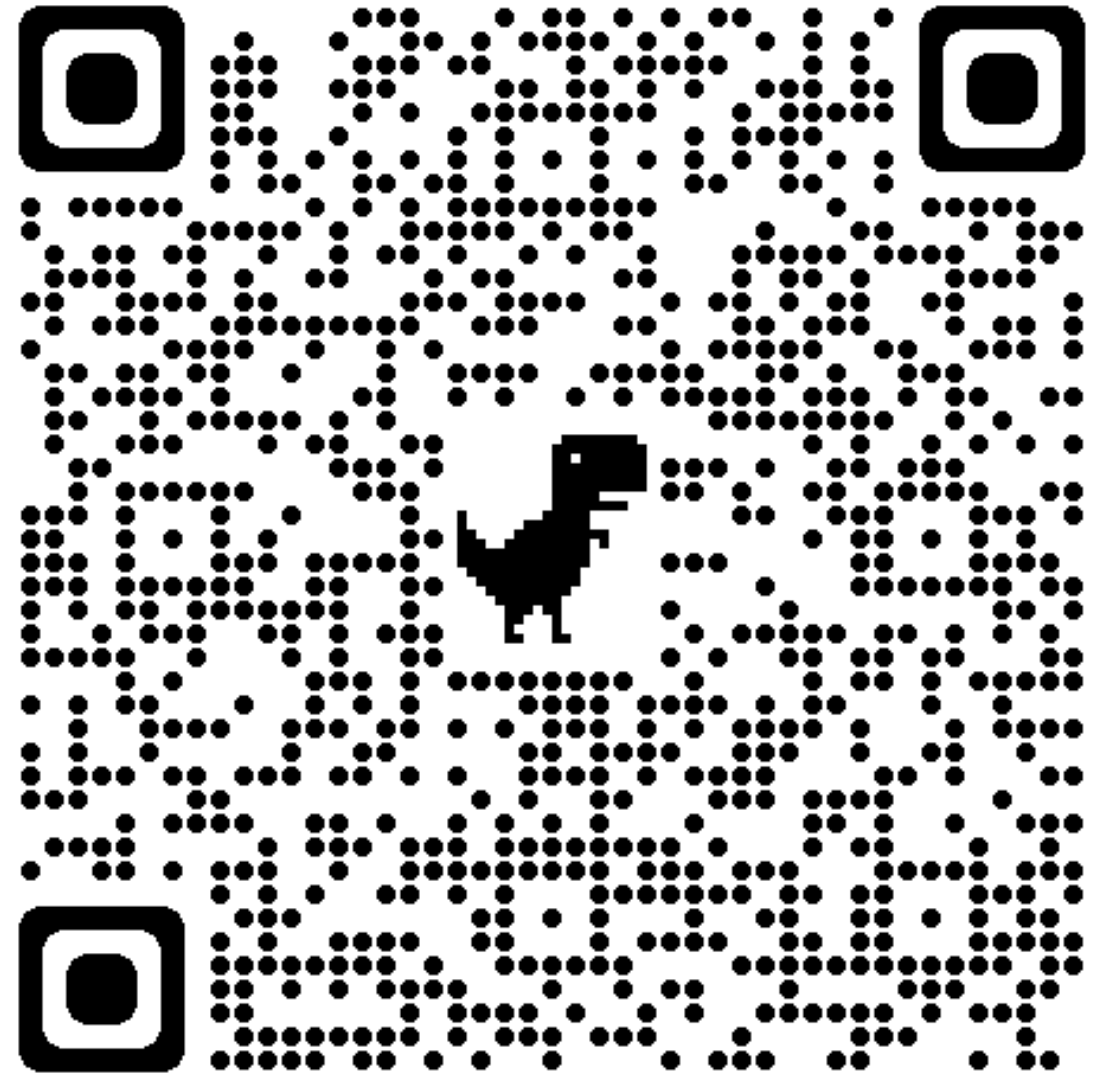
Sebastian Lesniewski

Sebastian.Lesniewski@bil.ac.uk



Written Corrective Feedback

“a form of instruction ...
provided as a response to
errors that learners have
made in their written output
... to help student writers
build awareness, knowledge,
and strategic competence so
that they can develop skills
to better monitor their own
writing in the future”
(Bitchener & Ferris, 2012,
pp. 125 & 140)



Written Corrective Feedback

- We're not trained on how to give feedback
- We receive some general guidelines from managers
- We develop our own feedback-giving habits
- We reflect on the feedback we received as students
- We tend to be unaware of research about feedback

Written Corrective Feedback in Second Language Acquisition and Writing

John Bitchener and Dana R. Ferris

Bitchener, J., & Ferris, D. R. (2012). *Written Corrective Feedback in Second Language Acquisition and Writing*. New York: Routledge.

