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Watching the signs – An examination of foreign/second language written corrective feedback

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Watching the signs – An examination of foreign/second language written corrective feedback

by

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Watching the signs – An examination of foreign/second language written corrective feedback

by

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This report seeks to examine the literature related to written corrective feedback in second/foreign language classrooms in order to inform the most effective pedagogical practices related to this topic. I begin with an article by Truscott which would set the tone for the academic debate on whether or not to provide written corrective feedback in L2 classrooms. In his 1996 article Truscott claims that written corrective feedback a) is not helpful, b) is harmful, and c) should be eliminated entirely. Chapter 1 covers this debate, referred to as the Truscott Debate, reviewing the many articles that directly answer the challenge laid down by Truscott (1996). Following a review of this academic debate, I examine the literature that investigates the specific providers of feedback (teachers or peer feedback), the types of feedback (direct or indirect) and the degree of focus related to those feedback options. Chapter 4 reviews other factors that can also affect the efficacy of written corrective feedback, such as student motivation, learner levels, and oral feedback in conjunction with written feedback and online feedback. Chapter 5 puts forth particular circumstances in which each type of feedback can be efficacious, offering a guide for the provision of feedback in a variety of circumstances.

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Introduction – Early Beginnings

I learned to read and write at a fairly young age; around three years old. Although the initial process seemed to be a fairly simple one, my introduction to a more academic style of writing proved to be much more difficult. In junior high school, I found that my periodic writing assignments were much more difficult than the recreational writing I enjoyed as a hobby. It was not so much the initial writing itself that brought on these obstacles, but rather the teacher's corrective feedback that would inevitably and in great quantity accompany the assignments. I did not necessarily mind making the corrections, but there were always so *many* of them and they were not optional. The corrective categories ran the gambit from punctuation, conjugation and spelling to issues in content and register. Given that the assignments were in my native language, making these corrections was manageable. Nevertheless, in making those adjustments, I rarely understood where the focus of the feedback was intended to be. As I began to study foreign languages and I continued with assigned writing exercises, my reduced fluency in the second language effectively reduced my ability to process and apply the inevitable teacher feedback, which made me feel constantly frustrated in my second language studies. I soon realized that the edits I was assigned in my L2 classes were just as unfocused and widespread as the edits from my L1 classes.

Without any explanation of the feedback to supplement my corrections, the focus, vague and undefined as it was, was routinely lost on me to my frustration. My foreign language essays came back bleeding with corrections on a variety of linguistic structures. For many years and in good faith I made the assigned corrections, often making the same mistakes on different drafts of the same assignment without understanding why. I was just expected to make the corrections based on an extensive series of marks, so I did. In doing these circular exercises, I never felt like

I really learned why I kept making the same mistakes. Similarly, the effectiveness of written feedback in second language writing has been very controversial amongst educators and scholars. As I continued my study of languages, the "why" of the corrections eventually became clearer, but only because I was constantly engaged in the process of studying the language. For students who do not focus on language, I can only imagine the frustration inherent in making written corrections, especially when writing in a foreign language. In talking to my classmates, I realized that I was not the only one having this type of experience. As I began to study language pedagogy, I soon found that although a great deal of research had been done to demonstrate effective feedback techniques, there was as of yet no clear model for second language instructors in the effective provision of written corrective feedback.

In light of my experiences with corrective feedback, my aim for this report is to contribute to the field of language pedagogy and written corrective feedback in second/foreign language writing with a review of the literature that can inform the construction of an effective model for written feedback in L2 writing. This review identifies key issues in L2 written corrective feedback by distinguishing between direct and indirect feedback, peer- and teacher-based feedback and the degree of focus of feedback, while considering additional influencing variables such as individual learner levels, online feedback and the efficacy of oral feedback in conjunction with written feedback.

Chapter 1 - The "Truscott" Debate

The "Truscott Debate" was initiated by John Truscott in 1996 with his article *The Case Against Grammar Correction in L2 Writing Classes*. In this article, Truscott is immediately clear about his position: "This paper argues that grammar correction in L2 writing classes should be abandoned" (p. 327). He follows with a rationale for this seemingly radical proposal claiming that "(a) substantial research shows it [grammar correction] to be ineffective and none show it to be helpful in any interesting sense; (b) for both theoretical and practical reasons, one can expect it to be ineffective and (c) it has harmful effects" (p. 327). Truscott asserts that the role of grammar correction is a needlessly ensconced institution among educators. "Nearly all L2 writing teachers do it in one form or another, nearly everyone who writes on the subject recommends it in one form or another" (p. 328). He continues that researchers simply assume that the practice works, offering little critical analysis on the sources of this idea and concluding that researchers have paid "insufficient attention to the side effects of grammar correction" (p. 328). It is important to note that Truscott was only referring to grammatical feedback. He is not referring to content, organization or clarity of compositions: "By grammar correction I mean correction of grammatical errors for the purpose of improving a student's ability to write accurately" (p. 329).

Truscott's (1996) article begins with a review of the literature countering the efficacy of grammar correction. Citing Hillocks (1986), Knoblauch and Brannon (1981), Krashen (1984) and Leki (1990), evidence which would be debated for the next 15 years, Truscott claims that "correction is not helpful" (p. 330). The second half of this notable article discusses why grammar correction does not and cannot work. Citing the order of acquisition of grammatical structures, the "poorly understood processes" that characterize the phenomena of *interlanguage*

and the fallibility of educators to recognize that errors had been made, Truscott makes a controversial case arguing that grammar correction is ineffective and even potentially harmful to learners. Citing research by Kepner (1991), Semke (1984), and Sheppard (1992), Truscott (1996) concludes that grammar correction causes students to shorten and simplify their writing to avoid errors and that correction has deleterious effects on learner motivation. Ironically, one area Kepner (1991) notes as being an important focal point for further research is how to provide effective error corrections. Prefacing this focal point with the idea that learners respond in different and unpredictable ways to written comments, she writes that "research is necessary which will help identify optimally effective feedback modes which will enable L2 learners and teachers to work together" (p. 311); thereby suggesting that she believes that some types of feedback may be beneficial. The types of feedback and circumstances in which they are used, including but not limited to the myriad differences between individual learners, will be important determining factors in the efficacy of this feedback.

Truscott (1996) also disputes the "burden of proof assumption" (p. 356), which suggests that as long as there is a possibility that grammar correction could help, "they [educators] should continue using it (and using it generally with all types of students in all classes)" (p. 357). Truscott closes with what he calls a note of caution: "One cannot overlook the possibility that future developments will dictate a weakening of my thesis" (p. 361). The following 18 years would prove this assertion to be correct and reveal a number of researchers who would argue against this declaration that error correction in L2 writing is ineffective and should be eliminated.

Despite the vigorous defense of his original hypothesis promoting the elimination of written corrective feedback in foreign language writing assignments, Truscott's critiques of written corrective feedback in the years that would follow would encounter few supporters. She

closes her article with the caveat that more research is necessary. This caveat became a staple in the several dozen articles that followed. One area she notes as being an important focal point for this proposed research is, ironically, how to provide effective error corrections. Prefacing this focal point with the idea that learners respond in different and unpredictable ways to written comments, she writes that "research is necessary which will help identify optimally effective feedback modes which will enable L2 learners and teachers to work together of the first explicit responses to Truscott came three years later in Ferris's *The Case for Grammar Correction in L2 Writing Classes: A Response to Truscott (1996)* (1999), in which she states that "Truscott's thesis…is premature and overly strong" (p. 1) and further counters Truscott's statement with a personal anecdote revolving around the discovery of Truscott's article: "When I first encountered Truscott's article and told colleagues about it, the reaction was instantaneous and consistent. Veteran teachers recoiled as if they had been punched in the stomach" (p. 2). She critiques Truscott's lack of specificity and noting that correction comes in many different forms but these distinctions have little significance. Ferris cites several researchers (e.g., Bates, Lane & Lange, 1993; Ellis, 1998; Ferris, 1995; Reid, 1997) who found that effective error correction can and does help at least with some students in some circumstances. Another flaw in Truscott's article according to Ferris (1999) is that the various studies were not comparable, with the research paradigms and teaching strategies varying considerably. Also, she suggests that Truscott overstated the negative evidence while disregarding research results that contradicted his thesis. Ferris (1999) agrees that the evidence supporting the effectiveness of error correction is sparse and that there is clearly not a "one size fits all approach" (p. 6). Ferris offers a plea for restraint citing a lack of evidence for such a radical claim. She concludes by asking the reader to consider three factors that play a role in the efficacy of corrective feedback: "(a) is grammar feedback (…)

carried out selectively, systematically and accurately?, (b) are individual student differences (…) adequately considered and accounted for?, and (c) are studies which assess the effectiveness of error correction designed and executed appropriately?" (p. 9).

Truscott's aptly named article *The Case for "The Case Against Grammar Correction in L2 Writing Classes": A Response to Ferris* (1999) addresses the critique by Ferris (1999). He notes that Ferris (1999) refers to "mounting research evidence" in favor of error correction, but does not name any of the studies (p. 112). Truscott further asserts that this same evidence is "scant" (p. 113), mentioning two studies that would be discussed at length in the interchanges to come: Fathman and Whaley (1990), and Lalande (1982). He states that these studies only showed that "the revision process is more successful when teachers participate in it" (p. 115) and addresses the concerns about students' and teachers' expectations of error correction by drawing a corollary between students' faith in correction and its reinforcement by teachers. Truscott's cedes that grammar correction can be effective in the development of self-editing, but this involves "grammar correction with strategy training, making no distinction between them, so that the role that is being claimed for correction is unclear" (p. 117). Truscott closes calling his article "effective if it gives teachers an opportunity to consider correction-free instruction as a serious option for their teaching" (p. 122).

