

**DIFFERENTIAL EFFECTS OF CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK ON  
THE ESL LEARNERS' ACCURACY OF LINGUISTIC FORMS**

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**THESIS SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

**FACULTY OF LANGUAGES & LINGUISTICS  
UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA  
KUALA LUMPUR**

**2014**

UNIVERSITI MALAYA

**ORIGINAL LITERARY WORK DECLARATION**

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Name of Degree : **Doctor of Philosophy**

Title of ~~Project Paper/ Research Report/Dissertation~~/Thesis (“this Work”): **Differential Effects of Corrective Feedback on the ESL Learners’ Accuracy of Linguistic Forms**

Field of Study : **Second Language Acquisition**

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## ABSTRACT

This mixed-method study investigated the extent of focused and unfocused indirect corrective feedback efficacy in improving learners' linguistic accuracy in written work over a period of time. The quantitative inquiry that involved two treatment groups ( $n = 30$  for focused indirect corrections and  $n = 30$  for unfocused indirect corrections) and a control group ( $n = 30$ ), compared the differential effects of focused indirect with the unfocused indirect corrective feedback on the uptake and retention of the accurate use of subject-verb agreement, prepositions and articles as measured from the pretest, immediate and delayed posttests. The participants in the treatment groups were required to complete two writing tasks of which they received either focused or unfocused corrective feedback, and were required to complete two sessions of collaborative dialogue for the purpose of revising the written work based on the corrective feedback provided. The qualitative inquiry attempted to identify factors relating to the Language-Related Episodes (LREs) that influenced uptake and retention of the corrective feedback on subject-verb agreement, prepositions and articles in the learners' written work. These LREs were derived from the collaborative dialogue that the participants were required to complete for revision sessions. Selected participants were interviewed one week after the delayed posttest to further explore the factors that may have influenced corrective feedback efficacy on the uptake and retention of the targeted linguistic forms. Guided by Swain's (2005) Output Hypothesis, the LREs and interviews were analysed to identify prevailing influencing factors. The statistical findings revealed that both treatment groups outperformed the control group in the immediate and delayed posttests. However, there was no significant difference between the unfocused and focused corrective feedback groups indicating that both correction types were equally facilitative in increasing accuracy of the three targeted structures over a period of time.

The qualitative results revealed six main factors that may have greatly influenced the uptake and retention of the corrective feedback on those targeted forms, which are: learners' subsequent response to the corrective feedback; focus on ungrammatical uses; hypothesising of correct forms uses; post-response reflections; linguistic features and task-related factors. Overall, results suggest that while both focused and unfocused corrective feedback may be facilitative in improving language accuracy, based on the influencing factors identified, learners may benefit more from the unfocused corrective feedback. This implication was proposed with the condition that the feedback provided for the written work can retain learners' interest and focus towards task completion.

## ABSTRAK

Kajian ini dijalankan untuk menyelidik takat keberkesanan kaedah maklumbalas pembaikan tertumpu dan komprehensif ke atas hasil kerja penulisan bagi satu tempoh. Inkuiri kuantitatif yang melibatkan dua kelompok rawatan ( $n = 30$  bagi maklumbalas pembaikan tertumpu dan  $n = 30$  bagi maklumbalas pembaikan komprehensif) dan satu kelompok kawalan juga membandingkan bezaan kesan oleh dua jenis kaedah maklumbalas pembaikan tersebut ke atas ambilan dan pengekaln penggunaan kata kerja tertakluk, preposisi dan artikel yang tepat. Perbandingan ini dilakukan dengan mengukur min skor yang didapati dari praujian, pascaujian terdekat dan pascaujian tertangguh. Peserta kelompok rawatan dikehendaki menyempurnakan dua tugas penulisan yang kemudiannya diberi samaada maklumbalas pembaikan tertumpu atau maklumbalas pembaikan komprehensif. Mereka juga dikehendaki melalui dua sesi dialog kolaboratif untuk tujuan penyemakan dan pembetulan penulisan berdasarkan maklumbalas pembaikan yang diterima. Inkuiri kualitatif pula adalah untuk mengenalpasti faktor-faktor berkaitan dengan *Language-Related Episodes (LREs)* yang mempengaruhi ambilan dan pengekaln maklumbalas pembaikan yang diberi ke atas kata kerja tertakluk, preposisi dan artikel yang disebut. Analisa *LREs* dan temu bual dengan peserta yang terpilih dibuat untuk mengenalpasti faktor-faktor tersebut dengan berpandukan *Output Hypothesis* oleh Swain (2005). Dapatan statistik menunjukkan kedua-dua kelompok rawatan mengatasi kelompok kawalan dalam pascaujian terdekat dan juga dalam pascaujian tertangguh. Walaubagaimanapun, tiada perbezaan signifikan diantara kelompok maklumbalas pembaikan tertumpu dan kelompok maklumbalas pembaikan komprehensif. Ini bermakna tahap keberkesanan kedua-dua jenis maklumbalas pembaikan adalah sama dalam membantu peserta meningkat penggunaan yang tepat bagi tiga fokus tatabahasa yang disebut untuk sesuatu tempoh jangka masa.