Direct Correction

“a correction that not only calls attention to the error but also provides a specific solution to the problem” (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012, p. 125)

Direct Correction

has *at least*
Everyone ~~have~~ been a liar [^] once in their life. People who lie intentionally to harm others are bad people [,] and their lies are harmful too. However, there are lies that are *told* ~~done~~ with good *intentions* ~~intention~~. So, there are times that lies are appropriate. A lie is either a good or bad one *based* ~~base~~ upon the liar's intention. Only one person can really tell whether a lie is intended to harm or do good.

Indirect Correction

"indicating an error through circling, underlining, highlighting, or otherwise marking it at its location in a text, with or without a verbal rule reminder or an error code, and asking students to make corrections themselves" (Ferris, 2002, p. 63)

Indirect Correction: underlining

Everyone have been a liar once in their life. People who lie intentionally to harm others are bad people and their lies are harmful too. However, there are lies that are done with good intention. So, there are times that lies are appropriate. A lie is either a good or bad one base upon the liar's intention. Only one person can really tell whether a lie is intended to harm or do good.

Indirect Correction: underlining

Everyone have been a liar once in their life. People who lie intentionally to harm others are bad people and their lies are harmful too. However, there are lies that are done with good intention. So, there are times that lies are appropriate. A lie is either a good or bad one base upon the liar's intention. Only one person can really tell whether a lie is intended to harm or do good.

has

at least

~~Everyone have~~ been a liar [^] once in their life. People who lie intentionally to

harm others are bad people [^] and their lies are harmful too. However, there

told

intentions

are lies that are ~~done~~ with good ~~intention~~. So, there are times that lies are

based

appropriate. A lie is either a good or bad one ~~base~~ upon the liar's intention.

Only one person can really tell whether a lie is intended to harm or do good.

Indirect Correction: minimal marking

- ✓ Everyone have been a liar once in their life. People who lie intentionally to
- ✓ harm others are bad people and their lies are harmful too. However, there
- ✓✓ are lies that are done with good intention. So, there are times that lies are
- ✓ appropriate. A lie is either a good or bad one base upon the liar's intention. Only one person can really tell whether a lie is intended to harm or do good.

Indirect Correction: verbal rule reminders

subject-verb agreement

Everyone have been a liar once in their life. People who lie intentionally to

punctuation

harm others are bad people and their lies are harmful too. However, there

word choice

are lies that are done with good intention. So, there are times that lies are

verb form

appropriate. A lie is either a good or bad one base upon the liar's intention.

Only one person can really tell whether a lie is intended to harm or do good.

Indirect Correction: verbal rule reminders

Everyone **have** been a liar once in their life. People who lie intentionally to harm others are bad people and their lies are harmful too. However, there are lies that are done with good intention. So, there are times that lies are appropriate. A lie is either a good or bad one base upon the liar's intention. Only one person can really tell whether a lie is intended to harm or do good.

Commented [SL1]: Subject-verb agreement

Indirect Correction: verbal rule reminders

subject-verb agreement

Everyone have been a liar once in their life. People who lie intentionally to

punctuation

harm others are bad people and their lies are harmful too. However, there

word choice

are lies that are done with good intention. So, there are times that lies are

verb form

appropriate. A lie is either a good or bad one base upon the liar's intention.

Only one person can really tell whether a lie is intended to harm or do good.

→ not all errors can be described in a neat short phrase

Indirect Correction: error codes

AGR

Everyone have been a liar once in their life. People who lie intentionally to

PUNCT

harm others are bad people and their lies are harmful too. However, there

WC

are lies that are done with good intention. So, there are times that lies are

VF

appropriate. A lie is either a good or bad one base upon the liar's intention.

Only one person can really tell whether a lie is intended to harm or do good.