Truscott receives some support in an article by Fazio (2001), who examined 112 fifth grade French language students in Montreal, Canada, with a relatively large proportion of non-native speakers of French. The students were given a journal to write in and the study involved an examination of these journals as markers of language acquisition. The students were divided into two groups to receive different feedback conditions (content-based and form-focused) provided by the researcher (i.e., not the teacher) weekly. At the end of the semester, the students

were interviewed to determine the extent to which they attended to the feedback. Fazio states that overall findings indicate that minority-language and francophone students did not experience a significant change in their accuracy as a consequence of receiving corrections. Nevertheless, it is not unreasonable to expect students between 10 and 12 years old to not stringently attend to form-focused feedback in an expressive exercise. Somewhat contradictorily, Fazio highlights the efficacy of corrective feedback in her own literature review: "most studies involving different form focused treatments have demonstrated that students in all feedback groups improved their accuracy" (p. 237).

Another notable article is Chandler's (2003) two-part article examining both the ontological question of efficacy in corrective feedback and an examination of various treatment types. Chandler examined two groups of Asian students studying music at an American conservatory. Control and experimental groups were predominantly female (both groups had one male) and were taught by the same teacher. Students were instructed to write approximately five pages about their own life, on five occasions during the semester, with a total written production of 25 pages. The experimental group made revisions based on feedback before submitting the next assignment and the control group did all revisions toward the end of the semester after all first drafts had been written. Chandler concludes that the accuracy of student writing over 10 weeks improved more if these high intermediate East Asian college students were required to correct their errors. Despite some inconsistencies in the raters' rubric, this study illustrates a key factor in the efficacy of error correction; the agency of the learner over their own learning. Technically, both groups received corrections, while only the experimental group was required to make corrections before the next assignment. Chandler asserts that the concurrent increase in

accuracy is clearly related to the active integration of the feedback rather than its single directional reception.

Another response to the question of corrective feedback came in the form of *The "Grammar Correction" Debate in L2 Writing: Where are we, and where do we go from here? (and what do we do in the meantime…?)* (Ferris, 2004) After a brief summary of the published debate, Ferris claimed two points upon which she and Truscott agreed: "(a) that the research based on error correction in L2 writing is indeed insufficient" and perhaps more interestingly "(b) that the "burden of proof" is on those who would argue *in favor* of error correction" (p. 50). She continues with some critiques that would be repeated often in the discourse: (a) the studies that do exist are fundamentally incomparable and (b) existing research predicts positive effects for written error correction, addressing the aforementioned "burden of proof." Ferris concludes that research should rely on "evidence that does exist, our own experience and intuitions, and the desires of our students to inform and guide us" (p. 59). She suggests that to ensure the efficacy of error correction, teachers must prepare themselves to effectively treat students' written errors and the effective treatment of students' errors must include a variety of carefully integrated components including teacher-provided feedback. She concludes with a common caveat: "Further research is necessary" (p. 60).

Other researchers would soon weigh in on this debate. In addition to Chandler publicly contradicting Truscott's use of her own cited material in Truscott's 2007 article (see Chandler, 2009), Guénette's article (2007) echoes the critique of inconsistency levied against the studies comprising the arena for this discussion. Guénette clarifies his stance on the pro-correction side of the debate claiming that the various referenced studies were incomparable due to inconsistent design and methodologies. He poses the question: "Should teachers keep on providing corrective

feedback on form to their students?" To which he responds resoundingly in the affirmative, although he states that there is no single "corrective feedback recipe" (p. 51).

Truscott maintains his earlier arguments in his next reply: "*The effect of error correction on learners' ability to write accurately*" (2007). This study employed a new methodology, meta-analysis, to establish the ineffectiveness of correction in order to find the best estimate of the overall effect of correction on accuracy and to determine an upper limit on how helpful correction might be. Based on this analysis, Truscott posits that "(a) correction has a small harmful effect on students' ability to write accurately and (b) we can be 95% confident that if it actually has any benefits, they are small" (p. 270). To conclude, he rephrases the question "How effective is correction?" as "How harmful is correction?" (p. 271).

Truscott and Hsu (2008) continue the debate, examining forty-seven EFL graduate students in a public Taiwan university. The students were divided into two groups with the writing samples of one half of the class not being graded, although they all received in class training and assignments. In this paper, we see an admission to potential benefits of error correction by Truscott if only in a narrow range of application: "our findings confirm (…) that correction does help students reduce their errors on the writings on which they receive corrections, and that effect is substantial" (p. 299). However, he mediates this statement by saying that this improvement is only in revisions of the same task and does not extend to subsequent writing tasks. Truscott and Hsu suggest that these revisions do no predict learning and these findings "are entirely consistent with the view that feedback (…) has beneficial effects just as they are consistent with the view that it does not" (p. 299). Truscott and Hsu (2008) conclude that "the revision studies reviewed offer no evidence regarding the effect of correction on learning" (p. 300), clearly distinguishing the revision process from the learning process.

This same ongoing debate continued with Bruton's (2009a, 2009b) critiques of Truscott and Hsu's (2008) research stating that he intends "not to enter into the debate about the (…) effects of grammar correction in L2 writing" (p. 136), but to show that such studies have a "crucial inconsistency" in the design and interpretation of data. Here Bruton cites a "ceiling effect" in research by Truscott and Hsu (2008), caused by a lack of overall errors in the first place. Bruton (2009a) also claims that the lack of benefits derived from error correction do not stem from the inefficacy of the correction because "most of the errors in the second composition did not correspond to those corrected in the first" (p. 140). Bruton (2009b) does enter the correction debate questioning how improvement can occur without corrective feedback. He states "it is counter-intuitive (…) that more evidence (…) should inevitably result in (…) deterioration" (p. 601). He concludes this second article using a "common sense" argument stating that "any form of feedback…should offer further evidence for more correct performance" (p. 610). Here we see the name "The Truscott Debate" first used which Bruton (2009b) describes as being "a rather tedious sterile academic debate" (p. 611). Both of these articles see quick response by Truscott (2010a, 2010b) essentially comprising a debate over the definition of design flaws, the presence of which both would mutually consider "clear" evidence. Truscott (2010b) reemphasizes his unyielding position: "Correction does not work and should be abandoned" (p. 334).

Karim and Ivy (2011) weigh in examining 18 teachers and 58 students taken from five universities in Bangladesh. The scholars illustrate the role of the instructor in regard to the efficacy of written feedback. This article examined the most prevalent forms and the nature of teacher feedback in various L2 writing classrooms at the university level. Administering two questionnaires using both closed and open questions, the research focused on the role of

feedback from the points of view of both teacher and student, revolving around "importance, preferred types, attitude/approach towards feedback, efficacy, the stage in which it was given and training on feedback. In addition to feedback being widely recognized as an effective educational instrument, Karim and Ivy (2011) conclude that "written comments give students inspiration and help (…) to make the next draft" (p. 40) and that feedback is "practiced in the field with a variety of techniques with a positive attitude" (p. 44).

In conclusion, despite his promotion of the elimination of corrective feedback, Truscott found few supporters for his controversial pedagogical methodology. Conversely, there is much research that examines the different types of corrective feedback and the contexts in which they can be most effective. This research supports what has been referred to as the "common sense" argument promoted by Bruton (2009b) and Ferris (1999, 2004). Truscott's assertion that the field must be expanded (1996, 1999) is legitimate and research must be flexible enough to change with newly illustrated information. At this point I return to the initial criticisms of Truscott (1996) in order to inform the debate over error correction. In his initial argument, Truscott (1996) writes that grammar correction in L2 writing classes should be abandoned for the following reasons: (a) substantial research shows it to be ineffective, (b) for both theoretical and practical reasons, one can expect it to be ineffective, and (c) it has harmful effects. This three-part criticism, upon closer inspection is really a two-part criticism, with (a) and (b) being effectively the same point, has little support in the ongoing literature. Truscott's final criticism that correction is harmful has similarly drawn little support from contemporary research. Conversely, an ongoing review of this extensive debate reveals the potential efficacy of corrective feedback as pedagogical practice. Ferris (2010) writes that "it is safe to say that the benign neglect approach to accuracy issues in L2 writing has ended" (185). Ferris (2010) also

reminds us that this call to eliminate corrective feedback has "rather than ending the discussion, actually inspired interest in the topic on the part of researchers" (p. 185). Hartshorn et al. (2010) echo this view as well: "perhaps the time has come to reframe the WCF (written corrective feedback) debate to focus less on whether WCF is effective and more on how to use WCF" (p. 103). Thus far, we see a clear response to Truscott's claim that feedback is not helpful. With extensive evidence to the contrary, it is important to note that the type of feedback and the context in which it is applied are somewhat specific. Research suggests that there are several methods to written corrective feedback, each having their own effective domain. They are not interchangeable.

Chapter 2 - Teacher-Based Feedback

Thus far we have seen several researchers (Chandler, 2003, 2009; Ferris, 1999, 2004, Guenette, 2007; Karim & Ivy, 2011) proposing that second language writing corrections in general can be beneficial, although the argument about the efficacy of error correction has often degenerated into debates on the methodologies and experimental designs. Nevertheless, feedback in a classroom taken at its broadest point can come from two different sources: the teacher and the other students. Both sources have been the subject of research designed to illustrate effective provision of critical feedback in L2 writing classes. This section informs and illustrates some of the prominent methods of instructor provided corrective feedback in second language classrooms.

