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### POSITION/FOCUS PAPER

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Effects of different types of feedback: Issues in past and current theory and research



Written corrective feedback (CF) has been considered as a key teaching technique for “writing-to-learn”. Bitchener and Ferris (2011) undertook a narrative review of a range of studies. This provided clear evidence of the effectiveness of written CF when this is examined in terms of accuracy in new pieces of writing. Three basic strategies for providing written corrective feedback have been distinguished by researchers, corresponding quite closely to those discussed in the teacher guides – direct CF, indirect CF and metalinguistic CF. There are also other possibilities for correcting written

errors. Reformulation involves a native-speaker rewriting the student’s text in such a way as ‘to preserve as many of the writer’s ideas as possible, while expressing them in his/her own words so as to make the piece sound native-like’ (Cohen, 1989: 4). This differs from the three main strategies as it involves reconstructing the whole of the student’s text rather than focusing only on the erroneous parts. It lays the burden on the learner to identify and accept or reject the specific changes that have been made. Another possibility providing learners with a detailed metalinguistic explanation of a specific type of error (e.g. errors in the use of articles) without correcting the actual errors that occur in the learners’ text. This differs from other forms of CF because the feedback is not individualized (i.e. all the students can receive the same metalinguistic explanation) and thus is less time-consuming and also because it requires the learners to locate the actual errors in their text. Researchers have been interested in which type of CF is more effective in assisting L2 learning than others and whether revision contributes L2 learning.

In this talk I will examine second language acquisition theories that explain the effectiveness of written CF. I will then explore possible strategies for providing feedback on writing and discuss advantages and disadvantages of each. I will also examine results of research that has investigated the effects of each feedback strategy. I will conclude with the summary of research findings and gaps in the research field.