KEY to Error Codes:

AGR = subject-verb agreement

PUNCT = punctuation

WC = word choice

VF = verb form

Error Codes

WF	wrong form	WF	The harder you work the <u>best</u> will be your achievements.
WW	wrong word	WW	... <u>patient</u> , funny, and <u>kindly</u>
T	wrong tense		In the last few weeks you <u>didn't have</u> much fun
Λ	something is missing		You arrived in Brighton ^{1st July} .
Sp	wrong spelling	SP	<u>confortable</u>
WO	wrong word order		You haven't seen [yet] London
P	wrong punctuation	P	Look out.
V	wrong verb form	V	The Titanic <u>sunk</u> very quickly.
//	new paragraph needed		
φ	not necessary		John came in and he sat down.
—	You don't need a new sentence. Join up the ideas.		
?	I don't understand what you're trying to say.		
~~~~~	This isn't quite right. It needs clearer expression. Usually the teacher provides an alternative.		
[ ]	This part needs to be re-arranged or reworded.		
!!	You really should know what's wrong here because we've just done it in class		

Symbol	Meaning	Incorrect Sentence
sv	subject-verb agreement	The student <u>work</u> hard. There <u>is</u> five employees.
S	no subject	<u>^</u> Find it easier to study in Arabic.
pl	singular/plural	The Internet has a lot of informations. You can make new friend easily.
sp	spelling	The <u>maneger</u> is a woman.
A	Article (a, an, the)	Diners expect <u>a</u> glass of water when they first sit down at their table.
p	punctuation	I live in Fujairah <u>but</u> I go to school in Al Ain.
delete	unnecessary word	My teacher <u>she</u> watches everyone all the time.
^	add word/s	A camel is an animal <u>lives</u> in the desert.
cap	capitalization	Some people love to drive <u>landcruisers</u> .
vf	verb form	I am <u>live</u> in the hostel.
T	verb tense	I <u>see</u> my friend yesterday.
wf	word form	This book is <u>bored</u> .
ww	wrong word	My teacher <u>learns</u> me many new things.
wo	wrong word order	We never <u>class have</u> on Fridays.
Pron	pronoun reference	My brother loves to swim. <u>She</u> goes swimming everyday.
RO	run-on sentence	Lily failed the exam and she is upset and she went home and her mother said she shouldn't worry.
CS	comma splice	Mary was tired, <u>she</u> went to sleep.
SF	fragment (incomplete sentence)	She was tired. <u>Because</u> she always went to bed at 3:00am.
ns/	start a new sentence here	Sleep is important, <u>in</u> addition, eating healthy food is necessary.
prep	preposition	The cafeteria starts serving dinner <u>in</u> 6:00 PM.
conj	Conjunction missing or incorrect	I like coffee <u>and</u> I don't like tea.
?	I don't understand what you want to say.	



# Error Codes

<b>sp</b>	<b>spelling mistake</b>
<b>p</b>	<b>punctuation needed</b>
<b>NP</b>	<b>new paragraph needed</b>
<b>NS</b>	<b>new sentence needed</b>
<b>c</b>	<b>misuse of capital letter(s)</b>
<b>gr</b>	<b>poor grammar</b>
<b>exp</b>	<b>poor expression</b>
<b>^</b>	<b>word(s) missing</b>

ww = wrong word

?t = add a word

?- = omit

?? = makes no sense

wo = word order

m = masculine / noun - adjective - agreement (n-a-a)

f = feminine / n-a-a

pl = plural / n-a-a

sg = singular / n-a-a

lt = literal translation

vf = verb form / subject - verb - agreement

C = capitalization

P = punctuation

sp = spelling

we = wrong expression

wa = wrong article / article - noun - agreement

vt = verb tense / present instead of past for example



# Indirect Correction: meta-linguistic explanation

Everyone have been a liar once in their life. People who lie intentionally to harm others are bad people and their lies are harmful too. However, there are lies that are done with good intention. So, there are times that lies are appropriate. A lie is either a good or bad one base upon the liar's intention. Only one person can really tell whether a lie is intended to harm or do good.

Dana Ferris 27/5/10 12:05

**Comment:** use singular form "has" to agree with the subject "Everyone"

Dana Ferris 27/5/10 12:05

**Comment:** Use a singular pronoun form (his/her) to agree with "Everyone"

Dana Ferris 27/5/10 12:06

**Comment:** Add a comma before a coordinating conjunction

Dana Ferris 27/5/10 12:06

**Comment:** We don't "do" lies; we "tell" lies; use "told" here

Dana Ferris 27/5/10 12:07

**Comment:** Use the participle form "based" here

# Direct Feedback

# Indirect feedback

- underlining
- minimal marking
- verbal rule reminders
- error codes
- meta-linguistic explanation

# Now, let's get real

In the recent years, inequality in the workplace is increasing. There are two types of inequity which are well-known by people who works in workplace, they are gender discrimination and gender pay gap. 'Inequality' is defined in the the Oxford Learner's Dictionary as "the unfair difference between groups of people in society, when some have more wealth, status, or opportunities than others". According to Kraus et al. (2018), as a member of social species, human beings should be divided into many levels. This viewpoint indicate that inequality not only a serious issue in the workplace, but also a long-standing phenomenon in human society. This essay focuses on two serious inequalities in business activities, which are gender discrimination and gender pay gap. Analyzing these two inequality situations in the workplace, and then describe and evaluate how to solve these problems in the business field.