Indirect Feedback

Robb et al. (1986) defined indirect error feedback as "prompts about the location of errors by underlining the errors or by indicating the number of errors per line with or without a code," but it was the polarizing debate initiated by Truscott (1996) that would initiate the intense interchange to follow. Lee (1997) cites Truscott in examining the efficacy of indirect error feedback beginning with a strict definition of terms. Lee describes direct correction as "the teacher providing the correct forms or structures in students' faulty sentences" (p. 462). In this way, Lee claims that indirect feedback is not really correction at all, as no corrections are explicitly provided. She provides three assumptions that support the efficacy of indirect feedback: (a) overt correction is helpful; (b) students are able to cope with error feedback by means of a correction code; and (c) all errors deserve equal attention. To test these assumptions, Lee designed an error correction task containing both content errors and grammatical errors. Feedback was provided using three types of prompts: direct, indirect, and no prompts (the

control group). The direct prompts included underlined errors requiring student correction and the indirect prompts indicated the lines requiring student correction. All three prompt types fall under the heading of indirect feedback as no correct forms were provided, but these do show the various degrees of "directness" that can be found in indirect feedback. After analyzing the writing of 149 engineering students between 19 and 23 years old, Lee writes that indirect feedback may be more effective (at least depending on the level of the student) as a pedagogical tool, and states that the use of a code to provide indirect feedback must be considered carefully, citing that lower level students benefitted more from a more explicit and direct code.

Ferris (1999) promotes indirect forms of error correction and vehemently counters Truscott's original call to abolish error correction with what she refers to as a "plea for restraint and a call for further research" (p. 8). Nevertheless she clearly supports the prioritization of indirect over direct feedback as a viable pedagogical methodology asserting that "indirect error correction is preferable to direct correction" (p. 5) because indirect feedback elicits more interaction between the text and student, as long as the student is given explicit instruction regarding rules governing grammar. Nevertheless, in addition to her statement that "error correction is a necessary component of L2 writing instruction" (p. 59), she also states that in the majority of instances, teachers should provide indirect feedback that engages the students in cognitive problem solving with exceptions including students at lower levels of proficiency that may not possess the linguistic competence to self-correct.

Furthermore, Ferris and Roberts (2001) investigated 72 university ESL students' abilities to self-edit a text given three feedback systems: (a) errors marked with codes from five error categories, (b) errors in the same categories underlined but not additionally marked and (c) control group that received no feedback. The results of this investigation counter Truscott's

original assertion that error feedback does not help learners as Ferris and Roberts (2001) write that "there were no significant differences in editing success between the groups that received coded feedback and the group that simply had errors underlined" (p. 176). Students did maintain a positive perception of direct feedback and clearly favored the more explicit coding approach. Similarly, Kubota (2001) investigated the effectiveness of the indirect feedback coding system used by the Victorian Certificate of Education. The 63 students that participated in this study were Australian college students enrolled in a lower intermediate Japanese course and were divided into three groups: (a) those that had studied Japanese for two and a half years, (b) those that had studied Japanese for one and a half years, and (c) those that had stayed in Japan for considerable time. Kubota found that the students all agreed that the coding system was useful, although results suggested that to correct their errors, students tended towards simplification of written language production, which researchers found troubling. Kubota (2001) writes that "students quite often resort to reduction rather than elaboration for their error correction…they improve correctness at the expense of creativity" (p. 478). Regardless, Kubota (2001) found that the number of errors decreased in all categories after the students' corrections, illustrating the efficacy of the indirect error feedback. I propose that the simplification is a result of their lower level of proficiency and this is in accordance with several studies in this section that suggest that indirect feedback, while certainly effective, may not be the ideal system for lower level learners.

The efficacy of indirect feedback was further explored in a more recent review article by Storch (2010). In this review, Storch addresses early research (1980-2003) which shows the findings of various researchers, some of whom have already been discussed in this report (Fazio, 2001; Kepner, 1991), to be fairly balanced in terms of the ontological question of the efficacy of

corrective feedback. Storch (2010) points out certain flaws in the design of some of the earlier studies; namely the lack of a control group and the lack of a new piece of writing incorporating the feedback and makes an interesting distinction between the use of direct and indirect feedback, both of which appear to be useful at different stages in the development of the student. She writes "indirect feedback can only lead to an increase in control of a linguistic form that has already been internalized. It cannot lead to new learning." (p. 40). Nevertheless, Storch clearly promotes the efficacy of written corrective feedback in general and indirect feedback in particular, at least for more advanced learners.

Hartshorn et al. (2010) also support the efficacy of indirect feedback in their presentation of what they refer to as *dynamic corrective feedback.* This study included 47 advanced-low to advanced-mid ESL students studying at Brigham Young University divided into a treatment group (28 students, 18-45 years old) and a control group (19 students, 18-33 years old). For this investigation, the experimental group received indirect feedback in the form of coded symbols that identify the error type and the location of the error (indirect feedback). Hartshorn et al. write that "perhaps the most salient outcome of this study has shown that a systematic approach to WCF (written corrective feedback) can have a positive effect on the accuracy of ESL writing" (p. 102).

Lee (2011) follows up with a case study examining 26 teachers from 15 secondary schools in Hong Kong who were asked to provide six student essays incorporating feedback provided by the instructors. The most prevalent form of feedback was direct feedback (71.5%) although Lee also makes a compelling argument for the use of indirect feedback. "The prevalence of direct feedback is problematic since by providing the correct form for students, teachers are depriving students of the opportunity to correct their own errors" (p. 387). Lee then

cites Ferris (1999) stating that this practice is "undesirable" for treatable errors, or errors that are rule-based, like verb tense form and form and subject-verb agreement. In this way, Lee (2011) states that students are reduced to passive recipients of learning rather than active participants in the learning process, and students are unable to develop strategies for locating their own errors, thus limiting their own ability to self-edit. This perspective is reinforced by Ferris and Roberts (2001), Kubota (2001) and Bitchener (2012) who also write that indirect feedback is effective for advanced learners in both composition and language learning classes, whereas direct feedback is potentially better for lower proficiency learners, a position already noted by Lee (1997).

This section reveals two notable tendencies. The first is the overall effectiveness of corrective feedback in general, strongly countering Truscott's view that error correction overall is not helpful and may even be harmful. This conclusion is clear from the successes in language learning garnered by the students represented in the studies reported in this section. While the articles cited by Truscott in his original article condemning corrective feedback should not be disregarded, it is clear that different forms of feedback are effective in the proper context. Instructors have many feedback options and it is their responsibility to recognize the most effective approaches for their teaching contexts. In addition, Lee (2013) summarizes an idea that we have already seen in several studies (e.g., Bitchener, 2012; Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Kubota, 200; Lee, 1997, 2011, 2013; Robb et al., 1986) when she writes that "it (written corrective feedback) may be best through the use a combination of direct in indirect WCF (*written corrective feedback)* to suit different learners" (p. 111). The articles I have examined strongly suggest that indirect error feedback may be most effective for more advanced learners who have developed the skills necessary to incorporate feedback into their own written works. Storch (2010) also points out that "indirect feedback can only lead to an increase in control of a

linguistic form already partially internalized. It cannot lead to new learning." (p. 40). Thus, we see that indirect error feedback is not only a viable methodology (depending on the circumstances, of course); it is also not the only form of feedback worthy of investigation.

Direct Feedback

In addition to the several articles concluding that indirect feedback can be an effective pedagogical device, so too do we see a similar tendency in investigations of the efficacy of direct feedback. Direct feedback is defined by Ferris (1999) as the explicit correction of student errors, specifically the provision of the correct answer as opposed to indirect feedback which only marks the location of an error. Bitchener (2008) expands this definition to include written meta-linguistic information and/or oral meta-linguistic explanation which provides a reason for the feedback.

Van Beuningen, De Jong and Kuiken (2008) propose that both forms can be effective pedagogical tools depending on the context to which they are applied. For example, they state that corrective feedback can be effective in improving students' accuracy, but while short-term effects were found for both direct and indirect corrective feedback, only direct feedback proved to have a significant long-term effect. Another article proposing the efficacy of direct feedback is Chandler's (2003) two part-study examining both the efficacy of corrective feedback in general in the first half (found to be in the affirmative) and an examination of direct feedback as a pedagogical tool, in which 36 first or second year music majors from an American conservatory, divided into two ESL classes taught by the same instructor, were provided with different types of feedback, which included (a) direct feedback (teacher correction of errors), (b) underlining with description (indirect feedback, high explicitness), (c) description only (indirect feedback, lower

explicitness) and (d) underlining only (indirect feedback, lowest explicitness). Outcome measures included a measure of errors per 100 words, holistic ratings, time spent writing by the student, immediate student response to feedback type and a comparison of time spent by the teacher in providing the feedback. Chandler (2003) found that error correction can be an effective learning tool, especially when the teacher wrote the corrections. Chandler notes that the next most effective form of teacher response was also the next most explicit form: underlining with description. Description only or underlining only were the least effective forms of feedback. Students reported preferring the explicit feedback due to the ease of subsequent revisions although they also reported the more explicit form of indirect feedback to be favorable. Chandler closes with an interesting observation: "What seems to be a crucial factor (…) is having the students do something with the correction besides simply receiving it" (p. 293).

Bitchener, Young and Cameron (2005) also investigated if the type of feedback given to 53 adult migrant ESOL students on three types of errors (prepositions, definite articles and simple past tense) resulted in improved accuracy in new writing over a 12-week period. Each participant completed four 250 word writing tasks in which the different grammatical structures were emphasized using direct explicit written feedback with student conferences, direct explicit feedback only and no feedback. Bitchener et al. (2005) found that that the type of feedback had a clear effect on the accuracy of new pieces of writing. Specifically, full explicit written feedback, together with individual conference feedback, resulted in significantly greater accuracy when the simple past and the definite article were used in new pieces of writing. Sheen (2007) also examined direct feedback using 111 intermediate level adult ESL learners between the ages of 21-56. To do this, three groups were formed; (a) a direct-only correction group, (b) a direct metalinguistic correction group and (c) a control group which received no feedback. Sheen

found that the corrective feedback treatment groups outperformed the control group, indicating that the feedback was more effective than the no feedback group. The effects of metalinguistic feedback will be addressed later in this report.