Hasil kajian kualitatif mengenalpasti enam faktor utama yang mempengaruhi ambilan dan pengejalan penggunaan tepat tiga fokus tatabahasa yang disebut. Pertama, respons pelajar terhadap maklumbalas pembaikan; kedua, fokus kepada penggunaan tatabahasa yang tidak tepat; ketiga, hipotesis penggunaan tatabahasa yang betul; keempat, pengamatan pasca-respons; kelima, ciri-ciri tatabahasa; dan keenam, faktor berkaitan tugas. Secara keseluruhannya, walaupun keberkesanan kedua-dua maklumbalas pembaikan adalah sama, berdasarkan faktor-faktor yang dikenalpasti dari inkuiri kualitatif, keputusan kajian menyarankan pelajar boleh mendapat manfaat yang lebih dari maklumbalas komprehensif. Saranan ini diutarakan dengan syarat maklumbalas mestilah diberi untuk jenis penulisan yang boleh mengekalkan minat dan tumpuan pelajar dalam menyempurnakan tugas.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Deepest gratitude to my advisor, Dr Ng Lee Luan, for continued valuable support, mentoring and efficient guidance at each phase of completing this study. Many thanks also to Dr. Tan Siew Kuang for constructive comments and advice on the theoretical framework, methodological matters and presentation of findings in the write-up of the study. I extend my appreciation to the external examiners, Professor Icy Lee Kit-Bing and Assistant Professor Dr. Younghee Sheen for insightful comments and suggestions. My appreciation is also extended to all the students and an independent rater who participated in the study. Special thanks to my mother, sister and brother for the help and encouragement from time to time. Heartfelt gratitude to my husband, Ahmad Nasaruddin Sulaiman and my three daughters, Nor Asyikin, Nor Humaira and Nor Hanani, for the unremitting assistance, support and encouragement in every way, throughout.

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## LIST OF TERMS

<b>ESL</b>	English as a second language
<b>L1</b>	First language/ Native language
<b>L2</b>	Second language
<b>SLA</b>	Second language acquisition
<b>CF</b>	Corrective feedback
<b>WCF</b>	Written corrective feedback
<b>FCF</b>	Focused corrective feedback – Feedback provided for one error type or category
<b>UFCF</b>	Unfocused corrective feedback – Comprehensive feedback provided for all errors or a wider range of error category
<b>Indirect CF</b>	Corrective feedback that informs the learners that errors have been committed by indicating with symbols or underlining the error. However, the correct form is not provided
<b>Direct CF</b>	Corrective feedback that informs the learners of the errors as well as the correct forms
<b>Language-Related Episodes (LREs)</b>	Segments in the pair talk during which learners focused explicitly on language items
<b>Uptake</b>	A process of which learners take up or use the accurate form of the targetted linguistic forms as provided through the corrective feedback
<b>Retention</b>	A process of which learners managed to retain the accurate use of the targetted linguistic forms as provided through the corrective feedback over a period of time
<b>Collaborative Dialogue</b>	The activity of which learners deliberate collaboratively over the CF that they received during the pair talk