## Describe and evaluate how research in your field addresses inequality

In the recent years, inequality in the workplace is increasing. There are two types of inequity which are well-known by people who works in workplace, they are gender discrimination and gender pay gap. 'Inequality' is defined in the the Oxford Learner's Dictionary as "the unfair difference between groups of people in society, when some have more wealth, status, or opportunities than others". According to Kraus et al. (2018), as a member of social species, human beings should be divided into many levels. This viewpoint indicate that inequality not only a serious issue in the workplace, but also a long-standing phenomenon in human society. This essay focuses on two serious inequalities in business activities, which are gender discrimination and gender pay gap. Analyzing these two inequality situations in the workplace, and then describe and evaluate how to solve these problems in the business field.



## Describe and evaluate how research in your field addresses inequality

In the recent years, inequality in the workplace is increasing. There are two types of inequity which are well-known by people who works in workplace, they are gender discrimination and gender pay gap. 'Inequality' is defined in the the Oxford Learner's Dictionary as "the unfair difference between groups of people in society, when some have more wealth, status, or opportunities than others". According to Kraus et al. (2018), as a member of social species, human beings should be divided into many levels. This viewpoint indicate that inequality not only a serious issue in the workplace, but also a long-standing phenomenon in human society. This essay focuses on two serious inequalities in business activities, which are gender discrimination and gender pay gap. Analyzing these two inequality situations in the workplace, and then describe and evaluate how to solve these problems in the business field.

## Describe and evaluate how research in your field addresses inequality

In the recent years, inequality in the workplace is increasing. There are two types of inequity which are well-known by people who works in workplace, they are gender discrimination and gender pay gap. 'Inequality' is defined in the the Oxford Learner's Dictionary as "the unfair difference between groups of people in society, when some have more wealth, status, or opportunities than others". According to Kraus et al. (2018), as a member of social species, human beings should be divided into many levels. This viewpoint indicate that inequality not only a serious issue in the workplace, but also a long-standing phenomenon in human society. This essay focuses on two serious inequalities in business activities, which are gender discrimination and gender pay gap. Analyzing these two inequality situations in the workplace, and then describe and evaluate how to solve these problems in the business field.

# Direct Feedback

→ Usually not recommended

# Indirect feedback

→ Preferred

→ Problem solving

more memorable

(Brown & Craik, 2000, p. 102)

guided discovery

(Thornbury, 2017)

# Direct Feedback

- Usually not recommended
- Reformulation

# Indirect feedback

- Preferred
- Problem solving

“if a teacher reformulates what a student has said or written, they present it back to the student with errors corrected – or rephrase it in a more linguistically sophisticated way” (Dellar & Walkley, 2016, p. 149)

- *Are you coming to the event on Thursday?*
- *I must to work lately.*
- *I'm working until late.*



# Direct vs indirect feedback

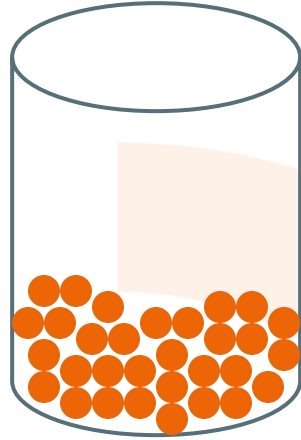
## Written Corrective Feedback in Second Language Acquisition and Writing

John Bitchener and Dana R. Ferris

# Direct vs indirect feedback

Lalande (1982)	Advantage reported for indirect coding but not statistically significant
Semke (1984)	No difference
Robb et al. (1986)	No difference
Van Beuningen et al. (2008)	Direct error correction more effective long-term; both direct and indirect feedback effective short term
Van Beuningen et al. (2012)	Direct feedback more effective for grammar but indirect for non-grammar items
Bitchener and Knoch (2010)	Direct error correction more effective long-term; all direct and indirect feedback options equally effective short-term

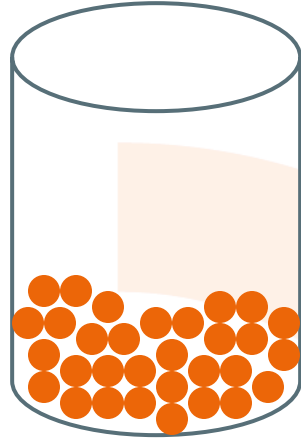
# RQ Do the orange pills cause weight loss?



independent  
variable

dependent  
variable

# RQ Do the orange pills cause weight loss?

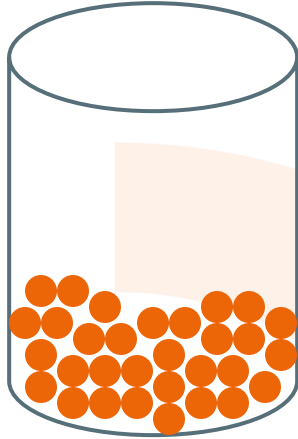


- 1 – weigh participants
- 2 – administer the pills to participants for 28 days, monitor other factors
- 3 – weigh participants again