Bitchener (2008) returns to the efficacy of direct corrective feedback presenting a study involving 75 low intermediate ESL students in New Zealand. He examined the accuracy in the use of the article system over time and with different types of corrective feedback. Students were divided into four groups for this study: (a) direct feedback with written and oral metalinguistic explanation, (b) direct feedback with only written metalinguistic explanation, (c) direct feedback only, and (d) no corrective feedback. Participants produced three pieces of writing describing the events in a picture, targeting definite and indefinite English articles over the course of a semester. This study found that written corrective feedback had a clear effect on improving accuracy in the use of the two functional uses of the English article system and showed that this improvement appeared to be retained two months later without additional feedback or instruction. Bitchener (2008) also found that the most effective form of feedback included oral meta-linguistic explanation with the written feedback.

Bitchener and Knoch (2009) replicate the previous study in order to investigate the accuracy in the use of the two article functions over a ten month period (as opposed to a semester) according to differing corrective feedback options. As in Bitchener (2008), 52 low intermediate ESL students in Auckland, New Zealand, were provided with four types of feedback: (a) direct feedback with written and oral meta-linguistic explanation, (b) direct feedback with written meta-linguistic feedback, (c) direct feedback only, and (d) no feedback. This study included three delayed post-tests to examine long term acquisition of target structures. The efficacy of direct feedback was supported with the finding that "all three groups that

received corrective feedback outperformed the group that received no feedback" (p. 206). This was extended into a more advanced learner level with Farrokhi's (2012) article which investigated direct written corrective feedback with high proficiency English learners in the use of English articles. This study involved 60 Iranian university students who were high proficiency English L2 learners divided into three equal groups of 20, two of which received direct corrective feedback (focused and unfocused) and a third group which received no feedback. While part of this study was intended to investigate varying degrees of focus of the corrective feedback, the larger question of the efficacy of direct corrective feedback is answered resoundingly in the affirmative. Farrokhi (2012) writes that statistical analyses indicated that both experimental groups (focused and unfocused) did better than the control group (no feedback) in the post-test. This article concludes with the assertion that even highly proficient learners can improve their use of the L2 as the result of direct corrective feedback.

Although many of these studies indicate that direct corrective feedback is preferable to indirect feedback at lower learner levels, Farrokhi (2012) also suggests its efficacy at higher levels. Additionally, this article introduces us to a new dichotomy differentiating types of corrective feedback. Like indirect feedback, direct feedback appears to be an effective tool for providing language students with the information they need to continue their linguistic development, contradicting the original claims by Truscott (1996). Nevertheless, although the explicitness (direct vs. indirect) of feedback is an important concern for educators, it is not the only distinction to be considered. Another topic of interest has been the degree of focus of the corrective feedback.

Degree of Focus

Thus far many researchers have answered the call to scholarship initiated in Truscott's (1996) article illustrating one distinction in the provision of written feedback to L2 students; that of explicitness. In reviewing the literature, we see that both direct and indirect feedback appear to be potentially beneficial when matched with the appropriate learner level. Similarly, we may distinguish between the varying levels of scope or focus for which corrective feedback is given. Highly focused feedback would deal with a small number of linguistic (or just one) feature whereas unfocused feedback would involve several features at a time or all errors comprehensively. Ellis, Sheen, Murakami and Takashima (2008) define focused feedback as the specification of certain errors to receive feedback while other errors are ignored.

Ellis et al. (2008) illustrate the need for this distinction, writing that "A mass of corrections directed at a diverse set of linguistic phenomena (…) is hardly likely to foster the noticing and cognizing that may be needed for corrective feedback to work for acquisition" (p. 368). Storch (2010) supports this position claiming that providing feedback on a large number of errors may "overwhelm the learner" and that while a large number of studies dealt with one structure (often English articles), this should be followed with an examination of a more expansive array of structures (p. 43). Ferris (2010) also supports the distinction of focus, arguing that a major problem of earlier written corrective feedback research is its "vague, correct-all-the-errors approach" (p. 192).

For example, Bitchener et al. (2005) found that more focused feedback is preferable to less focused feedback, especially at lower proficiency levels. They also concluded that oral feedback in addition to focused, direct feedback is more effective than written feedback alone

and noted that "learners (…) in the process of acquiring new linguistic forms may perform them with accuracy on one occasion but fail to do so on other similar occasions" (p. 191). Their examination of focused feedback included a number of targets, including prepositions, past simple tense and the definite article. Sheen (2007) and Bitchner (2008) examined focused direct feedback on the English article and also found it to be an effective pedagogical tool. In another study, Bitchener (2008) found that improved accuracy resulting from targeted, corrective feedback was retained two months later without additional feedback or instruction. Bitchener and Knoch (2009) soon followed up with a study (see direct feedback) on the two functions of the English article system and noted that all the groups that received direct feedback outperformed the group that received no feedback. These gains were retained as much as ten months later upon inspection of a delayed post-test. In this study, Bitchener and Knoch (2009) promoted the benefits of a focused approach to feedback writing: "the results of this study demonstrate the value of focusing on a single error category" (p. 206). They also concluded that a focused approach should be maintained until there are clear signs of improvement before reducing the focus of the feedback. Farrokhi and Sattarpour (2012) provided evidence not only that both the focused and unfocused groups showed better accuracy performances on the post-test than the control group, but also that among these high proficient English students, the focused feedback group outperformed the other groups, illustrating the greater efficacy of a more focused type of feedback.

While many studies have used direct feedback to examine differing degrees of feedback focus, others have also examined the scope of focus in corrective feedback using indirect feedback. One example is by Hartshorn et al. (2010), who used indirect feedback in the production of what they refer to as Dynamic Corrective Feedback. In addition to reinforcing that

corrective feedback could be an effective pedagogical tool, they also pointed out a lack of class time in which to cover all relevant linguistic structures. Another example of indirect feedback used in a focused context is a study by Yang and Lyster (2010), who examined improvements on regular and irregular past tense forms in English. Participants were 72 undergraduate EFL students (64 female, 4 male; aged 18-24) at a university in northern China. They reported an average of 9.25 years of experience learning English. Their performance on the use of the past tense was measured three times: before, immediately after and 2 weeks after the treatment. Each testing session involved oral production (students telling a story from a picture) and written production (written narrative). The correction forms used were recasts (direct feedback) and prompts (indirect feedback) with a control group not receiving feedback used for comparison. Results indicated that both feedback type groups outperformed the control group; yet, the prompt group made clearer gains, both in the long and short term. These results support findings from previous studies that have demonstrated that prompts are generally more effective than recasts in classroom settings.

Lee (2011) also examined focus in her comparison of direct and indirect feedback. She found that although most of the teachers in this study tended towards direct feedback, indirect feedback was a more effective feedback treatment option. In addition, she found that the teachers who graded the writing samples marked errors comprehensively, suggesting that students should aspire to error-free writing which she writes "is an unrealistic goal for L2 learners" (p. 387). She argued that if a student made a large number of errors, he or she would probably not be prepared to deal with all of them at once. Lee (2011) also noted that "As teachers locate all errors for students they do not receive sufficient help to develop strategies for independent editing because editing entails error location before error correction" (p. 388). Lee

(2013) reinforced her claims in a review article stating that while there may be some evidence demonstrating the efficacy of unfocused feedback, "its benefits are of yet few and far between" (p. 109). This conclusion is also supported by Bitchener and Ferris (2012), who observe that comprehensive and unfocused corrective feedback may only be effective for advanced learners. Lee (2013) closes with the caveat that teachers "have to factor their students' needs and proficiency levels into their decision making" (p. 109).

The articles summarized so far have dealt with the provision of feedback—direct, indirect or both—which inadvertently utilized varying degrees of focus. The following articles were designed to test the efficacy of a more vs. less focused approach to error correction. Ellis et al. (2008) used a pre-test, posttest, delayed posttest design, and reported on two research questions: (a) Does written corrective feedback help Japanese learners of English to become more accurate in the use of the English indefinite and definite articles to express first and second mention? and (b) Is there a difference in the effect of unfocused and focused corrective feedback directed at using the indefinite and definite articles to express first and second mention? This study used two experimental groups, one receiving focused error correction, the second using unfocused corrective feedback, and a control group that received no feedback. All three groups completed narrative writing assignments based on picture stories, and an error correction test prior to the treatment and immediately following treatment. The participants were 49 advanced students enrolled in general English classes in a national university in Japan with 6 years of English study and were in their first year at the university. Results indicated that all three groups improved from pre-test to posttest 1. However, both experimental groups proved more accurate in the long term than the control group. Also, although the unfocused group improved more than the focused group initially, the focused group continued to improve, while the unfocused group did not. Ellis

et al. also mention that the differences between the two experimental groups were not statistically significant, a fact mitigated perhaps by the advanced level of the students, suggesting that students with higher levels of proficiency may not need such a narrow focus in terms of feedback. Van Beuningen (2010) agrees with Ellis et al. (2008) regarding the robust positive effects of focused corrective feedback, citing the 10-month period in the Bitchener (2008) study over which gains in proficiency were maintained without additional instruction.