- 4 – compare participants' weight before and after

Each participant lost at least 3 kilograms.

Can I say that they lost weight because of the pills?

# RQ Do the orange pills cause weight loss?



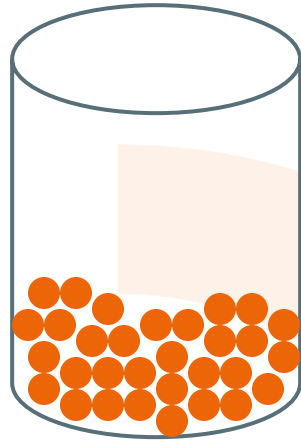
- 1 – weigh participants
- 2 – divide participants into an **experimental** group and a **control** group
- 3 – administer the pills only to the experimental group for 28 days, monitor other factors
- 4 – weigh all participants again

Each participant in the experimental group lost at least 3 kilograms.

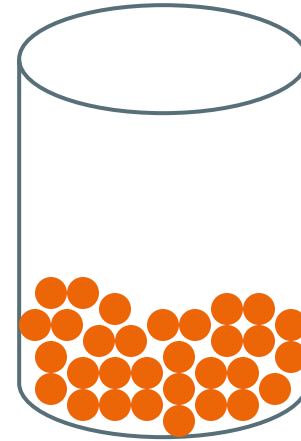
Participants in the control group didn't lose any weight.

Can I say that they lost weight because of the pills?

# RQ Do the orange pills cause weight loss?



independent  
variable



dependent  
variable

- 1 – weigh participants
- 2 – divide participants into an **experimental** group and a **control** group
- 3 – administer orange pills to experimental group for 28 days, monitor other factors
- 4 – administer **placebo** to the control group for 28 days, monitor other factors
- 5 – weigh all participants again

Each participant in the experimental group lost at least 3 kilograms.

Participants in the control group didn't lose any weight.

Can I say that they lost weight because of the pills?

# Direct vs indirect feedback

Lalande (1982)	Advantage reported for indirect coding but not statistically significant
Semke (1984)	No difference
Robb et al. (1986)	No difference
Van Beuningen et al. (2008)	Direct error correction more effective long-term; both direct and indirect feedback effective short term
Van Beuningen et al. (2012)	Direct feedback more effective for grammar but indirect for non-grammar items
Bitchener and Knoch (2010)	Direct error correction more effective long-term; all direct and indirect feedback options equally effective short-term

# Bitchener & Knoch, 2010

- US university, 63 students, age 18-20, East and South Asia, L2 English users, course in academic writing
- Use of “the” and “a”
- Group 1: direct feedback (written explanation) – 12 Ss
- Group 2: indirect feedback (error circling) – 27 Ss
- Group 3: direct feedback (written & oral explanation) – 12 Ss
- Group 4: no feedback – 12 Ss



# Bitchener & Knoch, 2010

- Day 1: pre-test (what is happening in a picture, 30 min)
- Day 4: feedback, post-test
- Day 70: delayed post-test



# Bitchener & Knoch, 2010

- Day 1: pre-test (what is happening in a picture, 30 min)
- Day 4: feedback, post-test
- Day 70: delayed post-test
- Accuracy was calculated as a percentage of correct usage of “the” and “a” for all occasions where the grammatical structure of the sentence written by the student required it.

The indirect approach could be even less explicit. So here we're looking at the same passage, but this time the number of fids on the left indicates the number of errors in a given line. So the student is expected to scan the first line carefully, knowing that there is one error somewhere in it. They need to find the error, and then fix it. I'm personally very sceptical if this is likely to work.

The indirect approach could also be a bit more explicit. So this time the error is not only underlined, but there is a short phrase describing the type of error. So there's a problem with the subject-verb agreement, a problem with punctuation, a problem with the word choice, and a problem with the verb form. This increases the chance that the student will be able to self-correct, although the very obvious limitation of this technique is that not all errors can be neatly described in a short phrase like this. Actually, I would argue that very few types of errors can be indicated using this technique. Nevertheless, of the indirect techniques that we've looked at so far, this one I personally would use, and I'd use it, though I'd rather use Microsoft Word for this. Scribbling over someone else's handwriting is something I don't do. When a student brings me some writing on a piece of paper, I ask them to re-write it in a word document and email it to me. And as they re-write it, they might already spot some errors and self-correct.

The most indirect technique is almost the same, but this time the short descriptions are replaced by codes. This technique is very common. It's one of those techniques that is recommended by our managers, course leaders and directors of studies. But I personally have never been a big fan of using codes. The first limitation is the same as with the previous technique - very few types of errors can actually be identified this way. Secondly, there's no such thing as one agreed list of codes that would be understandable to all teachers and all students. Instead, every institution might have their own set of codes, every course leader might have their own set of codes, and even every teacher might have their own very special list of codes that they are very fond of. And thirdly, while these codes are supposed to simplify our work, they do the opposite. Because I would need to read the student's writing carefully, find an error, then scan the list of codes and try to find a code that would match the type of error I see. And then the student has to do the same work in reverse. My impression is that the student would have to be super keen and super motivated to actually want to do that. So the codes can only work for the most repetitive types of errors, and in a situation where we get to teach the same students for a longer period of time, so that it's actually worth training them to decipher our codes.

One more indirect technique, the meta-linguistic explanation - this one is the most explicit in terms of the amount of information about the type of error. For instance, here the teacher tells the student to use the singular form "that" to agree with the subject "everyone" - so it's indirect, in that it's asking the student to make the correction, but telling them exactly what change to make - so it could be argued that, effectively, this is direct correction.

Now, we've looked at those direct and indirect techniques. But they were exemplified on a suspiciously neat piece of writing, probably made up, to smoothly illustrate each technique. So now let's take a look at a piece of writing produced by one of my former students.

100%

The indirect approach could be even less explicit. So here we're looking at the same passage, but this time the number of fids on the left indicates the number of errors in a given line. So the student is expected to scan the first line carefully, knowing that there is one error somewhere in it. They need to find the error, and then fix it. I'm personally very sceptical if this is likely to work.

The indirect approach could also be a bit more explicit. So this time the error is not only underlined, but there is a short phrase describing the type of error. So there's a problem with the subject-verb agreement, a problem with punctuation, a problem with the word choice, and a problem with the verb form. This increases the chance that the student will be able to self-correct, although the very obvious limitation of this technique is that not all errors can be neatly described in a short phrase like this. Actually, I would argue that very few types of errors can be indicated using this technique. Nevertheless, of the indirect techniques that we've looked at so far, this one I personally would use, and I'd use it, though I'd rather use Microsoft Word for this. Scribbling over someone else's handwriting is something I don't do. When a student brings me some writing on a piece of paper, I ask them to re-write it in a word document and email it to me. And as they re-write it, they might already spot some errors and self-correct.

The most indirect technique is almost the same, but this time the short descriptions are replaced by codes. This technique is very common. It's one of those techniques that is recommended by our managers, course leaders and directors of studies. But I personally have never been a big fan of using codes. The first limitation is the same as with the previous technique - very few types of errors can actually be identified this way. Secondly, there's no such thing as one agreed list of codes that would be understandable to all teachers and all students. Instead, every institution might have their own set of codes, every course leader might have their own set of codes, and even every teacher might have their own very special list of codes that they are very fond of. And thirdly, while these codes are supposed to simplify our work, they do the opposite. Because I would need to read the student's writing carefully, find an error, then scan the list of codes and try to find a code that would match the type of error I see. And then the student has to do the same work in reverse. My impression is that the student would have to be super keen and super motivated to actually want to do that. So the codes can only work for the most repetitive types of errors, and in a situation where we get to teach the same students for a longer period of time, so that it's actually worth training them to decipher our codes.

One more indirect technique, the meta-linguistic explanation - this one is the most explicit in terms of the amount of information about the type of error. For instance, here the teacher tells the student to use the singular form "that" to agree with the subject "everyone" - so it's indirect, in that it's asking the student to make the correction, but telling them exactly what change to make - so it could be argued that, effectively, this is direct correction.

Now, we've looked at those direct and indirect techniques. But they were exemplified on a suspiciously neat piece of writing, probably made up, to smoothly illustrate each technique. So now let's take a look at a piece of writing produced by one of my former students.

92%