Another similar study comes from Sheen, Wright and Moldawa (2009). This article focused on three research questions: (a) is there any difference in the effect of focused and unfocused error correction on adult ESL learners' use of English articles? (b) Is there any difference in the effect of focused and unfocused error correction on adult ESL learners' use of grammatical features other than that which is the focus of the correction? (c) Is there an effect for written narrative tasks without error correction on the accurate use of grammatical features other than those which are the focus of the correction? To answer these questions, Sheen et al. (2009) examined five native-English speaking teachers and their 80 intermediate level ESL students enrolled in a U.S. college, with one control and three experimental groups, each receiving a different type of feedback: focused written feedback, unfocused written feedback, a writing practice group and a control group. Five linguistic features received feedback: articles, copula "be", regular past tense, irregular past tense and temporal and locative prepositions. The results indicated that the focused corrective feedback group outperformed not only the control group but also the unfocused group in posttest 1, and over a longer term, the focused feedback group (CF) outperformed the control group whereas the unfocused group did not. Results also showed that the writing practice group outperformed the control group in both accuracy of articles and in the use of the five grammatical structures. According to Sheen et al. (2009), "while the current

study does not lend full support to this claim by Truscott, (1996), it does suggest that learners accuracy can improve without any corrective feedback as long as the writing task lends itself to a focus of accuracy" (p. 566). The authors conclude that practice and focused CF may be more beneficial than practice alone and suggest that their study "failed to demonstrate any benefit in providing unfocused CF" (p. 567). Like the previous article, these findings may also be explained by the intermediate proficiency level of the students.

Chapter 3 - Peer Feedback

In the preceding section, I reviewed articles dealing with varied forms of teacher corrective feedback for L2 writing. This section will continue the investigation into the efficacy of corrective feedback in general, but with a focus on peer feedback. Rollinson (2005) suggests that this option for feedback should have a place in educators' repertoires, writing that "the use of peer feedback (…) has been generally supported in the literature" (p. 23). In Rollins' (1998) PhD thesis, he found high levels of valid feedback coming from his college-level students with only a small amount of potentially damaging feedback (80% vs. 7%, respectively). He also points out that student feedback is "a different kind from that of the teacher" (p. 24), operating on a more informal level that teacher feedback, thereby perhaps further expanding its efficacy. Rollins (1998) closes this review article by pointing out that peer feedback can potentially help not just the student whose work is being examined, but also the student providing the feedback: "By giving students the students practice in being critical readers, we are at the same time helping them towards being more self-reliant writers" (p. 29). This conclusion is supported by Berg (1999), who found that peer feedback led to increased use of critical reasoning. Berg writes that "the student will need to consider the advice from a peer, question its validity, weigh it against his or her own ideas and then make a decision" (p. 232). Chaudron (1984), Clifford (1981) and Elbow (1973) have also cited advantages to peer feedback, such as social support from peers, feedback that is more informative because students are at the same social level, and the provision of a broader audience for students' writing.

Diab (2011) follows up on the overall efficacy of peer feedback in a study examining peer-editing vs. self-editing. Participants in this study included 40 students (aged 18-23) studying low intermediate English at an American University in Lebanon. Both groups were

trained to write an argumentative essay and to edit for content and organization. Students wrote three essays, incorporating feedback in revisions. Results showed that the students engaged in peer editing improved in content and organization more than the control group and that their changes improved revised drafts more than in the self-editing group. These findings were supported by a study (Salih, 2013) that investigated 16 non-English speaking students at a Malaysian university. The students were trained in peer review before writing their essays and exchanging them for peer feedback. A post interview and questionnaire followed, suggesting that although writers all placed grammar as the main area of preferred focus, peer reviewers tended to concentrate again on clarity of feedback and essay structure. Nevertheless, this study reinforced the overall efficacy of peer feedback confirming "the relevance of peer review as an alternative feedback delivery system in L2 writing" (p. 42). Furthermore, Karim and Ivy (2011) noted that "for peer feedback to be effective students must be given a training session demonstrating the procedure prior to starting the task" (p. 43), and that this training would not only lead to more effective peer feedback provision but could potentially be an effective pedagogical tool in its own right.

Zhao (2010) also mitigates the preference for teacher feedback in his study. Participants included 18 second year (intermediate level) English majors at a large university in China. Data was examined and interpreted by the use of content analyses, simulated recall interviews on comprehension and interviews affecting student response to different types of feedback with results showing that 83% of peer feedback was understood by students whereas only 58% of teacher feedback was clear to the students, showing that peer feedback was clearly easier for the students to understand. Another noteworthy point of this study is that the use of the students' L1 (Mandarin Chinese) in peer interaction was presented as another important cause of learners'

heightened understanding of peer feedback. Teacher feedback was presented in the target language, English.

Another early examination into peer feedback comes from Hedgecock and Lefkowitz's (1992) study involving 30 native English speakers divided into two groups of college intermediate level learners of French who were given two essay assignments, each of which required three drafts. The control group received feedback only from the instructor and the experimental group received feedback orally in small groups from other learners. According to Hedgecock and Lefkowitz (1992), the essays produced by the experimental group received higher scores than the control group, arguing that "the findings suggest that systematic, collaborative revision produces in learners an awareness (…) of their own writing and an ability to self-correct errors" (p. 255). Furthermore they found that the students who received teacher feedback scored better on grammar-related errors whereas students in the peer feedback group attended more to content and organization.

Jacobs, Curtis, Braine and Huang (1998) investigated student preference to the provision of peer feedback. Participants were 121 first and second year English undergraduate learners, from intermediate to high proficiency in universities in Hong Kong and Taiwan. These students were asked to complete a one item questionnaire indicating that students would prefer to have peer feedback in addition to teacher feedback or that they did not want any peer feedback at all. 93% of the students responded positively for peer feedback with teacher feedback. Jacobs et al. (1998) conclude their article suggesting that "The results of the present study suggest that students learning a second language who are familiar with a process approach to writing (…) generally value peer feedback as one, but not the only, type of feedback" (p. 313). Another study that supports these previous investigations' finding comes from Yang, Badger and Zhen

(2006) in their examination of two classes, both of which included three rounds of multi-draft composition and included parallel writing instruction, with both classes receiving one type of feedback. Peer feedback groups were self-selected pairs and students were allowed to use their native tongue to provide the feedback. Once again students adopted more teacher feedback (90%) than peer feedback (67%) although peer feedback constituted a larger percentage of changes in revision. Students expressed that this was because they felt the teacher to be more "experienced and trustworthy" than their peers, supporting the students' need to process the peer feedback and make decisions as to its validity (critical thinking). Yang et al. (2006) drew several conclusions from this study. First, they concluded that peer feedback "plays an important role in Chinese EFL students' revisions" (p. 193). Second, peer and teacher feedback affect different aspects of writing: peer revision appears to bring about more meaning-change revision while teacher feedback affects grammatical aspects more often. Third, students value teacher feedback more than peer feedback and recognize its importance as "a useful adjunct to teacher feedback, even in cultures which are supposed to grant great authority to the teacher" (p. 193). This was supported by Lin and Chien (2009) in their examination of seven English majors enrolled in a writing course over eight weeks in a national university in Taiwan. The students were trained in numerous writing strategies during the first part of the class and received a ten-item survey about the perception of teaching strategies of the class, with results in favor of peer feedback. In fact, only two of the seven reported that they still wanted teacher-based feedback in addition to peer feedback in order to effectively revise their essays. Although all respondents reported preferring to read peer comments to teacher comments, citing that these interactions "provided them more inspiration and motivation in writing" (p. 83), a lack of confidence in peer feedback validity was also expressed. 86% of the students responded that they did not agree that they could learn more

from their peers than from the instructor, indicating that while peer feedback should not totally replace by teacher feedback, it is an effective supplement.

This was expanded upon by Gielen, Tops, Dochy, Onghena, and Smeets (2010) in an attempt to ascertain whether peer feedback can be a substitute for teacher feedback. Using a pre-test post-test design, Gielen et al. examined 85 Belgian seventh grade students between the ages of 12 and 13. Students were divided into three groups receiving variants of peer feedback and the fourth group received feedback from the teacher. Students were given instruction on peer assessment before the study began. Gielen et al. (2012) confirmed that peer feedback can substitute teacher feedback "without a considerable loss of effectiveness in the long run" (p. 157) extending the findings by Cho and Schunn (2007), also finding no difference between single peer feedback and teacher feedback.

A more recent investigation into the efficacy of peer feedback and learner differences comes from Hu and Lam (2009). This study examined writing improvement in 20 ESL postgraduate students at a Singapore university. All studied English formally for at least 10 years. Participants formed their own pairs and responded to the writing assignment drafts (400 pages) brought by their classmates in three categories: language, content and organization. Participants were assigned to read the comments provided and write a second draft. Questionnaires and student interviews followed within the following two weeks. Although most of the students reported preference of teacher feedback as at least one form of feedback, 80% of the participants reported their preference to have peer feedback in addition to teacher feedback. Although some students did report that peer feedback could be problematic, especially in Asian cultures, due to the higher respect afforded to instructors and a desire to maintain interpersonal harmony with other students, Hu and Lam (2009) concluded that "peer review can be an

appropriate and effective pedagogical tool in L2 writing instruction" (p. 388). They close pointing out the development of critical thinking involved in both the provision and reception of peer feedback. These findings are supported by Lundstrom and Baker's (2009) examination of the benefits of peer review to the reviewer. Ninety-one beginner and intermediate students at an American university were divided into a control group (the receivers of peer feedback) and an experimental group (the providers of feedback) and received instructional training in peer review techniques. Lundstrom and Baker (2009) found that the students in the control group (receivers) showed improvement overall; thereby supporting the overall efficacy of peer review to those receiving the feedback and suggesting that L2 writing students "can improve their own writing by transferring abilities they learn when reviewing peer texts" (p. 38). Results also suggested that students trained to give feedback improved their writing more than those taught to use feedback, especially those students at a beginner level. There were no differences between the groups at an intermediate level, although both groups improved from pre-test to post-test.