The indirect approach could be even less explicit. So here we're looking at the same passage, but this time the number of fids on the left indicates the number of errors in a given line. So the student is expected to scan the first line carefully, knowing that there is one error somewhere in it. They need to find the error, and then fix it. I'm personally very sceptical if this is likely to work.

The indirect approach could also be a bit more explicit. So this time the error is not only underlined, but there is a short phrase describing the type of error. So there's a problem with the subject-verb agreement, a problem with punctuation, a problem with the word choice, and a problem with the verb form. This increases the chance that the student will be able to self-correct, although the very obvious limitation of this technique is that not all errors can be neatly described in a short phrase like this. Actually, I would argue that very few types of errors can be indicated using this technique. Nevertheless, of the indirect techniques that we've looked at so far, this one I personally would use, and I'd use it, though I'd rather use Microsoft Word for this. Scribbling over someone else's handwriting is something I don't do. When a student brings me some writing on a piece of paper, I ask them to re-write it in a word document and email it to me. And as they re-write it, they might already spot some errors and self-correct.

The most indirect technique is almost the same, but this time the short descriptions are replaced by codes. This technique is very common. It's one of those techniques that is recommended by our managers, course leaders and directors of studies. But I personally have never been a big fan of using codes. The first limitation is the same as with the previous technique - very few types of errors can actually be identified this way. Secondly, there's no such thing as one agreed list of codes that would be understandable to all teachers and all students. Instead, every institution might have their own set of codes, every course leader might have their own set of codes, and even every teacher might have their own very special list of codes that they are very fond of. And thirdly, while these codes are supposed to simplify our work, they do the opposite. Because I would need to read the student's writing carefully, find an error, then scan the list of codes and try to find a code that would match the type of error I see. And then the student has to do the same work in reverse. My impression is that the student would have to be super keen and super motivated to actually want to do that. So the codes can only work for the most repetitive types of errors, and in a situation where we get to teach the same students for a longer period of time, so that it's actually worth training them to decipher our codes.

One more indirect technique, the meta-linguistic explanation - this one is the most explicit in terms of the amount of information about the type of error. For instance, here the teacher tells the student to use the singular form "that" to agree with the subject "everyone" - so it's indirect, in that it's asking the student to make the correction, but telling them exactly what change to make - so it could be argued that, effectively, this is direct correction.

Now, we've looked at those direct and indirect techniques. But they were exemplified on a suspiciously neat piece of writing, probably made up, to smoothly illustrate each technique. So now let's take a look at a piece of writing produced by one of my former students.

58%

The indirect approach could be even less explicit. So here we're looking at the same passage, but this time the number of fids on the left indicates the number of errors in a given line. So the student is expected to scan the first line carefully, knowing that there is one error somewhere in it. They need to find the error, and then fix it. I'm personally very sceptical if this is likely to work.

The indirect approach could also be a bit more explicit. So this time the error is not only underlined, but there is a short phrase describing the type of error. So there's a problem with the subject-verb agreement, a problem with punctuation, a problem with the word choice, and a problem with the verb form. This increases the chance that the student will be able to self-correct, although the very obvious limitation of this technique is that not all errors can be neatly described in a short phrase like this. Actually, I would argue that very few types of errors can be indicated using this technique. Nevertheless, of the indirect techniques that we've looked at so far, this one I personally would use, and I'd use it, though I'd rather use Microsoft Word for this. Scribbling over someone else's handwriting is something I don't do. When a student brings me some writing on a piece of paper, I ask them to re-write it in a word document and email it to me. And as they re-write it, they might already spot some errors and self-correct.

The most indirect technique is almost the same, but this time the short descriptions are replaced by codes. This technique is very common. It's one of those techniques that is recommended by our managers, course leaders and directors of studies. But I personally have never been a big fan of using codes. The first limitation is the same as with the previous technique - very few types of errors can actually be identified this way. Secondly, there's no such thing as one agreed list of codes that would be understandable to all teachers and all students. Instead, every institution might have their own set of codes, every course leader might have their own set of codes, and even every teacher might have their own very special list of codes that they are very fond of. And thirdly, while these codes are supposed to simplify our work, they do the opposite. Because I would need to read the student's writing carefully, find an error, then scan the list of codes and try to find a code that would match the type of error I see. And then the student has to do the same work in reverse. My impression is that the student would have to be super keen and super motivated to actually want to do that. So the codes can only work for the most repetitive types of errors, and in a situation where we get to teach the same students for a longer period of time, so that it's actually worth training them to decipher our codes.

One more indirect technique, the meta-linguistic explanation - this one is the most explicit in terms of the amount of information about the type of error. For instance, here the teacher tells the student to use the singular form "that" to agree with the subject "everyone" - so it's indirect, in that it's asking the student to make the correction, but telling them exactly what change to make - so it could be argued that, effectively, this is direct correction.

Now, we've looked at those direct and indirect techniques. But they were exemplified on a suspiciously neat piece of writing, probably made up, to smoothly illustrate each technique. So now let's take a look at a piece of writing produced by one of my former students.

63%

# Bitchener & Knoch, 2010

- Day 1: pre-test (what is happening in a picture, 30 min)
- Day 4: feedback, post-test
- Day 70: delayed post-test
- Accuracy was calculated as a percentage of correct usage of “the” and “a” for all occasions where the grammatical structure of the sentence written by the student required it.
- Mean scores in each group were compared using ANOVA

# Bitchener & Knoch, 2010

- All three treatment groups (indirect and both types of direct feedback groups) outperformed the control group in the immediate post-test
- However, these levels of improvement across the 10 week period (revealed in the delayed post-test) were only retained by the two direct feedback groups, but not the indirect group.
- One aspect of language, relatively small groups

# Conclusion

- Students should be given both direct and indirect feedback.
- Indirect feedback should only be given if there's a good chance that the student will be able to understand the error and correct it.
- Teachers should explain until it's clearer than clear, through a variety of channels.
- It's useful to look at the student's writing in terms of how well it achieves its goal.
- Teachers should not assume that the feedback they give will necessarily have some effect on the students' skills.



[Sebastian.Lesniewski@bil.ac.uk](mailto:Sebastian.Lesniewski@bil.ac.uk)

[SebastianLesniewski.com](http://SebastianLesniewski.com)

# References

Bitchener, J., & Ferris, D. R. (2012). *Written Corrective Feedback in Second Language Acquisition and Writing*. New York: Routledge.

Bitchener, J., & Knoch, U. (2010). Raising the linguistic accuracy level of advanced L2 writers with written corrective feedback. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 19(4), 207-217

Brown, S. C., & Craik, F. I. M. (2000). Encoding and Retrieval of Information. In E. Tulving & F. I. M. Craik (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Memory* (93-107). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Dellar, H., & Walkley, A. (2016). *Teaching Lexically: Principles and Practice*. Peaslake: Delta Publishing.

Lalande, J. F. II (1982). Reducing composition errors: An experiment. *Modern Language Journal*, 66(2), 140-149.

Robb, T., Ross, S., & Shortreed, I. (1986). Salience of feedback on error and its effect on EFL writing quality. *TESOL Quarterly*, 20(1), 83-89.

Semke, H. (1984). The effects of the red pen. *Foreign Language Annals*, 17(3), 195-202.

Thornbury, S. (2017). *The New A-Z of ELT*. London: Macmillan Education.

van Beuningen, C., de Jong, N. H., & Kuiken, F. (2008). The effect of direct and indirect corrective feedback on L2 learners' written accuracy. *ITL International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 156(1), 279-296.

van Beuningen, C., de Jong, N. H., & Kuiken, F. (2012). Evidence on the effectiveness of comprehensive error correction in Dutch multilingual classrooms. *Language Learning*, 62(1), 1-41.