Diab (2010) also investigated the effects of peer-based feedback on rule-based (subject/verb agreement, pronoun agreement) and non-rule-based errors (word choice, awkward sentence structure). Participants in this study were enrolled in a freshman English class at a Lebanese university with 18 students in the control group and 22 in the experimental group. Students received instruction on the language structures under study and practiced editing content using previous students' essays. The experimental group employed peer editing with their classmates, and the control group used self-editing to revise three essays over the course of the class. Diab (2010) reports that students engaged in peer editing reduced their rule-based errors more so than those who self-edited their essays. He also found that there was no significant decrease in non-rule-based errors. Nevertheless, results of this study show that in

addition to a reduction in rule-based errors, peer feedback allows students to notice faulty structures and increases awareness of the relationship between meaning and form, further illustrating the benefits to both students involved in peer editing.

Chapter 4 – Additional Factors Affecting Feedback

A tendency often illustrated in the literature, and perhaps an explanation for the radical advice given by Truscott (1996), is that the types of feedback thus far examined are not interchangeable. Their use should be determined by a number of important variables, any of which can individually affect the efficacy of a particular type of corrective feedback. Considering their cumulative, potentially obstructive potential, these are the factors most represented in contemporary literature to have a legitimate effect on both the learning process and the efficacy of any given type of written corrective feedback.

Student Motivation

A recurring factor in the effectiveness of any teacher-student interaction is the motivation of the students. Guenette (2007) is clear on this point: "any type of feedback that does not take the crucial variable of motivation into consideration is perhaps doomed to fail" (p. 44). If one considers learners of any type to be more than passive receptacles for knowledge, then motivation of the learner to learn is of utmost importance. The most carefully articulated feedback will be of little use to a student that has no interest in the learning the material. This outcome clearly has no bearing on the efficacy of the feedback itself, but it certainly must be considered in the provision of feedback and interpretation of data. Nevertheless, student motivation has played an important part in the ongoing debate and was addressed early on by Truscott (1996, 1999) and Ferris (1999, 2004) among other researchers who have investigated learner beliefs in regard to corrective feedback. Although Ferris (1999) points out that students' attitudes are favorable towards correction and that correction is expected and welcomed, Truscott (1996, 1999) continues to state that this reasoning is circular. "By using correction, teachers

encourage students to believe in it; because students believe in it, teachers must continue using it" (p. 116). Truscott (1996) also notes that this rationale cannot justify the continuation of a potentially harmful, counterproductive practice. However, with the previous literature informing the current discussion, there is little evidence to corroborate Truscott's (1996, 1999) hypothesis that corrective feedback is harmful and, therefore, the practice does not merit this counterproductive description.

Several studies have examined this potentially mediating factor. Evans, Hartshorn and Tuioti (2010) investigated the place of corrective feedback in language classes and the reasons that instructors choose to provide feedback or not. Evans et al. (2010) fashioned a 24-item survey investigating these questions and received 1053 surveys from which to draw data. They found that most teachers do provide corrective feedback and cite student expectation as the second most common reason for the provision of this feedback. This finding is further reinforced in other studies: "Students desire to improve their linguistic ability (…) and students expect to have their writing errors marked" (Evans, Hartshorn, McCollum & Wolfersberger, 2010, p. 451). A point of note: Loewen, Li, Thompson, Nakatsukasa, Ahn and Chen (2009) found that many students had mixed feelings about corrective feedback. To examine students' beliefs, they surveyed 754 language students in various levels of instruction at an American university. They concluded that "it is clear that learners valued grammar instruction. However, it is also apparent that not everyone valued grammar instruction equally." (p.101) Truscott (1996) also addresses this issue: "students (…) do not enjoy the sight of red ink all over their writing and probably find the experience extremely discouraging" (p. 354). Ironically, Truscott provides a solution for the negative affective implications of comprehensive corrective feedback and a pedagogical implication from the previous section dealing with the scope of focus: "One

might think at least some of these problems could be greatly reduced if teachers selected a few important errors and consistently corrected them (…) ignoring other less important errors" (p. 352), inadvertently providing an argument for the efficacy of focused feedback. These potential pitfalls can be easily avoided with the use of an alternately colored pen and a tight focus on grammatical structures, especially at lower proficiency levels. If it can be shown that corrective feedback is helpful (which we have) and not hurtful (which it is not), then if the students expect it, regardless of whether or not they like it, then the use of such feedback is in accordance with effective pedagogical practices.

Proficiency Level

Another factor requiring thoughtful consideration in the provision of effective written corrective feedback is the level of fluency of the student receiving the feedback, which has been identified numerous times and early on in the debate on written corrective feedback. For example, after citing the research of a number of different scholars dealing with a variety of different languages, Truscott (1996) writes that "developmental sequences are real (…) grammar instruction (or correction) that does not respect these sequences will probably encounter problems" (p. 337). While the preceding literature review shows that properly executed corrective feedback is in fact effective, many of the researchers we have already encountered also found that learner levels are a factor that must be considered in the provision of written corrective feedback, in large part citing Krashen's (1981) natural Order Hypothesis and Pieneman's (1989) Teachability hypothesis. This latter concept posits that learners will only be able to learn (or acquire) features for which they are developmentally prepared. The former suggested that different grammatical features develop in a relatively strict and predefined order. Both of these concepts propose that learning is not subject to a sequence proposed by teacher or

syllabus, but rather it is the teacher and syllabus that must respect these sequences. If this process is not considered in the curricula, then the provision of feedback on structures the student is not ready for will be ineffective. This is further supported by DeKeyser (2001) who states that declarative knowledge (what one knows) is required for the development of procedural knowledge (what one can do). This idea is reinforced by Sheen (2007), who reports that "learners with a high level of…ability benefitted more from both types of corrective feedback" (p. 276) and this is related to the ability of students to handle increasing cognitive loads as they improve. If a student has not developed the declarative knowledge of a structure presented out of this order, the development of procedural knowledge can never take place. One can expect corrective feedback on structures beyond the students' proficiency to function similarly.

This idea is repeated throughout the literature. Ellis et al. (2008) writes that "the effectiveness of direct and indirect feedback is likely to depend on the current state of the learners' grammatical knowledge" (p. 355). This is further corroborated by Farrokhi and Sattarpour (2012) who found that both types of feedback (direct and indirect) were effective for advanced learners. Sheen et al. (2009) also pointed out that unfocused feedback was not effective because when it targets a wide range of features, "learners are unable to process the feedback effectively, and even if they attend to corrections, they are unable to work out why they have been corrected. A return to both Krashen and Pieneman explain this, especially at lower levels. If a student has not become proficient in the use of a grammatical structure (or structures), it is unreasonable to expect them to be able to incorporate feedback in several structures simultaneously. Ferris, Brown, Liu and Stein (2007) examined feedback and learner levels and found that one group of teachers interviewed about provision of feedback "understood that not all L2 writers are alike and worked to understand each student as an individual" (p. 221).

By this rationale, it is clear that beginning level students cannot be expected to benefit from comprehensive or indirect feedback as it would present a cognitive overload that can negatively affect student motivation. Additionally, in keeping with Pieneman (1989) and Krashen (1981), students who receive feedback on structures they are not developmentally prepared for will be unable to utilize this feedback, making it ineffective. It is no wonder that Truscott found corrective feedback not to be helpful since the vast majority of the studies cited in his argument used comprehensive feedback at lower learner levels.

Oral Feedback

In addition to the different forms of feedback that can be provided by both teacher and student, an examination of the literature reveals still another factor that can improve the efficacy of written corrective feedback: the use of oral corrective feedback concurrent with written corrective feedback. Much of the research already discussed included an oral/aural metalinguistic component illustrating the benefits of oral metalinguistic feedback in conjunction with written feedback. One such example of this is Hedgecock and Lefkowitz's (1992) already discussed research on peer feedback. As we have seen, this study not only supported the notion that peer feedback is an effective form of feedback provision, but also the experimental group using peer feedback consisting of both oral and written feedback outperformed the control group (which received only written feedback from the instructor). This finding suggests that the use of verbal feedback can increase the efficacy of written feedback, making it an effective tool in the language teachers' arsenal, at least in the context of peer feedback. The use of an aural medium for feedback was not the focus of this research, simply a serendipitous observation, although Hedgecock and Lefkowitz (1992) write that "operationalization of such a procedure requires careful management and a set of tools which learners are willing to use" (p. 259-260). This

argument is also supported by Salih (2013), who reports that although students preferred receiving grammatical feedback from their peer partner, the reviewers tended to focus more on content and structure. Regardless of students' expectation, the use of metalinguistic oral feedback in a peer feedback context was again shown to be an effective supplement to written feedback.

Baker and Bricker (2010) expand on metalinguistic feedback within the focus of their research, specifically examining whether freshmen college students, both native English speakers and ESL learners, differ in their speed and accuracy in understanding teacher written comments based on the degree of directness of these comments. For this study, the researchers gave 71 native English and ESL students at an American university two sample essays with positive and corrective feedback and asked them if corrections were needed based on the provided teacher feedback. They found that both the native speakers and ESL students identified direct oral comments the fastest and most accurately. Baker and Bricker (2010) concluded that "participants may have understood that a correction was needed when indirect forms were used, but they may not have known how to accurately correct what the indirect comment asked them to correct" (p. 83). This finding suggests, especially at lower levels of fluency, that direct oral feedback can increase the efficacy of written corrective feedback. Other studies reviewed under Focused Feedback included a metalinguistic aspect to their investigations on written feedback, especially under highly focused circumstances. One such example is Bitchener et al. (2005), who examined direct feedback on the use of the English simple past and the article system with and without an additional five minute teacher-student conference. As we have seen, the students who received direct feedback, both with and without the conference, outperformed the control group, which received no corrective feedback. Most important here is that "the provision of full,

explicit written feedback, together with individual conference feedback, resulted in greater accuracy when the past simple tense and definite articles were used in new pieces of writing" (p. 201). Bitchener (2008) followed up with a similarly designed study on direct and focused corrective feedback on the English article. This study also included an oral metalinguistic group. In keeping with Bitchener et al. (2005), the results indicated that all groups receiving direct, focused feedback outperformed the control group, which again received no feedback, and that the oral/written feedback group outperformed all other groups. Due to a slightly modified design structure, we can also note that these improvements were retained two months later with no additional instruction or feedback. Bitchener and Knoch (2009) produced similar findings in another examination of direct and focused feedback, also on the English article system. As with Bitchener (2008), all the groups receiving feedback outperformed the control group, which received no feedback. Also like Bitchener (2008) and Bitchener et al. (2005), the group that received oral and written feedback, outperformed all the other groups. These findings were corroborated by Yang and Lyster (2010), who examined students' use of both the regular and irregular English past tense. Oral feedback was also presented in two forms, recasts (direct) and prompts (indirect). The study provided evidence for prompts being more effective than recasts on regular past tense, although the results were comparable for the irregular past. These findings echo sentiments by Bitchener et al. (2005) and Bitchener (2009), who suggested that feedback on rule-based structures is most effective when provided indirectly, while direct feedback is most effective on structures that are less rule-based (e.g., see Bitchener et al., 2005, on preposition use; see Yang & Lyster, 2010, on irregular past tense).

Online Feedback

An examination of recent literature also shows an increasing trend as technology is incorporated into the classroom: the provision of corrective feedback online. Ware and Warschauer (2006) make note of this emerging use of technological advancements in the learning classroom, suggesting that teachers should consider new and emerging technologies and the capabilities they add to approaches to teaching. In order to encourage second language acquisition, educators should provide students with tools to control the quality and quantity of input (Krashen, 1982). As technology continues to advance exponentially, it is no wonder that educators have also begun to incorporate it into classrooms. For example, Liu and Sadler's (2003) examination of online feedback given to 48 students in an American university demonstrated that the overall number of comments and the percentage of revision-oriented comments made in the online context (i.e., asynchronous online feedback) were larger than in the traditional group (i.e., paper-based feedback), suggesting that online feedback can potentially increase the efficacy of written corrective feedback. Yeh and Lo (2009) corroborated these results with a study that employed online asynchronous corrective peer-based feedback and error analysis. Participants were 50 ESL students in a university in Taiwan. They were divided into two groups: a paper-based (direct and indirect) feedback group, and an online-based feedback group. Results showed that the online-based feedback group identified more errors and missed fewer incorrect texts than the paper-based feedback group. Yeh and Lo (2009) concluded that this online system could be used to scaffold student learning, and "to develop his or her corrective strategies" (p. 891).

This line of research clearly suggests an unrealized pedagogical potential in the use of an online feedback mode, but there are caveats to be considered. For example, Liu and Sadler (2003) suggest that while many students favored this mode, others commented on preferring the

more traditional, in-class feedback method. They also note that the students' nonverbal communication can be indispensable in peer review and this would be eliminated by an asynchronous, online environment. Some of the more recent research on technology in feedback points out other aspects that also need to be considered. For example, Liang (2010) suggests that online synchronous feedback needs to be monitored and scaffolded by instructors in order to maintain its effectiveness in a pedagogical sense. This article describes a study of synchronous online interaction among three small peer groups in a Taiwanese undergraduate EFL writing class. 12 students comprised these three groups and all students had studied English for at least eight years. In this article, Liang points out that peer response groups enables students to collectively brainstorm, share and review texts, which is commensurate with providing tools to students as cited by Krashen (1982). Liang (2010) concludes that That is, while a synchronous online environment can potentially provide useful tools for writing pedagogy, instructors must effectively model and scaffold the instruction in order to minimize any potential distraction and to maintain the purposeful use of student time. Similar problems are pointed out by Ellis (2011) in an examination of peer feedback at an American university, where one class with 16 students engaged in peer feedback online and another class with 18 students engaged in on-paper feedback. Results showed again that the online environment produced more feedback overall, although the on-paper feedback tended to be more effective for proof-reading the writing samples. Ellis (2011) argued that the online environment introduced "an important interpersonal element into the feedback process" (p. 96) and provided a "slightly higher level of macro structure comments" (p. 88) as opposed to its more traditional counterpart. Ellis also pointed out the potential of the development of social communication media: "The shift in register

influenced (…) by the overlap of classroom technology with widely used social communication media, merits further investigation" (p. 96).

Although the literature on online feedback environments is scarce, especially in an L2 context, I am hesitant to make any over-encompassing statements regarding its efficacy as a pedagogical tool. However, an examination of the literature that does exist shows that this can be a viable supplement to feedback provision, but not without some structure and modeling from the instructor. Maintaining an asynchronous environment seems to be most effective as long as exterior mitigating factors are not allowed to interfere (e.g., social media). Perhaps the most effective approach to this type of feedback context is a combination of traditional and online environments. As pointed out by Liu and Sadler (2003), it is important to understand that the use of technology "should not be seen as monolithic" (p. 221). In other words, technology should not be used just for the sake of using technology, but rather when it presents solutions to problems presented by more traditional forms of feedback.

Chapter 5 - Conclusion

In this Report, I have sought to investigate the practice of written corrective feedback in language learning classrooms. The articles presented here offer valuable insights into pedagogical practice and classroom maintenance in an attempt to discern the most effective feedback practices for L2 learners in writing classes. In order to contextualize this research, I return to the debate that has been so prominent in the previous 15 years: whether or not to provide corrective feedback in L2 classrooms. In the review article that acted as the catalyst, Truscott (1996) throws down a gauntlet claiming that feedback is ineffective and should be eliminated. In order to address Truscott's call to eliminate corrective feedback in L2 classrooms, I propose a return to the claims of his original 1996 article.

Truscott (1996) begins by referring to other literature reviews that argued against the efficacy of corrective feedback. He is clear when he writes that "the corrections had no effect…Correction is not helpful" (p. 330). Despite the vigor of this statement, one must consider that even 18 years ago, the average elapse of time between the Truscott article and his supporting articles is over ten years –Knoblauch and Brannon (1981), Hillocks (1986), Krashen (1984) and Leki (1990)—, perhaps leaving the body of knowledge somewhat dated, even for when it was written. Also, as Truscott points out, many of the studies cited had concerns that could mitigate their findings, such as the lack of a control group and different levels of comprehensiveness in correction. Nevertheless, Truscott places the burden of proof on "those that would claim that correction is helpful" (p. 330). We have seen no shortage of research to do this, showing the efficacy of corrective feedback in a number of incarnations, such as indirect feedback (Bitchener, 2012; Ferris, 1999, 2004; Ferris & Roberts 2001; Hartshorn et al, 2011; Kubota, 2001; Lee, 1997, 2011, 2013; Storch, 2010), direct feedback (Bitchener, 2008;

Bitchener, et al., 2005; Bitchener & Knoch, 2009; Farrokhi & Sattarpour, 2012; Sheen, 2007, Van Beuningen et al., 2008) and focused feedback (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012; Ellis et al., 2008; Sheen et al., 2009; Van Beuningen, 2010; Yang & Lyster, 2010). This literature review overwhelmingly provides clear support for the efficacy of all these forms of corrective feedback. These studies used control groups and provided positive evidence in favor of feedback, clearly countering Truscott's claim that corrective feedback is not helpful and is potentially harmful to students who receive it. One must consider that the research cited by Truscott (i.e., Kepner, 1991; Semke, 1984) involved not only structural limitations (lack of a control group), but also universal, comprehensive correction, as opposed to more focused feedback, which has been shown to be beneficial, especially at lower levels.

Truscott had four main points in his argument against corrective feedback in L2 writing; He claims that (a) research evidence shows that…correction is ineffective, (b) this is to be expected given the nature of language learning, (c) correction has harmful effects, and (d) the arguments offered for it all lack merit. On the contrary, research shows that correction is often effective in different styles and for different levels of students and has not been shown to be harmful. Effectively countering points one and three, the many articles reviewed described clear gains by learners and none seem to suggest that correction is harmful. Truscott's second claim is not an argument in and of itself, but rather a rationale to explain his other points, namely numbers one and three. An examination of his fourth point also loses credibility since almost all the articles reviewed conclude that correction is not harmful, but in fact beneficial for many students across different language backgrounds and levels of proficiency, affording them opportunities for language fluency improvement. Truscott and Hu (2008) even partially prove the argument against Truscott, finding that students who were given corrective feedback, while

not improving from writing assignment to writing assignment, did improve on revisions of the same assignment. Perhaps a modified argument could be made in place of the one posed by Truscott; "All corrective feedback is (in)effective sometimes." It is the responsibility of educators to discern what types of feedback are most effective in any particular set of circumstances and factors predicated by the learners ever changing needs. Nevertheless, before we can begin to provide effective corrective feedback, there are certain considerations to keep in mind. Lee (2011) reminds us that "there is no one size fits all approach to feedback" (p. 380) and teachers must examine their teaching contexts and students' needs to guide their feedback practices. Examination of the literature presented here has identified some of these factors to keep in mind in the consideration of the efficacy of written corrective feedback.

In the same way that these articles have presented evidence on multiple pieces of the puzzle of written corrective feedback, these articles can also provide the necessary evidence to extrapolate an effective system of provision of written corrective feedback. Overall, this review of research of the previous 18 years has already shown that in the appropriate circumstances, error correction is often an effective and viable tool in the language instructor's repertoire. Nevertheless, Ellis (2008) writes that "the effectiveness of direct and indirect feedback is likely to depend on the current state of the learners' grammatical knowledge" (p. 355). It appears from the articles reviewed in this Report that each type of written corrective feedback has its place, depending upon the various circumstances in which it is applied.

Indirect Feedback

A comparison of explicit correction versus error feedback suggests that while low proficiency users must first learn to recognize grammatical structures before using them

effectively, more advanced learners benefit from indirect feedback. Considering this, it is no surprise that we see several articles recommending direct feedback for beginners (e.g., Ferris, 2004; Ferris & Roberts, 2008; Kubota, 2001; Lee, 1997). These same articles promote indirect feedback in general and include low proficiency users as the exception, who benefit from direct feedback. Bitchener (2008) provides a possible explanation for this: "Once the error has been noted, indirect feedback has the potential to push learners to engage in hypothesis testing (…) a process which (…) may induce deeper internal processing and promote the internalization of correct forms" (p. 105). Ferris (2002) also states that indirect feedback can lead to hypothesis testing which can further lead to deeper internal processing and promote internalization of correct forms and structures, especially at higher levels of proficiency. Hartshorn et al. (2010) found indirect feedback to be effective with advanced low to advanced-mid ESL students. This idea has been echoed by several researchers, including Lee (2013) and Bitchener (2012).

Also, despite the support for the use of direct feedback for certain rule-based structures, Ferris and Roberts (2001) also state that indirect feedback can "even help students self-edit idiosyncratic errors such as word choice and sentence structure" (p. 172). One would expect indirect feedback to follow explicit instruction in cases such as these to ensure that students learn the material before its processing and use. This was also further supported by Yang and Lyster (2010) who state that while the use of prompts (indirect) provide greater gains in accuracy in the use of regular English past tense forms than recasts (direct), "prompts and recasts had similar effects on improving accuracy in the use of irregular past tense forms" (p. 259) which would clearly be non-rule based. Again, one would simply expect that before indirect feedback be applied, that the students first receive explicit instruction and direct feedback, especially at lower levels of proficiency. This point has been further reinforced by Storch (2010) who writes that

"indirect feedback can only lead to an increase in control of a linguistic form that has already been partially internalized. It cannot lead to new learning." (p. 40)

Direct Feedback

One such study to provide this guidance comes from Lee (1997) in an attempt to prove the efficacy and superiority of indirect over direct feedback. Although Lee (1997) did conclude that "error feedback may be more desirable than overt correction" (p. 471) a caveat was included: that of the low proficiency learner. Lee (1997) writes that "the present study has found that the students who were of low language proficiency benefitted from direct but not indirect cues of error feedback" (p. 471). Lee continues that students at lower levels of proficiency will require more detailed and direct cues and more advanced students will not require such detail due to their higher proficiency. This idea is echoed by Ferris and Roberts (2001), and Kubota (2001), who also points out that as learners' proficiency increases, their ability to make their own corrections increases. Resultantly, "learners at an advanced level may need to be given only the location of errors" (Kubota, 2001, p. 478) corresponding to indirect feedback. While these previous articles simply speculate on the needs of lower proficiency students, research by Chandler (2003) lends some credibility to this concept. A quick review shows that first and second year students of low to intermediate proficiency not only preferred direct over indirect feedback, but that at this level of proficiency, direct feedback resulted in the largest increase in accuracy both in revisions and in subsequent writing. This study also showed that the most explicit form of indirect feedback was the second most effective form, with the least explicit form of indirect feedback being the least effective form of feedback in general, supporting the idea that lower level students benefit most from direct feedback.

Another conclusion that can be realized by the examination of this literature is that not all language structures are learned in the same way. In their argument for indirect feedback, Ferris and Roberts (2001) also mention that direct feedback might be better not only for lower level students but also "for certain complex idiosyncratic types of errors" (p. 164). Lee (1997) points out that research has long shown that students are "better at correcting surface errors (errors in spelling, punctuation) than meaning errors. Ferris (1999) also supports this by pointing out the fact that some errors (like verb tense) are rule-based while others (like word choice) are not. This dichotomy has also been investigated by researchers investigating focused feedback.

Focused Feedback

Bitchener et al. (2005) illustrate the differences in structure type as well as providing support for both direct feedback and focused feedback. In examining 53 post intermediate English students, researchers focused on English prepositions, simple past tense and articles, finding that while the latter two improved as a result of direct, explicit feedback, the former did not. Bitchener et al. (2005) write that "whereas the use of the past simple tense and the definite article are determined by sets of rules, those concerning the use of prepositions are more idiosyncratic" (p. 201). The idea of focused feedback was also examined by Sheen (2007) who found that direct focused feedback (in this case on the English article system) improved the accuracy of intermediate level students. A similar study also focused on the English article system (Bitchener, 2008) and showed that the gains made by the control group were maintained two months after the study with no additional instruction. This was extended even further by Bitchener and Knoch (2009) who also concluded that this was effective, but that the gains lasted 10 months without additional instruction. Ellis et al. (2008) also contributes to this discussion with their comparison focused and unfocused direct feedback in their examination of advanced

English students in Japan. They point out that a mass of corrections directed at a diverse set of structures is "hardly likely to foster the noticing and cognizing that may be needed for CF (corrective feedback) to work" (p. 367). With this somewhat more advanced participant pool, we see that both focused and unfocused experimental groups improved, supporting the efficacy of focused and direct feedback not only at lower levels, but at more advanced levels as well. This was also found to be the case in Farrokhi and Sattarpour (2012) who also examined high proficiency English students in Iran, focusing also on the English article system. Their results showed that while both focused and unfocused groups outperformed the control group, focused corrective feedback was more effective than unfocused feedback, at least in the use of English articles, a finding further supported by Sheen et al. (2009).

Final Note

This report has sought to accomplish two major goals; a response to Truscott (1996) who states that error correction is not only not helpful but potentially harmful and should be eliminated, and to provide parameters for its inclusion in foreign/second language writing classes. Despite the tenacity with which he has clung to this idea, the research has not supported this idea whatsoever. In fact the single article to even somewhat corroborate this hypothesis came from Truscott & Hsu (2008). It should be noted that even in here, researchers found that while the use of corrective feedback did not precipitate gains in new writings, it did help in the revision process, somewhat contradicting this earlier statement. What we have seen on the other hand is that corrective feedback in its various forms has in fact led to gains in linguistic proficiency in a number of different studies and formats, such as indirect feedback (Bitchener, 2012; Ferris,1999, 2004; Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Hartshorn et al., 2010; Kubota, 2001; Lee, 1997, 2011, 2013; Storch, 2010), direct feedback in the case of low proficiency learners (Ferris,

1999; Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Lee, 1997) and direct feedback in general (Bitchener, 2008; Bitchener & Knoch, 2009; Chandler, 2003; Ferris, 2010; Farrokhi & Sattarpour, 2012; Sheen, 2007), and focused feedback (Bitchener, 2008; Bitchener and Knoch, 2009; Ellis et al. 2008; Farrokhi and Sattarpour, 2012; Ferris, 2010; Lee, 2013; Sheen, 2007; Sheen et al, 2009; Van Beuningen, 2010, Yang and Lyster, 2010). A return to Truscott's (1996) original article and the studies cited therein simply presaged what researchers would eventually discover through their scholarship; that unfocused, comprehensive feedback, especially at low levels of proficiency, is not an effective method of corrective feedback provision. On the other hand, the use of direct, indirect and focused feedback can all be effective means to provide written corrective feedback to a wide range of recipients, each with its own context in which it is most effective.

So it would appear that each of its forms has a place, and as we have heard several researchers claim, feedback is not a "one size fits all" process. Several factors must be taken into consideration. One important factor is the motivation of the students. As we have seen in this review, students expect to receive feedback. This alone is not enough to justify its provision, but in view of the efficacy demonstrated thus far, it is a legitimate consideration. Another important factor is the level of proficiency of the students receiving the feedback. Although the composition of learners in any given classroom can vary, sometimes greatly, thus altering specific interactions, a review of these articles can certainly give us a starting point. As I have pointed out, indirect feedback is only effective when the learners have already internalized, at least partially, any given grammatical structure. Therefore, a direct feedback approach is probably most effective with low proficiency students as pointed out by Lee (1997) and Ferris (1999, 2001, 2004). A return to Chandler (2003) points out the need for students to manipulate the knowledge as it is received in order to effectively internalize it. This can be accomplished by

incorporating a more indirect approach after the information has already been provided, ensuring that the learners can form their own conclusions and solidify the material in their own interlanguage. Caution should be used in the transition between these two forms of feedback in order to maintain students' hypothesis creation and to maintain high motivation, as we have already discussed the importance of this facet to learning. We have also seen that the use of peer feedback in the classroom can also be an effective pedagogical tool. A caveat to peer feedback is that all students, especially at lower levels, should receive training in this technique in order to maintain its efficacy. Finally, although research is just beginning to examine these factors, one can expect that written corrective feedback can be made more effective through the incorporation of oral feedback in order to clarify any questions or confusion in regard to the material being presented. Also, the use of an online medium appears to be helpful, not only in maintaining student motivation, but also in the economical use of classroom time. Although the original claims of Truscott (1996) do not appear to be supported by contemporary literature, this article, having been cited in the vast majority of those articles reviewed here, has set in motion a great many scholars who have sought to prove that Truscott's arguments are incorrect. In doing so, the academic knowledge pedagogical foresight of the themes discussed herein and in no small number of studies has been greatly increased, moving us farther along the way and bringing us closer to the most effective means for teachers to interact with students. For this, Truscott should be commended, as it was his 1996 article that has precipitated a remarkable increase in scholarly investigation and the creation of knowledge revolving around the provision of error correction in second/foreign language writing classrooms.

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